

Little Easton Parish Council

Minutes

Annual Parish Assembly

Wednesday 29 APRIL 26 – 7:00pm

Little Easton Memorial Hall

Agenda

1. Welcome from the Chairman
2. Approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly May 2025
3. Chairman's Report
4. Internal Audit feedback - Clerk
5. Date of next Annual Parish Assembly – T.B.C.
6. Chairman to close the meeting.

Press and public are welcome to attend

Jacqui English

Chairman

22 April 26

STATEMENT BY CHAIR JACQUI ENGLISH ACM 2026

Unfortunately in May of last year Peter Bright resigned as Chairman of Little Easton Parish Council and subsequently Simon Benstead then resigned as a Parish Councillor. Both were a great loss to the Parish Council. I then took the post of Chair. At the end of last year Chris Brooks joined the Parish Council.

In June 2025 Truvelo installed two Digital Speed devices one in Mill End and the other in Duck Street. They have had a very good response. The device in Mill End was upgraded in September 2025. Our Speedwatch group in Mill End has been languid due to winter and myself as Speedwatch Co-ordinator not having enough time due to work and family pressures.

In July the Parish Council adopted the Biodiversity Policy so the Parish Council undertook to work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within the areas of the parish.

Last year the Parish Council made a donation towards Essex and Herts Air Ambulance.

During the year the Parish Council contributed towards the VE day celebrations with the Memorial Hall which marked the 80th anniversary of the end WW2 in Europe. It was a well attended event.

The Parish Council have purchased 4 self watering planters which have now been installed in Duck Street and Mill End due to the existing ones deteriorating badly. We are merely waiting to see flowers put in.

Unfortunately it transpires that by a recent decision made by Essex County Council any works wanting to be carried out on Highways land, footway, verge, highway or bridleway they will be using their own contractors. Therefore a new dog poo bin and waste bin have been delivered and shall shortly be installed within an entrance to the Rectory Ponds and the Parish Council are indebted to Chris Trembath for granting us permission for this to happen. We are also grateful to Uttlesford Council that these will be emptied regularly.

Denbury Homes have confirmed that we can arrange for a dog poo bin to be installed just within the entrance to their development but only once all their building work has been completed and all fully sold.

Dog leashes and a new 'no dog sign' have been installed on the outside fence around the children's playground.

Luckily the playground equipment has not required any major repairs or replacements.

The War Memorial has not required any works other than a coating on the gate which should be done once the weather improves this year.

We voted at the end of last year to not increase the precept for the next financial year.

We are now looking to hopefully install around 5 to 6 pieces of outdoor gym equipment near a corner of the playing field. We are awaiting any comments from parishioners. We envisage the cost and installation of this equipment to be in the region of £5 to £10,000.

At the end of January this year we were pleased to note that seemingly Landsec have decided no longer to pursue their plan to develop Easton Park for housing. Many people

have been involved in the battle to 'Stop Easton Park' and we are all extremely thankful for their efforts to date.

The new local plan has been adopted by Uttlesford District Council which will assist considerably in the determination of planning applications, particularly unwanted ones.

You will be aware that from 1st April 2028 Uttlesford District Council and all the other existing Councils in Essex will no longer exist and Uttlesford will be merged with Harlow and Epping Forest to most probably being known as West Essex Council unless it is challenged by way of Judicial Review.

There is still a vacancy for a Parish Councillor.

Finally I am sure I speak for all of us I would like to thank Ian Brown for his continued dedication and hard work as Clerk to this Parish Council.

CLERKS END OF YEAR 25-26 FINANCE UPDATE

As I report I am awaiting the Internal Auditors report on our recent three hour grilling, seemingly the 2026 Practitioners Guide for Auditors is pointing towards even greater expectations of parish councils when it comes to their adherence to governance and accounting matters, as witnessed in part by the introduction this year of something called Assertion 10; which we met.

The council did finish the year slightly over expected budget with an increase in grass cutting costs, some additional play area expense and a complete review of the PC website accessibility performance completed by a third party. As a local authority we are expected to work towards the same high level of accessibility performance expected of the higher tier local authorities and why not. This will require more work to attain those comprehensive levels of accessibility.

We have increased the community's assets with the purchase of additional litter and dog waste bins, Four man made material self watering planters to replace the old and tired existing ones and two Speed Indicator signs, the council had taken on the responsibility for the operating costs associated with the Defibrillators.

The 25-26 VAT reclaim was submitted and the funds have been transferred by HMRC into our account as has the first half year portion of the Precept.

Having said all that the council finances have finished the year in a healthy condition with sufficient reserves to meet its statutory requirements and responsibilities and its proposed budget needs for this coming financial year. Providing costs do not escalate outside of our control when we will have to cut our cloth accordingly.

Once I receive the internal auditor's report our next step is to complete the various documentation for the government's appointed auditors, PKF Littlejohn and submit them for scrutiny and await their report later this year.

Just over £51,000 in the bank and a budget for 26-27 set at circa £30,000