

Little Easton Parish Council Minutes

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Minutes of the **MEETING OF LITTLE EASTON PARISH COUNCIL** held at the **MEMORIAL HALL** on **WEDNESDAY 29 JULY 2026 AT 7:00PM**

Councillor	Attendance
Cllr Liam Phillips	YES
Cllr Jacqui English	YES
Cllr Ian Sussams	YES
Cllr Emma Wells	NO
Cllr Chris Brooks	NO
VACANCY	
Dist Cllr Richard Haynes	YES
Dist Cllr Martin Foley	YES
Cnty Cllr Bo Davis	YES

2 member(s) of the public
 Clerk – Mr Ian Brown

26/030	NOTE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Approved apologies for Cllrs Emma Wells and Chris Brooks
26/031	WITH REFERENCE TO THIS AGENDA MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO DECLARE ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS, NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS AND OTHER REGISTRABLE INTERESTS None declared
26/032	APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING 27 MAY 2026 RESOLUTION: - Approve minutes : Proposed Cllr Jackie English; Seconded Cllr Liam Phillips
26/033	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION Members of the public may raise questions about and comment on items on the Agenda OR of import. Session is limited to 15 minutes (3 minutes per person with no repetition of a previous question) ➤ Village Hall sign laying on the ground at bottom of Manor Road – request to reinstate pole / sign by MHMC ➤ Consider additional bin and post for playingfield, CLERK to ACTION ➤ LECClub – Oak tree behind Pavilion needs more work / to lift branches off Pavilion roof. Considering new machinery storage location / small shipping container near Pavilion ➤ LECClub Practice nets – not insignificant expense, an ongoing project ➤ Cnty Cllr Bo Davis to escalate Mill End pavement challenge
26/034	RECEIVE THE DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORTS

	Cnty Cllr Bo Davis – report APPENDIX A Dist Cllr Richard Haynes - LGR future remains uncertain; District Cllrs may well be asked to remain on after their term ceases in 2027. Report – APPENDIX B Dist Cllr Martin Foley – Covered many topics including the fact that Unitary Authorities are nothing new; seeming lack of concerns over global warming. Report – APPENDIX C
26/035	CONFIRM MEETING DATES FOR 2026 September / November 2026; January / March 2027 (question over April and May)
26/036	NOTE CLERKS REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE External Auditor queries being answered
26/037	FINANCE – RECEIVE STATEMENT & AGREE PAYMENTS – REVIEWED BY TWO MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PRIOR TO THIS MEETING COMMENCING Finance Statement – APPENDIX D 26/037(i) - APPOINT AUTHORISER Cllr Jackie English 26/037(ii) – COUNCILLORS TO NOTE RECONCILED BANK STATEMENT & BUDGET PERFORMANCE RESOLUTION – Approve finance statement(s) and reconciliations: Proposed Cllr Ian Sussams; Seconded Cllr Liam Phillips 26/037(iii) – TO APPROVE PLACING THE CLERK AND ANY FUTURE CLERK IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME WITH ECC RESOLUTION: Approve placing the position of CLERK / RFO in the LGPS: Proposed Cllr Jackie English; Seconded Cllr Liam Phillips 26/037(iv) – APPROVE WREATH PURCHASE Type C - £27 RESOLUTION:- Approve Wreath Type C purchase: Proposed Cllr Ian Sussams; Seconded Cllr Liam Phillips 26/037(v) – CONFIRM ANNUAL REVIEW OUTCOME TO PLACE CLERK ON SPC25 RESOLUTION: Approve Clerk pay scale review at SCP25: Proposed Cllr Jackie English; Seconded Cllr Ian Sussams 26/037(vi) – CONSIDER APPROACHING TBS FOR A QUOTE TO MANAGE THE PARISH BINS OR REMAIN WITH UDC Remain with UDC but monitor situation
26/038	PLANNING – REVIEW AND COMMENT ON ANY CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS OR APPEALS AND OUTCOMES OR PREVIOUS DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS RECEIVE ANY UPDATE ON LITTLE BARNS SITE UTT/26/2599/FUL PROPOSAL: Section 73A Retrospective application for use of site for children's swimming lessons. Change of use and extension of former pool house to ancillary cafe. New parking area, access and associated development. LOCATION: Little Barn Park Road Awaiting further outcome

	UTT/26/0053/DOV Proposed Deed of Variation to the 1939 Agreement to disapply historic development restrictions within the Easton Park planning application site, enabling implementation of outline planning permission UTT/21/1708/OP. "FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES"
26/039	REPRESENTATIVES REPORT PLAY AREA – All seemingly OK, tree cut back over slide. A slide and swing need upgrading, Cllr Phillips to investigate options 26/039(i) – UPDATE ON IDENTIFYING EQUIPMENT DUE FOR UPGRADE / REPLACEMENT AND OUTDOOR GYM INSTALLATION CLERK to request feedback from residents via direct mailing PARISH MAINTENANCE INCLUDING WAR MEMORIAL – Nothing to report, gate awaiting staining SPEEDWATCH – Nothing further to report
26/040	FEEDBACK ON SUGGESTION TO JOIN THE PARISH JOINS 20s PLENTY CAMPAIGN Remove item from agenda
26/041	FEEDBACK ON COMMEMORATIVE PLANTING OF DAFFODILS ALONG NEW PATHWAY FENCELINE CLERK to enquire of parish maintenance for pricing. Along line of new fenceline.
26/042	ITEMS OF REPORT OR FOR INCLUSION ON NEXT AGENDA Commemorative bench costing and location 26/042 (i) CONFIRM APPOINTED CONTRIBUTOR TO 5P MAGAZINE Cllr Jackie English to submit both August and September entries for the parish magazine
26/043	DATE OF NEXT MEETING(S) – 30 SEPTEMBER 2026 - CLOSE 8:45pm

Signed.....Date.....

APPENDIX A

Parish Council Update – Cllr Bo Davis

Good evening Chair, councillors and residents, and thank you for the opportunity to join you this evening.

For those I haven't met before, I'm **Cllr Bo Davis**, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services at Essex County Council. Whilst I regularly engage with parish and town councils across Essex, this is my **first visit to Little Easton Parish Council**, so I wanted to take the opportunity to introduce myself, provide a brief update on what's happening at County Hall, and most importantly hear about the issues that matter to your community.

As many of you will know, the election on 7 May brought a new administration to Essex County Council. In the words of the County Council's 100 Day Plan:

"The people of Essex voted decisively for change."

Whatever our political views, the message from residents was clear. People want us to focus on the basics, improve services, deliver value for money and make sure local voices are heard.

In addition to that, as the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services, my role is to help ensure Essex County Council is financially sustainable, efficient and able to deliver the services that residents rely upon every day.

Potholes and Highways

The biggest issue I hear about from residents remains the condition of our roads.

The scale of the challenge is significant. Essex's own analysis shows that between 2022 and 2024 the county experienced the highest increase in reported potholes of any council area in the UK, with more than **70,000 potholes recorded over the four years leading into 2025**. The 100 Day Plan describes this as a **"public service emergency."**

That is why one of the first actions taken by the new administration was to declare a **Pothole Emergency** and invest an additional **£7.5 million** into road repairs.

Importantly, we are already starting to see results. Essex Highways has reported that repairs are running **30% higher than the same period last year**, with **more than 5,000 carriageway defects repaired during the first quarter of this financial year alone**.

As [Cllr Peter Harris](#), Leader of Essex County Council, recently said:

"When residents tell us that fixing potholes is one of their top priorities, it is our job to act."
[\[essexhighways.org\]](https://essexhighways.org)

There is still a long way to go, but residents are entitled to expect visible improvements and that remains a top priority.

Early Delivery and Positive Change

Alongside highways, the administration has focused on some practical early actions that residents can actually see and feel.

One of the first decisions was the removal of library reservation charges, helping support our libraries and encourage reading across Essex.

Work has also started on tackling SEND backlogs, expanding fostering recruitment, reviewing council spending and contracts, and ensuring taxpayers receive the best possible value from every pound spent.

The principle is straightforward: residents should see practical improvements in everyday services, not just hear about plans.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Many of you will also be following developments around Local Government Reorganisation and what it means for Essex.

The County Council has been clear that it opposes the Government's current proposals and continues to make that case. At the same time, we have a responsibility to prepare properly for any eventual outcome.

From my perspective, preparation is about ensuring that residents continue receiving services regardless of what structures may look like in the future.

One statistic highlights the scale of the task. Approximately **70% of Essex County Council's budget is spent through externally commissioned services and contracts.**

That means a huge amount of work is already taking place behind the scenes to ensure contracts, services and suppliers remain in place and that value for money continues to be a priority throughout any transition.

For me, the key test is simple:

Residents should not experience disruption to essential services, or be put at any risk because of government dictated organisational restructuring.

Working with Parish Councils

Finally, I want to recognise the important role that parish councils play.

You are often the first people residents contact when something goes wrong and often the people with the best understanding of local priorities.

So my request this evening is very simple.

Please tell me:

- Where the pothole hotspots are.
- Where road safety concerns exist.
- Where council services are not meeting expectations.
- Where a small intervention from the County Council could make a meaningful difference.

The 100 Day Plan talks about**"common sense, not ideology. Action, not drift."**

Ultimately, residents will judge all of us not on strategies, structures or organisational charts, but on whether life improves in the communities where they live.

Cllr Bo Davis Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services Essex County Councillor for Thaxted Email: Cllr.Bo.Davis@essex.gov.uk

APPENDIX B

District Councillor's Report – July 2026

Just a few topics that may be of interest:

Local Government Reform

There remains some uncertainty over local government reform with Harlow boycotting the process until there is more certainty over the issue and Essex still pursuing their Judicial Review. UDC are however proceeding on the basis that matters will unfold in accordance with government proposals whereby UDC merge with Epping Forest and Harlow to form a West Essex unitary authority. There is still a complete lack of clarity however as to the implications of a new authority and how it will operate. I have been trying to establish through the Scrutiny Committee how the interim arrangements will work leading up to vesting day in April 2028. For current District Councillors our term of office comes to an end in April next year. It seems that we will be asked to stay on for an extra year to provide a shadow authority essentially carrying out the functions of the existing Uttlesford authority. It is uncertain how many existing councillors will in fact, want to stay on and it is not entirely certain what will happen if they don't. It may be that some wards will simply be left vacant but elections will have to be held if there is less than perhaps two thirds (?) of the Council remaining. It seems that the existing ward boundaries will remain and there will be no attempt to progressively amend them to fit the new boundaries (it is proposed that Thaxted and the Eastons will merge with the Sampfords under the new authority). There is no agreement yet where council functions will be based (although the answer is probably 'where they are now – in officers' spare bedrooms!). Similarly, it is unclear how the interim arrangements will impact parish councils and whether term extensions sought where necessary. I have asked that a guide for councillors be issued as soon as there is a bit more clarity so that we can all get a better view on where we stand.

Council Tax Support Scheme

There is a consultation underway (closing on 14th September) inviting views on how UDC should provide support to those struggling to pay their council tax. The proposal is that for 2027/2026 it should remain the same as last year whereby claimants can obtain a reduction down to as little as 12.5% of the demand (down to potentially 0% for pensioners and the disabled).

North Essex Parking Partnership

This is a joint body used by the north Essex authorities and administered by Colchester to provide parking enforcement services. Its income is derived solely from parking fines and local parking schemes and there had been concern that it was running at a deficit (which would have meant top-up payments from Council tax). It has however, now turned round to run at a small annual surplus. The future of the arrangement is uncertain under LGR.

Uttlesford Big Green Festival

This was organised by UDC in conjunction with Sustainable Uttlesford and consisted of 50 events run by local community groups throughout the District including a sculpture exhibition in Thaxted church. Of lasting

interest was the sponsorship of a film called River's Return based around work being done on the chalk streams feeding into the Cam and work on the River Roding. It can be viewed at:

<https://youtu.be/UZFcVgLwW-U>

Uttlesford Signage and Wayfinding Project

A scheme of new walking and cycling signage is being prepared for Saffron Walden, Hadstock, Thaxted, Dunmow and Takeley.

Community Grant Scheme

Under the most recent scheme applications for small grants of up to £3,000 were invited and 35 were received and only 3 were refused. A total of £82,500 was awarded.

Buildings at Risk Register

In 2017 Uttlesford prepared a heritage buildings at risk register. In response to a member's question the portfolio holder for planning has confirmed that work on this project is still ongoing (although it has to be said that the response was hedged around in considerable vagueness).

APPENDIX C

Local government Reforms

Following on from Cllr Haynes. See below link to LGR....

There is at this stage as Cllr Richard Haynes points out, some clarification needed and even doubts raised now by ECC contesting reorganisation.

My experience over the last 5 years (and I had been to a number when Chair of UDC) about Unitary Authorities are they will be as good as the people that run them.

Thurrock for instance was a disaster in my opinion, and several others are functioning well and beginning to save residents money.

We in Uttlesford DC under the present Administration have held our Council Tax Rises to a minimum whilst (one of the lowest) whilst gaining improvement in all departments. One thing of note...If Essex County Council was to continue in its current form, there is growing concern from many about lack of commitment to pollution and climate change mitigation measures being expressed by the new administration at ECC.

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/devolution-and-local-government-reorganisation>

Council Tax support scheme for 2027/28

The public consultation on how much support we should give to people who might struggle to pay their Council Tax bill is now underway.

The Local Council Tax Support scheme is designed to help the most vulnerable.

The details of the scheme and the consultation are available on our website: www.uttlesford.gov.uk/lcts-consultation

The consultation runs until Monday 14 September.

Equality report published

UDC has recently published the Annual Equality Report for 2025-26, outlining the progress made across the organisation to strengthen equality, diversity and inclusion across the organisation and the services it provides.

The report highlights improvements in staff engagement, workforce data quality, hybrid working arrangements and inclusive policy development. It also sets out areas for further improvement, including increasing disability and ethnicity disclosure rates and embedding Equality Impact Assessments more consistently across all services.

The report forms part of the council's ongoing monitoring and commitments within its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

► [Read the Annual Equality Report](#)

Martin Cllr Martin Foley, Chair of Licensing and Environmental Health Committee

APPENDIX D

LEPC JULY 2026 Finance Statement								Budget	Net Exp	Diff +/-
Precept	34,000							25,796	12,960.96	12,835
Date	Supplier	Description	Invoice	FPO/DD	Min Ref	Rec	Credit	Debit	VAT	Net
Opening balance							2,399.49	0.00		0.00
01/07/26	A&J Lighting	Lighting maintenance		DD		Y		28.80	4.80	24.00
08/07/26	MF Howlett	Bouncy Castle Dam Dep	N/A	BGC		Y	150.00			
10/07/26	ActivWeb	Hosting support		DD		Y		42.00	7.00	35.00
15/07/26	MF Howlett	Bouncy Castle Dam Dep	N/A	FPO		Y		150.00		150.00
21/07/26	SSE Energy	Electricity supply	Inv 04639158	DD		Y		78.83	3.75	75.08
23/07/26	HMRC	Qtr Tax/NIC	PAYE	DD		Y		565.24		565.24
28/07/26	Employee	WFH Allowance	N/A	SO		Y		26.00		26.00
	Employee	Travel expenses	July claim	FPO				5.50		5.50
	Employee	Salary	PAYE	FPO				436.55		436.55
	HP Inc UK - IB	Instant Ink share	Inv 823977	FPO				4.50	0.75	3.75
July							2,549.49	1,337.42	16.30	1,321.12
Opening Balance							1,212.07	0.00		0.00
Current T1	£1,212.07									
Instant Access	£56,115.63									

APPENDIX D – BUDGET TO DATE

Outline Budget 2026-2027	0	0	0
0	0	0	0
0	0	Net	0
0	2026/27	2026/27	2026/27
0	Budget	Actual	Diff +/-
0	25,796.00	12,960.96	-12,835.04
Cost Code	Amount	Amount	Amount
Salary	7,000.00	1,959.80	5,040.20
HMRC	1,608.00	794.75	813.25
Clerk Expenses	643.20	0.00	643.20
Training	107.20	0.00	107.20
Chairmans Allowance	0.00	0.00	0.00
Subscriptions	428.80	140.00	288.80
Insurance	1,286.40	1,090.09	196.31
Admin, Bank	214.40	289.50	-75.10
Audit, Legal	536.00	0.00	536.00
Printing & Stationery	30.00	17.36	12.64
Lighting & Utilities	2,000.00	641.45	1,358.55
Play Area	804.00	80.00	724.00
Parish maintenance	3,000.00	873.02	2,126.98
War Memorial	0.00	0.00	0.00
Grass & Trees	5,770.00	6,885.00	-1,115.00
S137 & Grants	268.00	0.00	268.00
Hall Hire	200.00	0.00	200.00
Capital projects	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
Website	700.00	189.99	510.01
Events & Parties	200.00	0.00	200.00
Professional Fees	0.00	0.00	0.00
Contingency	0.00	0.00	0.00
Local & Neighbourhood Plan	0.00	0.00	0.00
0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Reserves	0.00	0.00	0.00
Legal costs	0.00	0.00	1,000.00
Elections	0.00	0.00	1,500.00
General Reserves	0.00	0.00	0.00
Earmarked - Play Area	0.00	0.00	5,000.00
Total	25,796.00	12,960.96	12,835.04