



GREAT CANFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING Held at Great Canfield Village Hall on Monday 13th May 2024 at 8pm

In attendance were 7 members of the Parish Council, 3 members of the public, District Cllrs and the Parish Clerk.

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME, Virginia Barlow as chair of the Parish Council opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance to the Annual Village Meeting.
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – None
3. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING held on Thursday 11th May 2023 were proposed by Virginia Barlow as a correct record, seconded by Jenny Jewell with all in agreement.
4. PARISH COUNCIL CHAIR'S STATEMENT – Cllr Virginia Barlow

Great Canfield Parish Councillors are beginning their second year of a four-year term, we remain at full strength. We wish to recognise the significant contribution made to village life by one of our previous Cllr members, Henry Green who was a stalwart of the Parish Council for many years and who died in December 2023.

Great Canfield is a supportive and lively village, and we would like to thank our Village Hall Committee who organise events with the support of the parish council. Over the past year we enjoyed a great community celebration for the coronation, an amazing fireworks night, Oktoberfest, quiz night and most recently a bingo night over the past year.

The committee is currently working on the D-Day event which we are sure will be a huge success thanks to our community spirit. The parish council will host an event on Thursday 6th June where the village beacon will be lit along with 100s of others across the country.

Please don't forget that there are funds available, and it is within the Parish Council's remit to be able to award grants to any causes which are for the benefit of Great Canfield residents. If any local groups, parishioner or group of parishioners come to the Parish Council with an idea for something which might benefit the village we will always consider it.

Traffic and Roads

Speeding and HGVs using unsuitable lanes continues to be something the parish council has been vocal about for many years, we continue to push Essex Highways to reduce the speed limit through Bacon End and to enforce ditch maintenance, with the advice and assistance of County Councillor Susan Barker.

This year we must thank our local farmers for assisting with ditch clearance, and allowing the parish council to carry out works, which has really helped the flooding issues along Bacon End and Lower Road.

The Parish Council continues to be aware of the state of some of the roads, there is no reduction in the past year of the large number of encroaching potholes, and increasingly the cliff edge road verges where poor drainage and large vehicles have created irreversible damage. There is ongoing dialogue about road repairs although Essex Highways restricted budgets generally mean Great Canfield's rural roads are at the bottom of the priority list.

Signed
Virginia Barlow
Chair Parish Council

Planning

The Local Plan went through its Regulation 18 Consultation phase, and we were pleased to see that Great Canfield was classified a 'small village' with no allocated development sites. We submitted a great number of points on the subject of the Flich Way and the continued recognition that Great Canfield is a small rural community with no infrastructure. The submissions from all parties are available to view online and we await publication of the Regulation 19 Submission version of the plan later this summer.

We await the next stage before deciding upon updates to the Village Design Statement. It is important for all residents to be aware of the village design statement which is on the website when upgrading works to their properties, the document is a 'material consideration' in planning decisions. The look and feel of the village is rural. It is why people choose to live here. It is important to bear this in mind when undertaking any works that might change the look of a property.

Throughout the village there have been the usual number of planning applications during the year for extensions, and other small works. There have also been a number of applications and appeals which are at various stages for small clusters of new build homes. The parish council as a statutory consultee considers these and will always comment where there is felt to be a threat to the rural character of the parish.

Footpaths

The PC continues to monitor all public rights of way and report issues. In particular there are the continued issues with motorised vehicles damaging byways, the parish council would like to see these downgraded to bridleways or restricted to protect the surface and ensure they can be enjoyed by the local community. The legislation to do this is limiting and very difficult to use, recently members of the parish council met with Kemi Badenoch MP to discuss these issues and there is ongoing dialogue.

Crumps Farm

In September 2023 the parish council was made aware of the illegal dumping of thousands of tonnes of waste materials at Crumps Farm and the decision by Essex County Council that it was too dangerous to enter the site for monitoring. With the help of District Cllr Neil Reeve, the parish council escalated the issues and the key authorities are now meeting quarterly as they determine how to deal with the situation, the parish council remain concerned about the slow progress and have also raised this with Kemi Badenoch.

Defibrillator

The parish council was successful in applying for a small grant to assist with the installation of a second defibrillator for the village. The Village Hall was chosen as the site due to its central location.

Fly Tipping

There has been an increase in fly tipping throughout the village again this year and the parish council has been considering ways in which this can be monitored.

Waste Collection

There was a period of a number of weeks where the whole area was without bin collections due to a paperwork error at Uttlesford. This has now been rectified and there is currently an investigation into why it occurred and how to ensure it does not happen again.

In closing I would like to thank District Cllr Geof Driscoll and District Cllr Neil Reeve both from Resident4Uttlesford for their support over the last year and for continued attendance and contribution at our meetings.

Thanks also to my fellow parish councillors who voluntarily give up their time to attend meetings, read the large amount of correspondence we receive and who support the parish in many other often unseen ways, as a parish council we work collectively to maintain the rural environment and to make Great Canfield a better place for all to live and work.

Finally on behalf of the Parish Council I would like to thank our Clerk Allison Ward, without whom this Parish Council could not run! She provides invaluable advice and counsel to all of us.

5. DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCIL STATEMENT – District Cllr Neil Reeve

The current Uttlesford administration is coming to the end of its first year. Highlights include a balanced budget which puts the district council in good shape. The Local Plan regulation 19 is on target to be published for consultation at the end of July with the statutory consultation period being extended to 8 weeks. Whilst individual chapters will not be made public until the whole plan is ready, the housing allocation from Regulation 18 is likely to be reduced by c.2,000 homes due to approvals since regulation 18 was drafted.

Housing team are now working on plans for a change in the housing contractor from 1 April 2025.

The council has approved a biodiversity annual action plan and is making use of grants, e.g. Saffron Walden now has 2x EV shared vehicles to use and 10% of council housing stock will be refurbished and brought up to environmental standards.

6. VILLAGE HALL REPORT – Robert Mackley

In the last year there have been some changes to the village hall committee, Jason Asser has stepped down from the Chair due to work commitments, and Keith Vincett has resigned from being the booking clerk due to moving away from the village, I would like to place on record many thanks to both of them for their commitment. With these changes it was the perfect chance for a reset. We now have joint chairs in Tracey Evans and myself, we welcome two new bookings clerks, Jane Giles and Allison Hepburn who share responsibilities and am pleased to report that two parish councillors have also joined in line with the requirements put in place by the parish council when taking on the lease. Ginny Barlow who has taken on the role of secretary and Magnus Mildwater who is responsible for all things health and safety.

The finances of the hall remain very sound with c.£13.8k in reserve in addition to the remainder of the grant from the Community Trust to cover this lease terms rent. Also available is c.£9k of funds raised by The Great Canfield Community Trust when they were the leasees of the hall.

The hall tends to trade at a yearly loss of c.£1k before any fund-raising events. The hall Committee targets to raise c.£2k per annum from events so we always have plenty in reserve for any future requirements.

Just before last year's Annual Village Meeting the hall committee organised two major events to celebrate the coronation of Charles III and distributed celebratory keepsake mugs for the youth of the village, these mugs were also available for sale to our residents. The Hall Committee would like to thank the Parish Council for the generous grant that helped us make these celebrations so successful. Other events organised this year are recorded in the parish council's statement. Now-days the requirements that need to be put in place for a village fireworks evening are great and quite a burden, this time the hall committee received great and much welcomed support from the parish council in what will now become a joint effort. We are currently planning a dance night in celebration of the 80th anniversary of the D Day landings on 8th June.

The hall is used by many groups including a village toddler group at no cost, the Happy Circle, a weekly yoga class and as a hired venue for children's parties, wedding celebrations, wakes and as the local polling station. It continues to be the central hub for the community.

In the past year the hall Committee have installed a new ladies toilet, purchased new wine glasses, some more local photos to hang and two emergency oil filled radiators to take the edge off the hall in the deep winter. More renovations are planned, new racking for the storeroom subject to approval and once the church building work is complete, we intend to totally redecorate, dry clean the curtains and lay a new carpet and coconut matting in the entrance hall.

I would like to thank all the members of the Village Hall committee and our two booking clerks for their hard work and free time given in running this important village hub.

7. OTHER VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS AND GROUP REPORTS

7.1. GREAT CANFIELD PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL – David Turner

Continuing on the subject of the hall, as you will be aware there is a significant damp issue in the party wall between the hall and cottage. With the support of the church architect the required works have been tendered, and responses are being considered. The costs are in the region of £35k, plus Architects fees of c.13.5% of tender price. The plans remain

Signed
Virginia Barlow
Chair Parish Council

to carry out the works between June and August as it needs to be completed in good weather.

At the church we have issues with the stonework around the windows and are looking at the requirements. The plans for facilities in the church will hopefully be progressed once the current works to the hall and any immediate church repairs are sorted.

In terms of personal, we are still looking for a permanent church treasurer. Rev Gary Fleming who has lived at the Rectory in Great Canfield for the last three years will be moving to become the vicar of the Clavering benefice in the summer. Rev Jo Wood continues her curacy training with us and provides additional support to Rev Robert Stone who is the vicar of the benefice.

We are currently without a gardener for the churchyard after our previous contractor had to step down. We hope to find a solution soon.

8. PARISHONERS QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

A request was made to consider first aid training including how the defibrillators work

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 12th May 2025 at 8pm.

The meeting closed at 8.25pm