

## Little Easton Parish Council

**IAN BROWN**  
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Minutes of the **Little Easton Parish Council Meeting** due to be held at **Memorial Hall** on **WEDNESDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2023 AT 7:00PM**

Councillor	Attendance
VACANT	
VACANT	
Cllr Rebecca Fowell	YES
Cllr Emma Wells	YES
Cllr Simon Benstead	YES
Cllr Peter Bright	YES
Dist Cllr Michael Tayler	YES
Cnty Cllr Martin Foley	YES

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

<b>22/136</b>	<b>APPOINT CHAIRMAN TO HOLD OFFICE UNTIL MAY ELECTION</b> Cllr Peter Bright put himself forward, his nomination was unanimously approved
<b>22/137</b>	<b>NOTE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> None given
<b>22/138</b>	<b>DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR THIS MEETING</b> None declared
<b>22/139</b>	<b>APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING 18 JANUARY 2023</b> <b>RESOLUTION</b> – Approve minutes of the meeting of 18 January 2023; Proposed Cllr Simon Benstead, seconded Cllr Emma Wells – Unanimous approval
<b>22/140</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION</b></p> <p>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)</p> <p>Memorial Hall toilet door – Item 22/152</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Toilet entrance door to be wider, part horizontal glazed to be DDA compliant</li> <li>➤ Door to open outwards into the hall</li> <li>➤ Kitchen door to be renewed to match new toilet entrance door</li> <li>➤ UDC advised planning permission not required but Building Regs required</li> <li>➤ Requires a larger – longer lintel</li> <li>➤ Building inspections at beginning and end of works</li> <li>➤ Electric hand dryers to be installed, door will help mask sound of dryers</li> <li>➤ Request to reinstate Hall sign fallen at corner of Manor Road junction, MHMC to action</li> </ul> <p>Coronation celebration arrangements – Item 22/158</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Residents group organising Coronation street party with assistance from the PC in matters such as finance / grant applications; more details to follow</li> </ul>

<p><b>22/141</b>  <i>Cnty Cllr Martin Foley and Dist Cllr Michael Tayler left the meeting at 7:35pm</i></p>	<p><b>RECEIVE THE DISTRICT &amp; COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORTS</b>  Cnty Cllr Martin Foley – Full report <b>APPENDIX A</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Comparator to neighbouring council's parlous financial performance</li> <li>➤ ECC assisting Thurrock council, proving resource consuming and costly</li> <li>➤ Move to Unitary council status possibly not the panacea expected</li> <li>➤ ECC budget increase 3.5% for 23-24</li> <li>➤ Highways particularly impacted by financing difficulties, staffing levels seriously depleted</li> <li>➤ Pothole repairs remains a constant challenge for Highways</li> <li>➤ Latest LHP Administrator proving an excellent appointment</li> <li>➤ Recycling Centre booking system - Survey of +2,400 residents identified a 99% disapproval – residents and LEPC urged to respond to the survey and comment on the proposals before proposed commencement date of 13 March which will affect local sites at the Saffron Walden and Braintree recycling centres, plus others across Essex</li> </ul> <p>Dist Cllr Martin Tayler</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Cllrs voted to adopt the *Corporate Plan which runs to 2027 (see *category items below)</li> <li>➤ Budget adopted for 2023-24</li> <li>➤ *Placemaking</li> <li>➤ *Progressive Custodianship – recognise district biodiversity and rural nature</li> <li>➤ *Connectivity – Schools / Students – producing a safer place</li> <li>➤ *Blue print Uttlesford – Service &amp; Maintenance</li> <li>➤ *Corporate Investments – realised £60Million in revenue over recent years which will help mitigate current financial pressures</li> <li>➤ Staffing – some natural wastage expected, others could benefit from redeployment</li> <li>➤ Council Tax – 3% Band D increase</li> <li>➤ District parking charges reviewed, areas in demand not to be reduced</li> <li>➤ Planning fee revenue increased above budget expectation</li> <li>➤ Cost of Living support fund introduced</li> </ul>
<p><b>22/142</b></p>	<p><b>NOTE CLERKS REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE</b>  Full report – <b>APPENDIX B</b></p>
<p><b>22/143</b></p>	<p><b>FINANCE – RECEIVE STATEMENT &amp; AGREE PAYMENTS – APPOINT AUTHORISER</b>  Fifteen minutes prior to the PC meeting two Cllrs sat with the Clerk to review the current finance statement, Invoices and bank statements to test a change in the review process to reduce the time taken during the PC meeting that follows.  <b>RESOLUTION</b> – Approve finance statements and approve payments; Proposed Cllr Emma Wells, Seconded Cllr Simon Benstead – Unanimous approval  All four Cllrs to act as Authorisers with each being asked to authorise one payment to test the mandate changes.  Finance statement – <b>APPENDIX C</b>  <b>22/143(i) – AGREE TWO CLLRS WILL REVIEW AND INITIAL THE INVOICES PRIOR TO THE PC MEETING STARTING AND REPORT TO COUNCIL ON THEIR FINDINGS DURING THE FINANCE ITEM</b>  <b>RESOLUTION</b> – Approve change in finance review procedures with invitation for residents to attend; Proposed Cllr Peter Bright, Seconded Cllr Simon Benstead – Unanimous approval  <b>22/143(ii) – CONFIRM APPOINTMENT OF VAL EVANS AS INTERNAL AUDITOR</b>  <b>RESOLUTION</b> – Approve appointment of Val Evans as Internal Auditor; Proposed Cllr Peter Bright, Seconded Cllr Emma Wells – Unanimous approval</p>
<p><b>22/144</b></p>	<p><b>CONFIRM RISK ASSESSMENT REVIEW AND INSURANCE COVER</b>  Remain on Agenda</p>
<p><b>22/145</b></p>	<p><b>RECEIVE UPDATE ON LOCAL PLAN – CLLR PETER BRIGHT</b></p>

	Local Plan update – <b>APPENDIX D</b> Thaxted briefing report – <b>APPENDIX E</b>
<b>22/146</b>	<p><b>PLANNING – REVIEW AND COMMENT ON ANY CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS OR APPEALS AND OUTCOMES</b></p> <p><b>UTT/22/2732/FUL</b>  <b>PROPOSAL:</b> Construction and change of use from paddock to equestrian menage and construction and change of use from paddock to canter track  <b>LOCATION:</b> Easton Glebe Laundry Lane Little Easton Essex  Amended information has now been received in respect of this application.  <b>Comment date – 03 March 2023</b>  NO OBJECTION – CLERK to ACTION</p> <p><b>FEEDBACK - Easton Park 1200 Homes Inquiry commenced 05 July held at the repurposed Winfresh site in Little Canfield</b>  Inspector report due publication 22 March 2023</p>
<b>22/147</b>	<p><b>RECEIVE FEEDBACK FROM ELECTION BRIEFING – CLERK</b>  Full report – <b>APPENDIX F</b></p>
<b>22/148</b>	<p><b>CONSIDER RESPONSE TO MRS JACKSON BENCH REQUEST</b>  Council agreed in principle pending confirmation of proposed site and receipt of the PC Bench Policy.  CLERK to ACTION</p>
<b>22/149</b>	<p><b>REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS – RESPONSIBILITIES MAY CHANGE</b>  <b>WAR MEMORIAL – Cllr Emma Wells</b> – Site visit exposed further works, memorial specialist contractor to be invited to review FULL scope of works and quote accordingly  <b>MEMORIAL HALL – TBC, SEE ITEM 22/152</b> – PC acting as Landlord and Custodian agreed to toilet entrance door improvements, along with changes to Kitchen door to mimic new toilet door  <b>PLAY AREA – Cllr Rebecca Fowell</b>  <b>22/149 (i) – RECEIVE UPDATE ON ACQUISITION OF PLAY AREA SIGNAGE</b> – Contractor recommends pictorial signage over text based sign  <b>GARDENS OF EASTON LODGE – TBC</b> – 3*Snow drops events very well attended; Land Securities agreed to additional pathways; further volunteers at the gardens would be welcome  <b>COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES – ALL CLLRS</b> – Coronation event focus  <b>HIGHWOODS QUARRY – TBC</b>- Awaiting further contact from the Quarry re next meeting  <b>PARISH MAINTENANCE – Cllr Rebecca Fowell</b> – Suggested ask grass cutting contractor to consider mowing playing-field boundary leaves</p>
<b>22/150</b>	<p><b>RECEIVE UPDATE ON <u>SPECIFICATION</u> PROPOSALS TO INSTALL PATHWAY FROM MEMORIAL HALL TO PLAY AREA – CLLR SIMON BENSTEAD</b>  Request to Tender will be sent to contractors</p>
<b>22/151</b>	<p><b>RECEIVE UPDATE ON <u>SPECIFICATION</u> PROPOSALS TO INSTALL MULTI PURPOSE CONCRETE BASE AT SITE OF BEACON TO ENABLE SWAPPING OUT FOR CHRISTMAS TREE – CLLR SIMON BENSTEAD</b>  Request to Tender will be sent to contractors</p>
<b>22/152</b>	<p><b>CONSIDER REQUEST FROM MHMC TO INSTALL WIDER, PERMANENT, WOODEN INTERNAL DOOR TO TOILET FACILITIES IN THE MEMORIAL HALL</b>  Council unanimously agreed to the request</p>
<b>22/153</b>	<p><b>CONSIDER THE INTRODUCTION OF TECHNOLOGY IN PRINCIPLE TO IMPROVE THE ABILITY OF THOSE IN ATTENDANCE TO HEAR THE COUNCILLOR’S DISCUSSION</b>  Suggested to firstly change seating arrangements to measure if that improves the situation</p>

22/154	<b>RECEIVE FEEDBACK ON ELECTION 2023 BRIEFING – CLERK</b> Duplicate of Item 22/147
22/155	<b>AGREE ACTION TO REMEDY BROKEN STILE(S) AT PARISH CHURCH</b> Council agreed to determine condition of all the stiles in the parish for which LEPC has responsibility, noting concern that stiles are generally a Highways matter and if LEPC were arranging to repair this could result in liability issues if a subsequent injury occurs.  Request parish maintenance contractor review situation with the Church stile and suggest remedy CLERK to ACTION
22/156	<b>CONSIDER REQUEST FROM RINGCRAFT GROUP TO RUN PRE CRUFTS TRAINING SESSIONS ON THE PLAYING FIELD</b> <b>RESOLUTION</b> – Approve use of the playing-field with clarification of previous year and current year donation; Proposed Cllr Simon Benstead, Seconded Cllr Emma Wells – Unanimous approval CLERK to ACTION
22/157	<b>CONSIDER A BID TO THE UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND BEING ADMINISTERED BY UDC</b> Remove from agenda
22/158	<b>CONSIDER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EVENTS WORKING PARTY TO MANAGE THE CORONATION PROJECT AND APPLY FOR FUNDING</b> All four Cllrs agreed to work with the residents working group to assist wherever possible, in particular the PC office can assist with grant related applications and management of finances
22/159	<b>CONSIDER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EMAIL LIST FOR THE PC TO COMMUNICATE WITH RESIDENTS, WITH POTENTIALLY SOME INITIAL CONTACTS FROM THE SEP MAILING LIST</b> Cllr Peter Bright agreed to pursue the matter further
22/160	<b>PROGRESS THE ACQUISITION OF GOV.UK DOMAIN AND ASSOCIATED EMAIL ACCOUNTS</b> Additional research required CLERK to ACTION
22/161	<b>ITEMS OF REPORT OR FOR INCLUSION ON NEXT AGENDA</b> Change of Agenda running order – CLERK to ACTION <b>22/161(i) APPOINT CONTRIBUTOR TO 5P MAGAZINE</b> Cllr Emma Wells
22/162	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING(S) – 29 MARCH 2023 – 7pm – CLOSE 9:20pm</b>

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

## APPENDIX A

### County Cllr Martin Foley – Report, February 2023

#### Highways

Another Highways Update by next meeting ( or even before) as LHP meeting early March.

#### New Booking System at Recycling Centres

In a word I think the new scheme is bonkers and they would have done well to speak to Parish Councillors/District Councillors and gone out to proper consultation first.

I am strongly opposing it , as in the trial that has already been done recycling has gone down by 13% already in that area. I think the only thing likely to make a difference is if Residents, District and Parish Councillors complain.

## ECC Council Tax Rise

A further report on ECC Budget to follow.

The increase is 3,5% (same as UDC) but on initial findings there will be considerable cut to services in ECC as there seems to be major funding gap.. In ECC there is a considerable shortage of Highways Officers which is causing delays to work being carried out.

A considerable amount of officers time is being spent on Thurrock Council which is efficiently bankrupt

## Thurrock Council expecting £182.5m in government help –

BBCh<https://www.bbc.co.uk> › uk-england-essex-64438336

28 Jan 2023 — Thurrock council is effectively bankrupt and is now expecting to receive £182.5m in government support over the next year to help fund services going.

## APPENDIX B

## CLERKS REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE – Little Easton PC

22 FEBRUARY 2023

I am trying to incorporate much of the correspondence my office receives into the agenda, such as the Bench request and the Coronation working group plus funding....so let us see if that works. The members receive from myself numerous sector specific correspondence and updates throughout the month which are not included in my report and or not always on the agenda as they are either advisory or legislative and would normally come into the public domain in due course.

The Tree contractors have advised they will commence the next phase of the three year maintenance programme during March, so look out for them on the field.

**MEMBERS REQUEST** – Clerk to advise contractor to not commence any tree felling prior to advising the council of that need / intention – CLERK to ACTION

Members have received various communications throughout the month from those bodies and organisations that support this sector and all other matters are covered by the agenda.

## APPENDIX C

LEPC February 2023 Finance Statement										
Precept	32,364							<b>Budget</b>	<b>Net Exp</b>	<b>Diff +/-</b>
								32,364	17,929	-14,435
Date	Supplier	Description	Invoice	FPO/Min Ref	Rec	Credit	Debit	VAT	Net	Centre
Opening Balance						58,069.20	0.00		0.00	
10-Feb	Activ Web	Web services	8905	DD	Y		42.00	7.00	35.00	Web
15-Feb	A&J Lighting	Lighting maintenance	36992	DD	Y		24.30	4.05	20.25	Lighting
20-Feb	DRAX Energy Supply	Lighting electricity	4365/4366	DD	Y		48.11	2.29	45.82	Utility
	EALC - IB - Credit Card	Election briefing	16205	FPO			54.00	9.00	45.00	Admin
	Employee	Expenses	February doc	FPO			4.50		4.50	Admin
	Employee	Salary	PAYE	FPO			415.85		415.85	Clerk
	Employee	WFH	N/A	S/O			26.00		26.00	Admin
Feb						58,069.20	614.76	22.34	592.42	
Opening Balance						57,454.44	0.00		0.00	

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## APPENDIX D

### Local Plan Notes

- UDC Planning is severely under-strength but still aiming April/May for reporting their list of preferred sites for development.
- Following the recent reported slippage of the Local Plan schedule, the Reg 18 consultation document is still scheduled for public presentation in August although the last UDC Scrutiny meeting inferred a possibility this could be delayed again.
- SEP has sent a letter to Peter Holt (CEO UDC) reminding him of the 1939 agreement. This covenant between the then Rural Council of Dunmow (adopted by UDC when it was formed) and the Countess of Warwick's executors **restricted** 810 acres of Easton Park to no more than ten houses being erected on the land which was to be "a ground for sports, play, rest or as an ornamental garden or pleasure ground" or "as meadow land, arable or pasture land" or "as a park".
- Further info:
  - The 1939 covenant is still in force and was recognised as such in 2011 by UDC, ECC, Landsec and SRC when quarrying was approved.
  - However, as late as 2018 UDC Officers believed they could refuse to enforce the covenant's restrictions thus enabling Easton Park for housing development. A similar legal case - 'Attorney General vs Barratt Manchester Ltd 1991' - had been cited as rationale for refusing to enforce, notwithstanding materially different circumstances.
  - SEP employed two barristers, again in 2018 to review the covenant but it still remains open as to whether it can be legally enforced or not.
  - SEP continues to explore all options with its solicitors to ensure enforcement of the restrictions.
- Separately, the result of the Land East of Highwood Quarry 1,200 houses appeal is still awaited but SEP understands that the Minister of State for Housing should be making a decision before 22<sup>nd</sup> March, though it is possible that this decision could be delayed given that a new minister was appointed on 7<sup>th</sup> February following the government reshuffle.

## APPENDIX E

Attendees from screen names:

Dean Hermitage - Uttlesford DC  
Dena Oxley- Thaxted  
Diana Frost Hempstead PC  
Jeanette O'Brien  
Jo curtis  
John L  
John Stevens  
loftusbuhagiar  
Rachel Kesterton  
Richard Freeman  
Sue Hayden - UDC (Host)  
Cllr Martin Foley  
Peter Holt  
Andrew  
Andy Frater  
April Gardner  
Cllr Terry Frostick Thaxted PC

#### Main points from meeting

- **Giles Tofield** from The Cultural Engine spoke first regarding the work being done by them in the district re heritage and economic reinvigoration.
- **Phil Hardy spoke re the forthcoming election**
  - For parishes, business as usual
  - Purdah commences from 22nd March to 4th May.
  - Avoid proactive events
  - Voter photo id required
  - 4th March nominations system go-live
  - 4th April 4:00pm deadline for nominations to be submitted and accepted by UDC.
  - Looking for poll clerks £225 for the day
  - Bring nominations in person, one person can submit for the council
  - All parishes must submit - checks will be performed
  - 4th April list of contested parishes to be produced and prioritised.
  - Election expenses return to be submitted by beginning of June.
  - Count on 5th May
  - AGM to be held before 1st June
- **Dean Hermitage. -Planning**
  - Still experiencing huge problems with staffing. Running under capacity.
  - Two new graduate planners started today..
  - New LP manager in four weeks.
  - 300 housing sites and 100 employment sites being reviewed. 50% through reviewing sites.
  - Only a few parishes have submitted responses to the UDC questionnaire sent out last year. [LEPC one of those.]

- April/May timeframe still on target for site recommendations.
- No sites have been allocated yet.
- UDC have responded to an NPPF redrafting. This will be shared to parishes next week.
- s106 SPD - taking for adoption and reviewing responses covering Hatfield Forest mitigation and water management.
- Enforcement Team to be reviewed for improvements.
- Protocol to be enforced for developers to involve the community on any sizeable housing development.
- Planning Services - D Regulation - trying to get out of PINS involvement and revert back to UDC making planning decisions. In discussion with DLUC re this and demo'ing improvements.
- Local Planning Officers are the most difficult roles in the country to replace.
- *Response to a question on pre-application advice given to developers.* Planning staff not allowed to indicate that if a developer did this and that they would get approval for their scheme. Hermitage agreed that training for PC councillors on pre-application advice should be given.
- **Peter Holt - CEO UDC**
  - Will create a working group to decide the “curriculum” for training PC councillors on pre-app advice.
  - UDC use the Compass website for planning services and appeals. UDC have also got a subscription to Planning Magazine. This is expensive but would be invaluable for planning experts sitting on PCs. Will look at the UDC subscription with the aim of trying to spread more widely to PCs.
  - Went through a number of grant schemes in current operation and for the future.
    - DLUC £300k addressing the environment - open for applications in the summer. To be publicised on UDC website.
    - UK Shared Prosperity Fund. £1m allocated to UDC over three years. Open end-Feb for first £300k.
    - Rural England Prosperity Fund. £813k with £203k available starting in April. Balance twelve months later.
    - £1.3m given by central government to UDC to support Ukraine refugees.
    - Coronation grant. Closing 13th April.
  - All above found on <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/find-a-grant> at the appropriate time.

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## APPENDIX F

### Election briefing 21 February 2023 – Phil Hardy , UDC

- Election 04 May 2023, voter ID required, polling stations open 7am to 10pm
- Count order to be confirmed, parish ballot papers – yellow
- Nomination Papers will be available online via the UDC website to download from around **06 March**
- Publication of Notice of Elections in Uttlesford, **22 March**, latest date 28 March



- Candidates will need a Proposer and Secunder only, who live in the Ward/Parish
  - Candidates can use “Uttlesford District” as their address entry on the nomination form to keep their home address private
  - Nomination papers, or your withdrawal from the election, **MUST** be delivered to Electoral / Democracy office at UDC, Saffron Walden by **4pm on TUESDAY 04 APRIL LATEST**. Your nomination papers will be checked whilst you wait to ensure they are correct, suggested you not leave that delivery until the last minute
  - Statement of persons nominated to be circulated by **5pm WEDNESDAY 05 APRIL**
  - Purdah period commences in Uttlesford on **22 MARCH** until election day; Coronation event does not count and arrangements / management can continue, new projects from 22 MARCH cannot commence. Members may not utilise ANY council assets for electioneering purposes
  - Annual Parish Assembly can take place during Purdah but avoid self congratulations
  - Cllrs officially take office on TUESDAY 09 MAY (BH adds a day), any co-option procedure can take place after 09 May if vacancies due to uncontested election
  - Candidates may request a copy of the Electoral Register from the Democracy Office but specifically and only for election purposes and then destroyed
  - Expenses claim form, EVEN IF NIL, must be returned by 02 JUNE; legal requirement for ALL candidates. Claim form is downloaded from the Electoral Commission website, UDC intend to carry a link / copy
  - Awaiting confirmation of date / period for the Annual Council Meeting wherein a Chairman is elected plus other items of business are to be conducted
- .....