



MINUTES

Annual Parish Council Meeting

13th May 2026 at 7.15pm held at

Little Bardfield Cricket Club, Bardfield Road, Church End, Little Bardfield. Essex CM7 4TS

Present: Cllr Andrew Davies (Chair), Cllr Colin Simpson (Vice-Chair), Cllr Juliet O'Brien, Cllr Mike Tayler (UDC), Clerk & RFO Sophie Blair Wolker, 2 Parishioners in part.

1/26 Election of a Chair

Cllr Andrew Davies was re-elected as Chair for 2026-27. Cllr Davies signed the declaration of acceptance of office. All in favour.

2/26 Election of a Vice-Chair

Cllr Colin Simpson was re-elected as Vice-Chair for 2026-27. All in favour.

3/26 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies received.

4/26 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5/26 Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th February 2026 were approved and signed.

6/26 Matters arising from the minutes of 11th February 2026

There were no matters arising.

7/26 Public Forum

A parishioner expressed his views regarding the recent planning application at White House (UTT/26/1024/HHF). He stated that he felt the proposed structure did not align with Little Bardfield's Village Design Statement, particularly in relation to the window design, and suggested that this should be reviewed. Cllr Tayler stated that, as a representative of Uttlesford District Council (UDC), he would be willing to raise the matter with the UDC Planning Committee for prioritisation. The parishioner declined the offer.

A parishioner noted that the noticeboard adjacent to the Almshouses had been moved and raised concerns regarding its relocation. The Council explained that the noticeboard had been moved due to health and safety concerns and considered the new location at the bus stop to be the most suitable. The Council further stated that there are currently no plans to reintroduce a noticeboard at the Almshouses, but this would be kept under review should other residents express a need for one.

A parishioner raised concerns regarding the transparency of the meeting minutes and that updates had previously been regularly published in the Bardfield Times. The Council agreed that this should resume, and the Clerk noted that she would contact the editor to ascertain the date of the next publication so that this could be reintroduced.

A parishioner commented that the grass surrounding the bench at St Catherine's Green, the churchyard, and the hedges at the church car park had recently become very overgrown. The Council noted the concerns, and the Clerk will investigate the areas to determine what maintenance or trimming the Council may be able to assist with.

8/26 Report from Essex County Council

There was no report received due to the recent election and change of representative. The Clerk stated that she would contact Essex County Council to determine the new representative for the division covering Little Bardfield, Oxen End, and Hawkspur Green, in order to receive regular reports and invite them to future meetings. The Clerk will also update the Council website and noticeboards with the updated contact details as soon as this is received.

9/26 Report from Uttlesford District Council

New Uttlesford Local Plan 2021–2041

Cllr Tayler reported that the new Uttlesford Local Plan 2021–2041 was formally adopted on 25th March 2026 and now carries full weight in planning decisions. He stated that the plan replaces the outdated 2005 Local Plan and sets out how housing, employment, infrastructure, transport and community facilities will be delivered across the district up to 2041, whilst also supporting climate and biodiversity objectives.

Local Government Reorganisation

Cllr Tayler provided an update on Local Government Reorganisation following the Government's decision to create five unitary councils in Essex. He explained that Uttlesford District Council will form part of the new West Essex Council alongside Epping Forest and Harlow. He noted that services would continue as normal for the time being, with elections to the new authority due to take place in May 2027 ahead of the new council formally commencing in April 2028.

Housing

Cllr Tayler advised that the Council's housing repairs service had been brought back in-house through "UDC Repairs Direct" from 1 April 2026, with early feedback reported as positive. He also highlighted concerns raised by some residents regarding housing insulation measures and energy efficiency requirements linked to decarbonisation projects.

Planning

Cllr Tayler reported that the Council had successfully moved away from Government designation of its planning service following significant improvements in planning performance, including a reduction in overturned appeals and improved processing times for major applications.

Bus Services

Cllr Tayler updated the Council regarding Essex County Council's proposed withdrawal of several bus services, including the 320 and 321 routes. He advised that, following joint efforts from residents, parish councils and local councillors, the decision had been reversed until at least 2028.

10/26 Planning

- (a)(b) To review applications submitted to Uttlesford District Council including any outstanding planning matters in Little Bardfield area-

UUT/26/0688/HHF- Now approved. No further comments.

UTT/26/1024/HHF- Planning application received on 13th May.

The Council resolved to support the application subject to the condition that the design of the windows is amended to better match the existing property. This is in accordance with the Little Bardfield Village Design Statement including Policy H8 relating to extensions.

11/26 Highways Issues

There were no current matters for discussion.

12/26 Verge Maintenance

- 12.1 The Council resolved to agree the 2026-27 cutting tender from CW Low & Sons, at **£49+VAT**.
- 12.2 The application for a Grant for verge maintenance from Essex County Council was accepted and monies are to be received in the upcoming month.

13/26 Website and Communications

- 13.1 The development of the Little Bardfield Parish Council Website was noted.
- 13.2 The Council resolved to fund the Little Bardfield Parish Website under Section 144 of the Local Government Act 1972, relating to the promotion of tourism in the Little Bardfield area.

14/26 Memberships

- (a) It was resolved to subscribe to CouncilWise Training and Support for 2026-27 at a cost of **£75+VAT**.
- (b) It was resolved not to re-affiliate to EALC/NALC for 2026/27.
- (c) It was resolved to continue the membership of SLCC for 2026-27.

15/26 Asset Register

The Asset Register for 2025-26 was approved and signed.

16/26 Insurance

It was resolved to renew the Council's insurance with Zurich for 2026-27 with the annual premium at **£367.96**.

17/26 Date, Time and Place of Meetings for 2026-27

The Council approved the proposed dates, times and venues of meetings up to and including the next Annual Council Meeting and the Annual Parish Meeting in 2027.

18/26 Finance

- (a) It was resolved to approve the payments made between 11th February 2026 and the date of this meeting, as follows:

Force 36 LTD- £73.31

Lloyds Bank- £17

HMRC- £10.09

Sophie Blair-Wolker- £1161.92

Harper Office- £57.39

Dunmow Trading Ltd- £167

Simon Onley- £110

Zurich Insurance- £367.96

- (b) The bank reconciliations for the end of the 2025-26 year were noted and signed.

Final balance at YE 31.03.26- £8960.26

Current balance of current account as of 30.04.26- £10,738.89

19/26 Acceptance of Year End Accounts for 2025-26

- (a) The Council declared itself exempt from External Audit for 2025-26 and the AGAR form was signed.
- (b) The Council approved the Annual Governance Statement for 2025-26 and the AGAR form was signed. The Accounting Statement for 2025-26 was approved, with the restatement of figures for 2024-25. The AGAR form was signed.
- (c) The Annual Internal Auditor report for 2025-26 was not available at the time of the meeting and therefore deferred until the next meeting.
- (d) The Council approved the period of the exercise of Public Rights as 3rd June 2026 to 14th July 2026.

20/26 Policies and Procedures

The following policies were reviewed and adopted:

- (a) Standing Orders
- (b) Financial Regulations
- (c) Internal Controls Policy
- (d) Financial Risk Assessment 2026-27

The following policies were deferred until the next meeting:

- (f) Health and Safety Policy
- (g) Working From Home Policy

21/26 Staffing Matters

The public and press were excluded from the following item as the discussion involved personal or contractual information (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A).

- (a) Noted, no resolutions made.
- (b) Noted, no resolutions made.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.02pm.