

**Notes of the Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural Parish Council
Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 19th May 2022 at
Greenstead Green Village Hall at 7.15pm.**

Present.

Cllr. Chris Butler

Cllr. Bill Dixey.

Cllr. Paul Foster. Chairman.

Cllr. Derek Hambling

Cllr. Ian Pleasance

Cllr. Pat Wickes.

Amanda Degnan – Clerk to the Parish Council.

County Cllr. Chris Siddal

District Cllr. Andrew Hensman, Chair of Braintree District Council (BDC)

5 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence. Cllr. Mason.

2. “Welcome and update from Paul Foster, Parish Council Chairman.” The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) which was the first one since May 2019 because of Covid. He introduced himself. The councillors then introduced themselves. The Chairman welcomed District Cllr. Hensman, newly elected Chairman of BDC who represents Braintree Central and Beckers Green ward since 2015 and was also delighted to welcome representatives from Greenwatch and Jean Hastings from Neighbourhood Watch.

The Chairman’s Update

“The purpose of an Annual Parish Meeting - The Annual Parish Meeting or Assembly is not a Council Meeting; it is a meeting for the parishioners of Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural. The meeting provides local organisations and individuals of Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural the opportunity to talk publicly about themselves, celebrating their achievements and acknowledging local events and activities that have taken place over the last year. It is also an occasion to say, “thank you” to people that have helped to make the achievements a success. The meeting also provides a forum to discuss issues that are currently on-going within the Parish.

I would like to say a big thank you to our small band of parishioners that regularly turn up at our parish council meetings. I am thinking of Ken, Colin, and Ros. It is very important that parish council business is undertaken in public and is transparent and

open. As parish councillors, the discussions we have and the decisions we take should be open to scrutiny. Thankfully, we have Amanda to keep us in check and I am confident that we conduct ourselves in accordance with the relevant regulations and our standing orders.

It is an opportunity to raise issues that are of concern. There will be a public forum for those who wish to speak on the agenda. Refreshments and drinks later.

I gave an update at the September 2021 parish meeting in lieu of the APM so I am going to give a snapshot of what the parish council has been involved with over the past 12 months up to March this year.

Highlights

A lot of the work that the Parish Council does is viewing and commenting on planning applications that fall within the parish. This year has been particularly busy. We responded to 21 applications including revised and updated applications – in total 9 more than last year which equates to 75% more. Many of these are not controversial or raise concerns – we made no objections on 17, objecting to only four.

We were invited to speak on four important planning applications at BDC's Planning Committee to put our concerns or views directly to the Members. We successfully had conditions amended or added on the planning permission for the Whitehouse Business Park extension at White Ash Green covering construction working hours and external lighting. I am very pleased that we joined forces with Halstead Town Council to successfully overturn a recommendation for approval for 200 dwellings at Bournebridge Hill in March. We argued on the grounds that the development was contrary to the development plan, would deliver a very short length of the Halstead bypass and provided no financial benefits to the parish despite it lying fully outside Halstead. We also combined with Halstead TC to speak against the Halstead Hall application for the 20 dwellings and new dementia unit as well as the development for 80 dwellings at land north of Oak Road. Although we were unable to overturn the recommendations for approval, we did once again highlight the need for BDC officers to factor in some financial contribution in drawing up s106 agreements for new residential development that falls within our parish.

The Open Spaces Plan has been updated to now include the former railway line between Halstead and Earls Colne so that s106 monies in the future can be directed towards both the playing field and the E2C cycle link which Derek Hambling is putting a lot of time and effort into.

Other than planning matters, the Parish Council has focused once again this year on improving the play equipment, goal posts, gates, and signage on the playing field – I was intending that I leave Derek Mason to talk more about this. Thanks to the Community Infrastructure Fund, we were able to purchase the new play equipment to the value of nearly £14,000 as well as replacing the goalposts at a cost of £1,600.

We have some other successes, notably the purchase of a reconditioned speed gun on behalf of Greenwatch, thanks in large part to funding from County Councillor

Chris Siddall's Locality Fund. I had hoped that Derek Mason had brought the speed gun with him tonight so that we can have a photograph with Chris, Derek, and Bob from Greenwatch.

And I would like to say a big thank you to Derek Hambling for organising and constructing the soldier silhouettes on the village green for Remembrance Sunday last November. A fitting tribute to heroes from another time but very poignant now.

We still have plenty of challenges and issues which will require our focus going forward. Inevitably, one of those issues is traffic – whether it is the need to repair the ever-increasing number of potholes, verges, and other road defects in our parish; the amount of traffic on our already congested road network; or at a more local level, the number of cars that continue to speed through the village. The SID recorded that 45% of cars exceed 35mph. We have now introduced an item on each PC agenda now to raise highway issues with Chris.

Flooding at Crocklands continues to be an issue which we have flagged up to ECC highways and through Chris. We hope that this can be made a priority in the next 12 months as climate change is likely to bring more dramatic weather patterns in future years.

I want to thank my fellow parish councillors for all their hard work over the past 12 months. Although we are a relatively small parish in terms of population, we cover a large area. And finally, a special thank you to Amanda, our clerk for keeping us on our toes and making sure we respond to consultations in time.”

3. Update from Derek Mason, Vice Chairman. There was no update due to the absence of Cllr. Mason.

4. Updates from Parish Councillors. Updates were provided by:

Cllr. Wickes,

Cllr. Dixey,

Cllr. Hambling – EC2H – hoping to reuse old rail line at Halstead for cycleway. Work is progressing on clearing the rail route of vegetation for cycles.

5. Updates from representatives of other organisations within the Parish. Including Greenwatch and NHW. Updates were provided by:

Ken Rogers – Greenwatch – spoke about the Jubilee celebrations, flower planting and the village entrance gates which were now in place. Speedwatch was ongoing and it was noted that the local roads were getting busier and being used as a ‘rat run.’

Ros Hardy – Litter pickers- have a team of 15 volunteers.

Colin Undrill- also spoke about Greenwatch and the speed gun. There are now 14 volunteers trained to use the speed gun.

Jean Hastings provided a report on Neighbourhood Watch.

The Chairman thanked the representatives for their work in the community.

- 6. **Update from Cllr Chris Siddall, ECC Councillor.** An update was received from County Cllr. Siddall regarding highways, and Essex County Council's plans for the future.
- 7. **Update from District Councillor Peter Schwier.** In the absence of District Cllr. Schwier there was no update.
- 8. **Public Forum.** Bob Dobson thanked the Parish Councillors for all their time and effort for the parish. Colin Undrill seconded this. Residents expressed concern about the continued closure of Halstead Hospital. County Cllr. Siddall was happy to help with addressing this issue.
- 10. **Address by District Cllr. Andrew Hensman. Chairman of Braintree District Council.** Cllr. Hensman thanked the Parish Council for inviting him. He is the first Autistic councillor in the country and now the first Autistic Chairman. He covered a wide area of subjects and was very keen on collaborating with community groups.

The Chairman, Cllr. Foster thanked District Cllr. Hensman and the public for their attendance. The meeting closed at 8.28pm and was followed by refreshments.

Signed.....

Chairman – Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural Parish Council.

Date.....

A. J. Degan

Amanda Degan – Clerk to the Parish Council, C/O Greenstead Green Post Office, Greenstead Green Farm, Greenstead Green, CO9 1QY. 01787 274992. parishclerk@greensteadgreenpc.org.uk. WWW. greensteadgreenpc.org.uk