

**Notes of the Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural Parish Council  
Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at  
Greenstead Green Village Hall at 7.15pm.**

**Present.**

Cllr. Paul Foster. Chairman.

Cllr. Derek Hambling

Cllr. Ian Pleasance

Cllr. Jeremy Siggers

Cllr. Pat Wickes

Amanda Degnan – Clerk to the Parish Council.

County Cllr. Chris Siddal

District Cllr. Peter Schwier

7 members of the public.

**1. Welcome from the Chairman.** Cllr. Foster welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) particularly County Cllr. Siddall, District Cllr. Schwier, Jean Hastings the Neighbourhood Watch Representative.. The councillors then introduced themselves.

**2. Apologies for absence.** None.

**3. Signing of the notes from the Annual Parish Meeting held 19<sup>th</sup> April 2023.**  
These were approved.

**4. Update from Paul Foster, Parish Council Chairman.**

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 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. Once again, I am thinking of Ken, Colin, and Roz. It is very

important that parish council business is undertaken in public and is transparent and open. Many parish councils struggle to get any members of the public to attend their meetings. As parish councillors, the discussions we have and the decisions we take should be open to scrutiny. I would like to thank Amanda for keeping us in check. I am confident that we conduct ourselves in accordance with the relevant regulations and our standing orders.

There will be a public forum for those who wish to speak on the agenda. Refreshments and drinks will follow later.

This year, we have elections for the seven seats on the parish council – four in Greenstead Green ward and three in the West Ward (Star Stile, Pennypot and White Ash Green). The number of nominations duly received by Braintree District Council by the deadline of 4.00 pm on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April for the parish council did not exceed seven. Therefore, the election of the six members who submitted their nominations was uncontested - which was the case in the vast majority of parish and town councils in Braintree district. The parish clerk will soon begin the process of seeking to co-opt a suitable person to fill the vacancy in the Greenstead Green ward onto the parish council.

In the meantime, I would like to take this opportunity to thank two long standing parish councillors who have made a great contribution to the work of the parish council in representing their local areas.

Bill Dixey stood down in July last year as the local representative of the Star Stile part of the parish. He served on the parish council for 12 years I believe. Bill always had good sound comments to make on the various planning applications we considered, carefully weighing up all the issues before giving his view. It is fair to say that Bill was sometimes frustrated with BDC's decisions on planning matters in going against the views of the parish council – a view sometimes shared by others. Bill was also the PC's tree warden. Bill - we want to show a small appreciation of your work as a parish councillor with some wine. There was a presentation to Bill Dixey who thanked everyone.

Pat Wickes also served on the parish council; indeed, I believe for longer than all of us, so we want to mark this occasion by thanking you for all your support in representing the parishioners of Burtons Green. There have been quite a number of issues that Burtons Green residents have had to contend with over the years; the state of the roads, Burton's Green bridge, the long-standing planning issues at Riefields, and the irregular flying activities at Earls Colne Airfield to name but a few. Pat has represented her part of the parish with a strong voice and stood up for Burton's Green when the fringe areas of the parish can sometimes feel they are given less attention compared to the village of Greenstead Green.

We are very pleased that you and Derek are here this evening Pat. Please accept this bouquet on behalf of the PC. There was a presentation to Pat Wickes who thanked everyone.

## **Highlights**

As usual, a lot of the work that the Parish Council does is viewing and commenting on planning applications that fall within the parish. It has been another busy year. We responded to 20 applications including revised and updated applications and appeals – one fewer than last year. Many of these are not controversial or raised concerns – we made no objections on 17, subject to specific conditions, and objecting to only three. One of those, for a new dwelling in Russell's Road, was subsequently refused by BDC.

We were invited to speak at the public inquiry into the refusal by BDC of planning permission for up to 200 dwellings at Bournebridge Hill on the southern edge of Halstead. The inquiry was held online in October last year and chaired by a Planning Inspector. The clerk read out a lengthy prepared statement which the PC had approved. It raised a number of objections to the proposed development which we felt were important to be taken into account, notably, landscape impact on the Bournebrook Valley, and its location, connectivity, and distance by walking between the site and the facilities in Halstead like shops, schools and community buildings.

Following the inquiry, the Parish Council joined forces with Halstead Town Council to formally request that the appeal be recovered so that the final decision could be taken by the Secretary of State because of the important issues it raised. Regrettably, as we know, planning permission was granted by the Planning Inspector in November and we await details of the layout and design of the proposed new development. It was pleasing that we had the opportunity to present a joint case with Halstead Town Council, led by Jackie Pell, in seeking to oppose the development and it made the front page of the Halstead Gazette!

The Parish Council has been active in contacting the BDC enforcement team where unauthorised development appears to have occurred. In particular, we raised parishioners concerns about a new access created at Greenstead Hall, which was investigated by enforcement officers but only after persistent calls from our vice Chairman. And in July, thanks to Pat Wickes, we raised concerns about the building of a large workshop at Burtons Green Nursery which was investigated by enforcement. A planning application has recently been submitted for this building which the PC has raised an objection.

Planning permission was granted just last week for 55 dwellings at Mount Hill, adjacent to Halstead Hall and opposite the junction with Oak Road. The PC did not object to this

planning application because it is largely surrounded by new residential development. However, it is disappointing once again that, as with Bournebridge Hill, the section 106 money will all go to ECC, BDC and Halstead rather than to any to the parish, even though the site lies entirely within the parish and we have an Open Spaces Plan which identifies where s106 money should be targeted in the parish.

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 will leave Derek Mason to talk more about this.

In January, we agreed a budget of £12,812, representing an increase of 6.8%, considerably lower than last year. This works out at £46.33 this year for a typical Band D property in the parish which is one of the lowest in the whole of Braintree district.

We still have plenty of challenges and issues which will require our focus going forward. Inevitably, one of those issue is traffic – whether it is the need to press ECC 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. Litter dropping continues to keep me and the other volunteers busy filling the purple bags with rubbish people have thrown into the verges.

The flooding that has occurred at Crocklands is now programmed for improvement works in this financial year, subject to funding approval so hopefully this matter will resolve before the next Annual Parish meeting.

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.

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

**6. Updates from Parish Councillors.** Updates were provided by:  
Cllr. Hambling  
Cllr. Pleasance  
Cllr. Siggers

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

Jean Hastings provided a report on Neighbourhood Watch.  
Colin Undrill provided a report on Greenwatch and speed watch.

An email from Roz Hardy was read out regarding litter picking.  
Paul Foster spoke about the litter picking he does between Plaistow Green and Penny Pots.  
A report was read out about the Village Hall.

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

8. **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.
9. **Update from District Councillor Peter Schwier.** An update was received from District Cllr. Schwier regarding Braintree District Council plans for the future.
10. **Public Forum.** A resident asked a question regarding street lighting in the village. This will not happen as there is no budget for it.

The Chairman, Cllr. Foster thanked the Councillors and the public for their attendance. The meeting closed at 8.42pm and was followed by refreshments.

Signed.....

**Chairman – Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural Parish Council.**

Date.....

*A. J. Degnan*

<p><b>Amanda Degnan – Clerk to the Parish Council, C/O Greenstead Green Post Office, Greenstead Green Farm, Greenstead Green, CO9 1QY. 01787 274992.</b> <a href="mailto:parishclerk@greensteadgreenpc.org.uk">parishclerk@greensteadgreenpc.org.uk</a>. WWW. <a href="http://greensteadgreenpc.org.uk">greensteadgreenpc.org.uk</a></p>
--