

**Minutes of the Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at Greenstead Green Village Hall.**

**These are draft minutes and yet to be agreed by the Parish Council.**

**Present.**

Cllr. Chris Butler

Cllr. Paul Foster. Chairman.

Cllr. Ian Pleasance

Cllr. Derek Mason. Vice-Chairman. Arrived 7.49pm

Cllr. Gemma Todd.

Amanda Degnan – Clerk to the Parish Council.

11 Members of the public

**23/25 Apologies for absence.** Apologies for absence were received and noted from District Cllr. Peter Schwier who was attending Braintree District Council (BDC) meetings.

**24/25 Casual Vacancy: Item 1: Co-option of new parish councillor for Greenstead Green Ward. Item 2: New councillor to sign Declaration of Office. Item 3: To sign form to agree to be contacted by electronic means.** There was no candidate for this vacancy, so this item was deferred to the May meeting. Vacancy to be advertised. **Action:** Clerk. Deferred to the May meeting.

**25/25 Declarations of interest. To declare any pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct.** None were declared.

**26/25 Minutes: Item 1: To approve the minutes of the January ordinary meeting.** Councillor Foster proposed the motion, which was seconded by Councillor Todd. The minutes of the January ordinary meeting were formally approved.

**Item 2: Matters arising from the January minutes that are not on the agenda.**

**Item 6/25 Precept/Budget:** The Clerk confirmed that the Precept for 2025/26 had been sent off to BDC. **Item 7/25 Finance:** The Community Grant from Cllr. Schwier had been successfully applied for, and the Parish Council had received a grant of £1250.00 to be used by the Village Hall to investigate improving the insulation and heating. The Chairman, Cllr. Foster had written to the Chair of the Village Hall Management Committee, Chris Butler, to inform him of the grant and what it was to be used for. Ongoing.

**27/25 County Councillor's report.** Due to the absence of County Councillor Siddall, no report was presented.

**28/25 District Councillor's report.** Due to the absence of District Councillor Schwier, no report was presented.

**29/25 Finance: Item 1: To agree to continue membership of RCCE at a cost of £58.80 (£52.80 last year) for the year.** Proposed Cllr. Foster, Seconded Cllr. Butler. All agreed.

**Item 2: To agree the accounts for payment.** These were circulated prior to the meeting. Proposed Cllr. Foster, Seconded Cllr. Butler. All agreed. The accounts for payment were duly approved.

Method		Payee	Amount	Reason
SO		Mrs A J Degnan	£362.00	February Salary pd 15/02/25
SO		Mrs A J Degnan	£362.00	March Salary pd 15/03/25
BACS		Village Hall	£20.00	hall rental
BACS		Mrs A J Degnan	£18.00	expenses
Card		Ionos	£6.00	website 17/01/25
Card		Post Office	£9.35	Recorded Delivery 16/01/25
Card		Ionos	£6.00	website 17/02/25
BACS		Enovert	£900.00	Donation
BACS		HMRC	£39.00	Income tax
BACS		FreshairFitness	£5,940.00	Final instalment for gym
BACS		HMRC	£13.00	Income tax
		<b>Total payments for March 2025</b>	<b>£7,675.35</b>	

**30/25 Planning and Braintree District Council (BDC). Item 1: Planning Applications: APPLICATION NO :25/00294/FUL. DESCRIPTION : Conversion of 2no. stable blocks into 16no. guest rooms. LOCATION : Greenstead Hall , Church Road, Greenstead Green.** This was a retrospective planning application as work had started in August 2024. Cllr. Mason had been alerted to this by a resident who had visited the hall at the time. The Parish Council had referred this planning breach to Planning Enforcement at BDC who had investigated and had instructed the applicant to apply for planning permission. The Councillors raised concerns regarding the unprofessional manner in which the Enforcement Officer at the time had dealt with the applicant. This officer had now left and been replaced with a new appointee.

After much discussion it was proposed to **Object** to this application on the following grounds. 'There had been no attempt by the applicant to demonstrate that the policy requirements of LPP8- Tourist Accommodation in the Countryside had been met. The policy requires evidence of sufficient car parking, landscaping proposals, structural survey, and sufficient utilities for the change of use to be allowed. There had also been no consideration of the environmental impact of this site on external lighting and traffic generation. We found the information in the application documents sadly lacking. We ask BDC to request this from the applicant. Once we have information regarding these requirements we will be happy to look at the application again.'

The Councillors also requested that the following condition be added that *'the accommodation is to be used for guests attending wedding events only'* to any planning permission.

Proposed Cllr. Foster, Seconded Cllr. Todd. All agreed. The proposal was duly carried.

**Item 2: Update on previous Planning applications. For information only.** Cllr. Foster reported that there had been no update on the Bournebridge Hill development.

**Item 4. Braintree District Local Plan Review 2041 Update - Issues and Options Consultation. Chairman.** Cllr. Foster had attended a recent information event on this at Queens Hall, Halstead. The Parish Council's response to the consultation can be found at Appendix A.

**31/25 Playing Field: Item 1: Update on playing field including installation of the outdoor gym.** The Outdoor Gym had been successfully installed. The Chairman encouraged residents to use the equipment.

**Item 2: Update on the progress of obtaining 3 quotes for the landscaping and reseeding of the additional 4-5m of land in the Playing Field.** Cllr. Mason had obtained 2 quotes- one for £3300 plus VAT and one for £3650.00 plus VAT. This was for spraying off the Bamboo, clearing the land and then backfilling with approximately 18tonnes of topsoil and then grass seeding it. Cllr. Mason felt that the Parish Council could conduct the work for a lot cheaper. Cllr. Butler had topsoil and a digger which could be used and Cllr. Mason could provide the labour. Cllr. Mason will provide a quote for the work. **Action:** Cllr. Mason. To be placed on the May agenda.

Before work could start there would need to be a meeting with the residents of The Hare and Hounds regarding their fence. The Clerk was instructed to draft a letter to the owners raising the Councillors concerns about the state of the fence and proposing a site meeting with them and Cllr. Foster and Cllr. Mason. **Action:** Clerk.

**Item 3: Update on Operations Inspections. Cllr. Mason.** Cllr. Mason was carrying out the weekly checks. He had spoken to the company who had trained him and although they did carry out the monthly Operations Inspections it was not in this area. He had then spoken to another company who were just as expensive as RoSPA but would be cheaper if they had a number of playing fields to inspect in the area. The Clerk was instructed to contact the surrounding parishes to see who they use. **Action:** Clerk. To be placed on the May agenda.

**Item 4: To consider purchasing new benches for the Playing Field from Parish Council funds. Clerk.** It was agreed in principle to purchase more benches and picnic tables. Proposed Cllr. Foster, Seconded Cllr. Butler. All agreed. To be placed on the May agenda with costs. **Action:** Clerk.

**32/25 Highways: Item1: Parish Councillors Highway issues. White Ash Green –** kerbing and deer sign request. Cllr. Pleasance had heard nothing from County Councillor Chris Siddall. **Action:** Clerk to chase. **Greenstead Green –** Cllr. Butler

reported that the recently repaired potholes in Ravens Hall Road were starting to reappear. The drain also needed to be unblocked. The edges of Church Road leading to Greenstead Green need to be repaired. The Chairman encouraged Councillors to send details of potholes to the Clerk to be passed on to County Cllr. Siddall. He also encouraged residents to report highway issues online.

**Item 2: Update on approaching ECC Highways and request that Burtons Green Road be considered for 'Quiet Lane' status. Cllr. Todd.** Cllr. Todd reported that a speed tracker had been installed by the bridge. **Action:** To be placed on the May agenda.

**Item 3: To consider supporting Gosfield School (Independent) and the residents of White Ash Green in the reduction of the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph in the Halstead Road.** Proposed Cllr. Foster, Seconded Cllr. Mason. All agreed. The proposal was duly carried.

**33/25 Truecam: Update from Clerk regarding letter written to District Cllr. Tom Cunningham and the Truecam rollout.** The Clerk read out a letter from District and County Cllr. Tom Cunningham. He had passed the question on to the Road Safety team who had forwarded it onto the Police. There was no further information.

**34/25 Neighbourhood Plan: To deliberate on providing a response to Bradwell with Pattiswick Neighbourhood Plan - Regulation 14 consultation.** There were no comments regarding this matter.

**35/25 Annual Parish meeting: Item 1. To consider whether to invite the local PCSO to the APM.** Proposed Cllr. Foster, Seconded Cllr. Mason. Agreed. **Action:** Clerk. **Item 2. To consider whether to provide refreshments.** Proposed Cllr. Foster, Seconded Cllr. Mason. Agreed. **Action:** Clerk.

**36/25 Training: To agree to send the new councillor on the 2-day Councillor Training course at a cost of £300 + VAT at EALC.** Proposed Cllr. Foster, Seconded Cllr. Mason. All agreed. The proposal was duly carried.

**37/25 Website: To consider applying for a .gov.uk website and emails.** Cllr. Pleasance offered to investigate this further. **Action:** Cllr. Pleasance. To be placed on the May agenda.

**38/25 Devolution: To deliberate on providing a response to the Government devolution consultation for Greater Essex. Consultation runs until 13<sup>th</sup> April.** The Chairman encouraged residents and Councillors to respond to this as individuals.

**39/25 Street Scene Partnership: To consider joining the Street Scene Partnership for 2025/26.** It was proposed not to join this. Proposed Cllr. Foster, Seconded Cllr. Mason. All agreed.

**40/25 Relocation of Mill View Dog Bin: To consider a request from BDC to relocate the dog bin from Mill View to the verge at Crocklands and 41/25 Public comment.** The Chairman, decided to take these two items together due to the number of residents who wished to comment on 40/25. The Clerk reported that she

had received 2 emails from residents against the proposal and one asking for more dog bins in the village. A resident reported that there was already a general waste bin at Crocklands which could be used for dog waste. The resident whose hedge the dog bin was in did not want it removed. They felt it would lead to dog owners placing dog poo in the open waste bin which is also in their hedge. Residents wanted dog bins at the Church and by the Track but not at Crocklands. The residents were adamant that they did not want the dog bin at Mill View to be moved or removed.

The Chairman proposed the following: "To decline the request from BDC to relocate the dog bin from Mill View to the verge at Crocklands." Proposed Cllr. Foster, Seconded Cllr. Mason. All agreed. The proposal was duly carried.

The Chairman also proposed the following " To approach BDC and ask for the installation of dog bins at the Church and by the Track." Proposed Cllr. Foster, Seconded Cllr. Mason. All agreed. The proposal was duly carried.

**Action:** Clerk to inform BDC regarding the decisions made.

A resident raised concerns regarding the owners of The Plough allegedly fencing off part of the Village Green. **Action.** To be investigated further.

**42/25 To receive reports from outside bodies, training courses, Village Representatives.** Jean provided an update on Neighbourhood Watch.

**43/25 Future agenda items. AGM – Archive, model financials. Items deferred to May.**

There being no further items to discuss the meeting closed at 8.45pm.

### **Next Parish Council Meeting.**

**Annual Parish Meeting Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April 7.15pm Village Hall**

**AGM followed by Ordinary Parish Council meeting Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025.  
7.00 pm Village Hall.**

Signed.....

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

Date.....

*Amanda Degnan*

**Amanda Degnan – Clerk to the Parish Council, C/O Greenstead Green Post Office, Greenstead Green Farm, Greenstead Green, CO9 1QY. 07782209224 . [parishclerk@greensteadgreenpc.org.uk](mailto:parishclerk@greensteadgreenpc.org.uk). WWW. [greensteadgreenpc.org.uk](http://greensteadgreenpc.org.uk)**

## Appendix A.

### Local Plan Review – Issues and Options 2025

#### Response by Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural PC

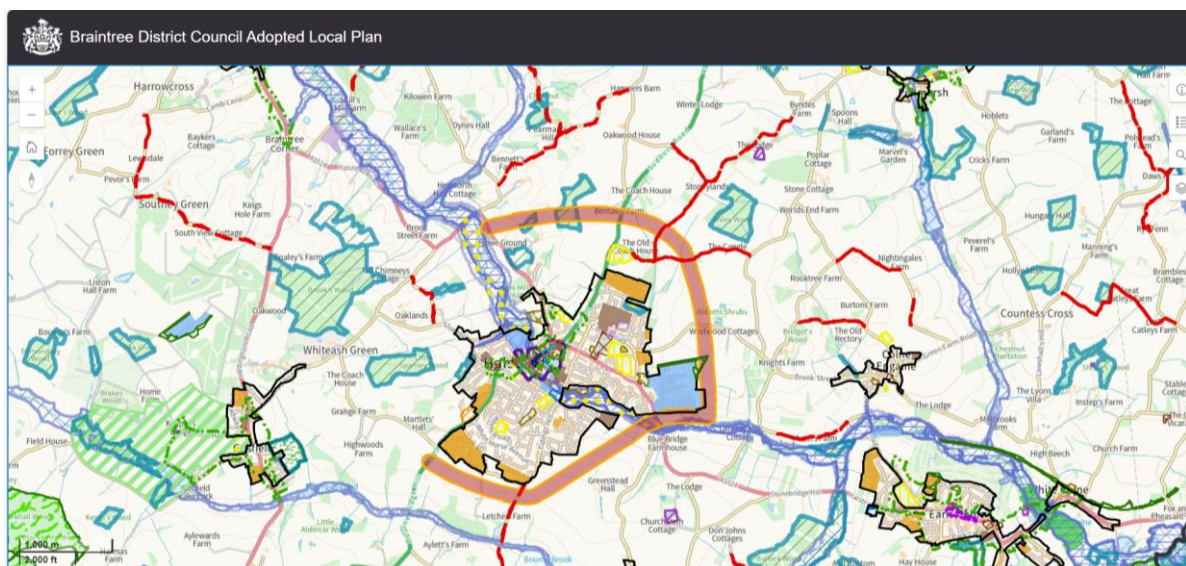
The focus of the comments on the Issues and Options paper from GG & HR PC is on the role of Halstead as a housing, economic and retail centre, the need for stronger protection to countryside areas and the provision of a bypass for Halstead.

The current spatial strategy concentrates development in four locations – Braintree, Witham, the A12 Great Eastern Mainline corridor, and Halstead. Of these, only one of these four – Halstead - has no direct access to a rail station.

In recent years, Halstead has grown significantly through additional housing to the north and the south. On the southern edge of the town, over 400 dwellings have been granted within Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural Parish alone in the past few years order to accommodate Halstead's needs.

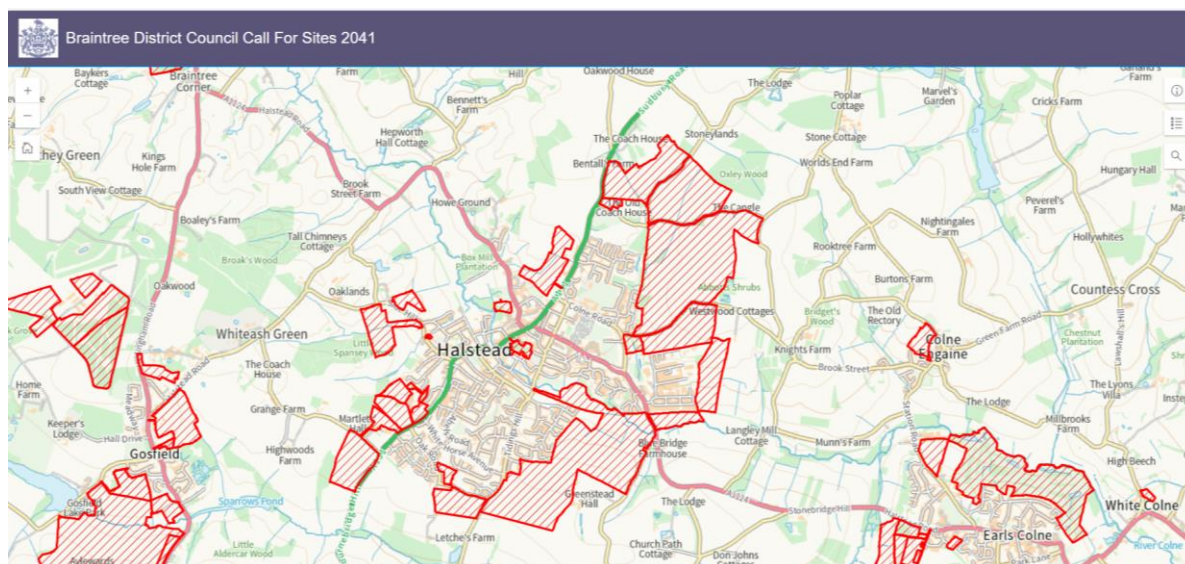
As a result, it calls into question whether Halstead can continue to accommodate residential significant growth without the need for major new infrastructure, including the Halstead bypass. The most recent largescale residential permission, up to 200 houses at Bournebridge Hill, includes the first western section of the Halstead bypass. This demonstrates that developers are willing to fund the new road.

Table 4 of the I&O document lists six allocated transport projects, of which one is the Halstead bypass and one of two which will need to be funded privately. Paragraph 4.156 of the adopted BDC Local Plan states that the Halstead bypass scheme remains a priority for Essex County Council and that growth will likely result in a need to commence development work during the plan period, that is before 2033. The adopted Local Plan shows the indicative route of the bypass.





The recent Call for Sites has identified a number of potential new housing sites around the southern and eastern edges of Halstead. Indeed, there is a contiguous set of sites which broadly follows the diagrammatic corridor route of the proposed Halstead bypass between the A131, from Bournebridge Hill to the south and Sudbury Road to the north. We understand that BDC officers are currently assessing the suitability of the sites. However, this assessment needs to be considered in the broader context.



The Government has made it clear that one of its central aims is to significantly increase housebuilding in England over the next five years. The recent changes to the standard method formula in the NPPF reflect this and the Council estimates that the Council will be required to deliver around 56% more homes than currently required.

A large number of the call for sites that have come forward around Halstead lie within Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural. As a largely rural parish council, we would normally seek to resist further development in the parish. However, it is clear that the long-awaited Halstead bypass will only be delivered privately, that is, through section 106 and 278 legal agreements attached to new planning permissions for housing. The new Local Plan Review could be an opportunity for the bypass to be delivered. However, this would be dependent upon a number of conditions:

1. A co-ordinated and managed fund which all housing developers would be expected to sign up to, to deliver the bypass in phases.
2. Support from BDC and ECC to enable the bypass to be properly designed and route options carefully considered.
3. A recognition of some of the s106 monies for community infrastructure should be set aside to GG & HR PC.

The Parish Council supports the key objectives within the I&O document in respect of environmental protection, sustainability, green infrastructure, and biodiversity.