

**Notes of the Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural Parish Council  
Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at  
Greenstead Green Village Hall at 7.15pm.**

Cllr. Paul Foster Chair

Cllr Derek Mason Vice-Chair

Cllr Derek Hambling

Cllr. Ian Pleasance,

Cllr. Gemma Todd.

Parish Clerk Amanda Degnan

County Cllr. Chris Siddall.

Peter Kohn GreenWays

5 members of the public.

- 1. Welcome from the Chairman.** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting. The Councillors then introduced themselves.
- 2. Apologies for absence.** Apologies for absence were received from District Cllr Peter Schwier.
- 3. Signing of the notes from the Annual Parish meeting held 19<sup>th</sup> April 2023.** These were approved and signed.
- 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. Unusually, it is a form of direct democracy, rather than representative democracy. And there are strict rules about when such a meeting can be held – the Local Government Act states that the meeting shall be held between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> June and no earlier than 6pm! So, all good so far! 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.

Once again, I would like to say a big thank you to our small band of parishioners that regularly turn up at our parish council meetings. 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.

My notes cover the 12 months since our last parish meeting, held in April 2023. We were delighted to welcome Councillor Gemma Todd on to the parish council in May as the representative of Burtons Green. In case you did not know, the parish council meets six times a year in person, that is every two months.

## **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 around 20 planning applications including revised and updated applications – much the same as previous years. Many of these are not controversial or raised concerns – we made no objections on 18, subject to specific conditions, and objected to only two. One of those two where we raised an objection, retrospective demolition of a building and the construction of a replacement workshop building at Burtons Green Nursery, was granted under delegated powers in June. The other, on land at Ayletts Farm for a change of use from agriculture to equestrian stables use, resulted in the application being withdrawn and re-submitted with new supporting information.

Representatives of the Parish Council attended and spoken at BDC's planning committee in support of the officer's recommendation to refuse planning permission for 26 dwellings at Halstead Hall in March this year. It seems to be the case that now that BDC can demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply, there is no longer the pressure for officers to accept speculative residential planning applications. There is a focus more on striving for higher design and quality when determining planning applications than has been in the past. The Parish Council raised concerns about the increased risk of accidents arising from vehicles emerging onto Russell's Road from the proposed site and turning onto the A131 southbound. We also raised a concern about the need to extend the footpath on the north side of the A131 to avoid the need for residents to cross the road. We were pleased that County Highways also formally objected. The application was refused on seven grounds in total.

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 timing of deliveries and other operations at Logmasters in Burtons Green and about the design of the new access created at Greenstead Hall. Our Vice Chairman met with a member of the BDC enforcement team to discuss the difference between what has been approved and what has actually been built.

The Parish Council responded to the draft Earls Colne Neighbourhood Plan and has recently made representations to Essex County Council in respect of three proposed sand and gravel sites in Stisted parish which we considered were not suitable to proceed as allocations in the draft Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

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 for 2024/25 of £13,540, representing an increase of 4.8%, lower than last year. This works out at £48.57 this year for a typical Band D property in the parish which continues to be 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 issues is traffic and the need to press ECC to repair the ever-increasing number of potholes, verges, and other road defects in our parish. We have had some successes, thanks to our hardworking County and District Councillors. The flooding at Crocklands has finally been resolved with a new drainage system while blocked drains have been cleared at Ravens Hall Road. However, the amount of rain we have had this spring has resulted in the very poor road surface over Bournebridge Brook. Potholes, I am sure will continue to remain a bone of contention, but I am pleased to report that long overdue repairs were carried out just this week overnight at Pennypot Corner. Litter dropping continues to keep me and the other volunteers busy filling the purple bags with rubbish people have thrown into the verges.

The Parish Council replaced the defibrillator pads and battery in September last year. Currently, we are looking at using some of our reserves and combining them with a grant from Enover Community Trust, an environmental body which supports community and environmental projects, to fund some new exercise equipment on the playing field for all residents of the parish to enjoy.

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.** Cllr. Mason thanked Cllr. Foster for all his work which was seconded by everyone. Cllr. Mason provided a report on the Playing Field.

**6. Updates from Parish Councillors.**

Updates were received from:

Cllr. Hambling

Cllr. Todd

Cllr. Pleasance

**7. Updates from representatives of other organisations within the Parish.**

Updates were received from:

Jean Hastings – Neighbourhood Watch

Ros Hardy – Litter picking report via email.

A report was read out about the Village Hall.

Peter Koln presented a brief update on the work of Greenways and the progress of the cycle path project from the Colne Valley to Halstead.  
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. The Chairman thanked County Cllr. Siddall.
9. **Update from District Councillor Peter Schwier.** In the absence of District Cllr. Schwier there was no update.
10. **Public Forum.** Residents raised concerns regarding Greenstead Hall and recent events which had led to noise complaints. The Clerk was asked to place Greenstead Hall on the May Ordinary Parish Council agenda.

The Chairman, Cllr. Foster thanked the Councillors and the public for their attendance. The meeting closed at 8.25pm and was followed by refreshments.

Signed.....

Chairman – Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural Parish Council.

Date.....

*A. J. 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. WWW. greensteadgreenpc.org.uk
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