



ST OSYTH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council
held at St Osyth Village Hall
on Thursday 16th January 2025 at 7.00 pm



PRESENT: Chairman: Cllr. Karen Sinclair, Vice-Chairman: Cllr David Cooper
Cllr's Clive Atkins, Susan Ball, Alma Blockley, Ray French,
Michael Talbot, Michele Thomas, Catherine Venables & John White

Cllr. Alan Goggin, Essex County Councillor (arrived at 8.20 pm)

APOLOGIES: Cllr. Jake Moore (Holiday)

MINUTES: Neil Williams (Parish Clerk)

PUBLIC PRESENT: One

OM-24-151 MEMBERS DECLARATION OF INTEREST:

The Chairman reminded Councillors, that under Section 31 of the Localism Act 2011 and The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, they had a responsibility to declare any Pecuniary, Other Registerable or Non-Registerable Interests in any matter to be discussed.

OM-24-152 PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

	APPLICATION & ADDRESS	PROPOSAL
a.	24/01852/LBDISC Messrs RA, TR, DR & AI Sargeant St Osyth Priory The Bury St Osyth	Discharge of conditions application for 21/00838/LBC - Condition 3 (New or replacement windows, doors and gates) and Condition 4 (Samples of all new wall and roofing construction materials, schedule of repair for the existing wall, arch feature and retained structures, and Queen closers flanking apertures). No objections.
b.	24/01869/TCA c/o RBL Tree Surgery 98 Clacton Road St Osyth	Trees in a Conservation Area Notification - Pollard Acacia tree in front garden of property. Remove dead Holly tree in front garden. This application is referred to the TDC Tree & Landscape Officer for consideration.
c.	24/01910/FUL Messrs Cook & Wicken Rear of 140 Point Clear Road Point Clear	Planning Application - Erection of two detached self-build bungalows. Notwithstanding the contradiction between Policy LP 7 (Self-build and custom-built homes) which states <i>the Council will also consider, on their merits, proposals for small developments of new Self-Build and</i>

		<i>Custom-Built Homes on land outside of, but within a reasonable proximity to, settlement development boundaries and Policy LP 8 c (Backland residential development) which states the proposal must avoid “tandem” development using a shared access, the Parish Council objects to the erection of two self-build bungalows, however, given that similar applications have been granted on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate. The Parish Council would have no objections to the erection of a single dwelling, especially as access would be via a track offering single vehicle access and egress at any one time.</i>
d.	25/00026/TCA c/o Eastwood Tree Services Ltd 17 Point Clear Road St Osyth	Trees in a Conservation Area Notification Horse Chestnut - Pollard to historic pruning points just above the level of the fence on the tree house. This application is referred to the TDC Tree & Landscape Officer for consideration.

OM-24-153 PLANNING CORRESPONDENCE:

The following correspondence was noted:

- a. Tendring District Council (TDC) weekly Notifications of Decisions (Determinations) for the period of 13th December 2024 to 3rd January 2025.

OM-24-154 APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

RESOLVED: That having been previously circulated, the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of 19th December 2024 be verified for accuracy by the Council and signed by the Chairman, as a true and accurate record. The motion was proposed by Cllr. French and seconded by Cllr. Talbot. All agreed.

OM-24-155 SUMMARY OF ACTION:

- a. OM-24-135 c i. The Clerk informed the Council that he had submitted an application, to Cllr. Goggin, for the renewal of signage in Stone Alley as part of the Member-Led Repair Programme.
- b. OM-24-140 a ii i). The Clerk reminded the Council that the subject of the request for a sponsored planter at the Clacton Road entrance to the village was to be discussed further by the Public Realm Working Party.
- c. OM-24-140 c i b). The Clerk informed the Council that he had forwarded the concerns of residents in respect of vehicles parking along the entrance road to Wellwick Wharf, to the Estate Director of St Osyth Priory.
- d. OM-24-141 f vi. The Clerk reported that he had yet to liaise with the Chairman about writing to the Local Government Minister with regard to Councillor’s Allowances.

- e. OM-24-146. The Clerk informed the Council that an advertisement detailing the vacancies for a Councillor in both St Osyth and Point Clear would be included in the February edition of St Osyth Life.
- f. OM-24-147. The Clerk reminded Councillors that any dates for future meetings of Committee and/ or Working Parties should be forwarded to him at the earliest opportunity.
- g. OM-24-150 a ii. The Clerk informed the Council that he had responded to the resident who had raised concerns over the removal of barriers along Footpath 29.
- h. OM-24-150 b i. The Clerk informed the Council that the concerns over speeding within the parish raised by Cllr. Venables was to be discussed further by the Highways Working Party.
- i. OM-24-150 d I & iii. The Clerk informed the Council that the concerns over the safety improvements to the crossroads, including the installation of speed cushions and possible use of parking restrictions, by way of double red lines, was to be discussed further by the Highways Working Party.

OM-24-156 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

OM-24-157 CORRESPONDENCE:

The following correspondence was noted:

- a. Correspondence from the Essex & Herts Air Ambulance Trust (E&HAAT) with regard to funding.
- b. Correspondence from a resident of St Osyth with regard to the provision of dog waste bins.
 - i. The Clerk informed the Council that this matter would be referred to the Public Realm Working Party.
- c. Correspondence from a resident of St Osyth with regard to the replacement of the zip wire at Cowley Park.
 - i. The Clerk informed the Council that this matter would be referred to the Public Realm Working Party.
- d. Correspondence from the Point Clear Community Association (PCCA) with regard to funding.
- e. Correspondence from Brightlingsea Harbour Master with regard to funding.
- f. Correspondence from the Essex & Herts Air Ambulance Trust (E&HAAT) with regard to funding.

OM-24-158 FINANCE:

- a. Approval of payments for December 2024, as per the circulated lists were agreed by the Council.

b. The following balances were noted and agreed:

- i. Current a/c: £47,635.70
- ii. Deposit: £150,000.00

OM-24-159 REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS:

a. **Public Realm Working Party:**

- i. The Clerk informed the Council that earlier that day, the Chairman, Cllr's Ball and White, the Deputy Clerk and himself had met with former Councillor Julie Ward, six pupils from St Osyth Primary School, their teacher and Mr Rian O'Dell, the developer whose funds had been redirected to improving Priory Meadow, to view the recently installed junior gym equipment and new activity tower and activity trail.
- ii. By way of a PowerPoint presentation, the Clerk displayed a number of photographs of the pupils using the recently installed equipment.
- iii. It was agreed that the junior gym equipment, activity tower and activity trail was a welcome addition to the play area, which would be well used, especially by school pupils as part of 'golden time.'

b. **Highways Working Party:**

- i. The Clerk reported that a meeting of the Working Party would be held before the Council's meeting on 20th February 2025.

c. **Martin's Farm Country Park:**

- i. The Clerk reported that a meeting of the Martin's Farm Country Park Working Party would be held at some point in February 2025.
- ii. The Clerk informed the Council that rare bread goats were currently being kept on site.
- iii. The Chairman enquired as to whether the pothole on the B1027, opposite the entrance to the approach road to Wellwick Wharf had been reported.
 - a) The Clerk confirmed that it had.

OM-24-160 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES:

a. **Community Matters & Well-being:** Nothing to report.

b. **Essex Police:** Having been previously circulated, Cllr. Cooper briefed the Council on reported crime during November 2024 in St Osyth and Point Clear, by offence and location, and where practicable the status of the investigation.

- c. **Footpaths:** Cllr. Atkins reported that having been notified by the Deputy Clerk of a fallen elm tree obstructing Footpath 19 near Martin's Farm Park, he had sawn the tree by hand, clearing the footpath.
- d. **Tree Warden:** By way of a PowerPoint presentation, the Clerk reminded the Council of the felling of willow trees in the plantation adjacent to Spring Road, which had taken place in July 2024. The Clerk continued that the trees, which had been felled under a Forestry Commission licence, had now been replaced by 15 foot four-year-old sets, which would ultimately be felled in approximately twenty years.
 - i. Cllr. Atkins confirmed that the willow trees had been grown specifically as a crop for harvesting.
- e. **Tendring District Association of Local Councils (TDALC):** Cllr. Sinclair reported that the next meeting of the Association was scheduled for Wednesday 22nd January 2025.
- f. **District Councillor's Report:**
 - i. Cllr. Talbot gave the following report:
 - a) Ian Davidson, our CEO, reported to TDC members on Devolution that, Essex County Council held an extraordinary meeting on Monday 10th January 2025, where County Councillors resolved to submit an Expression of Interest to government for the Devolution Priority Programme, including a commitment to Local Government Reorganisation, and including a request to delay the elections scheduled for May 2025. This follows similar decisions by Southend Borough Council and Thurrock Council, all committing to a Greater Essex Strategic Combined Authority.
 - b) Following the meeting an Executive Decision was signed by ECC's Leader, Councillor Kevin Bentley, which will mean the County Council, alongside Southend-on-Sea City Council and Thurrock Council, will write to the Minister to request participation in the programme, and to request the postponement of elections scheduled for May this year in the ECC and Thurrock Council areas.
 - c) However, regardless of the above position, we in Tendring need to make sure we are prepared for all eventualities, including that this Council may become part of a wider unitary authority at some point from 2028. As a result, TDC are working with partners, including other local authorities, to establish what work we need to do together, to ensure we are in a strong position to serve our Tendring community, particularly due to the challenges we face here. This work will take considerable time and effort from officers, which will no doubt be beneficial regardless of the outcome, and as a result may require some re-prioritisation of where we focus time and resources.

- d) The 'Value for Money' External Audit Report has been much delayed, and we have eagerly awaited this independent view on the Council's value for money. Our outgoing External Auditors finally provided this late last year, which was considered by our Audit Committee in December. It covered a number of areas such as financial sustainability and governance and provided a helpful and positive view, with the External Auditor stating the following *'We have not identified any significant weaknesses in the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources'*. This statement is a compliment to Richard Barrett our Head of Finance and his staff, when you think that a number of Authorities are having extreme difficulties in dealing with debt!
- e) Tendring is conducting an audit of Council House tenancy, to ensure that Council homes are genuinely allocated to those entitled to them. These checks aim to identify properties that, for example, have been abandoned, sub-let or falsely claimed. The checks are also carried out to ensure that tenants are in receipt of the correct discount or benefit, for example Single Person Discount, Local Government Support Grant or Housing Benefit, where applicable. In recent years, more than 60 properties have been reclaimed from individuals who falsely claimed entitlement and these homes have been reassigned to families on the waiting list who genuinely need them.

ii. Cllr. White gave the following report:

- a) Yesterday at what was one of our monthly Members Update programmes we had a talk about East Suffolk & North Essex Hospital Foundation Trusts given by Dr Shane Gorden and Peter cook.
- b) Dr Gorden is the Director of Strategy and Innovation. Peter Cook is the Ass Director Innovation & Education.
- c) Here are some of the many details of they gave to us:
- i) The Trust has two Acute hospitals Colchester & Ipswich. They have six community hospitals including Clacton & Harwich.
- ii) They employ 12,000 staff who deal with 250,000 emergencies, & 1.5 million outpatient appointments annually together with 100,000 elective procedures.
- iii) Their main challenges that they have to deal with are:
- Depravation
 - Ageing (the largest number of patients in the UK)
 - Population Growth
- (Colchester hospital needs 40 more beds, using the projected figures it will need 140 new beds in 10 years' time)

- d) Dr Gordon went on to talk about their recent successes and started with the brand-new Orthopaedic centre at Colchester and its use of Robotic assisted Surgery equipment. He showed us one such bit of equipment which itself cost £2¼ million. He had bought 4 of these bits of equipment. Colchester has become the world leader in using this equipment. The spin off using these gadgets was that a person who previously had a knee or hip operation would have up to a week in stay hospital now they could be sent home usually on the same day as the operation.
- e) Another of the successes is the Clacton Community Diagnostic Centre, which is open 12 hours a day, 7 days a week. It can carry out CT, MRI, Ultrasound scans and X-rays. It deals with pathology, phlebotomy, urine testing and endoscopy, 24-hour blood pressure, ECG and lung functions.
- f) In the last year it had done 180,00 tests for folk that previously would have travelled to Colchester.
- g. **Website:** The Clerk informed the Council that some changes were required to the website, which would be done as part of his [the Clerks] training package.

OM-24-161 REPORTS FROM NOMINATED REPRESENTATIVES & TRUSTEES:

- a. **St Osyth Almshouse Charity:** Cllr. Sinclair reported that the next meeting of the Chairty, which currently had a vacancy, was scheduled for 7th February 2025.
- b. **St Osyth Playing Field Charity:** The Clerk reported that there was an accumulation of discarded items, primarily from the garages adjacent to the pavilion, building up in the old practice nets. The Clerk stated that he would liaise with the Chairman of Elmden Rovers Youth Football Club, as the items were becoming an eyesore.
- c. **Point Clear Community Association:** Cllr. Thomas gave the following report on the meeting on 9th January 2025:
 - i. That a new Treasurer was being appointed following the resignation of the previous Treasurer.
 - ii. That there were a few 'snagging' issues with the air-to-air heat pump which had to be resolved.
 - iii. That two new fire doors had been fitted, with the rest to be replaced in due course.
 - iv. That funds were stable.
 - v. That the next quarterly meeting was scheduled for 13th February 2025.

- vi. Cllr. Sinclair reported that following the installation of solar panels and the air-to-air heat pump, the most recent gas bill had been approximately £18.00, the bulk of which had been attributable the daily standing charge, with the actual amount of gas used being £2.67.
- d. **Village Hall Management Committee:** Cllr. Thomas reported that although she did not know the exact date for the next meeting of the Management Committee, she believed it to be in February 2025.

OM-24-162 CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS:

- a. As a result of the Christmas tree on The Bury blowing over during the Christmas/ New Year holidays, the Clerk informed the Council of the suggestion that a permanent Christmas tree be planted, rather than having a tree delivered each year.
 - i. The Chairman stated that it would be worth considering, given that the annual cost for a tree, which this year had kindly been sponsored by L&K Funeral Directors, was approximately £250.00.
 - ii. A discussion ensued as to the size of tree to be planted, during which Cllr. Atkinson suggested that a 15-foot tree, as used on The Bury, could cost in the region of £1,000.00, and that it would be preferable to plant a smaller tree which could then establish a decent root system as it grew.
 - iii. Cllr. Thomas enquired as to whether a permanent tree would impact on the residents of The Bury.
 - a) The Clerk stated that he did not think there would be any objections.
 - iv. Cllr. Thomas enquired as to whether the District Council would have an objection to a tree being planted.
 - a) The Clerk stated that this would have to be discussed with the District Council's Planning Department.
 - v. It was agreed that the matter be discussed further by the Public Realm Working Party.
- b. The Clerk informed the Council that the Christmas lights on the northern side of Clacton Road, extending from Boots to Ellacott Morris had not been illuminated over Christmas/ New Year due to concerns over their safety. The Clerk continued that when initially switched on, by way of a timer, the lights had come on as planned, however, after several days they had failed to illuminate. When checked by Paul Dewing, it had been ascertained that the cable was worn in places, which was causing some of the light fittings to smoke.
 - i. The Clerk reported that the cable, which had originally come from the pavilion at Cowley Park, needed to be replaced. The Clerk estimated that the cost of replacing the cable would be in the region of £600.00 - £750.00.

- ii. It was agreed that the Clerk should investigate replacement cabling and that the matter be discussed further by the Public Realm Working Party.

OM-24-163 IMPLEMENTATION OF A SAFE SWIMMING AREA IN POINT CLEAR BAY:

The Clerk reminded the Council of Cllr. Ball's suggestion that a safe swimming area be created in Point Clear Bay.

- a. The Clerk stated that having contacted the Marine Management Organisation, who could assist with the application for a license, advise as to the installation and materials to be used, it would be advisable to liaise with local Harbour Authority for guidance, as both the cost of the license and materials, such as physical buoyage, would be down to the applicant to pay.
- b. The Clerk suggested that it might be worthwhile arranging a virtual meeting with the officer from the Marine Management Organisation who could provide further information.
 - i. It was agreed that the Clerk should look towards arranging a meeting.
- c. Cllr. Talbot informed the Council that there had previously been a buoyed area, for swimming, opposite Seaview Terrace, and that Cllr. Ball's suggested that a new area be created was more a case of asking for the original area to be reinstated.

OM-24-164 FURTHER MATTERS:

- a. Several Councillors remarked on the appearance of the boatyard, which many residents deemed to be an eyesore.
 - i. Cllr. Thomas stated that an historical barge was being restored.
 - ii. Cllr. White informed the Council that there was nothing which could be done with regards to the appearance of the boatyard.
 - iii. The Clerk cited previous liaison with Tendring District Council, Essex County Council, Natural England and the Environment Agency, all of whom stated that despite the south bank of the boatyard having designations including being a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Ramsar Site (a wetland site designated to be of international importance), there was nothing which could be done to improve the appearance of boatyard, specifically the south bank, which was now being used by residential houseboats.
 - iv. For the benefit of Councillors, the Clerk cited the findings of the 1983 Local Ombudsman's report, which stated that '*no building, structure, plant, quay or mooring shall be erected, constructed or laid down without the prior approval in writing of the District Planning Authority*'.
- b. Cllr. Ball enquired as to the reason for the removal of the cycle barriers from Footpath 29.

- i The Clerk stated that the barriers, had been removed as they prevented mobility scooters from being able to negotiate the path, and were in some cases corroded, would be replaced by Essex Highways.
- c. Whilst waiting for Cllr. Goggin to arrive from the meeting of Brightlingsea Town Council, Cllr. Talbot gave an overview of a recent meeting of Independent District Councillors, at which the subject of Devolution had been discussed.

Being that there was no further Parish Council business to discuss, the Chairman stated that those Councillors who wished to do so could depart the meeting.

Cllr. Blockey departed the meeting at 8.10 pm.

OM-24-165 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES:

- a. **Essex County Council:** Having arrived at 8.20 pm, Cllr. Goggin addressed the Council in respect of Devolution:
 - i. That although discussions at County Council level had been ongoing for past 18 months, the Parish Council had not been given much in the way of details until its meeting of 16th December 2024, the date on which the Government had released its White Paper on Devolution. Even then, there had been more questions than answers.
 - ii. That Devolution, which would see a massive change, would happen, despite local objections.
 - iii. That Essex County Council was keen to be one of ten Councils to enter into the next phase of Devolution, with the response to the Government being required by 10th January 2025.
 - iv. By way of a map, Cllr. Goggin briefed the Council on those areas of the country where Devolution had already taken or was in the process of taking place.
 - v. Cllr. Goggin gave an overview of how, should Essex County Council, be accepted as part of the Devolution Priority Programme, the elections planned for May 2025 would be cancelled. Cllr. Goggin added that he hoped to know more about this in time for the Parish Council meeting on 20th February 2025.
 - vi. That when the County Council had voted in respect of Devolution, of 75 Councillors, 8 had been absent, 14 had voted against, with the remaining 53 all voting in favour of Devolution.
 - vii. That the potential merger of elements of Essex County Council, with Tendring District Council, Colchester City Council, Braintree District Council and possibly Uttlesford District Council, to create, for example, North East Essex Council, would see a reduction in the number of Councillors from 8 County Councillors per District and 48 District Councillors, totalling 224, to 50 Councillors for the new authority.

- viii. A discussion ensued during which it was agreed that Devolution would see the loss of many an experienced Councillor.
- ix. Cllr. Goggin stated that he hoped that any redundancies or cuts to staffing levels would be from the top down, not the bottom up.
 - a) The Chairman expressed concerns that it would see a similar situation to when schools had transitioned to academies, with the loss of staff at the lower level to ensure the retention of the hierarchy.
- x. Cllr. Cooper enquired as to whether there would be a mayor for each new authority, in the way that each London borough had a mayor?
 - a) Cllr. Goggin stated that it might be possible for civic purposes.
- xi. Cllr. White stated that there was unlikely to be a public vote.
 - a) Cllr. Goggin stated that there would be a vote of mayoral candidates.
- xii. Cllr. Atkins enquired as to who would decide who got jobs within the new authorities.
 - a) Cllr. Goggin stated it would more than likely be a government decision, however, he did not know. Cllr. Goggin continued that he would be willing to visit each of the Councillors within his division to discuss Devolution once further details were known.
- xiii. The Chairman stated that in the case of academies, it had been a case of 'economics of scale' with well-run schools being absorbed into academies with schools which were worse off financially. This had resulted in budgetary decisions being made elsewhere.
- xiv. Cllr. Talbot stated that the Government of the day ran the country and that if the public didn't like it, they could change the Government by way of voting them out at elections.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8.50 pm.

The date and time of the next meeting was set for 7.00 pm on Thursday 20th February 2025, at St Osyth Village Hall.

Summary of 'Action Required' from the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Thursday 16th January 2025		
OM-24-161 b	Storage of Items in Former Practice Nets	Clk to action
OM-24-162 a v	Planting of Christmas Tree	PRWP to discuss
OM-24-162 b ii	Replacement of Christmas Lights	PRWP to discuss
OM-24-163 b i	Meeting with Marine Management Organisation	Clk to action