

Helions Bumpstead Parish Council

Parish Clerk/RFO: Kevin B. Money

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Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on Monday 14th. April 2025 at 7.15pm in the village Hall

Present: Cllrs. N. Nicholson (Chair), S. Cunningham, R. Etheridge, R. Kirkland, A. Parker, BDC Cllr D. Garrod and Kevin B. Money Clerk/RFO to the Council.

There were 12 members of the public present.

1. Apologies for Absence were received from ECC Cllr P. Schweir, Cllrs S. McGrath and N. Turner
2. Minutes of the 2024 Parish Assembly **All Agreed**
3. Matters Arising. No matters arising from the minutes
4. Chairman's Report – Cllr Neville Nicholson

The Parish Council

We are pleased to welcome Richard Kirkland and Steve McGrath onto the Parish Council. It is encouraging to have a good response to an appeal for new councillors. But apart from that, it has been a tricky year for the PC.

Sue Kehr resigned as Chairman at the beginning of the year after many years of much appreciated service and the Clerk resigned immediately afterwards. The replacement Clerk only stayed for two months, after which we discovered that she had failed to obtain the PC's records from her predecessor, who meanwhile had emigrated to Australia.

We owe a lot of thanks to Kevin, our new Clerk, who has reconstructed the PC's financial records and paid all the unpaid bills, so that the PC is now largely on an even keel. One exception is the village email alert system which was lost and we have not yet found a way of convincing everyone to send us their email address and permission to use it.

Anglian Water and the Roads

As you know, we have had a huge traffic problem throughout the year. Anglian Water laid a new pipe line along the B1057 and officially diverted the traffic between Steeple and Haverhill *via* the B1054 through New England. They did not consult the PC, but we were informed by our District Councillor, Diana Garrod and we wrote explaining that all the traffic would come through Helions. Despite repeated letters from the PC and individual Councillors, Anglian Water took no notice except when we pointed out that closing the B1054 at the same time as the B1057 would make the route through Helions on unclassified roads the only viable route to Haverhill from Steeple and that that was potentially illegal.

SpeedWatch made it clear that they were unlikely to be helpful in controlling the extra traffic in this kind of situation, but Madeleine Vigor developed a helpful relationship with the Police who have set up speed traps and signage. Essex Highways has also taken notice of our emails and pictures of the damage to our roads and we are grateful that they are now repairing them.

The problem remains that our roads are classified as priority routes (PR2), which encourages a large volume of traffic and when cars meet on the single track sections they squeeze past each other and grind away the edges of the roads. Our County Councillor, Peter Schwier, has agreed that the PR2 designation should be removed and is lobbying Highways on our behalf.

Village Matters

Thanks to all the people who do so much for the village when you think of all the events and services there are Coffee mornings, Soup Lunches, Oil syndicate, Village Hall, Village Magazine, Harvest Supper, Mutual Support Group, I am afraid I have probably missed some, but amazing that so many people do so much.

Our Postman, Dave, is retiring in April and Andy Parker is organising a Retirement Collection to thank him for his many years of exceptional service and his helpful presence in Helions Bumpstead. We hope to present this to him during a celebratory drink in the pub so, please come along and wish Dave a Happy Retirement.

Local Government Reorganisation

A cloud on the horizon is the Local Government Reorganisation. The Government will be combining Braintree District with several other districts in order to make it easier for them to control local government and so that well managed districts can pay the debts of profligate areas. This will not be to our advantage and we will be lucky to see a local councillor again.

Aircraft Stacking

There is currently a nationwide review and reorganisation of aircraft routes in British airspace (CAAUKads Consultation). This is the first ever attempt to rationalise the way in which aircraft fly over the country. There was a brief consultation period in the Autumn of last year and the PC has submitted a detailed analysis of aircraft stacking and explained that making aircraft fly in circles creates unnecessary carbon dioxide emissions. Stacking was really bad last Summer but the Winter was fairly free of commercial aircraft stacking. I think that our efforts over the years have had the effect of making the stacking aircraft higher and quieter.

Major Developments

Catesby Developments continues to apply for outline planning permission to build 5,000 houses to the south of Haverhill and partially in our parish. The PC has sent an Objection to this to the West Suffolk local plan Consultation, pointing out that the nearest arterial road to Haverhill is 10 miles away along a notoriously dangerous road (A1307), there is no railway, there is little employment in Haverhill, the site would be separated from Haverhill by an industrial estate containing dangerous chemical factories and the development would make our flooding problem much worse. We have not found a reference to the Catesby plan in the published consultation document. We also sent our Objection to the Consultation for the Braintree District Council local plan Refresh to which Catesby had also sent its application.

Wethersfield Airfield

The unused barracks at the airfield are currently being used to house 700 asylum seekers. The Home Office appears to have underestimated the isolation of the site, its poor roads and lack of suitable staff, doctors, hospitals, shops, schools, entertainment, houses and Police and this is making things difficult. The Ministry of Justice has noted these problems and appears to be less keen on building the largest prison in Europe on the site as the expense of making it successful would be colossal. The presence of a prison on the site would have a major effect on the whole area and would eventually fill in the last green space between London and Cambridge with suburbia. The Wethersfield Airfield Scrutiny Committee have proposed transforming part of the site to a wildlife reserve which would be appropriate to its isolated position in the overpopulated south east of England.

5. County Councillor's Report – ECC Cllr Peter Schweir **No report was supplied**

6. District Councillor's Report – BDC Cllr Diana Garrod
BDC Cllr D. Garrod detailed Annual report can be found at
<https://helionsbumpsteadparishcouncil.gov.uk/parish-council-minutes/>

Scheduled Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders & Roadworks

Multi-way signal traffic control at Four Ash Hill, Birdbrook 14th to 25th April 2025 for highway maintenance.
Ref: EP02263439592-02 More info at: <https://one.network/>

Waste Consultation Update

The Government policy says '*Simpler Recycling will enable consistent, more streamlined collections from all households, businesses and relevant non-domestic premises (such as schools and hospitals)*'.

Braintree District Council's is now assessing the results from the public consultation, which ended 2nd March. Changes are proposed to improve recycling rates, reduce waste to landfill, ensure financial sustainability and compliance with the Environment Act 2021's, Simpler Recycling policy (from April 2026).

The proposed preferred collection approach includes a:

- weekly food waste collection for all properties
- fortnightly paid for collection of garden waste (where requested)
- three-weekly collection of general waste
- alternate fortnightly collection of paper and card in one bin collected one fortnight
- alternate fortnightly collection of glass, metals, plastic and food and drink cartons in another bin collected the following fortnight

There were 7847 responses to BDC's consultation and it will take some time to analyse these. The findings are scheduled to be reported to Cabinet on 26th May 2025. Whilst implementation is suggested for April 2026, some councillors think it might be prudent to consider a start date after the May Bank Holidays.

Procurement of Waste Vehicles

The current Food Waste Collection vehicles had a GVW of 7500kg which provided a net load of approximately 3tn per vehicle. From April 2026, legislative changes would introduce food waste collections from flats and businesses and there would be increased communications to encourage all households to recycle more food waste as part of the Waste Review. As a result, it was anticipated that the amount of food waste collected would increase to a potential maximum of around a 1000 tonnes per month, although this was more likely to be around 730 tonnes per month. The increase in food

waste would present a capacity deficit; therefore, it was necessary to consider how best to increase the capacity available. At the Cabinet meeting 17th March, members agreed to authorise the upsizing of the Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) of the current Food Waste Collection Vehicles from 7500kg to 11000kg/12000kg. The S151 Officer the decision to determine the most appropriate method of financing the vehicles. The Cabinet Member for Transformation, the Environment and Customer Services, in consultation with the Corporate Director (Operations), to award all associated contracts for the procurement of 13 commercial vehicles as follows: 8 Food Waste Collection Vehicles, 3 Refuse Collection Vehicles and 2 Street Cleansing vehicles. The Council has received a £319,648 capital transitional grant in April 2024 from DEFRA to support extending weekly food waste collections to flats. A proportion of this (£20,000) has been allocated to funding a trial leaving the balance available to fund the costs of two food waste vehicles. End of life vehicles that are owned by the Council are sold at auction. Sales proceeds of less than £10,000 are returned to the Vehicle Financing Reserve to be used for reinvestment into the replacement vehicles.

Options Reviewed	Capital costs	Annual Revenue costs.	Load Capacity
Replace all food waste vehicles for 7500kg - inadequate capacity	£700k	£560k	440 tonnes
Increase the number of routes and purchase an additional 7500kg - inadequate capacity	£800k	£640k-£660k	504 tonnes
Replace all of the food waste fleet for 11000kg/12000kg - Meets requirements	£960k Increased financing costs over existing provision offset by DEFRA grant	£595k	735 tonnes

BDC's Annual Plan Approved at Cabinet

The Annual Plan 2025/26 proposes the Council's activities and performance measures to support the second year of delivering the Corporate Strategy 2024-2028. The activities and performance measures are aligned to each Corporate Strategy themes as follows:

- Communities
- Prosperity
- Environment

The Annual Plan 2025/26 includes actions to continue delivering against the Council's Fit for the Future programme which will be reviewed to align with work to support Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation. The Plan also provides the framework for managing the delivery of the activities against the priorities by regularly reviewing progress and achievements and reporting on the progress on a quarterly basis to Cabinet. Following the announcement that Essex has been accepted onto the Devolution priority programme, the Government has also agreed to explore local government reorganisation alongside devolution. There will be a need to re-align the transformation activity to ensure the Fit for the Future programme reflects the ongoing needs of the organisation.

Some of the key actions highlighted from the Annual Plan included:-

- Revisions to the Local Plan to ensure there was a fresh framework to enable sustainable development across the District;
- Setting a target for the delivery of 250 affordable homes over the next year;
- Developing a supported housing strategy to support people and families at risk of homelessness;
- Building more social connections through the provision of sports facilities and community centre in Witham, as well as refurbishing four more play areas across the District;
- The provision of a range of funding to boost local initiatives such as the continuation of the Councillor Grant Scheme, the Cost-of-Living Scheme and administering health grants;
- Sustaining the growth of the District through delivering town centre improvements in Witham and Halstead and supporting neighbourhood plans in local villages;
- Assisting with the development of the North Essex Growth Plan that would facilitate and encourage constructive engagement with the forthcoming plans for devolution in Greater Essex; and - Improving the economic wellbeing of the District's residents by providing more successful job fairs and supporting green skill programmes.

7. Reports from Village Organisations

Organisation representatives spoke at length about the Village Hall 100 Club, Table Tennis Club, Bowls Club, St. Andrew's Church.

8. Public Participation Session

Residents asked questions on why the roads and verges are being neglected by Essex Highways. The Chair informed the meeting that the Parish Council will maintain sending in Highways problems and letters to the Essex County Councillor. Recovering of verges is more important than repairing roads. The Parish Council will write to Anglian Water to repair the damaged verges left by Anglian Water employees. Speedwatch training needs to be organised.

9. Chair to close the meeting

The Chair then closed the meeting at 8.20pm and thanked everyone for attending

Signed

12th. May 2025

N. Nicholson
Chair

DRAFT