

STAPLEFORD ABBOTTS PARISH COUNCIL

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Draft Minutes of the Council Meeting

7.15pm Tuesday JUNE 3 2025

Present:

Councillors: Jayne Jackson (Chair) (JJ) Marion Francis (MF) Kim Lidlow (KL) Colleen Atkinson (CA)

Officers:

Ellie Thomas, Clerk

In attendance:

9 Residents/ Visitors Cllr C Amos (EFDC) Mr Chris Finney (No to Moto)

1336/25	Apologies for Absence
	None
1337/25	Declarations of Interest
	None
1338/25	Minutes of last Meeting
	Confirmed as a true record
1339/25	Clerk's Report
	Usual bulletins from EFDC, ECC, EALC, Police, Travel Essex, Speedwatch, Tourism Essex, Libraries & Trading Standards circulated. EFDC - Parish councils can erect notice boards without requiring full planning permission, as these are considered functional advertisements under the Town and Country (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007. Estimate from Matt Bates for fitting the parish council notice board is £80 - £100 - can't give an exact price till he sees it. VE80: celebrations went off very well. Thank you to all who participated. EFDC Whats On Brochures collected by Clerk and distributed in the village. Plant sale went well – it was a beautiful morning and upward of £400 was raised. Rogation Walk successful and a fine day- despite half term & bank holiday weekend pushing numbers down. Many thanks to all who contributed to the walk, the co-ordination, the tea and the activities. Epping District, in collaboration with Theydon Bois, will be running a live Rest Centre exercise (Exercise Spark) on 29th October – call is out for any interested parties to take part in the form of an 'evacuee'. EFDC Councillor Caroline Pond has died – SAPC has sent a sympathy e-card
1340/25	Matters for Report
	Welcome to Chris Finney of No To Moto/ M25 North East Residents Association (NERA) – with an outline of service stations plans for the M25 proposed by Moto and Welcome Break at junction 28. Residents Association has 220 members and 2 committee members from NotoMoto also attended this Parish Council meeting. • Welcome Break propose 38 hectares east of Stapleford Abbots, a single site and a bridge. Moto is 45 hectares east of Stapleford Abbots, between Harold Hill and Brentwood with a separate hub for each direction, and National Highways have not approved the rear access road for staff and deliveries on this site. It is unusual to have two applications of this type in preparation at the same time. • KL commented that electric cables are being run along the M25 already. • So far, campaigning has centred on Moto only as Welcome Break have not submitted a planning application. • Moto began talking to Brentwood Borough Council in 2023; the planning team gave reasons against, including the Green Belt status and the rear access. Brentwood is responding to NERA 's arguments, but they are not acknowledging them as a body contributing. JJ advised vigilance in case another application is lodged. • Moto are adjusting rear access for a staff drop-off and control gate at a different location. National Highways, who is still deliberating, as people may drive past and park in the lanes, gave Moto a deadline to answer all resident queries. They also need planning permission from Havering, site of a slip road, but there's little progress. Alternative routes through South Weald would also prove difficult. • NERA will write to Brentwood to object. The process allows Moto to meet Brentwood Borough Council, but NERA have had no invite to any meetings. CA pointed out that there had not been any discussion about this in EFDC either. • Brentwood's website states deadline 31/5 and the Council will meet on the 21/6. They are not statutory deadlines, as the Secretary of State may have to be involved. NERA have been in touch with the Secretary of State. • Around 150 direct objections have been lodged to the planning committee and NERA have objected for members. Several petitions with hundreds of signatures have been compiled. NERA is open to all who live within 10 miles of the M25, it is free to join, details are online. • Suggested that Chris Finney will liaise with Linkup to explain the situation and NERA's response, and encourage support. Suggested Clerk to contact Welcome Break for an update on their plans. • Rev Gayler explained that the Church commissioners own the mineral and mining rights to land where the Moto area is planned. The environmental impact assessment suggests flood issues, but the government website says it's a low risk. Rev Gayler said the church commission is under pressure to be "greener". Chris Finney and NERA to write to them about this. Church Report: welcome to Rev Roger Gayler. • Plant sale was a great success and £425.65 raised. Thanks to everybody who gave plants (special mention to Angela and her houseplant selection) and supported the event. • Church toilet: Drainage works are in progress. The fund is £10k short – SAPC to write to local developers for sponsorship. • The Rogation Walk went well - next year, it will be 10/5/26, the day after the plant sale.

	• The Coronation Trail walk – 22/8/25 at 2pm, starting at Stapleford Abbots church and going to Abridge church - clerk to do the poster. • Flower Festival 26/7 – 27/7. Raffle prizes welcomed and help on the days gratefully accepted. Vintage Games Day – 25/7. • Crossfire Rock Concert & BBQ 3/8. All posters to come to SAPC for advertising. Rogation Walk – Covered. Moto & Welcome Break - Covered EALC - Changes - They will move from the Great Dunmow office this year. Pearl Willcox from Training was made redundant as was Sophie on Comms. Ann Wood on legal liaison will leave in July. Pearl’s absence means that councils all over Essex will not have the point of contact for training any more. They are planning to have an online portal to book training, with in-person sessions being held at different hubs around the county, detailed guidance anticipated. Some member councils have been very concerned – EALC issued statement to reassure and more updates are in preparation. Clerk to research with other parishes about additional training options.																		
1341/25	Finance Transactions for the month – All agreed and actioned. PKF Littlejohn returns – passed and sent to auditor. Mr. Watts has paid his allotment rent																		
	<table><tr><td>A KING</td><td>STRIMMING IN CHURCH YARD</td><td>300</td></tr><tr><td>E THOMAS</td><td>CLERK MAY 2025</td><td>495</td></tr><tr><td>S FREEMAN</td><td>ROGATION WALK PROVISIONS</td><td>20.79</td></tr><tr><td>S FREEMAN</td><td>ROGATION WALK PROVISIONS</td><td>5.43</td></tr><tr><td>E THOMAS</td><td>SWEETS/ CRAFT ITEMS FOR ROGATION WALK</td><td>17.98</td></tr><tr><td>M BATES</td><td>BUS SHELTER REFURB</td><td>553.33</td></tr></table>	A KING	STRIMMING IN CHURCH YARD	300	E THOMAS	CLERK MAY 2025	495	S FREEMAN	ROGATION WALK PROVISIONS	20.79	S FREEMAN	ROGATION WALK PROVISIONS	5.43	E THOMAS	SWEETS/ CRAFT ITEMS FOR ROGATION WALK	17.98	M BATES	BUS SHELTER REFURB	553.33
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1342/25	Planning (Development Control & Enforcement Team) EPF/0874/25 https://eppingforestdcpr.force.com/pr/s/planning-application/a0hTv000007M2IV Field End, Oak Hill Road, Stapleford Abbots, Romford, RM4 1EH Demolition of the poor-quality existing dwelling and erection of replacement dwellinghouse with basement. Mohinder Bagry RETURN JUNE 9 2025 Stapleford Abbots Parish Council OBJECTS to this application. This is how we understand the situation: there is an application that was approved in 2023 for enlargement of the dwelling (EPF/1627/23), and now the property owners want to supersede this application with a new one (EPF/ 0874/25) for actual demolition and rebuilding of the dwelling. We have concerns that the plan to demolish and rebuild was lodged to facilitate the building of a basement – this would not be able to be done unless the existing building was removed. However, as far as the basement goes, this would not be appropriate as there is a flood risk in this area accelerated by the topography of the land. A basement and everything therein would be the first casualty if there was a flood in this area; three other houses nearby have attempted applications for a basement and all were refused for this very reason, so there is a precedent set. This application is basically to turn a bungalow into a house and therefore losing a bungalow in the village; there is now a clause in EFDC planning policy that would preclude this. It was not in place in 2023 when the first application went in; but the applicant should be warned that it stands now. We are concerned about protection for trees close to the house – the boundary of the new building would be very close to some of the trees on site - we would like to know if they would be disturbed? The neighbour notification is unrealistic – out of six households approached, one is empty and two are family members of the applicant. We are also concerned that there are no sizes on the plans. Should this application come to Committee we will register to speak. EPF/0732/25 https://eppingforestdcpr.force.com/pr/s/planning-application/a0hTv000006rZII Waters Farm Cottage, 252 Ongar Road, Stapleford Abbots, Romford, RM4 1RD Stapleford Abbots have NO OBJECTION IN PRINCIPLE to this application. We would however question if this new proposal would be taking the applicant over half the footprint that they are allowed. Single storey side extension. Caroline Brown RETURN JUNE 9 2025 EPF/0974/25 https://eppingforestdcpr.force.com/pr/s/planning-application/a0hTv000007jkU5 Sundown, Bournebridge Lane, Stapleford Abbots, Romford, RM4 1LT Proposed outdoor covered sitting area with a pitched roof and outdoor fireplace. Alterations of fenestrations and external finish. Suleman Uddin RETURN JUNE 9 2025 Stapleford Abbots have NO OBJECTION IN PRINCIPLE to this application. We ask that there are conditions laid down in any approval that this veranda structure is not to be converted to a separate room in the future. We have no objections if it is stipulated to be for outdoor use only.																		
1343/25	Parish Council Projects Plant sale and Rogation Walk went very well. CA suggests looking into getting a female “Tommy” statue - clerk to find out RBL’s prices and report back.																		
1344/25	Correspondence Lorries - A resident is concerned. JJ has called Brentwood enforcement, and the officer is away. We need a second end date. Tenant asked about buying his rented plot – he will not be able to as the land was given in trust and cannot be sold. Resident reports uncut grass on council-owned plot outside his house - encouraged him to check with EFDC Clerk had call from member of public with links to village about missing dogs – referred him to police.																		
1345/25	Meetings of Outside Bodies and Training Courses Clerk attended EFDC Councillor Chris Whitbread’s clerks forum meeting 16/5/25 at EFDC. • This was attended by EFDC reps Cllr Chris Whitbread and Cllr Nigel Bedford, Fabrizio Ferrari, the acting director for communities, also Tom Carne from PR; and parish council reps from North Weald, Stapleford Tawney, Stapleford Abbots & Theydon Mount.																		

	- Officers and councillors at District are aware of widespread frustration about trying to contact EFDC about non-democratic matters that has been in the air since 2020. They are wanting to have meetings like this three times a year with Chris Whitbread and the small councils; Nicola Leach of Publicity is going to write to all the town and parish clerks on the subject – watch this space. - This communication will be off the back of an ongoing peer review EFDC are doing about corporate communications, especially about direct communications with District. They are aware that there has been a lot of dissatisfaction with the state of affairs among towns & parishes, so they want to reboot the personal relationship with the parishes. The aim is to share information and network two ways. - Tom Carne and Paula McGinnis have been working on a strategy for this, and they are due to take the next step. - It isn't just about comms – parishes will be welcome to come forward with events or stories, and someone like Nicola could be the first point of contact or reference, and refer parish councils to other officers who might be more appropriate. We need to know who to go to for immediate issues with planning, housing, waste, environmental, etc, so this will hopefully set us up with somebody who will help via the Contact Centre. - Planning: had a large backlog because senior planning officer Graham Courtney is off sick and will not be back till until the end of July. - Changes are afoot at EFDC as well as at Essex County Council, due to ongoing devolution and financial groundwork for which public consultation is required. There is also a local government review going on at the moment. There will be elections next year at ECC and also district council elections in 2026; the mayorals are slated for 2027 - Towns and parishes are not going to be heavily affected by the changes, so they should keep on with the usual decision cycles. In 2028 unitaries will look to town and parish roles, so everyone will need to think about how to deal with unitaries as it is predicted that town and parish importance will actually grow. - Civic offices will be scheduled to have the library and the register office there, and there will be a reduction in District councillors. Go to the local website for information on devolution and local government review. - Chris Whitbread and his assistant, Kelsey are here to help. They are willing to come and meet parish councils too. Everyone apologised for dissatisfaction and Chris said he knows District can do better. - They were keen to scotch a rumour that EFDC are not doing site visits because of finances - site visits still take place and are arranged on the day of the meeting that the application is going to go to. We are also reminded that ward councillors can't vote if an application is in their ward, but they can speak for or against even if they can't vote; strong objections will be picked up.
1346/25	Highways
	- Ongoing issue with lorries: suggested Clerk to ask Abridge Parish Council to ask if it's also a concern for them on their bridge, and Theydon Bois Parish Council if they have concerns on the station flyover bridge which is known to have weigh issues. Also copy in MP. - The manhole beside Jaysom is still a problem - JJ is monitoring and will talk to Lee Cunningham, Drain is full at Nabbits, and Tysea Hill chapel fence works have generated a lot of loose soil which is causing problems on the road. - Residents report that Bournebridge Lane is blocked with no warning signs - in two directions. Signs are subcontracted and not to do with the road menders, so no one is really accountable. We can write to ECC about this. - Burnt out Fiat 500 at Passingford Bridge. Police aware. JJ is to speak to Louise Coverley at EFDC - Hook Lane was signposted well, but the cyclists moved the fences. - Footpath to High House farm is still shut and no reason – to see what the owner says – see below. - Fly tipping: reported.
1347/25	Matters for future Agendas
	None
1348/25	Open Forum
	PC Footpaths: June 25 - Thanks to everyone who reported issues on footpaths/ Public Rights of Way. (PROW) - Update on PROW 37. Several villagers noted this popular route was blocked by a locked gate. The landowner has been instructed to ensure access. Should they be required to lock a gate they must provide 1.5 metre gap to the side of the gate for public access. Please let me know if anyone incurs any further issues. - PROW 22 which has been closed due to the building works at High House Farm should now be open but isn't. The temporary closure has expired this is being followed up by Essex. - PROW 14 which comes off Gutteridge Lane has suffered from a massive nettle growth. The volunteers have carried out clearance last week. The other end of the path PROW 13 is due for work this week. - New volunteers always welcome. Please message me if you plan to join us so I have enough gloves etc. (07980 808317) - Some persistent failure to mark cross field paths has resulted in an escalation to the enforcement team. - Most farmers are now marking these but one continues not to. - Please please continue to report any issues on our village footpaths using the Essex highways tell us/report a problem site and select PROW. It really does help keep our beautiful footpaths open and maintained. 23rd and 24th of June, Gallows Corner will close until further notice. The 375 buses will stop in Collier Row over the duration. EFDC AGM was last week. Louise Mead chair. Alan Lyon vice chair. No elections, so all committees remain same and are rolled over. There was a reorganization of councils being discussed – 25/9/25 deadline for the proposal to respond to the government, who may do something else different with the police, fire and transport managers. Mayoral suggestions are going up now. Andy at the church asked how much was earmarked for strimming to the churchyard. Up to £1500 pounds are earmarked until March.
1349/25	Time & Date of next meeting
	NEXT MEETING 1/7/25 AT 19:15. This meeting concluded at 21.46

Signed by Chair: Date:

Signed by Clerk: Date: