



MINUTES

Annual Parish Council Meeting 18th May 2026 at 7.30pm, held at

Highwood Village Hall, Loves Green, Highwood, Chelmsford, CM1 3QG

Attendees:

Cllr Peter Latham (Chair), Cllr Trevor Hornsell (Vice-Chair), Cllr Kelly Latham-Pearmain, Sophie Blair-Wolker (Clerk). There was one parishioner present.

Before the start of business, the Chairman reminded attendees to turn off or silence mobile phones, and that anyone intending to record or broadcast the meeting declare this at the outset.

1/26 Election of a Chair

Cllr Peter Latham was re-elected as Chair for 2026-27. Cllr Latham signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. All in favour.

2/26 Election of a Vice-Chair

Cllr Trevor Hornsell was re-elected as Vice-Chair for 2026-27. All in favour.

3/26 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Cameron and Cllr Maclean, both of which were accepted. No apologies were received from Cllr Sinclair.

4/26 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest on any items of the agenda.

5/26 Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2026 were approved and signed.

6/26 Matters arising from the minutes of 16th March 2026

There were no matters arising.

7/26 Public Forum

A parishioner raised concerns regarding the condition of the main road through Loves Green, including stones being displaced onto the road surface from residents' driveways. The Council advised that it did not have authority to undertake road sweeping but agreed to pass the information to Essex Highways, which is responsible for the maintenance of roads and footpaths.

The parishioner also expressed concerns that trees may have been planted unlawfully along the local bridleway known as Highwood 30. The Clerk was asked to liaise with the relevant authorities to establish how the Council may be able to assist.

8/26 Report from Essex County Council

There was no report received.

9/36 Report from Chelmsford City Council

There was no report received.

10/26 Clerks Report

The Clerk's report was noted.

11/26 Planning

To review and comment on any applications submitted to Chelmsford City Council-

	Reference	Address	Description	Status
(b)	25/01556/FUL	1 Woodside Cottages, Nathans Lane, Highwood, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 3RD	Construction of a timber fence with an electronic sliding gate and a side access gate	No comments
(d)	25/01786/OUT	Phillips Farm Highwood Road Highwood Chelmsford Essex CM1 3PX	Outline application for the development of 2 self build dwellings.	No comments
(e)	26/00085/FUL	Land North of New Barnes Cottages, Ingatestone Road, Highwood, Chelmsford, Essex	Proposed Eco Bungalow and bin store	No comments

12/26 Environment

Norwich to Tilbury Update

An update was received regarding the group of parishes' Deadline 4 submission to the Examining Authority in relation to the proposed Norwich to Tilbury pylons. The recent submission raised concerns regarding the impact of the proposals on the wider landscape and heritage setting, particularly in the Walthams area and around Chelmsford. The submission also challenged National Grid's approach to creating new overhead line corridors and called for greater consideration of rationalising or undergrounding existing infrastructure.

The group's landscape consultant, Alison Farmer, had identified growing recognition at the Examination Hearing of the significant adverse effects on the Walthams area and considered that the routing around Chelmsford should be fundamentally re-appraised.

Highwood CCTV Project

The Council awaits to hear back from the Parochial Church in order to move the project forward. It was noted that the plans include the cameras to cover Wyse Road, both directions of Highwood Road and St Pauls Church.

Highways

SID Unit Failure, Inspection and Replacement at Loves Green

The Council noted that the SID unit had ceased connecting to the app and was exhibiting significant battery drain. Traffic Technology Ltd inspected the unit and confirmed that it required temporary removal for repair. The unit was subsequently replaced and is now operational. The Clerk confirmed that expenditure could be authorised under Financial Regulation 5.18 (up to £2,000 excluding VAT in cases of serious risk to council services or public safety), with reporting to the Chair and Council as required by the Regulation.

Traffic Congestion and Visibility Concerns

The Council raised concerns regarding the amount of traffic passing the primary school during peak times, noting that the chicanes were causing traffic backlogs, resulting in congestion and potential safety concerns. The Clerk noted the concerns and advised that Essex Highways would be contacted for further advice.

The Council also raised concerns regarding the chicane at the junction of Wydes Road, Highwood Road and Loves Green, noting that visibility when pulling out from Wydes Lane onto either road was hazardous. It was acknowledged that surrounding hedges should be regularly trimmed back to improve visibility and help prevent accidents. The Council also supported the installation of 'narrow bend' signs. The Clerk noted the concerns and advised that Essex Highways would be contacted for further advice.

13/26 Appointment of Committees

To review and agree membership of Committees including-

(a) Planning Committee

The Council resolved not to proceed with the establishment of a Planning Committee due to insufficient interest from members to participate. All future planning applications are to be reviewed at Full Council Meetings going forward.

(b) Personnel Committee

The Terms of Reference for the Personnel Committee were re-adopted with no amendments. The following members were appointed to the Personnel Committee for 2026/27:

- Cllr Latham
- Cllr Maclean
- Cllr Latham-Pearmain

14/26 Website and Communications

(a) It was resolved to adopt .gov.uk domains for Clerk and Councillor email addresses and the Council website pending further information.

15/26 Memberships

- (a) It was resolved to subscribe to CouncilWise Training and Support for 2026-27 at an annual fee of **£150+VAT**.
- (b) It was resolved not re-affiliate to EALC/NALC for 2026/27.

16/26 Review of the Asset Register

The asset register for 2025-26 was approved and signed.

17/26 Insurance

It was resolved to renew the Council's insurance with Zurich. The annual fee for 2026-27 is **£1016.51**.

18/26 Date, Time and Place of Meetings for 2026-27

The council approved the proposed dates, times and of meetings (including the next Annual Council Meeting and the Annual Parish Meeting 2027) to fall on the third Monday of every other month.

19/26 Finance

(a) It was resolved to approve the payments made between 16th March and the date of this meeting as follows:

Sarah Gaeta	£85.25
Sophie Blair-Wolker	£1140.90
HMRC	£181.74
PWLB	£5169.08
Parochial Church (Grant)	£600
Unity Trust Bank	£15.35
Tracey Poole	£120

Wallace Arboriculture	£283.20
Mayor Cuttle	£102
Solopress	£420.69
Zurich Municipal	£1016.51
Traffic Technology	£1596.00

- (b) The bank reconciliations for 2025-26 were noted and signed.

Final Balance at YE 31.03.26- £147,978.90

Current balance of all accounts as of 30.04.26- £163,849.30

20/26 Acceptance of Year End Accounts for 2025-26

- (a) The Council approved the Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements for 2025-26 and the AGAR forms were signed.
- (b) The Annual Internal Auditor Report for 2025-26 was not available at the time of the meeting and therefore deferred until the next meeting.
- (c) The Council approved the period of the exercise of Public Rights as 22nd June 2026- 31st July 2026.

21/26 Policies and Procedures

The following policies were reviewed and re-adopted with no amendments and to include the new Clerk's contact details where applicable:

- (a) Standing Orders
- (b) Financial Regulations
- (c) Code of Conduct
- (d) Equality and Diversity Policy
- (f) Working From Home Policy
- (g) Co-option Policy
- (h) Complaints Policy
- (i) Expenses Policy
- (j) Freedom of Information- Publication Scheme
- (k) Grievance Policy
- (l) Media Policy
- (m) Retention Policy
- (n) Safeguarding Policy
- (o) Training Policy
- (p) Vexatious Complaints Policy

The following policies were deferred until the next meeting:

- (e) Health and Safety Policy
- (f) Working From Home Policy
- (o) Training Policy

22/26 General Information

23/26 Staffing Matters

The public and press may be excluded from the following item if discussion involves personal or contractual information (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A).

- (a) It was resolved to purchase the Clerk a new laptop including Microsoft 365 for a total cost of **£528.97**.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.43pm.