



MINUTES

Parish Council Meeting

20th July at 7.30pm, held at

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

Attendees:

Cllr Trevor Hornsell (Vice-Chair), Cllr Kelly Latham-Pearmain, Cllr Steve Maclean, Cllr David Cameron, Cllr Nick Sinclair and 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.

24/26 Chairman's Welcome

Cllr Trevor Hornsell, Vice-Chair, welcomed those present.

25/26 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Peter Latham of which were accepted.

26/26 Declaration of Interest

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

27/26 Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2026 were approved and signed.

28/26 Matters arising from the minutes of 18th May 2026

There were no matters arising.

29/26 Public Forum

A member of the public had mentioned the benches at the bottom of the playground at the back of the Village Hall had become tired and old. A recent examination from Cllr Latham-Pearmain had said that the wood is rotten. It was suggested that the bench could be removed.

The following matters were also raised:

- Four trees planted on the bridleway and whether permission had been obtained.
- Overgrown hedge at Sparrows Close encroaching onto the footway.
- Mud on the footpath outside No. 8. Members noted this had previously been reported in September 2025.

30/26 Report from Essex County Council

There was no report received.

31/26 Report from Chelmsford City Council

There was no report received.

32/26 Clerks Report

The Clerk's report was noted.

33/26 Planning

There were no outstanding planning applications for consideration.

34/26 Street Naming and Numbering

Reference: 26/03212/NAMPRO

Land North of New Barns Cottages, Ingatestone Road, Highwood

Resolved: No comments.

35/26 Environment

(a) Land North of New Barns Cottages

(i) Correspondence was received from residents regarding the concerns of an encroachment of a travellers site and noted.

(ii) An update from the Essex Countywide Traveller Unit confirms that the matter relates primarily to **potential unauthorised development** rather than an unauthorised encampment. As a result, responsibility for enforcement rests with Chelmsford City Council (CCC) as the Local Planning Authority. The matter has therefore been referred to CCC for investigation from a planning enforcement perspective, and Essex Police have also been made aware of the concerns raised.

(iii) An update from CCC has confirmed that, following reports received on **26th June 2026** regarding the unauthorised use of the land as a residential caravan site and associated operational development, the Planning Enforcement Team prepared and served a **Temporary Stop Notice** on the same day. The Notice required all works to cease immediately and prohibited the further importation of caravans onto the land. CCC has advised that the Temporary Stop Notice was not complied with. Following consultation with its Legal Services Team, CCC successfully obtained an **Interim High Court Injunction**, which was served on the occupants of the land on **3rd July 2026**.

A return hearing has been listed for **20th July 2026**, when the High Court will consider whether the Interim Injunction should be continued. Residents are encouraged to continue reporting any suspected breaches of the Injunction directly to the Planning Enforcement Team and are advised not to approach the site or individuals involved.

(iii) An update from Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch confirmed that she has discussed the matter with Essex County Councillor Mike Steel, who shares the concerns raised by local residents. She confirmed that she and Councillor Mike Steel are writing jointly to CCC requesting that the matter continues to be treated as a priority, particularly following reports of additional hardcore being brought onto the site and the arrival of the caravans. She further expressed concern about the increasing number of unauthorised developments across the constituency and emphasised the importance of consistent and timely planning enforcement.

(b) Proposed Installation of CCTV within St Paul's Churchyard, Highwood

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- (i) The correspondence received from St Paul's Church and the Diocese regarding the proposed installation of Parish Council-owned CCTV within the churchyard was **noted**.
- (ii) It was **resolved** to proceed with the installation of Parish Council-owned CCTV within St Paul's Churchyard.
- (iii) it was **resolved** that Highwood Parish Council will own, operate and maintain the CCTV system and accept responsibility for all costs associated with the installation, operation, maintenance, insurance, UK GDPR compliance, signage and any ongoing operational requirements.
- (iv) It was **noted** that, following the Council's resolution, the Clerk will submit the Council's supporting information, including the approved resolution and minutes, to St Paul's Church to enable the Diocese's List B application to progress.

(c) Playground Inspection 2026-27

The RoSPA Playground Inspection Report for 2026/27 was received and noted. It was agreed that Cllr Maclean would inspect the safety matting beneath the dome climbing frame. Members also considered the condition of the play tower at Edney Common Playground and noted that when the tower inspected in 2022 there were no issues and queried whether the current concerns could be attributable to a design fault, given that the equipment remains commercially available.

(d) Replacement of Parish Council-Owned Bus Shelter – Highwood Road Adjacent to Sparrows Close

It was **resolved** to replace the bus shelter on Highwood Road, with funds being allocated from general reserves. **Proposed: Cllr Maclean, Seconded: Cllr Hornsell. All in favour.**

36/26 Website and Communications

- (a) The transition to .gov.uk email addresses and the website domain was noted. All Councillors and the Clerk have full access to, and are able to utilise, the system effectively.

37/26 Finance

- (a) The following payments were approved:

Steve Maclean (reimbursement of purchase of Clerk's laptop, including Microsoft 365)	£528.97
euHost	£175.18
HMRC	£152.94
Sophie Blair-Wolker	£1087.51
ICO	£47.00
Wallace Arboriculture	£283.20
Dunmow Training Ltd	£180
Solo Press	£380.42
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- (b) The bank reconciliations from May and June 2026 were signed.
- (c) The Internal Auditor's Report 2025-26 was noted.

38/26 General Information

(a) Highway Rangers Service

It was agreed for the Clerk to report the following matters to the Highway Rangers Service:

1. Overhanging trees along the bridleway at Paul's Lane.
2. Overhanging trees on the stretch between St Paul's Church and the neighbouring bungalow.

39/26 Private and Confidential- Exclusion of the Press and Public

- (a) The resignation of the current Clerk and RFO, including next steps and recruitment process was noted.

40/26 Any other Business

- (a) There was no further items for discussion.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.40 pm.

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