



# WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

White Colne Village Hall, Bures Road, White Colne, CO6 2QA.

[www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk)

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*Village of the Year 2025*

13<sup>th</sup> May 2026

To: All White Colne Parish Councillors

You are hereby summoned to attend the **ANNUAL MEETING** of **WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL**, to be held at **White Colne Village Hall** on **Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2026** at **1930hrs** for the purpose of transacting the following business. Members of the public and press have a right and are cordially invited to be present at the meeting. There will be an opportunity to address the Council under Agenda item 5.

Jim Morris, Clerk to the Council

## AGENDA

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To RECEIVE any apologies for absence.

**2. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON**

To ELECT the Chairperson of the Parish Council for 2026-27.

To RECEIVE the Chairperson's Acceptance of Office.

**3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

To ELECT the Vice-Chairperson of the Parish Council for 2026-27.

To RECEIVE the Vice-Chairperson's Acceptance of Office.

**4. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS**

To RECEIVE any disclosure by members of interests in Agenda items.

**5. PUBLIC SESSION**

To RECEIVE questions and statements from members of the public.

**6. MINUTES**

To RECEIVE and SIGN as correct records the Minutes of the White Colne Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2026 (Appendix A).

**7. MATTERS ARISING**

To RECEIVE and CONSIDER the list of matters arising and ongoing since previous meetings (Appendix B).

**8. CO-OPTION OF NEW MEMBER**

To RECEIVE and CONSIDER any applications to fill the council's vacant seat.

**9. REPRESENTATIVES' REPORTS**

- i. Cllr George Courtauld & Cllr Gabrielle Spray, Braintree District - Colnes Ward.
- ii. Cllr Isi Rocha, Essex County - Halstead Division.

**10. FINANCE**

- i. To APPROVE the successful contractor for Outdoor Gym supply & installation.
- ii. To APPROVE the contractor's invoice for payment.
- iii. To APPROVE the successful contractor for play equipment supply & installation.
- iv. To CONSIDER street cleaning expenditure in 2026-27 via BDC grant funding.
- v. To NOTE the schedule of payments made in 2025-26 Q4 (Appendix C).
- vi. To REVIEW the Council's expenditure under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- vii. To RECEIVE and CONSIDER bank reconciliations for 2025-26 Q4 (to be tabled at meeting).
- viii. To RECEIVE and CONSIDER the Internal Audit report for year-end 2025-26 (Appendix D).
- ix. To RECEIVE and CONSIDER the Annual Governance & Accountability Return Internal Audit Report 2025-26 (Appendix E).
- x. To APPROVE Confirmation of the Dates of the Period for the Exercise of Public Rights (Appendix F).

**11. ANNUAL RETURN – GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2025-26**

TO RECEIVE and CONSIDER Section 1 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31.03.2026 which has been prepared for the external auditors PKF Littlejohn LLP as required by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2006 (Appendix G).

**12. ANNUAL RETURN – ACCOUNTING STATEMENT 2025-26**

To RECEIVE and CONSIDER Section 2 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31.03.2026 which has been prepared for the external auditors PKF Littlejohn LLP as required by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2006 (Appendix H).

**13. PLANNING**

To RECEIVE and CONSIDER Planning Applications, Appeals or Consultations notified by Braintree District Council, Essex County Council, or any other relevant body, including any received between the date of the Agenda and the meeting.

- i. Planning Applications:
  - a) Ref: [260657](#) (Appendix I).

Location: Land at Earls Colne Road, Great Tey.

Proposal: Outline planning application for up to 150 no. residential dwellings, public open space, landscaping, a new vehicular access and all other associated works. All Matters Reserved, except access.

b) Ref: [26/00537/FUL](#) (Appendix J).

Location: Chalkney Mill, Tey Road, Earls Colne, Essex, CO6 2PR.

Proposal: Part retrospective application for the construction of 17 no. poultry breeding and rearing units.

c) Ref: [26/00649/FUL](#) (Appendix K).

Location: Land Adjacent to Millbrooks Farm, Mill Lane, Colne Engaine, Essex, CO6 2HU.

Proposal: Erection of stables, menage, access improvements and associated works.

d) Ref: [26/00909/OUT](#) (Appendix L).

Location: Garden To The Woodshed, Broom Farm, Colne Park Road, White Colne, CO6 2QN.

Proposal: Outline planning application with all matters reserved, except access for the erection of one dwelling.

ii. Planning Decisions: None received.

iii. Planning Appeals: None received.

iv. Braintree District Council Local Plan Review (Appendix M):

- White Colne Parish Council response (i)
- Colne Valley Parishes response (ii)
- Correspondence: *Braintree District Local Plan Review update and next steps* (iii)

v. Correspondence: *Bures N'hood Plan - Update and notice of new focused consultation (ends 29 May)* (Appendix N).

#### **14. COMMUNITY LIAISON**

To RECEIVE and CONSIDER items relating to liaison with the local community & outside bodies:

i. Colne Valley Parishes Meeting held 14.04.26 (Appendix O).

#### **15. LEISURE & FACILITIES**

To RECEIVE and CONSIDER items relating to parish council managed facilities:

i. Village Hall – new member of staff.

ii. Solar Energy Report (to be tabled at meeting).

iii. The Meadows – Play Areas Maintenance Log (Appendix Q).

iv. Allotments – Correspondence: *Perimeter Fence* (Appendix R).

v. Allotments – proposed Boundary Fencing Policy (Appendix S).

#### **16. GOVERNANCE**

i. Parish Council Action Plan 2026-27 (Appendix T).

**17. REVIEW OF DELEGATION ARRANGEMENTS**

To REVIEW the Scheme of Delegation and delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities (Appendix U).

**18. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES**

To APPOINT any new committees in accordance with White Colne Standing Order 4.

**19. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

To REVIEW White Colne Parish Council Standing Orders and Financial Regulations (circulated with Agenda).

**20. REVIEW OF: ARRANGEMENTS WITH OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES, NOT-FOR-PROFIT BODIES, & BUSINESSES; SUBSCRIPTIONS; & REPRESENTATION OR WORK WITH EXTERNAL BODIES**

To REVIEW: arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses; the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies; & representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back (App V).

**21. REVIEW OF INVENTORY OF LAND & ASSETS**

To REVIEW the inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment (Appendix W).

**22. REVIEW OF INSURANCE COVER**

To REVIEW and CONFIRM arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks (circulated with Agenda).

**23. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

To REVIEW the Council's Policy Review Schedule (Appendix X).

**24. WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS 2025-26**

To DETERMINE the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council (Appendix Y).

**25. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON THE AGENDA OF A FUTURE MEETING**

To RECEIVE from members any items for future consideration.

**26. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

To NOTE the date of the next meeting: Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2026.



# WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

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*Village of the Year 2025*

## **Minutes of the White Colne Parish Council Meeting held at White Colne Village Hall on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 19:30hrs.**

Present: Cllr Paula Bull  
Cllr Michael Field  
Cllr Jane Taylor (Chairperson)  
Cllr John Wilson  
Jim Morris, Parish Clerk  
Cllr George Courtauld, Colnes Ward

### **098/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Paul Batchford, Cllr Jason Pryke, Colnes Ward Cllr Gabrielle Spray, and Halstead Division Cllr Chris Siddall.

### **099/25 CO-OPTION OF NEW MEMBER**

No potential new councillors came forward.

### **100/25 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS**

Cllr Wilson had an ongoing dispensation, in accordance with Standing Order 13(e), to take part in discussions and any vote regarding Allotments.

### **101/25 PUBLIC SESSION**

No members of the public in attendance.

### **102/25 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the White Colne Parish Council Meeting held 20.01.2026 and the Extra-Ordinary Meeting held 05.02.2026 were approved as being true and correct records by council and signed by the Chairperson.

### **103/25 MATTERS ARISING**

Members considered the parish council's list of matters arising and ongoing (attached to record Minutes). The Speed Indicator Device had been returned to the manufacturer; the Village Hall's price increase and revised Terms & Conditions had been published and mediated to ongoing users; the council's precept requirement for 2026-27 had been entered; Essex Sight had attended a recent Warm Hub; and the council had supported the parish with information and updates on the Earls Colne Gas Main Replacement. Cllr Wilson had successfully sought £150 in printing costs from Cadent. Other matters were either ongoing or due to be considered at the meeting.

**It was RESOLVED: that the matters arising be noted.**

### **104/25 REPRESENTATIVES' REPORTS**

Colnes Ward Cllr George Courtauld offered a report to the meeting. There was significant concern regarding the major housing development proposals adjacent to Halstead of approximately 3,000

homes. There had been strong public opposition, with around 120 emails received. Key concerns include the loss of countryside, lack of infrastructure, and unclear road layouts and their potential impacts. A Planning Application at Colne Engaine for equestrian use, including stables and a menage, was noted. A meeting in the parish saw high public attendance and strong feelings expressed. It was emphasised that decisions cannot be made based on speculation, such as potential future use, and must instead be assessed solely on planning merits. Concerns were also raised about local government reorganisation, including the risk of a democratic deficit, loss of experienced staff, and challenges during the transition period. It was noted that parish councils may take on an increased role as a result.

**RESPONSE: Cllr Taylor thanked Cllr Courtauld for the report.**

Colnes Ward Cllr Gabrielle Spray had provided a written report for the meeting to consider (attached at Footnote<sup>1</sup>). Halstead Division Cllr Chris Siddall had offered apologies for absence.

## **105/25 FINANCE**

i. Members received and considered details of IT equipment purchased under Financial Regulation 5.18. The council's antivirus software had been due to expire on 26<sup>th</sup> February. The council had identified the need for a new laptop in its Budget 2026-27 calculations, assigning £500 as an earmarked reserve. The Chairperson received advice from a family member that Apple products were favourable due to usability and longevity. With time to either renew the antivirus or purchase an Apple laptop being short, the Clerk and Chairperson assessed the situation alongside the council's Financial Regulations, and considered that the risk to the ability to deliver council services due to infected IT equipment was serious enough to approve the purchase of a new laptop under Financial Regulation 5.18.

**It was RESOLVED: that the laptop purchase be unanimously approved.**

ii. Maintenance quote: to sand back and re-varnish the Village Hall floor had been quoted at £2,310. The contractor would charge £30 per sqm., applying two coats of varnish.

**It was RESOLVED: that the quote be noted and the works considered an aspiration.**

iii. Membership of Rural Community Council of Essex (attached to record Minutes): the annual subscription for 2026-27 would be £53.

**It was RESOLVED: that membership of RCCE in 2026-27 be approved.**

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### **<sup>1</sup> REPORT FOR PARISH COUNCILS JANUARY 2026**

**LOCAL PLAN:** The Regulation 18 Public Consultation on the District's Local Plan opened on 3<sup>rd</sup> March and will run for six weeks. The Council has been given a mandatory housing target to deliver 1,264 new homes per year and all residents, businesses and community groups are encouraged to share their views on where we want to see development over the next 15 years. At this stage of drafting our updated Local Plan nothing is decided or fixed. Full details, including how to comment, available at [www.braintree.gov.uk/localplanreview](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/localplanreview)

**COUNCIL TAX 2026/27:** The level of Council Tax for this financial year was discussed at Full Council on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February and it was agreed that Braintree Council's portion of Council Tax for this financial year will be frozen. This measure acknowledges that the cost of living still presents challenges for many residents. No front-line Council services will be cut as a result of the Council Tax freeze and your District Council intends to continue providing the best possible service for all residents.

**Norwich-Tilbury National Grid Upgrade:** The first public examination sessions took place in mid-February covering the areas for Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. The scheme, which Braintree Council acknowledges is needed in order to maintain a sustainable supply of electricity across the Eastern Region, will result in miles of new pylons appearing across our countryside. I logged onto the examination hearing for the Essex session and it was clear from listening to the speakers that communication between residents and National Grid has fallen short of what was expected; this is particularly relevant to the farming communities whose land will be affected by the route of the pylons, and it was made very clear to the Examiner from the Planning Inspectorate that the consultations were unsatisfactory in many instances. Further examination sessions will take place and the Examiner will also conduct site visits where she feels this would be appropriate.

**AGE WELL Fair:** On Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April Braintree District Council will be hosting the Age Well Fair at Halstead Leisure Centre, Colne Road, CO9 2HR. The event is free to attend and runs from 10.00am – 13.00pm. Over 30 local organisations will be attending to offer advice, support and help with ageing. Previous Age Well events have been very well attended and feedback shows that people find the information provided really helpful. Best regards, Cllr Gabrielle Spray

iv. Members considered confirmation of the council's precept requirement for 2026-27 (attached to record Minutes). Braintree District Council had resolved to depict parish councils' precept increases to one decimal point, resulting in White Colne's increase being mediated to local rate payers as "5.0%" rather than 4.99%.

**It was RESOLVED: that the precept confirmation be noted.**

v. Members considered suggested alterations to budgeted earmarked reserves for 2026-27 (attached to record Minutes). The laptop had been purchased, resulting in £500 no longer needing to be earmarked, and the quote for the Village Hall floor was £1,310 higher than anticipated.

**It was RESOLVED: that the council's budgeted earmarked reserves for 2026-27 be adjusted to reflect recent spending and quote received. The council resolved that holding an earmarked reserve for the purpose of carrying out Village Hall repairs did not necessarily commit it to carrying out the works during 2026-27.**

vi. Correspondence: *CouncilWise Subscription - Commencing 1st April 2026* (attached to record Minutes).

**It was RESOLVED: that the correspondence be noted.**

vii. EALC training available in Financial Year 2026-27 (attached to record Minutes).

**It was RESOLVED: that the training calendar be noted.**

## **106/25 COMMUNITY LIAISON**

i. Joint meeting with Chappell, Colne Engaine, Earls Colne, Halstead, and Wakes Colne Parish Councils held 11<sup>th</sup> March 2026 (notes attached at Footnote<sup>2</sup>). Cllrs Field and Taylor had attended on

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<sup>2</sup> **Present:** Cllr Alan Barnard (Colne Engaine), Cllr Jim Bond (Halstead), Cllr Peter Chillingworth (Wakes Colne), Cllr Patrick Dent (Chappel), Cllr Michael Field (White Colne), Cllr Nigel Lippiatt (Chappel), Jim Morris (acting Clerk, Wakes Colne), Cllr Denise Stocker (Chairperson, Wakes Colne), Cllr Jane Taylor (White Colne), Cllr Barry Walsh (Wakes Colne).

### **1. Welcome & Apologies**

Cllr Stocker opened the meeting. Apologies had been received from Cllr Paula Bull (White Colne) and Cllr William Sunnucks (Wakes Colne).

Members discussed ongoing issues, including Community Speedwatch; Local Government Reorganisation; Community Energy; and the footpath bridge at Colne Engaine.

i. Chappel Parish Council had signed up to the 20's Plenty campaign. Other councils had previously signed up but noted that it largely involves supporting the principle rather than immediate implementation. Volunteer recruitment for Community Speed Watch had been difficult in several villages despite previous attempts. Some parishes reported that speed was not considered a major issue, with road conditions and potholes naturally slowing traffic.

ii. The proposals for LGR were with Essex County Council and the Government. An announcement was expected around 27 March. The discussion noted rumours that the reorganisation may not proceed and that parish elections scheduled for 2027 may be deferred by a year if structural changes were to go ahead.

iii. Cllr Taylor provided feedback following Energy Local training in January. Energy Local Clubs required large electricity generators in order to be viable. The White Colne Village Hall solar array (approx. 14,000 kWh/year) was too small to support many households. Members of a Local Energy Club must also be connected to the same electrical substation, limiting participation between villages. White Colne's export rate had recently dropped from 12p/kWh to around 6p/kWh, however, making a potential alternative model more attractive. Further discussions would take place and updates provided.

iv. A damaged footpath bridge over the River Colne between White Colne and Earls Colne remains unresolved and Essex County Council had not provided clarity on replacement plans. Colne Engaine had entered a Freedom of Information request regarding previous costs.

### **2. Braintree Local Plan**

The group discussed the emerging Braintree Local Plan and the cumulative impact of development across the Colne Valley. **Strategic Housing Growth.** Significant development proposals were highlighted including: Kelvedon (5,600 homes proposed), Feering (approx. 835), Halstead (approx. 2,700), Marks Tey (approx. 2,500), and wider growth corridors along the A12 and A120. Concerns raised included: Traffic impacts across rural roads; Lack of planned infrastructure improvements; Pressure on local services; Environmental and landscape impacts. **Infrastructure Concerns.** Participants highlighted: Congestion already severe on A120 and A12; Risk of increased traffic through rural lanes; Increased pressure on schools, healthcare, sewage infrastructure, and local roads. It was noted that National Highways had already expressed concerns regarding junction capacity. **Impact on Smaller Villages.** Even villages without new allocations would

behalf of White Colne. The meeting had agreed that each parish would formulate and submit its own response to the BDC Local Plan but would also support one another and aim to produce a joint statement. Development in each parish, and at Greenstead Green, would have impacts across all the villages. The next meeting had been scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> April.

**It was RESOLVED: that the item be noted. Members would attend the forthcoming meeting if available.**

ii. Correspondence: ‘Healing Meadows’ – The Underdog Crew CIC (attached to record Minutes). The leader of the project had been invited to attend the Annual Parish Meeting and would speak on the subject.

**It was RESOLVED: that the correspondence be noted.**

iii. Members discussed the ongoing works associated with the Earls Colne replacement gas main project. Cllrs Taylor and Wilson had met with a representative of the contracting firm and had been assured that the work around the Village Green would be undertaken sensitively, although the ground crews had subsequently failed to follow the agreed method of turf removal and reinstatement. Cllr Wilson had discussed the matter with Cadent’s management, and it had been agreed that the contracting firm would pay for replacement turf and aftercare.

**It was RESOLVED: that the report be noted.**

## 107/25 PLANNING

### i. Applications

a) Ref: [26/00189/FUL](#) (attached to record Minutes).

Location: Land Adjacent to Millbrooks Farm, Mill Lane, Colne Engaine, Essex, CO6 2HU.

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[Footnote 2 cont.] experience increased through-traffic, pressure on amenities, and loss of rural character. Examples were given of residents from neighbouring towns using facilities such as White Colne Meadows, without associated funding support. **Strategic Sites.** Discussion referenced major proposed developments, including: Halstead growth area; Kings Dene strategic site; Additional housing near Marks Tey and along transport corridors.

Questions were raised about: Employment opportunities for residents; Car dependency; Sustainability of the development strategy. **Joint Parish Response.** There was strong support for collaborative working between parishes, including suggestions to create a Colne Valley parish network and prepare a joint response to the Braintree Local Plan consultation highlighting the cumulative impact across multiple villages. It was noted that a similar joint submission from seven parishes had been effective in raising concerns with Colchester City Council. **Actions.** Cllr Stocker would share the existing joint statement prepared by neighbouring parish group; Consider obtaining professional planning advice if funding allows; Explore involvement of experienced planning professionals already advising other parish groups. **Consultation Deadline.** The Consultation would close on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2026. Parishes agreed the importance of coordinating responses before that date. **Public Consultation Events.** Upcoming consultation events were noted.

### **3. Colchester Local Plan**

Cllr Stocker provided an update on the Colchester Local Plan process, which was slightly further advanced. Key issues raised: National Highways’ capacity concerns at A12 Junctions 26 & 27 (A12 & A120) due to already being at capacity; Constraints around Marks Tey / A120 corridor; Potential objections from National Highways if traffic issues cannot be resolved; Concerns over CCC Policy for dealing with speculative Planning Applications; Evidence of speculative applications being submitted by developers.

### **4. Halstead Empire Theatre Community Arts Centre**

Cllr Bond presented plans to develop the Empire Theatre site into a Community Arts Centre. **Overview.** Extension to the existing theatre building; Creation of a new community arts hub; Facilities to include: café/bar, exhibition space, improved theatre facilities. **Funding.** Estimated project cost: £1.7–£2 million. Potential funding sources include: Arts Council, Section 106 contributions, local fundraising, and grant funding. **Purpose.** The facility would serve Halstead and surrounding villages, providing cultural and community activities that are otherwise difficult to access due to transport limitations. **Support Requested.** The project team was seeking assistance with: fundraising, communications and publicity, social media, photography, and arranging corporate partnerships. Parish councils were invited to support the project where possible.

### **5. Any Other Business**

Next steps were resolved: Circulate the existing joint parish planning statement; Contact planning advisor involved with Colne Engaine; Explore joint response to Braintree Local Plan; Attend consultation events where possible; Consider public engagement in villages; Contact Greenstead Green & Halstead Rural Parish Council

Proposal: Erection of stables, menage, access improvements and associated works.

**RESPONSE: White Colne Parish Council objects to Application ref 26/00189/FUL. The proposal would increase traffic on Colne Park Road, which is an unlit, narrow and steep lane with no pedestrian footway. The parish council notes that the Highways Authority objects to the proposal, and supports its reasons. In addition, the site has no previous history of equestrian use, and any development including hardstanding would harm the setting of the Colne River Valley Landscape Area. White Colne Parish Council requests that the Application be refused at the earliest opportunity.**

b) Ref: [26/00414/TPO](#) (attached to record Minutes).

Location: 63 Colchester Road, White Colne, Essex, CO6 2PP.

Proposal: Notice of intent to carry out works to tree protected by Tree Preservation Order 1/81- T1 Trim Yew reduce new growth with hedge trimmer and cut back the bulbous lower area marked in photo to improve crown symmetry by approximately 1.5 meters.

**RESPONSE: White Colne Parish Council has no objection to Application ref. 26/00414/TPO.**

c) Further item received after Agenda: A retrospective Planning Application for the development of a poultry business at Chalkney Mill was expected.

**It was RESOLVED: that the item be noted.**

ii. Decisions – none received.

iii. Appeals – none received.

iv. The Braintree District Council Local Plan Review Regulation 18 Consultation (attached to record Minutes) had been published. Members discussed supporting the proposal to designate land adjacent to White Colne Village hall as Local Green Space (response attached at Footnote<sup>3</sup>).

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<sup>3</sup> White Colne Parish Council strongly supports the proposed designation of the land to the rear of the Village Hall (former railway line and goods yard) as a Local Green Space. The Parish Council considers that the site clearly meets the emergent December 2025 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) criteria for Local Green Space designation, complying with paragraphs: **HC1: Planning for healthy communities** 1. To promote the creation of healthy and inclusive places, and the provision, retention and enhancement of appropriate community facilities and public service infrastructure, development plans should, at the most appropriate level: c. Allocate land specifically for community facilities and public service infrastructure where it is appropriate to do so, and assess whether any land is suitable to designate as Local Green Space in accordance with policy HC2; d. Set local standards for the provision of different types of outdoor recreational land, including for play, sport, informal recreation and allotments. In doing so they should draw upon relevant national standards and best practice, tailoring these as necessary to local circumstances and evidence<sup>3</sup>.

Policies for play and informal recreation should aim to secure a connected network of high quality, inclusive and accessible opportunities as part of the wider network of green space provision, secured through both on-site provision in conjunction with land allocated for development and through other contributions and investment. **HC2: Local Green Space** 1. Local and neighbourhood plans may designate land as Local Green Space where this would safeguard green areas of particular value to the local community. Local Green Space should be limited to situations where the land concerned is: a. In close proximity to the community it serves; b. Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and c. Local in character and not an extensive tract of land. 2. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and the provision of sufficient land for homes, jobs and other needs. Local Green Space should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and should be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

### **1. Close Proximity to the Community**

The site lies within the village envelope and directly adjoins the Village Hall, allotments and the Meadows public open space. It forms an established pedestrian link between these community facilities and is used regularly by residents.

### **2. Demonstrably Special to the Local Community**

The land is demonstrably special for the following reasons: It has remained largely undisturbed for over 50 years, developing into long-established semi-natural habitat. It forms part of the former railway alignment and retains strong local historic character. It is publicly accessible and functions as an informal walking route linking key community assets. It provides visual openness and a green backdrop to the Village Hall. It forms part of a continuous green corridor that links with designated Local Nature Reserve land along the former railway line, achieving the NPPF target “to secure a connected network of high quality, inclusive and

Responses to other BDC LP Policies, including on matters such as scale of housing growth, parking standards, footway connectivity, design of the built environment, SuDS and flood mitigation, and infrastructure provision would be formulated and resolved ahead of the Consultation closing date.

**It was RESOLVED: that the council's responses be progressed. Details on the BDC LP would be included on the council's forthcoming leaflet to residents.**

## **108/25 LEISURE & FACILITIES**

i. Members considered items arising regarding the Village Hall: the Community Supermarket had offered to continue attending the Hall fortnightly following the end of autumn / winter Warm Hubs; Cllr Taylor had been invited to apply for £20,000 National Lottery Community Funding for two further years of Warm Hub (2026-27 & 2027-28) (attached to record Minutes). Two years' provision would require £942 in support from the parish council, proposed to be in the form of a reduced rate in Hall hire. If agreed, the grant application would be submitted closer to the restart of the Hub; following the assessment of the Solar Energy Report (attached to record Minutes), Cllr Taylor noted that Scottish Power had reduced its payment rate for export from 12 pence per kWh to 6 pence per kWh. The new energy import supplier could be approached to see if it could take on the Hall's export, and the possible creation of a Local Energy Club could be assessed.

**It was RESOLVED: that the Community Supermarket be offered free use of the Hall throughout the year, until the recommencement of the Warm Hub; that National Lottery Community Funding for the Warm Hub be approved and the application processed at a future date; the creation of a Local Energy Club would be considered at a future meeting.**

ii. Members discussed items broadly associated with outdoor leisure: funding for the Outdoor Gym had been confirmed and the supplier would seek to install the equipment within six weeks. The concrete table tennis table would need to be removed beforehand; updating the younger children's imaginative play equipment was discussed, and applications for grant funding considered; Cllrs Bull & Taylor had assessed The Meadows play equipment (attached to record Minutes) finding no major safety risks. Minor repairs and maintenance such as sanding and reinforcing were recommended.

**It was RESOLVED: that the table tennis table be offered at no charge to anyone able to dismantle and collect it; that an application for Councillors' Community Funding be entered for new play equipment; that Kevin Nolan be approached to quote for works needed to existing play equipment.**

iii. Correspondence: *Pump Track* (attached to record Minutes). Members expressed concerns over space and suitability in the village and declined to pursue the idea.

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[Footnote 3 cont.] accessible opportunities as part of the wider network of green space provision". It contributes to biodiversity and habitat connectivity within the village.

The Parish Council considers that the site performs an important green infrastructure function by maintaining ecological connectivity along the former railway corridor. Its loss or fragmentation would materially harm local biodiversity networks and diminish the character of this part of the settlement.

### **3. Local in Character and Not an Extensive Tract**

The site is mainly linear in form, clearly defined by the historic railway alignment and limited in scale. It is local in character and does not constitute an extensive tract of land.

### **4. Stewardship and Positive Management**

The Parish Council supports the long-term, sensitive management of this land in a manner consistent with its role as a green corridor and semi-natural habitat. Any future stewardship would focus on biodiversity enhancement and informal access, and would seek to involve community volunteers and, where appropriate, external grant funding. The intention would be light-touch ecological management, avoiding additional burden on public finances while safeguarding the site's environmental value.

For these reasons, the Parish Council strongly supports the proposed Local Green Space designation and considers it sound and consistent with national policy.

### **5. Overlapping Designations**

Whilst the council supports the proposed Local Green Space designation, it is noted that the land remains partly overlaid by designated Development Boundary. The two designations are in conflict with one another, and the Development Boundary should be redrawn to follow the fenceline of adjacent properties.

**It was RESOLVED: that the item be noted.**

iv. Correspondence: *Yellow-legged Asian hornet information to the public - we need your help* (attached to record Minutes). Council agreed with the correspondent on the severity of the problem posed by invasive hornets.

**It was RESOLVED: that the issue be highlighted. The council’s handyman would be asked to repair the noticeboard and other infrastructure at the entrance to The Meadows.**

**109/25 GOVERNANCE**

i. Members received and considered a report on *Assertion 10* (attached to record Minutes), a new governance requirement that the council would need to comply with in order to submit a successful Annual Governance Return for 2025-26. The council owned and controlled its official domain name, Councillors and staff used official email addresses for council business, and email and digital systems were secure. The council was registered with the Information Commissioner’s Office, and General Data Protection requirements were in place in the form of up-to-date Policies and procedures. Digital and data compliance had been reviewed across the council year, and an updated IT Policy was due to be considered at the following Agenda item. The council’s website provider had stated that the website was compliant with WCAG2.2AA regulations, adding that “of course that does not cover your content.”

**It was RESOLVED: that the council was compliant with Assertion 10 of the forthcoming Annual Governance and Accounting Return. Quotes for new or revitalised website would be sought and considered at a future meeting.**

ii. Policy review: IT, Press, & Social Media Policy (attached to record Minutes).

**It was RESOLVED: that the IT, Press, & Social Media Policy be adopted.**

**110/25 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON THE AGENDA OF A FUTURE MEETING**

A ‘Village Awards’ evening would be held in conjunction with the Annual Parish Meeting in April. Parishioners who had offered help and support to the council would be presented with gift vouchers for a local business, funded from the Chairperson’s annual allowance. Cllr Field would judge the best-kept Allotment.

**111/25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Annual Parish Meeting was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April at White Colne Village Hall.

The Annual Meeting of White Colne Parish Council was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at White Colne Village Hall at 1930hrs.

The meeting closed at 21:30hrs.

Signed.....

Date.....



## WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

White Colne Village Hall, Bures Road, White Colne, CO6 2QA.

[www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk)

[clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk)

*Village of the Year 2025*

### MATTERS ARISING & ONGOING

Minute Ref.	Action
066/24	Local Council Award to be considered at a future meeting.
009/25	Cllrs Pryke & Siddall to assess possible SID sites in Bures Road.
040/25	Enter application for replacement play equipment to Enover Community Trust.
056/25	Reconsider recycled clothing banks at a future meeting.
065/25	Clerk to follow up with ECC Highways over the missing streetlight.
072/25	Plan for Road Safety Week 2026.
073/25	Seek quotes for grass cutting.
	Develop Meadows Management Plan.
	Write to Allotment plot holders regarding netting; update 2026-27 Allotment Agreement.
079/25	Seek advice on installing a bin at the layby on Bures Road.
083/25	Write to Cllr Siddall re footways, streetlight, and pole for SID
086/25	Write to owners of property adjacent to former railway line
087/25	Seek tree works quotes
105/25	Subscribe to RCCE in 2026-27
	Amend earmarked reserves in 2026-27 budget
106/25	Members to attend Colne Valley Parishes meeting on 14.04.2026
107/25	Formulate and resolve BDC LP responses; produce information leaflet for residents
108/25	Offer use of the Hall to Community Supermarket
	Apply for Warm Hub funding
	Offer table tennis table to anyone willing and able to pick it up
	Enter grant requests to BDC / ECC representatives
	Appoint contractor to carry out play equipment repairs
Appoint contractor to carry out noticeboard repairs	
109/25	Seek quotes for new website
110/25	Prepare 'Village Awards' for the Annual Parish Meeting

# Whitecolne Parish Council

30 April 2026 (2025-2026)

## PAYMENTS LIST

Vouche	Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Payment Ref.	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
384	Office	02/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Office	Starboard Systems Limited	S	23.00	4.60	27.60
388	Fees	05/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	PayPal	X	3.78		3.78
428	Fees	05/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Card payments	SumUp	X	1.56		1.56
387	Subscriptions	06/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Subscription	The Allotment Society	S	70.00	14.00	84.00
385	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	06/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Gini Bryant	X	████		████
386	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	06/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Rachael Jennings	X	████		████
389	Fees	12/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	PayPal	X	1.61		1.61
398	Cleaning	13/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	Samantha Mason	X	148.15		148.15
397	WCVH H&S	13/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	John Watt Photography	S	227.00	45.40	272.40
396	General Expenditure	13/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Expenses	Jane Taylor	X	40.00		40.00
395	General Expenditure	13/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Expenses	Jane Taylor	X	37.60		37.60
391	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	13/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Caroline Lingley	X	████		████
392	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	13/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Gini Bryant	X	████		████
393	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	13/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Rachael Jennings	X	████		████
394	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	13/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Paula Bull	X	48.00		48.00
406	Christmas	16/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Christmas	Sainsbury's	Z	55.00		55.00
405	Christmas	16/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Christmas	Amazon EU	S	9.16	1.83	10.99
409	Community Events	16/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Open Spaces	DHF Products Ltd	S	23.50	4.70	28.20
404	Community Events	16/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Community Cafe	Black Horse Cafe	S	18.00	3.60	21.60
403	Community Events	16/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Community Cafe	Sainsbury's	Z	36.76		36.76
410	Office	16/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Office	Adobe Software Systems	S	16.64	3.33	19.97
408	Office	16/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Office	HP Inc UK Ltd	S	11.24	2.25	13.49
407	Banking Fees	16/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Card payments	LLoyds Multipay	X	6.00		6.00
402	Grant Exp - Warm Hub	16/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Grant Exp - Warm Hub	Amazon EU	Z	16.48		16.48
401	Grant Exp - Warm Hub	16/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Grant Exp - Warm Hub	Amazon EU	S	7.05	1.41	8.46
400	Grant Exp - Warm Hub	16/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Grant Exp - Warm Hub	Next Day Catering Equipm	S	21.66	4.33	25.99
399	Grant Exp - Warm Hub	16/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Grant Exp - Warm Hub	Sainsbury's	Z	280.52		280.52
390	Fees	19/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	PayPal	X	4.07		4.07
411	Electricity	19/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	Smartest Energy	L	132.53	6.63	139.16
412	Village Green	22/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Open Spaces	SD Arboriculture	E	400.00		400.00
416	Cleaning	22/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Window cleaning	Gallen Windows	X	14.00		14.00
413	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	22/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Caroline Lingley	X	████		████
414	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	22/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Rachael Jennings	X	████		████

PAYMENTS LIST

Vouche	Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Payment Ref.	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
415	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	22/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Gini Bryant	X	█		█
417	Subscriptions	23/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Subscription	Information Commissioner'	X	47.00		47.00
423	Meadows	27/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Open Spaces	Stephen Holt	X	75.00		75.00
422	Play Areas	27/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Open Spaces	Stephen Holt	X	30.00		30.00
418	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	27/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Caroline Lingley	X	█		█
419	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	27/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Gini Bryant	X	█		█
420	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	27/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Rachael Jennings	X	█		█
421	Grant Exp - Street Cleaning	27/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Grant Exp - Street Cleaning	Stephen Holt	X	180.00		180.00
429	Fees	28/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Card payments	Stripe	X	3.02		3.02
425	Salary	30/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Jim Morris	X	█		█
425	Work from Home Allowance	30/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Jim Morris	X	█		█
426	Booking Secretary	30/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	Jade Lock	X	130.00		130.00
424	Grant Exp - PAYE/NI	30/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		PAYE/NI	HMRC	X	█		█
427	Banking Fees	31/01/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		General Administration	Unity Trust Bank	X	6.00		6.00
431	Fees	02/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	PayPal	X	2.04		2.04
430	Office	02/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Subscription	Starboard Systems Limited	S	23.00	4.60	27.60
435	Cleaning	03/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	Samantha Mason	X	231.74		231.74
432	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	03/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Kirsten Thomas	X	█		█
433	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	03/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Caroline Lingley	X	█		█
434	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	03/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Gini Bryant	X	█		█
437	Fees	04/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	PayPal	X	4.94		4.94
436	Fees	04/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	SumUp	X	2.46		2.46
438	Deposit	11/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	WCVH Hirer	X	50.00		50.00
439	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	11/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Kirsten Thomas	X	█		█
440	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	11/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Caroline Lingley	X	█		█
441	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	11/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Gini Bryant	X	█		█
442	Community Events	12/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		General Administration	Paula Bull	X	35.00		35.00
449	Cleaning	16/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	SWS London Trading Ltd	S	15.71	3.14	18.85
451	Community Events	16/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Community Cafe	Black Horse Cafe	S	36.00	7.20	43.20
450	Community Events	16/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Community Cafe	Sainsbury's	Z	93.58		93.58
448	Community Events	16/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	Amazon EU	S	12.16	2.43	14.59
452	Electricity	16/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	Smartest Energy	S	1.70	0.34	2.04
452	Electricity	16/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	Smartest Energy	L	163.08	8.15	171.23
444	Office	16/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Office	Adobe Software Systems	S	16.64	3.33	19.97
445	Office	16/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Office	Post Office	E	9.25		9.25

PAYMENTS LIST

Vouche	Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Payment Ref.	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
443	Office	16/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Office	HP Inc UK Ltd	S	11.24	2.25	13.49
446	Banking Fees	16/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Card payments	LLoyds Multipay	E	6.00		6.00
447	Grant Exp - Warm Hub	16/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Grant Exp - Warm Hub	Sainsbury's	Z	370.76		370.76
456	WCVH H&S	17/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	John Watt Photography	S	38.00	7.60	45.60
457	WCVH H&S	17/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	John Watt Photography	S	52.08	10.42	62.50
453	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	17/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Caroline Lingley	X	████		████
454	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	17/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Rachael Jennings	X	████		████
455	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	17/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Gini Bryant	X	████		████
460	Salary	27/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Jim Morris	X	████		████
460	Work from Home Allowance	27/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Jim Morris	X	████		████
459	Booking Secretary	27/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	Jade Lock	X	128.43		128.43
461	Banking Fees	27/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		General Administration	Unity Trust Bank	X	6.00		6.00
458	Grant Exp - PAYE/NI	27/02/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		PAYE/NI	HMRC	X	████		████
464	Fees	02/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	Stripe	X	4.20		4.20
463	Fees	02/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	PayPal	X	3.20		3.20
462	Office	02/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Subscription	Starboard Systems Limited	S	23.00	4.60	27.60
469	Staff Training	03/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Training	Dunmow Training Ltd	S	25.00	5.00	30.00
468	General Maintenance	03/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Expenses	Jason Pryke	X	28.70		28.70
465	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	03/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Rachael Jennings	X	████		████
466	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	03/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Gini Bryant	X	████		████
467	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	03/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Caroline Lingley	X	████		████
470	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	03/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Kirsten Thomas	X	████		████
471	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	03/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Caroline Lingley	X	████		████
472	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	03/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Gini Bryant	X	████		████
473	Fees	04/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	SumUp	X	24.74		24.74
474	Employee Pension	09/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Pension	Standard Life	X	████		████
474	Employer Pension	09/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Pension	Standard Life	X	████		████
479	Cleaning	11/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	Gallen Windows	X	14.00		14.00
480	Cleaning	11/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	Samantha Mason	X	154.87		154.87
481	Electricity	11/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	Smartest Energy	L	206.95	10.35	217.30
478	WCVH H&S	11/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	E&J Fire Security	S	93.10	18.62	111.72
475	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	11/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Rachael Jennings	X	████		████
476	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	11/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Gini Bryant	X	████		████
477	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	11/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Caroline Lingley	X	████		████
484	Community Events	16/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Community Cafe	Black Horse Cafe	S	36.00	7.20	43.20

PAYMENTS LIST

Vouche	Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Payment Ref.	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
483	Community Events	16/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Community Cafe	Sainsbury's	Z	91.41		91.41
488	Office	16/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Office	Adobe Software Systems	S	16.64	3.33	19.97
489	Office	16/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Office	Apple Retail UK Ltd	S	749.17	149.83	899.00
486	Office	16/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Office	HP Inc UK Ltd	S	11.24	2.25	13.49
487	Office	16/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Office	Post Office	Z	9.25		9.25
485	Banking Fees	16/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Card payments	LLoyds Multipay	X	6.00		6.00
482	Grant Exp - Warm Hub	16/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Grant Exp - Warm Hub	Sainsbury's	Z	296.67		296.67
493	WCVH H&S	17/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	John Watt Photography	S	54.16	10.83	64.99
494	WCVH H&S	17/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	John Watt Photography	S	76.24	15.25	91.49
490	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	17/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Caroline Lingley	X	█		█
491	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	17/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Rachael Jennings	X	█		█
492	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	17/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Gini Bryant	X	█		█
495	WCVH H&S	24/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	CJO Plumbing & Heating Lt	S	180.00	36.00	216.00
496	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	24/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Gini Bryant	X	█		█
497	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	24/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Rachael Jennings	X	█		█
498	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	24/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Caroline Lingley	X	█		█
499	Employee Pension	27/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Pension	Standard Life	X	█		█
499	Employer Pension	27/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Pension	Standard Life	X	█		█
509	Fees	30/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	Stripe	X	3.33		3.33
505	Salary	31/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Jim Morris	X	█		█
505	Work from Home Allowance	31/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Jim Morris	X	█		█
506	Community Events	31/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Expenses	Paula Bull	X	35.00		35.00
503	Cleaning	31/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Laura Bowles	X	█		█
504	Booking Secretary	31/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Village Hall	Jade Lock	X	185.51		185.51
508	Banking Fees	31/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Expenses	Unity Trust Bank	X	7.00		7.00
500	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	31/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Caroline Lingley	X	█		█
501	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	31/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Rachael Jennings	X	█		█
502	Grant Exp - Warm Hub Staff Se	31/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		Staff salary	Gini Bryant	X	█		█
507	Grant Exp - PAYE/NI	31/03/2026		Unity Trust Bank - Ci		PAYE/NI	HMRC	X	█		█
<b>Total</b>									<b>13,094.21</b>	<b>404.80</b>	<b>13,499.01</b>

## WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL INTERNAL AUDIT 2025/26

### A Proper Bookkeeping

- Is the cash book maintained and up to date?  
*Yes. Cash book is updated monthly using Scribe package.*
- Is the cash book arithmetic correct?  
*Computerised accounting system*
- Is the cash book regularly balanced?  
*Computerised accounting system*

### B Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and Payment Controls

- Has the council formally adopted standing orders, financial regulations and publications scheme?  
*Yes. SO and FR were approved at the meeting on 20 May 2025 (minute 016/25). FOI / Publication Scheme was approved at the meeting on 20 January 2026 (minute 088/25).*
- Has the council reviewed / adopted other policies during the year?  
*Documents and Policies are on the website [Documents and Policies](#) and were reviewed and adopted at various meetings (minutes 014/25, 020/25, 023/25, 058/25ii). See also section O.*
- Has a Responsible Financial Officer been appointed with specified duties?  
*Yes. The clerk is the RFO with duties specified in the job description.*
- Have items or services been procured in accordance with Financial Regs?  
*Financial Regulation 5.15 specify clerk has delegated authority to approve up to £500 (ex VAT) for items within budget and up to £3000 (ex VAT) with the chair. FR 5.18 specify clerk can approve up to £2000 (ex VAT) in situations of serious risk to the council. FR 5.6 requires tenders for spend estimated over £60,000 (inc VAT) which agrees to SO 18a v. FR 5.8 requires 3 fixed price quotes for contracts between £3,000 (ex VAT) and £60,000 (inc VAT). FR 5.9 requires 3 estimates for contracts between £500 and £3,000 (ex VAT).  
*There are no payments of over £3000 in the year which would require 3 fixed price quotes. During the year budgets, estimates and quotes were discussed for insurance (019/25), allotment works (028/25), Electrical works on Green (054/25i), VH Canopy (054/25ii), tree survey (056/25iv), play repairs (073/25v), macbook (105/25).**
- Are payments in the cash book supported by invoices, authorised and minuted?  
*As the council meets bi-monthly and to avoid delays in paying suppliers, the council has devised a system for more regular authorisation and payment of invoices within limits of FR5.15. Invoices are added to a payments list as they are received. The payments list contains columns for date, supplier, item, amount and a reference to the source document. Once there are several invoices that need approval, often weekly, an invoices binder comprising the list as a front sheet and all the source documents is created in adobe and emailed to councillors. A poll is sent to the WhatsApp group (set up in May 2025 011/25v). Once approved by 4 councillors, the clerk sets up the payment on Unity Trust bank and advises the 3 signatories so 2 of them can release payment. A screenshot of the poll results is kept as evidence. A scribe payments list showing net VAT and gross (with staff pay redacted) or each quarter is appended to the minutes. [I'd suggest a tweak to the wording of FR6.7. to more accurately reflect this practice.](#)*

- Has VAT on payments been identified, recorded and reclaimed?  
*Scribe records VAT on payments and shows a total of £2657.17 for the 2025/26. VAT refunds of £1375.82 to 30/09/25 and £876.55 to 31/12/25. Final quarter VAT will be reclaimed in 2026/27.*
- Is s137 expenditure separately recorded and within statutory limits?  
*No donations / grants were made this year: S137 limit is £11.10 per registered elector.*

## **C Risk Management**

- Does a scan of the minutes identify any unusual activity?  
*Vacancies and co-option (minute 052/25, 068/25, 074/25iii, 099/25), Apple Day on 21/10/25 (minute 056/25iii), planning for 2026 celebration event (056/25vii), website redesign (058/25i, 071/25iv).*
- Do the minutes record the council carrying out a risk assessment?  
*Risk Assessment approved at meeting 18 November 2025 (minute 074/25ii) as a new combined policy with Health and Safety, lone working and safeguarding. Pages 1 to 6 cover H&S, lone working and safeguarding followed by separate risk assessments for Council Business (the annual assessment), Community Café and Hub, Litter Pick and Street Cleaning, The Meadows, The Meadows Play area and VH Play area. Each risk assessment has columns for subject area, description of the risk, level of risk, management / control measures and review / assess / revise.*
- Is insurance cover appropriate and adequate?  
*Insurance cover was reviewed at the meeting 20 May 2025 (019/25) and quotes sought. Insurance renewal 1<sup>st</sup> June 2025 with Zurich. Insurance cover for All Risks, employer's liability, public and products liability, fidelity guarantee, libel and slander, official's indemnity, personal accident and legal expenses. The council manages the village hall under an agreement with Essex County Council but does not own the building. White Colne PC insures the contents and I assume ECC insures the building under their global buildings cover (See also Section H).*
- Are internal financial controls documented and regularly reviewed?  
*Payment of invoices – Source documents are emailed to all councillors and 4 councillors are needed to approve them before the clerk can set up the payment on the Unity online system. A WhatsApp poll is used to ascertain approval and a screenshot of poll result is saved as evidence. In a wholly electronic system, where source documents cannot be initialled, this is a great evidence trail. Internal financial controls are strong.*  
*Bank mandate and authority – Unity Trust mandate has 3 authority levels to view, set up and authorise. Clerk has authority to view and set up. 3 councillors have authority to release payments.*  
*Review of bank recs and evidence of scrutiny against the bank statements – The minutes record bank reconciliations at every meeting. The monthly bank statements and recs are signed, exceeding the requirement of FR2.6*  
*Monitoring of actual v budget – Scribe AvB reports are downloaded into a spreadsheet and shared with all councillors quarterly. All councillors have log in read only access to scribe so can view reports at any time.*  
*Internal controls over salary payments – The clerk does his own payroll so this is an area requiring additional internal control. Payslips show hours worked and a calculation.*  
*Cash handling – none.*  
*Collection of all income due to the council - The receipt of allotment fees is controlled using a word document listing the plots and fees for each one and*

recording when paid. Hallmaster is used to control the collection of Village Hall lettings income. The contracted bookings clerk knows which invoices have been paid on stripe or paypal and asks the clerk for information about receipts into Unity. The bookings clerk enters the receipts onto the Hallmaster system and monitors / chases settlements. Café sales are by card only through SumUp.

Project management and Safeguarding assets – The clerk keeps a running tasks list which is reported to council each meeting under matters arising. This keeps a really good check on progress with actions. The day-to-day operation of the village hall is undertaken by the council (there is no VH Management Committee). A volunteer undertakes village hall inspections, and sends a monthly VH H&S Inspection Sheet with any matters that need to be actioned. The clerk arranges the statutory services for the hall (e.g., servicing of fire extinguishers, PAT testing, emergency lighting etc.) often prompted by reminders from contractors. *A list showing the dates last completed and the next due date might ensure nothing falls through the cracks.* A new practice has started for regular inspections of the play area. A councillor sends a monthly excel report detailing equipment defects, the works needed, and priority so that maintenance can be arranged (minute 108/25ii). This is good practice and it will be interesting to see how it develops.

- Are all risks identified and actions undertaken to mitigate risks?  
*The risk assessment is comprehensive in its identification of risks and the mitigating actions in relation to regular council business, damage to council assets and community activities and events. Mitigating actions are evidenced by the minutes i.e. Task list passed to handyman (040/25iii), active management of allotments (040/25vi), play area safety reports (040/25vii), action plan review (042/25ii), tree survey report and works (087/25vi).*

## **D Budgetary Controls**

- Has the council prepared an annual budget in support of its precept?  
*At their meeting on 20 January 2026, the council reviewed a proposed 2026/27 budget (minute 084/25v) and agreed a 2026/27 precept of £13435 (minute 084/25vi). This was confirmed at the meeting 17 March 2026 with background papers showing the updated budgeted spend requirement of £31394 and income of £17959.*
- Is actual expenditure against the budget reported to the council?  
*The minutes of the meeting 18 November 2025 record presentation of actual spend against budget for Q2 and a preliminary discussion about the 2026/27 budget (minute 070/25). The papers for the January 2026 meeting include AvB to the end of Qtr 3 which was reviewed as part of the precept deliberations.*
- Are there any significant unexplained variances from budget?  
*Both income and expenditure are significantly more than budgeted because of the grant income and related expenditure. The closing balance of reserves has reduced by £3909 to £23365 but the council is fortunate to have very healthy reserves that are almost double the annual precept.*

## **E Income Controls**

- Are there sources of income other than precept and VAT refunds?  
*Yes. Village hall lettings, allotment rental, events income, café income, wayleaves, energy generation income, prize money, BDC street scene contract, Grants, bank interest. VH fees were reviewed at the meeting on 20 January 2026 (minute 084/25iv).*

- Is income properly recorded and promptly banked?  
*Most income is by direct credit. Amounts are also received through SumUp (for café and events), Paypal and Stripe (for hall hire). These platforms pay the funds to Unity bank net of their fees. The income is grossed up the accounts to separate out the fees (code 4036) as expenditure. Occasional cheques are received which are posted in Freepost envelopes to Unity Bank for paying in.*
- Does the precept recorded in the cash book agree to the district council's notification?  
*Precept total £12,652 received as 2 x £6,326 in April and Sep 2025.*
- Are security controls over cash adequate and effective  
*One small amount of cash is handled, held securely and banked at Nat West.*

**F Petty Cash** No Petty cash is held. (Financial Reg 9.1).

## **G Payroll Controls**

- Do salaries paid agree with those approved by the council?  
*Clerk/RFO contracted for 12 hours per week on SCP 27. Pay varies each month as calculated at 2.4 hours per working day. Hub assistants are employed to run the summer hub and winter hub. Their contracts are for specific hours during hub sessions, with some flexibility, and pay is national living wage with rolled up holiday pay. The meeting on 18 November 2025 agrees the appointment of Hub staff from Nov 2025 to Easter 2026 (minute 073/25viii): one for 4 hours per week and one as needed for cover. Contract of clerk/RFO includes annual SCP increments and NJC cost of living awards. The NJC 2025/26 pay award backpay was paid with 29/08/25 salary. The payslip notes the number of hours and the additional information box includes a calculation. There will be a contractual spinal point increase from 01/04/26 to SCP 28. Hall bookings clerk, Hall cleaner, and Village handyman are engaged by the council as contractors and invoice the council for their services. They all have their own PL insurance. The hall cleaner joins the payroll in 2026/27 as an employee.*
- Are other payments to the clerk reasonable and approved by the council?  
*Yes. Clerk receives a working from home allowance of £26 per month paid with salary (tax free) and included correctly in box 6. Clerk can claim mileage if needed. Use of the Multi-pay card avoids personal reclaims for council related items.*
- Has PAYE / NIC and pensions been properly operated by the council as an employer?  
*HMRC RTI BASIC Tools is used; PAYE and NI are calculated by the HMRC system. The chair advises the clerk of the number of hours worked by the hub staff for the payroll. HMRC paid monthly. A pension scheme was set up with Standard Life (minutes 046/25, 054/25iii). Pension contributions were backdated to 01/01/25 when auto enrol threshold commenced. Noted that in 2026/27 the council is piloting PC Allowances of £250pa for councillors who wish to take them (minute 038/25) which will be processed through payroll.*
- What controls exist over management of staff time and duties?  
*The clerk keeps a time sheet and sends to the chair each month. There are regular 1:1s with the chair, usually a zoom call every few weeks. The hub staff are managed directly by the chair. The clerk's appraisal was noted at the meeting 15/07/25 (minute 042/25i).*

## H Asset Control

- Does the council keep an asset register of all material assets owned?  
*Yes. The Register is on scribe. The scribe list has assets in alphabetical order with asset description, date acquired, purchase value (cost), Current value (replacement value) and location. Note that the figure in the current value column is not to reflect the sales value of the asset. It should be the amount the council estimates would be needed to replace the item if a property damage claim were to arise. Therefore land (such as the Meadows) should have a zero in the Current Value column. The 'Active and Disposed' report at the year-end has a right hand column showing which assets disposed of. They can be deleted from the register after the year end. Scribe picks up the total of the 'active' assets for box 9.*
- Is the register regularly reviewed and updated?  
*The fixed asset register at 31/03/25 agreed at the meeting 20 May 2025 (minute 018/25). The register was updated at the year-end. As the clerk does not live in the village it might be good for councillors to review the register and verify the existence of the assets and their condition. AGAR brought forward is £184769.39, additions £1149 (mac book and printer), disposals £1836.83 (table tennis table, old laptop and printer). Closing AGAR £184081.56.*
- Do asset insurance valuations agree with those in the asset register?  
*The Zurich policy does not have any cover under Part A Material Damage, which is where I would have expected to see cover for the pavilion and its contents, sheds and contents, hall contents, fencing, street furniture (information boards, benches, art on the meadows etc) and play equipment. Instead, the council's cover is concentrated in Part C as 'all risks' cover, which makes sense for the laptop and printer which might be moved between locations, but not so much for the 'fixed' property. Cover in Part C is for Contents £34000 and Play equipment £63500. If the council is staying with Zurich for the 2026 renewal, I would recommend sending them the asset register (perhaps with current value figures updated to reflect replacement cost) and asking whether more appropriate to have the fixed location assets included in Part A. Note that the cover for the pavilion needs to be an amount sufficient to cover a total loss i.e., site clearance, professional / planning fees, new structure and its installation. I have assumed that the village Hall building is covered under ECC insurance, as owners of the property. Might be worth checking that this includes the solar panels or if the council needs to insure these separately against property damage.*

## I Bank Reconciliation

- Is there a bank rec for each account?  
*Yes. Unity Trust current account and savings account (opened May 2026 minute 011/25v).*
- Is the bank rec carried out regularly on receipt of statements? *Yes.*
- Are there any unexplained balancing entries in any reconciliation? *No.*

## J Year End Procedures

- Are year-end accounts prepared on the correct accounting basis (R & P / I & E)?  
*Yes, final report and accounts on R&P basis.*
- Do accounts agree with the cash book and working papers? *Yes. All cross check,*
- Is there an audit trail from underlying financial records to the accounts?  
*Invoices / scanned payment source documents are filed electronically in monthly folders.*

- Where appropriate, have debtors and creditors been properly recorded?  
*Disclosure not required for R&P. Hallmaster manages aged debtors for hall hire.*

### **K Council Exempting itself from a limited assurance review**

- Did the council meet the criteria?  
*No. Gross income and gross expenditure in 2024/25 exceeded £25000.*
- Did the council exempt itself from the review? N/A
- Was the exemption certified at a meeting? N/A
- Was the appropriate notice displayed? N/A

### **L Web page Publication**

The authority publishes information on a website/webpage, up to date at the time of the internal audit, in accordance with the relevant legislation.  
*Policies and minutes are on the website. Payments are appended to the minutes (staff info redacted), for each meeting (May and July) then Q2 and Q3 payments attached to Jan 2026 minutes.*

### **M Public Rights in Summer 2025**

The council agreed the dates for the period for the Exercise of Public Rights commencing 3 June 2025 and ending 14 July 2025 and displayed the notice [whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk/assets/Parish-Council/Accounts/2025/25.03.31-AGAR-Announcement-of-making-provision-for-the-exercise-of-public-rights-2024-25-PDF.pdf](http://whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk/assets/Parish-Council/Accounts/2025/25.03.31-AGAR-Announcement-of-making-provision-for-the-exercise-of-public-rights-2024-25-PDF.pdf)

### **N Publication of Annual Return 2024/25**

The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/25 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes). [Accounts](#)

### **O Digital and Data Compliance**

- Does the council have a generic email account hosted on an authority owned domain? Yes
- Does the council website meet web content accessibility guidelines?  
*Yes. The council's website provider has stated that the website is compliant with WCAG2.2AA regulations (minute 109.25ii). Note that when accessing the PC website my Kaspersky Security package tells me that one or more of the websites certificates are invalid and advises me not to visit the website.*



#### **Visiting an untrustworthy website has been prevented**

One or more of this website's certificates are invalid, so we can't guarantee its authenticity. This happens when the website's owner hasn't updated the certificate in time, or if it's a fake site created by scammers. Visiting a website like this makes you more vulnerable to attack.

You were protected from visiting this website by Kaspersky security. You can close this window with no risk.

[Show details](#)

- Has the council registered with ICO as a data controller/processor, appointed a data manager and have appropriate policies in place?  
*Yes, the council has ICO registration and the clerk is the data manager (i.e. the named contact on the privacy notice). The council has in place a Data*

*Protection Policy (021/25), Privacy Policy (042/25iii) and Policy and Press and Media Policy (022/25).*

- Has the council formally adopted an IT policy setting out how everyone – conducts council business in a secure and legal way?

*IT policy was adopted at the meeting on 15 July 2025 (minute 042/25v) and reviewed and updated at the meeting on 17 March 2026 (minute 109/25i)*

#### **P Trustees**

- If the council is a trustee, has it met its responsibilities?

*White Colne PC is not a sole trustee*

Jan Stobart, FCCA  
1 May 2026

# Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26

White Colne Parish Council

www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2026, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2025/26 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			✓
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2024/25, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024/25 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2025/26 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2024-25 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/25 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. The authority has complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.	✓		
<b>P. (For local councils only)</b> Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

01/05/2026

Mrs J E Stobart, FCCA

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

01/05/2026

\*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

\*\*Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

## WHAT SMALLER AUTHORITIES NEED TO DO TO ADVERTISE THE PERIOD DURING WHICH ELECTORS AND INTERESTED PERSONS MAY EXERCISE RIGHTS RELATING TO THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The [Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014](#) and the [Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015](#) require that:

- 1) The accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection by any person interested, during a period of 30 working days set by the smaller authority and including the first 10 working days of July.
- 2) The period referred to in paragraph (1) starts with the day on which the period for the exercise of public rights is treated as having been commenced i.e. the day following the day on which all of the obligations in paragraph (3) below have been fulfilled.
- 3) The responsible financial officer for a relevant authority must, on behalf of that authority, publish **(which must include publication on the authority's website)**:
  - a) the Accounting Statements (i.e. Section 2 of either Form 2 or 3, whichever is relevant, of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR)), accompanied by:
    - i) a declaration, signed by that officer to the effect that the status of the Accounting Statements are unaudited and that the Accounting Statements as published may be subject to change;
    - ii) the Annual Governance Statement (i.e. Section 1 of either Form 2 or Form 3, whichever is relevant, of the AGAR); and
  - b) a statement that sets out—
    - i) the period for the exercise of public rights;
    - ii) details of the manner in which notice should be given of an intention to inspect the accounting records and other documents;
    - iii) the name and address of the local auditor;
    - iv) the provisions contained in section 26 (inspection of documents etc.) and section 27 (right to make objections at audit) of the Act, as they have effect in relation to the authority in question;

### HOW DO YOU DO IT?

- 1) You will meet statutory requirements if you fully and accurately complete the notice of public rights pro forma in this document, and publish **(including publication on the smaller authority's website)** the following documents, the day before the public rights period commences:
  - a) the approved Sections 1 and 2 of either Form 2 or 3, whichever is relevant to your smaller authority, of the AGAR; and
  - b) the completed Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return. Please note that we have pre-completed it with the following suggested dates: Wednesday 3 June – Tuesday 14 July 2026. (The latest possible dates that comply with the statutory requirements are Wednesday 1 July – Tuesday 11 August 2026); and
  - c) the notes which accompany the Notice (Local authority accounts: a summary of your rights).

Where the authority has answered 'No' to any assertions on Section 1, as stated on the face of Section 1 of the AGAR, a sufficiently detailed explanation of the reasons must be published with the AGAR on the authority's website.

Smaller authority name: **White Colne Parish Council**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS AND PUBLICATION OF  
UNAUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE &  
ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN**

**ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026**

**Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 Sections 26 and 27  
The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)**

NOTICE	NOTES
<p><b>1. Date of announcement: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2026</b> (a)</p> <p><b>2. Each year the smaller authority's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) needs to be reviewed by an external auditor appointed by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd. The unaudited AGAR has been published with this notice. As it has yet to be reviewed by the appointed auditor, it is subject to change as a result of that review.</b>  <b>Any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection by any person interested. For the year ended 31 March 2026, these documents will be available on reasonable notice by application to:</b></p> <p>(b) Jim Morris, Parish Clerk &amp; Responsible Financial Officer  Contact: <a href="mailto:clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk">clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk</a></p> <p>commencing on (c) <b>Wednesday 3 June 2026</b></p> <p>and ending on (d) <b>Tuesday 14 July 2026</b></p> <p><b>3. Local government electors and their representatives also have:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The opportunity to question the appointed auditor about the accounting records; and</li> <li>• The right to make an objection which concerns a matter in respect of which the appointed auditor could either make a public interest report or apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the auditor and a copy sent to the smaller authority.</li> </ul> <p>The appointed auditor can be contacted at the address in paragraph 4 below for this purpose between the above dates only.</p> <p><b>4. The smaller authority's AGAR is subject to review by the appointed auditor under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the NAO's Code of Audit Practice 2024. The appointed auditor is:</b></p> <p><b>PKF Littlejohn LLP (Ref: SBA Team)</b>  <b>30 Churchill Place</b>  <b>London E14 5RE</b>  <a href="mailto:sba@pkf-l.com">sba@pkf-l.com</a></p> <p><b>5. This announcement is made by (e) Jim Morris, Responsible Financial Officer, White Colne Parish Council.</b></p>	<p>(a) Insert date of placing of the notice which must be not less than 1 day before the date in (c) below</p> <p>(b) Insert name, position and address/telephone number/ email address, as appropriate, of the Clerk or other person to which any person may apply to inspect the accounts</p> <p>(c) Insert date, which must be at least 1 day after the date of announcement in (a) above and exactly 30 working days before the date appointed in (d) below</p> <p>(d) The inspection period between (c) and (d) must be 30 working days inclusive and must include the first 10 working days of July.</p> <p>(e) Insert name and position of person placing the notice – this person must be the responsible financial officer for the smaller authority</p>

## LOCAL AUTHORITY ACCOUNTS: A SUMMARY OF YOUR RIGHTS

**Please note that this summary applies to all relevant smaller authorities, including local councils, internal drainage boards and 'other' smaller authorities.**

### The basic position

The [Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014](#) (the Act) governs the work of auditors appointed to smaller authorities. This summary explains the provisions contained in Sections 26 and 27 of the Act. The Act and the [Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015](#) also cover the duties, responsibilities and rights of smaller authorities, other organisations and the public concerning the accounts being audited.

As a local elector, or an interested person, you have certain legal rights in respect of the accounting records of smaller authorities. As an interested person you can inspect accounting records and related documents. If you are a local government elector for the area to which the accounts relate you can also ask questions about the accounts and object to them. You do not have to pay directly for exercising your rights. However, any resulting costs incurred by the smaller authority form part of its running costs. Therefore, indirectly, local residents pay for the cost of you exercising your rights through their council tax.

### The right to inspect the accounting records

Any interested person can inspect the accounting records, which includes but is not limited to local electors. You can inspect the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records. You can copy all, or part, of these records or documents. Your inspection must be about the accounts, or relate to an item in the accounts. You cannot, for example, inspect or copy documents unrelated to the accounts, or that include personal information (Section 26 (6) – (10) of the Act explains what is meant by personal information). You cannot inspect information which is protected by commercial confidentiality. This is information which would prejudice commercial confidentiality if it was released to the public and there is not, set against this, a very strong reason in the public interest why it should nevertheless be disclosed.

When smaller authorities have finished preparing accounts for the financial year and approved them, they must publish them (including on a website). There must be a 30 working day period, called the 'period for the exercise of public rights', during which you can exercise your statutory right to inspect the accounting records. Smaller authorities must tell the public, including advertising this on their website, that the accounting records and related documents are available to inspect. By arrangement you will then have 30 working days to inspect and make copies of the accounting records. You may have to pay a copying charge. The 30 working day period must include a common period of inspection during which all smaller authorities' accounting records are available to inspect. This will be 1-14 July 2026 for 2025/26 accounts. The advertisement must set out the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights, how you can communicate to the smaller authority that you wish to inspect the accounting records and related documents, the name and address of the auditor, and the relevant legislation that governs the inspection of accounts and objections.

### The right to ask the auditor questions about the accounting records

**You should first ask your smaller authority** about the accounting records, since they hold all the details. If you are a local elector, your right to ask questions of the external auditor is enshrined in law. However, while the auditor will answer your questions where possible, they are not always obliged to do so. For example, the question might be better answered by another organisation, require investigation beyond the auditor's remit, or involve disproportionate cost (which is borne by the local taxpayer). Give your smaller authority the opportunity first to explain anything in the accounting records that you are unsure about. If you are not satisfied with their explanation, you can question the external auditor about the accounting records.

The law limits the time available for you formally to ask questions. This must be done in the period for the exercise of public rights, so let the external auditor know your concern as soon as possible. The advertisement or notice that tells you the accounting records are available to inspect will also give the period for the exercise of public rights during which you may ask the auditor questions, which here means formally asking questions under the Act. You can ask someone to represent you when asking the external auditor questions.

Before you ask the external auditor any questions, inspect the accounting records fully, so you know what they contain. Please remember that you cannot formally ask questions, under the Act, after the end of the period for the exercise of public rights. You may ask your smaller authority other questions about their accounts for any year, at any time. But these are not questions under the Act.

You can ask the external auditor questions about an item in the accounting records for the financial year being audited. However, your right to ask the external auditor questions is limited. The external auditor can only answer 'what' questions, not 'why' questions. The external auditor cannot answer questions about policies, finances, procedures or anything else unless it is directly relevant to an item in the accounting records. Remember that your questions must always be about facts, not opinions. To avoid misunderstanding, we recommend that you always put your questions in writing.

### **The right to make objections at audit**

You have inspected the accounting records and asked your questions of the smaller authority. Now you may wish to object to the accounts on the basis that an item in them is in your view unlawful or there are matters of wider concern arising from the smaller authority's finances. A local government elector can ask the external auditor to apply to the High Court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, or to issue a report on matters which are in the public interest. You must tell the external auditor which specific item in the accounts you object to and why you think the item is unlawful, or why you think that a public interest report should be made about it. You must provide the external auditor with the evidence you have to support your objection. Disagreeing with income or spending does not make it unlawful. To object to the accounts you must write to the external auditor stating you want to make an objection, including the information and evidence below and you must send a copy to the smaller authority. The notice must include:

- confirmation that you are an elector in the smaller authority's area;
- why you are objecting to the accounts and the facts on which you rely;
- details of any item in the accounts that you think is unlawful; and
- details of any matter about which you think the external auditor should make a public interest report.

Other than it must be in writing, there is no set format for objecting. You can only ask the external auditor to act within the powers available under the [Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014](#).

### **A final word**

You may not use this 'right to object' to make a personal complaint or claim against your smaller authority. You should take such complaints to your local Citizens' Advice Bureau, local Law Centre or to your solicitor. Smaller authorities, and so local taxpayers, meet the costs of dealing with questions and objections. In deciding whether to take your objection forward, one of a series of factors the auditor must take into account is the cost that will be involved, they will only continue with the objection if it is in the public interest to do so. They may also decide not to consider an objection if they think that it is frivolous or vexatious, or if it repeats an objection already considered. If you appeal to the courts against an auditor's decision not to apply to the courts for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, you will have to pay for the action yourself.

<p>For more detailed guidance on public rights and the special powers of auditors, copies of the publication <a href="#">Local authority accounts: A guide to your rights</a> are available from the NAO website.</p>	<p>If you wish to contact your authority's appointed external auditor please write to the address in paragraph 4 of the <i>Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance &amp; Accountability Return</i>.</p>
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## Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

We acknowledge as the members of:

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2026, that:

	Agreed		'Yes' means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.			<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.			<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We have assured ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.			<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.			<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.			<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.			<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.			<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.			<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A <i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>
10. We have put in place arrangements for the effective IT and data management in accordance with proper practices during the year under review.			<i>has made suitable arrangements for its IT and data management and has complied with proper practices in doing so.</i>

**\*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2025 £	31 March 2026 £	
			<i>Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures <b>must</b> agree to underlying financial records.</i>
<b>1.</b> Balances brought forward			<i>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value <b>must</b> agree to Box 7 of previous year.</i>
<b>2.</b> (+) Precept or Rates and Levies			<i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>
<b>3.</b> (+) Total other receipts			<i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>
<b>4.</b> (-) Staff costs			<i>Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.</i>
<b>5.</b> (-) Loan interest/capital repayments			<i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i>
<b>6.</b> (-) All other payments			<i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>
<b>7.</b> (=) Balances carried forward			<i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. <b>must</b> equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>
<b>8.</b> Total value of cash and short term investments			<i>The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – <b>To agree with bank reconciliation.</b></i>
<b>9.</b> Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets			<i>The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.</i>
<b>10.</b> Total borrowings			<i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	
<b>11</b> Do the figures in the accounting statements above exclude any trust transactions?			<i>For guidance refer to the Practitioners' Guide sections 2.31 to 2.33.</i>

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2026 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

**Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval.**

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED



## WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

White Colne Village Hall, Bures Road, White Colne, CO6 2QA.

[www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk)

[clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk)

*Village of the Year 2025*

**To:** Planning Department

Colchester City Council

**Date:** 13/05/2026

**Ref:** 260657

**Details:** Outline planning application for up to 150 no. residential dwellings, public open space, landscaping, a new vehicular access and all other associated works. All Matters Reserved, except access. - Land at Earls Colne Road, Great Tey.

**White Colne Parish Council response:**

Jim Morris

Parish Clerk

White Colne Parish Council

**Email:** [clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk)

**Website:** [www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk)



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[clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk)

*Village of the Year 2025*

**To:** Planning Department

Braintree District Council

**Date:** 13/05/2026

**Ref:** 26/00537/FUL

**Details:** Part retrospective application for the construction of 17 no. poultry breeding and rearing units. – Chalkney Mill, Tey Road, Earls Colne, Essex, CO6 2PR.

**White Colne Parish Council response:**

Jim Morris

Parish Clerk

White Colne Parish Council

**Email:** [clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk)

**Website:** [www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk)



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[clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk)

*Village of the Year 2025*

**To:** Planning Department

Braintree District Council

**Date:** 13/05/2026

**Ref:** 26/00649/FUL

**Details:** **Erection of stables, menage, access improvements and associated works. - Land Adjacent to Millbrooks Farm, Mill Lane, Colne Engaine, Essex, CO6 2HU.**

### **White Colne Parish Council response:**

White Colne Parish Council objects to Application ref 26/00649/FUL. The proposal would increase traffic on Colne Park Road, which is an unlit, narrow and steep lane with no pedestrian footway. The parish council notes that the Highways Authority objected to the previous proposal for this site (26/00189/FUL), and supports its reasons. In addition, the site has no previous history of equestrian use, and any development including hardstanding would harm the setting of the Colne River Valley Landscape Area. White Colne Parish Council requests that the Application be refused at the earliest opportunity.

Jim Morris

Parish Clerk

White Colne Parish Council

**Email:** [clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk)

**Website:** [www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk)



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[clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk)

*Village of the Year 2025*

**To:** Planning Department

Braintree District Council

**Date:** 13/05/2026

**Ref:** 26/00909/OUT

**Details:** Outline planning application with all matters reserved, except access for the erection of one dwelling. - Garden To The Woodshed, Broom Farm, Colne Park Road.

**White Colne Parish Council response:**

Jim Morris

Parish Clerk

White Colne Parish Council

**Email:** [clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk)

**Website:** [www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk)



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[clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk)

*Village of the Year 2025*

### Braintree District Council Local Plan

#### **Policy LPR 1: Spatial Strategy for Braintree District**

Comment: White Colne Parish Council agrees with and supports the designation of White Colne as a 'Third Tier village.'

#### **Policy LPR 2: Development Boundaries**

Comment: White Colne Parish Council agrees with and supports Policy LPR2. The parish council notes that the White Colne development boundary can be revised (para. 3.17) and submits further comments under *Inset 21: Earls Colne East and White Colne*.

#### **Policy LPR 5: Employment Policy Areas**

Comment: With regards to the inclusion of 20.2ha of Employment Policy Area at Earls Colne Airfield, White Colne Parish Council highlights that the site does not benefit from an established bus route. The site is already the home of the Essex Golf and Country Club, a major employer and leisure facility in the area, and all journeys must currently be undertaken by private transport. The lack of public transport means that the site fails the Key Objectives *Creating a successful economy* (para. 2.2) and *Transport Infrastructure* (para. 2.5). Provision of Employment Policy Area of this scale could increase vehicle movements to and from the site up to 1,400 extra per day. A commitment to provide public transport and footways to the site will reduce local car journeys and facilitate sustainable modes of transport (Policy LPR 52), thus opening job opportunities to residents within the wider local area (supporting *A Strong Economy* para. 4.17). Without such a commitment, local roads will be adversely impacted (Policy LPR 79). An alternative new access route from the A120 should also be considered.

**Policy LPR 24: SGL - Land South and North-East of Halstead (Within Greenstead Green and Colne Engaine Parish)**

Comment: White Colne Parish Council submits that contributions to be gained under Policy LPR24 'd' must be linked to improvements on the A1124. In addition, the Policy should be reworded so that it is clearly stated that the bypass must be delivered either ahead of or at an early stage of the development.

**Policy LPR 55: New Road Infrastructure**

Comment: White Colne Parish Council notes that Policies LPR 24 and LPR 55 are inextricably linked to one another, and suggests that this is clearly stated in the final version of the Plan.

**Policy LPR 60: Provision for Open Space, Sport and Recreation**

Comment: White Colne Parish Council suggests that additional categories of '1-4 dwellings' and '5-19 dwellings' be introduced. Developments of five or more dwellings should include Amenity / Natural Green Space and Play Spaces for children. This would support other *Creating Better Places* Policies.

**Policy LPR 62: Layout and Design of Development**

Comment: White Colne Parish Council notes that paragraph 'o' should include a commitment that connectivity of footways within developments should also link to the wider network.

**Policy LPR 78: Green Buffers**

Comment: White Colne Parish Council would like to see the inclusion of a stated Green Buffer between White Colne and Wakes Colne. Proposed development at Wakes Colne under Colchester City Council Local Plan Policies PP28 and PEP12 threaten to increase urbanisation on open land between the two parishes.

**Policy LPR 79: Protected Lanes**

Comment: White Colne Parish Council welcomes the inclusion of a Policy aimed at protecting lanes and calls for it to be extended to all country lanes within the District. Motorists using 'C' class roads as filter routes degrades country lanes in rural parishes. This Policy needs to be robust and enforceable.

**Policy LPR 88: Infrastructure delivery and impact mitigation policy**

Comment: White Colne Parish Council is concerned that the full impact on all infrastructure associated either directly or indirectly with this plan has not been considered. The council requests that robust Policies are included that will ensure the delivery of key infrastructure will occur ahead of the additional new dwellings becoming occupied. At minimum these should include improvements and expansion of waste water treatment facilities, traffic calming on the A1124, and firm commitments to increase provision of doctors' surgeries and education facilities. In addition, White Colne Parish Council suggests that the introduction of Community Infrastructure Levy should be enacted in tandem with approval of the Local Plan.

**Inset 21: Earls Colne East and White Colne**

Comment: White Colne Parish Council strongly supports the proposed designation of the land to the rear of the Village Hall (former railway line and goods yard) as a Local Green Space.

The Parish Council considers that the site clearly meets the emergent December 2025 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) criteria for Local Green Space designation, complying with paragraphs:

**HC1: Planning for healthy communities**

1. To promote the creation of healthy and inclusive places, and the provision, retention and enhancement of appropriate community facilities and public service infrastructure, development plans should, at the most appropriate level:
  - c. Allocate land specifically for community facilities and public service infrastructure where it is appropriate to do so, and assess whether any land is suitable to designate as Local Green Space in accordance with policy HC2;
  - d. Set local standards for the provision of different types of outdoor recreational land, including for play, sport, informal recreation and allotments. In doing so they should draw upon relevant national standards and best practice, tailoring these as necessary to local circumstances and evidence<sup>1</sup>. Policies for play and informal recreation should aim to secure a connected

---

<sup>1</sup> These include the suite of Green Infrastructure Standards for England published by Natural England, the standards for open space, outdoor sport and play recommended by Fields in Trust (<https://fieldsintrust.org/insights/standards>) and published Sport England Guidance (including [Assessing Needs and Playing Pitch Strategy guidance | Sport England](#)).

network of high quality, inclusive and accessible opportunities as part of the wider network of green space provision, secured through both on-site provision in conjunction with land allocated for development and through other contributions and investment.

## **HC2: Local Green Space**

1. Local and neighbourhood plans may designate land as Local Green Space where this would safeguard green areas of particular value to the local community. Local Green Space should be limited to situations where the land concerned is:
  - a. In close proximity to the community it serves;
  - b. Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
  - c. Local in character and not an extensive tract of land.
2. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and the provision of sufficient land for homes, jobs and other needs. Local Green Space should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and should be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

### **1. Close Proximity to the Community**

The site lies within the village envelope and directly adjoins the Village Hall, allotments and the Meadows public open space. It forms an established pedestrian link between these community facilities and is used regularly by residents.

### **2. Demonstrably Special to the Local Community**

The land is demonstrably special for the following reasons:

- It has remained largely undisturbed for over 50 years, developing into long-established semi-natural habitat.
- It forms part of the former railway alignment and retains strong local historic character.
- It is publicly accessible and functions as an informal walking route linking key community assets.
- It provides visual openness and a green backdrop to the Village Hall.
- It forms part of a continuous green corridor that links with designated Local Nature Reserve land along the former railway line, achieving the NPPF target "to secure a connected network of high quality, inclusive and accessible opportunities as part of the wider network of green space provision".

- It contributes to biodiversity and habitat connectivity within the village.

The Parish Council considers that the site performs an important green infrastructure function by maintaining ecological connectivity along the former railway corridor. Its loss or fragmentation would materially harm local biodiversity networks and diminish the character of this part of the settlement.

### **3. Local in Character and Not an Extensive Tract**

The site is mainly linear in form, clearly defined by the historic railway alignment and limited in scale. It is local in character and does not constitute an extensive tract of land.

### **4. Stewardship and Positive Management**

The Parish Council supports the long-term, sensitive management of this land in a manner consistent with its role as a green corridor and semi-natural habitat. Any future stewardship would focus on biodiversity enhancement and informal access, and would seek to involve community volunteers and, where appropriate, external grant funding. The intention would be light-touch ecological management, avoiding additional burden on public finances while safeguarding the site's environmental value.

For these reasons, the Parish Council strongly supports the proposed Local Green Space designation and considers it sound and consistent with national policy.

### **5. Overlapping Designations**

Whilst the council supports the proposed Local Green Space designation, it is noted that the land remains partly overlaid by designated Development Boundary. The two designations are in conflict with one another, and the Development Boundary should be redrawn as part of this Local Plan Review (Policy LPR2) to follow the fenceline of adjacent properties.

# COLNE VALLEY PARISHES

## Joint Response to the Braintree District Council Local Plan Review

Regulation 18 Consultation | April 2026

*Earls Colne, Chappel, Colne Engaine, Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural, Wakes Colne, White Colne.*

This joint response represents the aligned position of multiple parish councils across the Colne Valley, including those within both Braintree District and neighbouring Colchester authority areas.

The parishes welcome the opportunity to comment on the emerging Local Plan and recognise the importance of planning positively for future growth. However, there are significant shared concerns regarding infrastructure capacity, transport impacts, and cross-boundary effects which must be addressed before the Plan progresses.

### 1. Strategic Overview

Across the Colne Valley, the Local Plan proposes substantial housing growth, including:

- Approximately 2,850 dwellings at Halstead
- Approximately 3,700 dwellings along the A1124 corridor

This represents a circa 35% increase in population in the corridor settlements, placing significant pressure on already constrained rural infrastructure.

**Growth must be infrastructure-led, not infrastructure-following.**

### 2. Cross-Boundary Planning and Duty to Cooperate

Several affected parishes lie within Colchester but are directly impacted by Braintree allocations. The A1124 corridor functions as a shared transport and infrastructure spine, including:

- Road network (A1124 and connecting rural lanes)
- Bus services
- Drainage and wastewater systems
- Utilities and flood-sensitive areas

#### Joint Position

- The Duty to Cooperate must be demonstrably and rigorously applied
- Cross-boundary impacts must be fully modelled and mitigated
- Allocations should be reviewed on a corridor-wide basis, not district-by-district

### 3. Transport and Highways – Fundamental Concern

#### 3.1 Existing Constraints

The current network is already under strain:

- A1124: constrained rural road with narrow sections, frontage access and flood risk
- A12 Junctions 25 & 26: operating at or above capacity
- Aldham Bridge: single-lane bottleneck

- Chappel/Wakes Colne viaduct section: flooding and closures
- Earls Colne junctions: congestion and safety concerns

### 3.2 Impact of Growth

All parishes raise concerns that:

- Increased traffic will worsen congestion and journey times
- Rural roads and lanes will be used as rat-runs and diversion routes
- Villages will face significant safety risks, particularly for pedestrians and school access
- Air quality and noise impacts will increase

This is reinforced by local experience of sat-nav diversion behaviour through rural lanes.

### 3.3 Sustainable Transport – Unrealistic Assumptions

The Plan relies heavily on modal shift, but:

- Rural bus services are limited and unreliable
- Rail access is extremely limited and not aligned to key destinations
- Cycling and walking options are constrained in rural settings
- Infrastructure proposals are often unfunded or undefined

### Joint Position

- Assumptions around modal shift are not credible at the required scale
- The Plan must demonstrate deliverable, funded transport solutions

## 4. Infrastructure First Requirement

***Development must not proceed ahead of infrastructure.***

Key infrastructure requirements include:

- Highway capacity improvements (A12 junctions, A1124 corridor, local junctions)
- Delivery of the Halstead bypass at an early stage or prior to occupation
- Drainage and wastewater upgrades
- Healthcare provision
- School capacity expansion
- Public transport provision

Parishes request:

- Clear, enforceable 'infrastructure first' policies
- Phasing conditions tied to infrastructure delivery
- A detailed and fully costed infrastructure schedule

This mirrors precedent in the North Essex Local Plan where development is contingent on infrastructure delivery.

## 5. Halstead Strategic Growth Location (SGL)

There is conditional support for growth at Halstead, but only if:

### 5.1 Bypass Delivery

- Must be delivered early or ahead of development
- Must function effectively to prevent traffic dispersal through villages

## 5.2 Traffic Mitigation

- Explicit measures to prevent rat-running through rural parishes
- Contributions secured via S106/S278 for: traffic calming, road narrowing/chicanes, speed controls and weight restrictions

## 5.3 Network Impact

Clear mitigation required for:

- A131 congestion
- A1124 corridor impacts
- High Garrett junction pressures

## 5.4 Coordination and Clarity

- Clarification required on whether Halstead is one or two SGLs
- Delivery must be coordinated and masterplanned comprehensively

## 6. Protection of Rural Character and Landscape

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Parishes consistently raise concern about:

- Loss of countryside character
- Settlement coalescence
- Urbanisation of rural gaps

Key requests:

- Strong and enforceable green buffers between settlements
- Protection of village identity and setting
- Avoidance of development sprawl beyond defined settlement boundaries

## 7. Drainage and Environmental Capacity

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Flooding and drainage are already significant issues: surface water capacity is constrained, and flood-prone infrastructure points exist (e.g. the viaduct area).

### Joint Position

- Development must demonstrate it will not exacerbate flooding
- Drainage infrastructure must be fully assessed, upgraded in advance, and clearly funded and deliverable

## 8. Local Services and Community Infrastructure

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There is a consistent view that current provision is insufficient across schools, healthcare and community facilities.

### Joint Position

- The Plan must include specific, funded expansions

- All development (including small-scale/infill) must contribute fairly and avoid 'development by stealth' impacts

## 9. Rural Lanes and Secondary Roads

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There is widespread concern about increased use of minor roads and lanes as shortcuts, damage to rural infrastructure, and safety risks to residents and pedestrians.

### Joint Position

- Stronger protection for rural lanes
- Explicit policy support for traffic management measures and enforcement mechanisms

## 10. Engagement with Local Knowledge

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Parishes emphasise they hold valuable local data and insight on traffic patterns, rat-running behaviour and flooding issues. They request formal involvement in:

- Transport modelling
- Infrastructure planning
- Mitigation design

## 11. Key Joint Requests

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The Colne Valley parishes jointly request that before Regulation 19:

- Reassessment of scale and distribution of growth along the Colne Valley
- A comprehensive cross-boundary infrastructure strategy
- A fully costed and funded infrastructure delivery plan
- Clear 'infrastructure first' phasing policies
- Early and guaranteed delivery of the Halstead bypass
- Explicit measures to prevent rat-running through rural villages
- Strengthened policies for rural lane protection, green buffers and settlement separation
- Full and transparent transport modelling, including cross-border impacts
- Formal inclusion of parish councils in infrastructure planning processes

## Conclusion

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The Colne Valley parishes support the principle of sustainable growth. However, the current proposals:

- Underestimate infrastructure constraints
- Over-rely on uncertain mitigation measures
- Fail to adequately address cross-boundary impacts

The Plan, as it stands, risks placing unsustainable pressure on rural communities and infrastructure. A revised approach is required that is:

***Infrastructure-led, evidence-based, cross-boundary coordinated, and deliverable.***

## **Braintree District Local Plan Review update and next steps**

**08.05.2026 12:28**

The Braintree District Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation, which ran for just over six weeks, closed on Friday 17 April. Thank you to everyone who took the time to share their views and attend our community events.

This stage of consultation focused on testing early ideas and gathering local insight. Over 1,800 responses were received. All feedback helps to shape the next version of the plan.

### **What happens next?**

We will now review all the comments and evidence submitted and use it to inform the next stage of the Local Plan. Further updates will be shared in the coming months.

All comments will be published on our website however due to the volume received, it is expected that this task will not be complete until July 2026.

The next formal stage, known as Regulation 19, is expected this summer/autumn and will present a more developed version of the plan before it is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination.

Throughout the next stages, the Local Plan will be discussed at public meetings of the Local Plan Sub-Committee. These meetings allow residents to follow the plan's progress, see how feedback and evidence are being considered, and stay engaged with decision-making. Details of these meetings will be available on our [website](#) and are broadcast live on the council's [YouTube channel](#).

### **Regulation 19**

Regulation 19 focuses on whether the Plan meets legal and national requirements and whether the evidence supports it. At this stage, you'll have all the evidence. If people identify that something about the Plan is "fundamentally unsound" (planning speak for 'totally wrong'), it can still be changed at this stage.

You can see what makes a Local Plan 'sound' or 'unsound' in the [national guidance](#). All the Regulation 19 comments will be submitted alongside the Plan. There could be another round of consultation called 'main modifications' if the Plan require changes.

The Local Plan Review includes some chunky documents. We want you to be as well-equipped as possible to get involved. Keep reading our planning newsletters, and follow us on social media, for easy-read background information.

We will also do all we can to make the documents themselves accessible. Some will be technical by nature, but others will include clear summaries that should help those who are new to local planning.

For more information on the Local Plan Review, please visit our website [www.braintree.gov.uk/localplanreview](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/localplanreview) or sign up to our [planning email newsletter](#) for the latest planning information and updates.

Kind regards,

Planning Policy Team

Braintree District Council | Causeway House, Bocking End, Braintree, CM7 9HB

01376 552525 | [www.braintree.gov.uk](http://www.braintree.gov.uk)

**Bures N'hood Plan - Update and notice of new focused consultation (ends 29 May)****08.05.2026 15:19**

*Please note: This email has been sent both for and on behalf of Babergh District Council and Braintree District Council.*

Because you are a statutory consultee, or because you / your client have previously expressed interest in the progress of the Bures Neighbourhood Plan (the 'Bures NP' or 'the Plan'), we have been keeping you apprised of its progression through the examination phase. In our last e-mail to you dated 22 April 2026 we asked that you please disregard the report that had been issued two days prior and said that we would issue a further update. This email provides that update.

**Notice of focused consultation on new legal requirements and a new basic condition test (ends Friday 29 May 2026)**

New provisions relating to how neighbourhood plans must be examined came into force on 25 March 2026 through Section 98 and Section 99 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (LURA) 2023. This means that these must now be considered by the Examiner before she can issue a new report on the Bures NP. Links to these new LURA provisions are provided below:

- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/55/section/98>
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/55/section/99>

The Examiner has also issued an '**Explanatory Note**' which provides more detail and sets out what now needs to happen. This note (see copy attached for convenience) is being published as part of an update to our two respective webpages:

- <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/w/bures-neighbourhood-plan>
- <https://www.braintree.gov.uk/planning-building-control/neighbourhood-planning/14>

On behalf of the Examiner, we are now carrying out a **focused consultation on whether or not these new provisions have any implications for the Bures Neighbourhood Plan**. That exercise begins on Monday 11 May and will end at 4:00pm on Friday 29 May 2026. Details of how to respond are provided online.

**Of note** ~ if you have previously made a written representation on this Plan that is unaffected by the new provisions you do not need to re-submit your comments as they have been taken into account. Also, this is not an invite to submit new comments on the Plan, or to seek to provide additional information connected with a previously made representation that is not relevant to the question being asked.

If you do wish to make a written representation on these new matters alone, the simplest way to do so is to reply directly to this email.

Yours faithfully,  
Paul Bryant

Neighbourhood Planning Officer | Planning Policy Team  
Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils – Working Together

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## **Independent Examination of the Bures Neighbourhood Plan Implications of Sections 98 and 99 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023**

### *Context*

The provisions of Sections 98 and 99 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) 2023 came into force on 25 March 2026. This means that the new requirements for neighbourhood plans came into immediate effect and those preparing neighbourhood plans or examining neighbourhood plans should do so in accordance with the new legal requirements.

The new provisions came into force during the fact check stage of this examination. I issued my final report on 20 April 2026, but this did not address the new provisions. As a result, I requested that my report be temporarily withdrawn whilst any implications arising from the new provisions were considered.

It is anticipated that neighbourhood planning guidance will be updated in due course and expand on how the new requirements should be applied.

However, at this point in time, I consider it prudent to provide an opportunity to the qualifying body, the local planning authorities and other interested parties, including those who submitted representations at the Regulation 16 stage, to comment on these changes including putting forward suggested modifications for my consideration to ensure the Neighbourhood Plan meets the new requirements.

### *Action required*

I have therefore requested that Babergh District Council and Braintree District Council hold a minimum two week period of focused consultation on the new provisions.

It should be made clear that there is no need for responses to repeat representations that have already been made at the Regulation 16 stage. These have already, and will continue to be, taken into account.

As the Regulation 16 consultation period has ended, it is not an opportunity to raise new matters that do not relate to these legal considerations.

### *What happens after the focussed consultation has ended?*

After I have received any representations made during the focused consultation, I will undertake a desktop-based reassessment of the Bures Neighbourhood Plan against the new provisions.

The consultation stage will assist me to recommend appropriate modifications if any are necessary to ensure the Neighbourhood Plan meets the new requirements.

I will then produce an Addendum to my final report setting out the context, the process undertaken and an assessment of whether the Neighbourhood Plan and its policies should proceed to referendum with or without additional, amended or deleted modifications to those contained in the final report.

Given this has implications for the timetable, I will aim to minimise any delay and will seek to issue a further fact check report and Addendum as soon as I can.

*Legislative changes – informal summary for information purposes only*

The further legal requirements are:

- So far as the qualifying body considers appropriate, and having regard to the subject matter of the plan, the plan must be designed to secure that the development and use of land in the neighbourhood area, contributes to the mitigation of, and adaption to, climate change; and
- So far as the qualifying body considers appropriate, and having regard to the subject matter of the plan, the plan must be designed to take account of any local nature recovery strategy under section 104 of the Environment Act 2021 that relates to all, or part, of the neighbourhood plan area.

The new basic conditions are:

- The making of the neighbourhood development plan would not result in the development plan for the area of the authority proposing that less housing is provided by means of development taking place in the area than if the neighbourhood development plan were not to be made.

Please note that this new basic condition replaces the former basic condition that the neighbourhood plan had to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the area.

- Any requirements imposed in relation to the plan by or under Part 6 of LURA 2023 (environmental outcomes reports) have been complied with.

Please note that whilst this basic condition has commenced, until such time as a completed framework for the implementation of Environmental Assessment Reports is in place, compliance with this basic condition cannot be assessed.

Ann Skippers MRTPI  
Independent Examiner  
1 May 2026



## **Colne Valley Parishes Meeting held at 6.00 p.m. on the 14<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at White Colne Village Hall, White Colne.**

### **Present:**

Chair for the meeting: Cllr Jane Taylor (White Colne), Ray Dalton (Earls Colne), Cllr Barry Walsh (Wakes Colne), Cllr Mary Ashby (Colne Engaine), Cllr Paul Foster (Greenstead Green), Debbie Wass (Greenstead Green), Cllr John Wilson (White Colne), Cllr Denise Stocker (Wakes Colne), Cllr Nigel Lippiatt (Chappel), Cllr Patrick Dent (Chappel), Cllr Michael Field (White Colne), Cllr Jim Bond (Halstead) & Grahame Walkingshaw (Parish Clerk for Colne Engaine).

#### 1. Welcome & Apologies

Cllr Jane Taylor opened the meeting at 6.00 p.m.

Apologies were received from Cllr Alan Barnard (Colne Engaine), Cllr Paula Bull (White Colne), Cllr Peter Chillingworth (Wakes Colne) and Cllr William Sunnick (Wakes Colne).

#### 2. Response to Regulation 18 – Local Plan (BDC)

Cllr Jane Taylor handed out a response sheet from White Colne, Earls Colne, Colne Engaine, Chappel & Wakes Colne in regards to regulation 18 Local Plan – Braintree District Council.

Cllr Jane Taylor welcomed Paul Foster & Debbie Wass from Greenstead Green Parish Council. Cllr Paul Foster informed the meeting that the bypass and housing is coming and that the main concerns of Greenstead Green were the additional traffic that the 2,800 houses would bring. Greenstead Green are focused on the developers paying for traffic measures such as speed bumps, speed cameras etc. to make it less attractive for cars to come through Greenstead Green.

Cllr Jane Taylor informed the meeting that we should all be protective of our country lanes and although there is legislation at present on this, work on speed bumps, speed cameras etc. if something we should all agree are necessary.

Cllr Debbie Wass pointed out that none of the development planned was to the West of Braintree.

Cllr Jane Taylor spoke about the green wedge between White Colne & Wakes Colne that is protected but stated that there is no protection between Wakes Colne & Chappel.

Cllr Paul Foster informed the meeting that any housing should be kept within the Halstead side of the bypass. Any development on the opposite side would then mean they could develop further out on that side in future.

## Appendix O



Cllr Jim Bond informed concerns about traffic

the meeting that it will be busy anyway with traffic but that the new bypass may reduce the number of lorries

the meeting that Halstead had and about the effects on the town itself.

He informed the meeting that it will be busy anyway with traffic but that the new bypass may reduce the number of lorries coming through Halstead. Halstead has further concerns with regards to parking but this may increase the number of shoppers to Halstead.

Cllr Denise Stocker informed the meeting that they were concerned with the high levels of traffic that would be on the bypass. The traffic would move from the bypass onto other local roads. Any response should feature a new road layout.

Cllr Nigel Lippiatt informed the meeting that Chappel has concerns about the 200 houses being developed on an extremely narrow lane which has features a dog-leg that would make it difficult to access by bus or lorry – how would they be able to pass each other in such a narrow lane? Chappell also had concerns that there had not been much mention of doctors or medical facilities.

Cllr Denise Stocker mentioned that Station Road could be an issue with traffic and that a pedestrian had been knocked down and killed last year. Any traffic moved from Station Road would move it to Spring Gardens Lane.

Cllr Jane Taylor informed the meeting that work would also be needed on the A12.

Cllr Nigel Lippiatt informed the meeting that with all this new housing development, they had not considered the effect on sewage and water. The Victorian Pumping Station was constantly being blocked at present.

Cllr Paul Foster informed the meeting that it was in the developer's interest to make sure these facilities were provided for. The King's Dene development would see 5,600 houses being built, he explained that there was a lot of opposition to this development in King's Dene.

Cllr Jane Taylor concluded the meeting by asking all of the Parishes present to send in their individual Parish Council responses to the Parish Clerk. These will be collated by Cllr Jane Taylor.

All Parish Council's should put their individual response online to BDC before the deadline on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

3. Date & Time of next meeting  
TBC confirmed by the Parish Clerk, next meeting to be held in White Colne Village Hall.

The meeting finished at 6.55 p.m.

Ref	Location / Equipment	Issue Identified	Risk Level	Required Action	Priority	Responsible	Target Date	Completion Date	Status	Notes
1	Agility Trail (Timber)	Timber decay at ground level and top bar	Medium	Replace affected timber sections	High				Open	
2	Agility Trail	Decay on suspension bridge posts and balance beam	Medium	Replace affected parts	High				Open	
3	Agility Trail	Surface holes present	Low	Repair holes in surface	Medium				Open	
4	Agility Trail	Missing cap	Low	Replace missing cap	Medium				Open	
5	Agility Trail	Structure relies on single post for stability	Medium	Monitor condition and consult manufacturer guidance	Medium				Open	
6	Agility Trail	Natural timber splits	Low	Monitor and sand splintered edges if required	Low				Open	
7	Swing Set (2 Bay)	Timber posts beginning to decay	Medium	Inspect further; consider penetration testing and replace if needed	High				Open	
8	Swing Set	Bird fouling on crossbar	Medium	Install anti-bird strip or deterrent	Medium				Open	
9	Swing Set	Loose bolts / shackles	Low	Tighten bolts and shackles	Medium				Open	
10	Playground Signage	Loose or missing fixtures	Medium	Tighten or replace fixings	Medium				Open	
11	Playground Area	Dog control signage recommended	Low	Consider installing dog ownership signage	Low				Open	
12	BBQ Area	Monitoring required	Low	Monitor when in use	Low				Open	

**Perimeter Fence**

**22.03.2026 20:33**

Evening jim,

Is there any chance we can get the perimeter fence of the allotments replaced or repaired ,its not fit for purpose lost all my winter vegetables to rabbits . fence is full of holes .

Yours sincerly Robin



## WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

White Colne Village Hall, Bures Road, White Colne, CO6 2QA.

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*Village of the Year 2025*

### **Allotment Boundary Fencing Policy**

White Colne Parish Council recognises the value of allotments to the community and seeks to maintain the allotment site to a reasonable and safe standard within available budgets.

The Council notes:

- allotment rents provide only limited annual income;
- allotment facilities are subsidised by the wider parish precept;
- perimeter fencing replacement can represent a significant capital expense.

The Council therefore adopts the following approach:

1. The Council will maintain allotment land in a reasonably safe condition as landowner.
2. The Council will consider repairs to fencing where necessary for:
  - public safety;
  - prevention of dangerous access;
  - protection of Council assets;
  - or prevention of significant deterioration.
3. The Council is not under a general obligation to provide or fully replace perimeter fencing solely for crop protection, wildlife exclusion, or tenant preference.
4. Full fencing replacement will normally only be considered where:
  - external funding is available;
  - sufficient Council budget exists;
  - or a clear safety or security need is demonstrated.
5. The Council encourages allotment tenants to work collectively through an allotment association where possible, particularly in relation to improvement projects, fundraising, and grant applications.
6. This policy shall be reviewed periodically alongside the Council's allotment budget and asset management priorities.

This Policy will be included within the Council's developing Climate & Biodiversity Policy.

**Adopted: 19.05.2026; Minute ref: 015/26**

**Next review: July 2026**



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### Action Plan 2026-27

#### 1. Environmental Sustainability & Energy Efficiency

- 1.1 Continue optimizing the solar panels, battery storage, and air source heat pump at the Village Hall.
- 1.2 Host renewable energy education events to support the progress of the Colne Valley Community Energy Project.
- 1.3 Support biodiversity and habitat conservation throughout the village.
- 1.4 Create Management Policies for parish council owned and/or managed land.

#### 2. Community Engagement & Volunteers

- 2.1 Continue supporting the Stationmasters Café as a bi-weekly community hub.
- 2.2 Ensure the successful reopening of the Community Warm Hub in November 2025.
- 2.3 Empower the WO Helpers Group to organize events and support community initiatives.
- 2.4 Support the introduction of the new mobile Social Supermarket at the village hall.

#### 3. Infrastructure & Facilities Development

- 3.1 Promote the community garden and continue to engage with local groups, e.g. the Scouts, children's holiday club.
- 3.2 Maximize the use of the upgraded village hall for community events.
- 3.3 Research external funding opportunities to improve playground facilities.
- 3.4 Aspire to install Village Gateways.

#### 4. Allotments: Fencing, Promotion & Community Involvement

- 4.1 Explore funding for new fencing via budgeting, sponsorship, fundraising, or in-kind support.
- 4.2 Encourage formation of an Allotment Society to:
  - Coordinate group buying for discounts
  - Sell surplus produce to raise funds
  - Assist with site maintenance and representation
- 4.3 Promote available plots and the benefits of allotment gardening.

#### 5. Community Orchard Maintenance

- 5.1 Engage local volunteers or groups for ongoing care and education.

- 5.2 Host orchard-themed events.
- 5.3 Create Management Policy for the Community Orchard.

## **6. Governance & Financial Stewardship**

- 6.1 Manage council finances responsibly, keeping the precept stable if possible.
- 6.2 Complete statutory audits and ensure public rights to view accounts.
- 6.3 Review and update council policies regularly.
- 6.4 Encourage all councillors to undertake relevant training to support their roles and improve the effectiveness of the council.

## **7. Communication & Community Relations**

- 7.1 Keep the council website updated with relevant news and information.
- 7.2 Ensure information leaflets are printed and delivered free to every household at least quarterly, maintaining this as a vital communication channel.
- 7.3 Develop new ways for residents to provide feedback and ideas.

## **8. Community Safety & Wellbeing**

- 8.1 Deploy the mobile SID (Speed Indicator Device) at various locations around the village to monitor vehicle speeds and collect data for sharing with the police.
- 8.2 Continue to fund and maintain the village defibrillator, and to provide training for local volunteers in its use.
- 8.3 Continue to report highway defects and maintenance issues to Essex County Council: [Tell us - Essex County Council](#)
- 8.4 Attempt to find a new solution to the continued destruction of the pavement in Colneford Hill Identify and implement ways to keep pavements clear, signage clean, and public areas well-maintained to ensure a safe and accessible environment for all residents.

## **9. Looking Ahead: Devolution and Local Empowerment**

- 9.1 Monitor developments in the Essex devolution programme and advocate for increased responsibilities and funding at the parish level.
- 9.2 Continue to pursue the transfer of the village hall tenure via a community asset transfer, in line with the ongoing devolution programme.
- 9.3 Prepare for potential new duties such as local highways maintenance, green space oversight, or small grants administration.
- 9.4 Build partnerships with neighbouring parishes, Braintree District Council, and Essex County Council to demonstrate readiness and capacity for devolved responsibilities.
- 9.5 Develop partnerships, where possible, with forthcoming Unitary Authority.

Reviewed & Amended 16.09.2025



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### Delegated Responsibilities 2026-27

Responsibility	Person Responsible
Allotments and Community Garden	Cllr Wilson
Climate Action, inc. Community Energy Project	Cllr Taylor
Community Liaison	Cllr Taylor
Defibrillator	Cllr Pryke
Environment (inc. Footpaths, Litter & Dog Waste Issues)	Cllr Batchford Cllr Pryke Cllr Wilson
Grant Funded Projects	Cllr Taylor
Highways (inc. Reporting Defects & Potholes, 20 is Plenty, Public Transport, SID)	Cllr Pryke
The Meadows	Cllr Batchford Mike King
Planning Applications	Cllr Wilson
Policies	Cllr Wilson
River Colne (inc. Flooding & Drainage)	Cllr Batchford Cllr Wilson
Parish Tree Warden	Lynne Brown
Village Green (inc. Christmas Lighting & Maintenance)	
Village Hall	Cllr Taylor
Village Hall H&S Checks	Mike King
Village Hall Land at Rear	Cllr Taylor
Website (inc. IT & social media)	

## **Scheme of Delegation**

This document sets out the manner in which White Colne Parish Council has delegated powers and responsibilities, and is one of the three major ways in which the Council regulates its affairs - the others being its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

The power to delegate functions is set out in the Local Government Act 1972 s101. The intention of the delegation scheme is to allow the Council to act with all reasonable speed. Decisions should be taken at the most suitable level. Therefore, the Clerk is given powers over the day-to-day administration of the Council to decide matters within available Terms of Reference, and matters of major policy should be recommended to the Full Council. Whilst delegation is necessary, it is the Council's policy that members and the public should have the fullest information available to them at all times. Therefore, the Clerk reports all major decisions taken under delegated powers at the next available Council meeting.

## **Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer**

The Clerk shall be:

- the Proper Officer and carry out the functions as provided by the Local Government Act 1972;
- the Responsible Financial Officer in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations in force at any given time.

## **Powers Which Cannot Be Delegated**

- levying or issuing a precept
- borrowing money
- approving the Council's annual accounts
- considering an auditor's report made in the public interest
- confirming that the council has satisfied the statutory criteria to exercise the general power of competence
- adopting or revising the Councils code of conduct

## **Delegated Powers and Responsibilities**

In addition to the responsibilities set out in the Clerk's job description the Clerk has the delegated authority to undertake the following matters on behalf of the Council:

- Day to day administration of services, together with routine inspections and control.
- Authorisation to respond immediately to any correspondence, requiring or requesting information or relating to previous decisions of the Council but not correspondence requiring an opinion to be taken by the Council or its Committees.
- Authorisation of routine expenditure in accordance with Financial Regulations (Budgetary Control and Authority to Spend).
- Preparation and submission of comments to Planning Applications where the Council's agreed stance is known.
- Handling requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1988 or General Data Protection Regulation (whichever is in force at the time of request).
- Issuing press releases and statements to the press on the Council's known policies.
- Updating and managing the content of the Council's website.

- Disposal of Council records according to legal restrictions;
- Take appropriate actions arising from emergencies in consultation with Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Council - as appropriate to the circumstances which may require expenditure above and beyond the £500 limit in the Financial Regulations.

### **Planning Delegation to the Clerk**

- The Council delegates decisions arising under development control consultations to the clerk in consultation with all Councillors.
- Consultation may be by correspondence, including email, or in person. It may also take place at meetings of the Council.
- The clerk will arrange for relevant papers to be circulated to the councillors who should return their comments, to the clerk for determination of the council's response within the prescribed consultation period.
- Delegated decisions will be reported to and recorded in the minutes of the next council meeting.
- In respect of the controversial or major development proposals, the clerk in consultation with the chairman, may decide that a parish meeting and/or an extraordinary meeting of the council be called to consider the matter.

This Scheme has been drafted from the NALC Model Scheme of Delegation. This scheme will be reviewed and amended as required, due to changes in legislation or on the employment of a new Clerk.

**Adopted: 19.05.2026; Minute ref: 017/26**

**Next review: May 2027**



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### Arrangements with other Local Authorities, Not-for-Profit Bodies, and Businesses

Organisation	Arrangements
Braintree Association of Local Councils	Annual membership
Braintree District Council	
Essex County Council	
Essex Association of Local Councils	Annual membership
National Association of Local Councils	Annual membership via EALC subscription
Society of Local Council Clerks	Parish Clerk has membership
Essex Police	Public Liaison Meetings
Rural Community Council of Essex	Annual membership
The Allotments Society	Annual membership
Unity Trust Bank	Banking
Scribe	Accounting software
Jan Stobart	Internal Audit
Simcott Renewables	
Monta	EV Charging
Hallmaster	Village Hall online booking system – annual subscription
Stripe	Village Hall bookings
SumUp	Card Payments
Scottish Power	Smart Export Guarantee (SEG)
JPB Landscapes	Grasscutting
Gallen Windows	Village Hall window cleaning
Jade Lock	Village Hall bookings
Laura Bowles	Village Hall cleaning
Suzanna Giera	Village Hall cleaning (relief)
E & J	Village Hall fire extinguishers
Stephen Holt	General maintenance
John Watt	General maintenance

## Representation or Work with External Bodies

Organisation	Arrangements	Representative
Braintree District Council		
Essex County Council		
Essex Association of Local Councils	Committee Member	Cllr Taylor
National Association of Local Councils	Annual subscription (via EALC membership)	
Society of Local Council Clerks	Essex Branch meetings	Parish Clerk
Essex Police	Attendance at Parish Police meetings	Cllr Wilson
Rural Community Council of Essex	Annual subscription	
The Allotments Society	Annual subscription	

**Adopted: 19.05.2026; Minute ref: 018/26**

**Next review: May 2027**

**Whitecolne Parish Council**  
**Fixed Assets and Long Term Investments (Active + Disposed)**

Asset Description	Date Acquired	Purchase Value	Current Value	Location /Responsibility	Estimated Life	Usage/Capacity	Charges	Status
<b>002 Leisure &amp; Facilities</b>								
2 x Interpretation boards	31/03/2023	2,966.25	5,000.00	The Meadows				Active
200l commercial freezer	31/03/2025	324.00	324.00	Village Hall				Active
3 backless banches	31/03/2025	499.00	500.00	Village Hall grounds				Active
30 solar panels, hybrid inverter, & 20kWh batte	31/03/2025	27,690.00	30,000.00	Village Hall				Active
Air filter	31/03/2023	695.00	695.00	Village Hall				Active
Art feature	31/03/2023	2,042.73	3,500.00	The Meadows				Active
Bar area	31/03/2023	3,000.00	3,000.00	Village Hall				Active
Basketball goal & post	31/03/2023	1,711.02	1,715.00	Village Hall grounds				Active
Beacon	31/03/2023	878.18	1,200.00	The Meadows				Active
Car park fencing	31/03/2023	348.41	350.00	Village Hall grounds				Active
Chairs	31/03/2025	1,506.00	1,506.00	Village Hall				Active
Chase Gate	31/03/2023	311.00	311.00	The Meadows				Active
Christmas lights	31/03/2023	128.25	1,000.00	Village Green				Active
Christmas tree & lights	31/03/2023	1,500.00	1,500.00	Village Green				Active
Community barbecue	31/03/2023	100.00	100.00	The Meadows				Active
Community garden	31/03/2024	2,500.00	2,500.00	Village Hall grounds				Active
Community garden furniture	31/03/2024	1,406.00	1,406.00	Village Hall grounds				Active
Concrete table tennis table	31/03/2023	1,289.83	1,300.00	Village Hall grounds				Disposed
Defibrillator	31/03/2023	1,290.00	1,290.00	Street furniture				Active
Dishwasher	31/03/2023	958.08	960.00	Village Hall				Active
Electrical supply box	31/03/2021	2,761.02	3,000.00	Village Green				Active
External lights	31/03/2023	175.00	175.00	Village Hall				Active
Fascias	31/03/2025	3,200.00	3,200.00	Village Hall				Active
Furniture	31/03/2023	3,172.00	3,172.00	Village Hall				Active
Interpretation board	31/03/2021	1,500.00	2,500.00	Village Green				Active
Interpretation board	31/03/2023	1,500.00	2,500.00	Village Hall grounds				Active

**Whitecolne Parish Council**  
**Fixed Assets and Long Term Investments (Active + Disposed)**

<b>Asset Description</b>	<b>Date Acquired</b>	<b>Purchase Value</b>	<b>Current Value</b>	<b>Location /Responsibility</b>	<b>Estimated Life</b>	<b>Usage/Capacity</b>	<b>Charges</b>	<b>Status</b>
Kitchen fixtures	31/03/2023	5,613.00	5,613.00	Village Hall				Active
Life belt	31/03/2023	340.06	350.00	The Meadows				Active
Loo fixtures	31/03/2023	425.00	600.00	Village Hall				Active
Marquee	31/03/2023	740.00	740.00	Village Hall				Active
Meadows bench	31/03/2023	1,824.00	1,824.00	The Meadows				Active
Meadows chairs	31/03/2023	390.00	390.00	The Meadows				Active
Meadows gazebo	31/03/2023	281.00	281.00	The Meadows				Active
Meadows kitchen	31/03/2023	2,500.00	2,500.00	The Meadows				Active
Meadows shed	31/03/2023	1,392.00	1,392.00	The Meadows				Active
Meadows tables	31/03/2023	309.00	309.00	The Meadows				Active
Memorial Bench	31/03/2023	1,010.50	1,010.50	Village Green				Active
Metal rebound football goal	31/03/2023	5,578.12	5,580.00	Village Hall grounds				Active
Microphone	31/03/2023	67.00	67.00	Village Hall				Active
Montages	31/03/2023	1,050.00	1,050.00	Village Hall				Active
New fencing	31/03/2023	600.00	600.00	Village Hall grounds				Active
Notice board	31/03/2021	890.11	1,500.00	Village Green				Active
Other	31/03/2023	1,110.84	1,110.84	Street furniture				Active
Parish Sign	31/03/2021	3,189.37	5,000.00	Village Green				Active
Pavillion	31/03/2023	2,000.00	2,000.00	The Meadows				Active
Pavillion event equipment	31/03/2023	250.00	250.00	The Meadows				Active
Picnic bench	31/03/2023	348.41	350.00	Village Hall grounds				Active
Plastic bench	31/03/2023	510.68	510.00	Village Hall grounds				Active
Plastic Benches	31/03/2023	980.00	980.00	The Meadows				Active
Potting shed	31/03/2023	695.00	695.00	Village Hall grounds				Active
Rangemaster oven	31/03/2025	2,725.00	2,725.00	Village Hall				Active
Rolec Securicharge Smart EV charger & socke	31/03/2025	3,500.00	4,000.00	Village Hall				Active
Roof	31/03/2025	8,750.00	8,750.00	Village Hall				Active
Screens	31/03/2023	127.00	127.00	Village Hall				Active

**Whitecolne Parish Council**  
**Fixed Assets and Long Term Investments (Active + Disposed)**

Asset Description	Date Acquired	Purchase Value	Current Value	Location /Responsibility	Estimated Life	Usage/Capacity	Charges	Status
Seat	31/03/2021	800.62	800.00	Village Green				Active
Shed	31/03/2023	1,600.00	1,600.00	Village Hall grounds				Active
SID	31/03/2023	3,378.00	3,378.00	Street furniture				Active
Smart key fob	31/03/2023	133.00	133.00	Village Hall				Active
Smoke / Carbon Monoxide detectors	31/03/2023	251.00	251.00	Village Hall				Active
Solar light	31/03/2023	1,020.00	1,020.00	Village Hall grounds				Active
Spider climber	31/03/2023	10,500.00	10,500.00	The Meadows				Active
Stepping stones & matting	31/03/2023	7,271.80	8,000.00	The Meadows				Active
Telephone box	31/03/2023	193.00	193.00	Street furniture				Active
Television & fittings	31/03/2023	1,182.00	1,182.00	Village Hall				Active
The Meadows - 6 acres	01/01/2001	36,000.00	36,000.00	The Meadows				Active
Trestle tables (in shed)	31/03/2023	110.00	110.00	Village Hall				Active
Wave shelter	31/03/2023	10,000.00	10,000.00	Village Hall grounds				Active
Wifi equipment	31/03/2023	350.00	350.00	Village Hall				Active
Wooden seat	31/03/2021	785.11	785.00	Village Green				Active
		<b>184,222.39</b>	<b>197,310.34</b>					
<b>004 Miscellaneous</b>								
HP Printer	2022	250.00	250.00	Office	2030			Active
Laptop & printer	31/03/2023	547.00	547.00	78 Manor Road				Disposed
MacBook Air 16GB	24.02.2026	899.00	899.00	Office	2035			Active
		<b>1,696.00</b>	<b>1,696.00</b>					
<b>Grand Total:</b>		<b>185,918.39</b>	<b>199,006.34</b>					



## WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

White Colne Village Hall, Bures Road, White Colne, CO6 2QA.

[www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk)

[clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk)

*Village of the Year 2025*

### Policy Review Schedule

Policy	Review Schedule
Financial Regulations	May
Standing Orders	May
Climate & Biodiversity	July
Human Resources & Conduct	September
Village Hall Hire	September
Health & Safety, Lone Working, Safeguarding, & Risk Management	November
Freedom of Information, Complaints, & Feedback	January
IT, Press, & Social Media	March



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*Village of the Year 2025*

## SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2026-27

21.07.2026

FULL COUNCIL

15.09.2026

FULL COUNCIL

17.11.2026

FULL COUNCIL

19.01.2027

FULL COUNCIL

16.03.2027

FULL COUNCIL

20.04.2027

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

18.05.2027

FULL COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING