



# 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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## **Minutes of the White Colne Parish Council Annual Meeting held at White Colne Village Hall on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 19:30hrs.**

Present: Cllr Paul Batchford  
Cllr Jim Bond  
Cllr Jason Pryke  
Cllr Jane Taylor (Chairperson)  
Cllr John Wilson  
Jim Morris, Parish Clerk  
Cllr George Courtauld, Colnes Ward  
One member of the public

### **001/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Chris Siddall, Halstead Division; and Cllr Gabrielle Spray, Colnes Ward.

### **002/25 ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON (Item managed by Parish Clerk)**

Cllr Jane Taylor was nominated by Cllr Batchford, seconded by Cllr Wilson, and unanimously elected Chairperson for 2025-26.

### **003/25 ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE OF CHAIRPERSON**

Cllr Jane Taylor signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Chairperson for 2025-26.

Cllr Taylor resumed chairing the meeting.

### **004/25 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

Cllr Jim Bond was nominated by Cllr Taylor, seconded by Cllr Batchford, and unanimously elected Vice-Chairperson for 2025-26.

### **005/25 ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

Cllr Jim Bond signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Vice-Chairperson for 2025-26.

### **006/25 PUBLIC SESSION**

A parishioner noted the deterioration of the wave shelter installed adjacent to the Village Hall. The canopy had several defects and was not draining properly. Some suggestions for remedial works were discussed, which would hopefully avoid having to dismantle it altogether.

**RESPONSE: members thanked the parishioner for their intervention. The item was due to be considered at Agenda item 28v.**

### **007/25 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS**

In accordance with Standing Order 13 (Code of Conduct and Dispensations), Cllr Wilson noted that his spouse was the tenant of an Allotment plot. Cllr Wilson requested dispensation to take part in discussions and any vote regarding Agenda item 28 – Allotments, and any further items regarding the Allotments in 2025-26.

**It was RESOLVED: that Cllr Wilson be granted dispensation to take part in any consideration of matters or vote concerning the parish council's Allotments during 2025-26, in accordance with Standing Order 13(e).**

### **008/25 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the White Colne Parish Council meeting held on 15.04.2025 were approved by council and signed by the Chairperson as a true and correct record.

## 009/25 MATTERS ARISING

Members considered the parish council's list of matters arising and ongoing. A quote of £475 for works to the silt trap had been received (Minute ref 064/24). Cllr Pryke had been in contact with Cllr Siddall regarding placing the SID in Bures Road. Cllr Taylor had liaised with Wakes Colne Parish Council and members were asked to provide their availability on Tuesdays in June for a meeting. **It was RESOLVED: that the quote for works to the silt trap be approved. Other matters arising were noted and would be progressed at future meetings.**

## 010/25 REPRESENTATIVES' REPORTS

Colnes Ward Cllr Gabrielle Spray had offered apologies for absence and 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.

Colnes Ward Cllr George Courtauld offered a report to the meeting. Braintree District Council (BDC) had been deluged with offers of land for housing during its Local Plan Review. The council was required to allocate land capable of delivering 1,400 dwellings per annum, yet proposals received would provide fourteen times the figure. Small sites were therefore unlikely to be considered. Cllr Spray had offered a calm and considered approach as Chairperson of Sub-Committee meetings. BDC was still arguing over how many bins it would provide to residents. The recent Consultation had prompted 8,000 responses. The process could be made irrelevant by the upcoming changes to local government, meetings about which had been endless and had offered scant decision making.

**RESPONSE: Cllr Bond noted that s.106 contributions from developers tended to be allocated to larger settlement areas, to the detriment of villages such as White Colne and asked for Cllr Courtauld's support in lobbying for equitable distribution of s.106 monies across parishes. White Colne Parish Council urged Cllr Courtauld to press BDC to committing a share of s.106 monies received to smaller parishes.**

## 011/25 FINANCE

i. Members received and considered the schedule of payments 01.03.2025 - 31.03.2025 totalling £5,126.70 (attached to record Minutes).

**It was RESOLVED: that the schedule of payments totalling £5,126.70 be approved.**

ii. Bank reconciliations for 2024-25 had been due to be tabled at the meeting. An oversight prevented members from viewing the reconciliations.

**It was RESOLVED: that scans of the bank reconciliations for 2024-25 be provided to members via email and noted at a future meeting.**

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### <sup>1</sup> REPORT FOR PARISH COUNCILS MAY 2025

**Local Plan:** The Local Plan sub-Committee met on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May to discuss the Draft Spatial Strategy i.e. broadly where in the District we would prefer to see development taking place. This item did not cover specific sites, those discussions will start with a meeting on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May and continue through to the end of July. There is a break in August, with meetings resuming from September – October.

Please do look out for meetings where sites specific to The Colnes villages will be examined. Currently, we have: Earls Colne (as a key service village) on 5<sup>th</sup> June; Colne Engaine 12<sup>th</sup> June; Pebmarsh 19<sup>th</sup> June; White Colne 25<sup>th</sup> June. Whilst it is hoped to stick to this timetable, it is subject to change if necessary, so do check the BDC website to be sure. Agendas will be published five working days prior to each meeting. This is very much a **draft allocation process**; the Reg 18 Public consultation will follow in November/December when anyone will be able to submit comments on what the Committee has decided. There will be a further public consultation in early 2026 before the draft Plan goes to the Planning Inspectorate. So, a long way to go yet!

**Waste Service Review:** There has been the biggest, and most detailed, consultation that District Councillors can remember on the proposed changes to how the District's waste is collected. A reminder that this is a change required by Government in order to increase recycling rates and standardise collections across the country. A final decision on exactly how the District will change the service, in terms of number of bins provided and frequency of collections will be decided at a meeting of the Cabinet on 27<sup>th</sup> May.

**Norwich-Tilbury energy scheme:** The decision to grant or refuse this National Grid scheme will be taken by the Planning Inspectorate as it is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). Braintree Council, through the planning team, continue to lobby National Grid to at least consider the off-shore option, for running cables undersea along the coast, rather than erecting multiple pylons across fields and farmland over three Counties. To date, National Grid are not receptive to looking at this option.

**Councillor Grant Fund:** A reminder that for the Council year 2025/2026 District Councillors each have £1,250.00 to donate towards local projects. Bids welcome! With best regards, Cllr Gabrielle Spray

iii. Quotes for electrical installation works on the Village Green were tabled. It was apparent that there had been a discrepancy between information given to potential contractors. Members discussed what the works should include.

**It was RESOLVED: that the scheme would include the running of cable to the copse of trees on the hill, but would not extend further. The Clerk would respond to each contractor, offering full details of the scheme as resolved. The council would consider revised quotes at a future meeting. Cllr Taylor noted that £500 was due from the maintenance team, and that District Councillors had access to grant funding of up to £1,250 for local projects. A fund-raising quiz night could be held at WCVH.**

iv. Street cleaning expenditure via BDC grant funding. Members discussed potential items for inclusion.

**It was RESOLVED: that the grant monies be spent on a battery-powered power washer, and a programme of street cleaning be progressed. The council's handyman would invoice for time spent.**

v. Internal Audit report for year-end 2024-25 (attached to record Minutes). The auditor had noted: that an FOI / Publication Scheme was not available on the website; that WCPC's Financial Regulations did not agree with Standing Order 18a v which requires a tender process for expected spend over £25,000 (presumed ex VAT although not stated), although tender thresholds could be brought into alignment when the new model Standing Orders are adopted in 2025/26; that there was a potential for linking Scribe to making tax digital systems for auto submission of tax returns in the future; that the council had sufficient reserves to fund projects such as Allotment fencing or Christmas lights installation, should grants not be available, and to keep them on the action tracker (matters arising); that income from WCVH had not been grossed up in 2024/25 accounts but would be separated out to show the fees as expenditure in 2025/26; and, that Major council decisions such as employment of staff, and taking on associated responsibilities and risks should be Minuted as resolutions of the council.

The auditor had recommended: that section 8 of the Financial Regs be updated to reflect the council's practice of having 2 cards, and the spend limits; that the council's invoice approval system be written into the new model financial regs, as part of section 6.5 which offered alternatives to full council authorisation by resolution; that some sort of poll, or use of a WhatsApp group would evidence councillor scrutiny of source documents against the payments list; that changing direct debits to payment of full invoice would solve any potential VAT126 issues; that the council's strategic risk assessment be reviewed in 2025/26, along with the other assessments; that a 'checklist' might also be useful for the hall (to include the café and hub activities) showing annual, monthly, weekly and specific event tasks as they relate to premises management, with a checklist listing the statutory requirements for the hall (e.g., boiler/gas service, music licence, servicing of fire extinguishers etc.), the date they were last done and the next due date, and that implications and risks associated with new projects (such as the warm hub) be considered at the time they are proposed to ensure compliance with FR 2.3; that opening a savings account with Unity would earn interest for the council; that one other person be able to 'submit' payments, as a backup for the clerk; and, checking that £14,131 was sufficient for total loss of the pavilion.

The auditor assumed ECC insured the Village Hall under its global buildings cover and was aware of the addition of solar panels to the roof.

**It was RESOLVED: that the Internal Audit Report be noted. Council approved the creation of a whatsapp group to approve invoices with an audit trail; and that a savings account with Unity be opened. Other items raised would be considered at a future meeting.**

vi. Annual Governance & Accountability Return Internal Audit Report 2024-25 (attached to record Minutes). The auditor noted that it was a legal requirement for the council to set up a pension scheme and auto enrol the clerk / RFO. The clerk could opt out of the scheme but if remaining in, the council will need to pay contributions from 01/01/25. This would affect the 2025/26 budget, but the council had sufficient reserves to cover this cost. The council had therefore failed to meet the requirement of Section G of the Annual Internal Audit Report: *Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.*

The auditor had offered the wording: *The parish council has not enrolled the clerk / RFO into a pension scheme. The council agreed to increase the SCP and number of hours per week with effect from 01/01/25 with the effect that the annual salary then exceeded the auto enrolment threshold. This is a genuine oversight that will be remedied in 2025/26 to be entered with the AGAR Internal Audit Report.*

**It was RESOLVED: that the AGAR Internal Audit Report be noted. The Clerk would provide information on pension schemes at a future meeting.**

vii. Confirmation of the Dates of the Period for the Exercise of Public Rights (attached to record Minutes).

**It was RESOLVED: that the dates for the period for the exercise of public rights be noted.**

#### **012/25 ANNUAL RETURN – GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2024-25**

Members received and considered Section 1: Governance Statement of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31.03.2025 (attached to record Minutes), which had been prepared for the external auditors PKF Littlejohn LLP as required by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2006.

**It was RESOLVED: that Section 1: Governance Statement of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31.03.2025 be approved. Section 1 was signed by the Chairperson and counter-signed by the Clerk.**

#### **013/25 ANNUAL RETURN – ACCOUNTING STATEMENT 2024-25**

Members received and considered Section 2: Accounting Statement of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31.03.2025 (attached to record Minutes), which had been prepared for the external auditors PKF Littlejohn LLP as required by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2006.

**It was RESOLVED: that Section 2: Accounting Statement of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31.03.2025 be approved. Section 2 was signed by the Responsible Financial Officer and counter-signed by the Chairperson.**

#### **014/25 REVIEW OF DELEGATION ARRANGEMENTS**

Members reviewed the Scheme of Delegation and Delegation Arrangements to Committees, Sub-Committees, staff and other local authorities (attached to record Minutes).

**It was RESOLVED: that the Scheme of Delegation be approved. Members would confirm their areas of responsibility following the meeting.**

#### **015/25 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES**

Members considered the appointment of any new committees in accordance with White Colne Standing Order 4.

**It was RESOLVED: that no new Committees would be appointed.**

#### **016/25 REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

Members reviewed White Colne Parish Council Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, which had been circulated with the Agenda. Amendments noted by the auditor and amendments suggested by the Clerk had been distributed to members ahead of the meeting for consideration.

**It was RESOLVED: that the suggested amendments be adopted. Standing Order 3 i was removed altogether.**

#### **017/25 REVIEW OF: ARRANGEMENTS WITH OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES, NOT-FOR-PROFIT BODIES, & BUSINESSES; SUBSCRIPTIONS; & REPRESENTATION OR WORK WITH EXTERNAL BODIES**

Members reviewed 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 (attached to record Minutes).

**It was RESOLVED: that the arrangements, subscriptions, and representation or work with external bodies be noted.**

#### **018/25 REVIEW OF INVENTORY OF LAND & ASSETS**

Members reviewed the inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment (attached to record Minutes).

**It was RESOLVED: that the Fixed Asset Register be noted.**

#### **019/25 REVIEW OF INSURANCE COVER**

Members reviewed and confirmed arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks, which had been provided in the Background Paper. The council's insurance was due for renewal, and the Fixed Asset Register would be provided to potential suppliers.

**It was RESOLVED: that the arrangements for insurance cover be approved. Three quotes would be sought, with a resolution on preferred supplier to be made after the meeting.**

#### **020/25 REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Members reviewed the Council's complaints procedure (attached to record Minutes).

**It was RESOLVED: that the Complaints Procedure be adopted.**

#### **021/25 REVIEW OF FREEDOM of INFORMATION and DATA PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

Members reviewed the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation, which were tabled at the meeting.

**It was RESOLVED: that the Data Protection, and Freedom of Information Policies & Procedures be adopted. Further information would be added to the Fol Policy at a later date.**

#### **022/25 REVIEW OF PRESS / MEDIA POLICY & PROCEDURES**

Members reviewed the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media, which was tabled at the meeting.

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

#### **023/25 REVIEW OF EMPLOYMENT POLICY & PROCEDURES**

Members reviewed the Council's employment policies and procedures, which was tabled at the meeting.

**It was RESOLVED: that the Staff Recruitment & Employment Policy & Procedure be adopted. Further information would be considered and added to the Policy at a future meeting.**

#### **024/25 REVIEW OF OTHER WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

Members reviewed the Council's existing policies and procedures, which had been viewed on the council's website [Documents and Policies](#) beforehand:

- Advertising Policy
- Allotments Privacy Policy
- Biodiversity Policy
- Customer Service Privacy Policy
- Data Breach Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Habitual or Vexatious Complaints Policy
- Lone Working Policy (not adopted)
- Model Council Officer Protocol
- Privacy Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Village Hall Hire Privacy Policy

**It was RESOLVED: that the existing Policies & Procedures be adopted.**

#### **025/25 REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT S137 EXPENDITURE**

Members reviewed the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972. The council had not made any expenditure under s.137.

**It was RESOLVED: that the non-expenditure of s.137 monies be noted.**

#### **026/25 WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS 2025-26**

Members received and considered the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council (attached to record Minutes).

**It was RESOLVED: that the Schedule of Meetings be approved.**

## 027/25 PLANNING

### i. Applications

a) Ref: [25/00915/FUL](#) (attached to record Minutes)

Location: Baggarets Farm, Dawes Hall Road, White Colne.

Proposal: Proposed agricultural workers dwelling.

**RESPONSE: White Colne Parish Council has no comment on Applications ref 25/00382/HH & 25/00383/LBC.**

b) Ref: [25/00943/TPOCON](#) (attached to record Minutes).

Location: 40 Colneford Hill, White Colne, Essex.

Proposal: Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area: Remove 2 No. Thuja Plicata.

**RESPONSE: White Colne Parish Council has no comment on Applications ref 25/00382/HH & 25/00383/LBC.**

c) Ref: [25/00966/TPOCON](#) (attached to record Minutes).

Location: The Kings Head, 19 Colchester Road, White Colne.

Proposal: Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area: T1 - Fig to crown reduce by 3m in height; T2 - Conifer to reduce by 1m in height; T3 - Conifer to reduce by 1m in height.

**RESPONSE: White Colne Parish Council has no comment on Applications ref 25/00382/HH & 25/00383/LBC.**

ii. Decisions – Cllr Bond had attended BDC Planning Committee to speak on WCPC's response to Planning Application ref 24/02538/FUL. The Committee had allowed the Application.

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

iii. Appeals – none received.

iv. Correspondence: *Guidance for queries regarding the Local Plan Review* (attached to record Minutes).

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

## 028/25 LEISURE & FACILITIES

i. Allotments – area of residence. Members considered the extent of the area of residence for Allotment Plot holders. A lengthy discussion was held over possible alternative ways of measuring the distance from White Colne. Cllr Bond noted that two Allotment sites were available in Halstead but had been unable to ascertain whether there was a current waiting list.

**It was RESOLVED: that the area of residence for White Colne Allotments be set at a radius of 3 miles from the Allotments site. Cllr Wilson would liaise with individuals on the waiting list, asking that they respond within a fortnight.**

ii. Allotments – disposal of debris and arisings. An accumulation of debris, including picnic tables which had formerly been on The Meadows, had been expanding adjacent to Allotment Plots 10 & 17. The arisings had been on plots which had changed ownership. It looked unsightly and it was suggested that the parish council could provide a skip.

**It was RESOLVED: that Cllr Wilson would seek quotes for providing a skip. Allotment holders would be encouraged to carry out the clearance. The Allotment Agreement would be assessed at a future meeting.**

iii. Allotments – repair / replace boundary fencing. There had been no available grants that could be applied for re-fencing the Allotments. The site was fenced by the council in 2005 at a cost of £4,000. Free hedgerow whips would be available from the Woodland Trust, which would increase biodiversity and provide a barrier. It was hoped that the fence could be repaired in places. The noticeboard also needed minor repairs.

**It was RESOLVED: that Cllr Wilson would seek quotes for fencing repair. Hedgerow whips would be considered wherever possible. Cllr Taylor offered two posts for noticeboard repairs.**

iv. Village Hall – energy update. The council's application to obtain a Smart Export Guarantee from Scottish Power was progressing. 7,880kWh had been generated since September 2024, with 4,390kWh exported. It was hoped that the Hall would receive £0.12 per kWh from export to the grid. Scottish Power charged £0.281 per kW for import, with a standing charge of £1.179 per day. Urban Chain was offering import at £0.203 per kW, with £0.85 daily standing charge.

**It was RESOLVED: that the import supply for the Hall be moved to Urban Chain.**

v. Village Hall – works needed to adjacent canopy (attached to record Minutes). The canopy had been installed with funding via a £10,000 grant. The installation had met with difficulties due to location and ground conditions. Various repair and modification options were discussed.

**It was RESOLVED: that advice and quotes be sought from local roofing contractors.**

**029/25 COMMUNITY LIAISON**

i. Parish Council Action Plan 2025-26 (attached to record Minutes). The Action Plan was a new initiative, designed with the intention of focussing attention on items the council aspired to and wished to progress, and would help with future grant applications. Cllr Bond noted that Neighbourhood Plans were being accorded increasing weight in planning decisions, and that they may gain further importance under devolved government plans and housebuilding targets.

**It was RESOLVED: that the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan be added as an aspiration.**

ii. Police Parish Liaison Meeting (attached to record Minutes). Cllr Wilson had attended the meeting, which had been useful but poorly attended by other parishes. PC James Draper had since attended White Colne to carry out a speed check, recording a top speed of 31mph. Members noted that some near misses had recently been witnessed.

**It was RESOLVED: that road safety be raised at a future Parish Liaison Meeting.**

iii. Correspondence: *Update on Local Government Reorganisation* (attached to record Minutes).

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

iv. Grant funding applications and updates. An application had been made for £5,640 from Essex Community Foundation to run a 'Summer Hub' at the Village Hall. The Foundation had been supportive of the initiative but was struggling to find funding. A revised application for £2,400 to cover wages for 16 sessions of the Community Supermarket had been entered. Unspent funds from the Winter Hub were being used in the meantime. An upcoming grant opportunity could possibly be used to fund a fitness trail at The Meadows.

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

v. Joint meeting with Wakes Colne Parish Council. The item had been adequately discussed at Agenda item 9.

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

**030/25 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON THE AGENDA OF A FUTURE MEETING**

Items arising and ongoing, and items raised at previous meetings would be included.

**031/25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of White Colne Parish Council was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2025 at White Colne Village Hall at 1930hrs.

The meeting closed at 21:20hrs.

Signed.....

Date.....



# WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

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

## MATTERS ARISING & ONGOING

### **050/24 COMMUNITY LIAISON**

ACTION ARISING: Members to make facebook posts on a regular basis.

### **064/24 FINANCE**

ACTION ARISING: Clerk to contact local contractor regarding quotes for works to the silt trap.

### **065/24 LEISURE & FACILITIES**

ACTION ARISING: Formal event for Allotment plot holders to be held.

### **066/24 COMMUNITY LIAISON**

ACTION ARISING: Local Council Award to be considered at a future meeting.

### **082/24 PUBLIC SESSION**

ACTION ARISING: Cllrs Bell & Pryke to assess possible SID sites in Bures Road.

### **103/24 FINANCE**

ACTION ARISING: Clerk to research Members' Allowances.

### **105/24 COMMUNITY LIAISON**

ACTION ARISING: Cllr Taylor to liaise and arrange a joint meeting with Wakes Colne Parish Council.

### **115/24 PLANNING**

ACTION ARISING: Cllr Wilson to amend WCPC response to 24/02538/FUL.

ACTION ARISING: Cllr Bond to attend BDC Planning Committee with WCPC response to 24/02538/FUL.



# Whitecolne Parish Council

9 May 2025 (2024 - 2025)

## PAYMENTS LIST

| Vouche | Code                            | Date       | Minute | Bank                  | Cheque No | Description                     | Supplier                   | VAT Type | Net     | VAT   | Total   |
|--------|---------------------------------|------------|--------|-----------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|----------|---------|-------|---------|
| 231    | Subscriptions                   | 03/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Subscription                    | Starboard Systems Limited  | S        | 23.00   | 4.60  | 27.60   |
| 238    | Cleaning                        | 04/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Village Hall                    | Gallen Windows             | X        | 14.00   |       | 14.00   |
| 232    | Gas                             | 04/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Village Hall                    | Scottish Power             | S        | 198.67  | 39.74 | 238.41  |
| 232    | Gas                             | 04/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Village Hall                    | Scottish Power             | L        | 134.00  | 6.70  | 140.70  |
| 232    | Gas                             | 04/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Village Hall                    | Scottish Power             | X        | -278.82 |       | -278.82 |
| 235    | Grant Expenditure - Warm Hub    | 04/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Grant Expenditure - Village Hal | East of England Co Op      | Z        | 6.20    |       | 6.20    |
| 236    | Grant Expenditure - Warm Hub    | 04/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Grant Expenditure - Village Hal | Abi Mapes                  | E        | 30.00   |       | 30.00   |
| 237    | Subscriptions                   | 04/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Subscription                    | Hallmaster                 | S        | 268.84  | 53.76 | 322.60  |
| 233    | Grant Expenditure - Staff Salar | 04/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Grant Expenditure - Village Hal | Aster Chatton              | X        |         |       |         |
| 234    | Grant Expenditure - Staff Salar | 04/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Grant Expenditure - Village Hal | Gini Bryant                | X        |         |       |         |
| 239    | Water                           | 10/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Village Hall                    | Everflow                   | X        | 72.94   |       | 72.94   |
| 245    | Cleaning                        | 11/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Village Hall                    | Samantha Mason             | X        | 217.50  |       | 217.50  |
| 246    | WCVH H&S                        | 11/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Village Hall                    | E&J Fire Security          | S        | 177.10  | 35.42 | 212.52  |
| 247    | Deposit                         | 11/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Village Hall                    | WCVH Hirer                 | X        | 50.00   |       | 50.00   |
| 248    | Subscriptions                   | 11/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Subscription                    | HP Inc UK Ltd              | S        | 17.57   | 3.51  | 21.08   |
| 249    | General Expenditure             | 11/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Card payments                   | LLoyds Multipay            | X        | 362.07  |       | 362.07  |
| 240    | Grant Expenditure - Projects    | 11/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Grant Expenditure - Community   | Stephen Holt               | X        | 85.00   |       | 85.00   |
| 241    | Grant Expenditure - Projects    | 11/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Grant Expenditure - Natural Pla | No Butts Bin Co Ltd        | S        | 498.75  | 99.75 | 598.50  |
| 242    | Grant Expenditure - Staff Salar | 11/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Grant Expenditure - Village Hal | Aster Chatton              | X        |         |       |         |
| 243    | Grant Expenditure - Staff Salar | 11/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Grant Expenditure - Village Hal | Rachael Jennings           | X        |         |       |         |
| 244    | Grant Expenditure - Staff Salar | 11/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Grant Expenditure - Village Hal | Gini Bryant                | X        |         |       |         |
| 254    | Community Events                | 19/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Village Hall                    | Black Horse Cafe           | S        | 38.83   | 7.77  | 46.60   |
| 255    | Community Events                | 19/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Village Hall                    | Black Horse Cafe           | S        | 38.83   | 7.77  | 46.60   |
| 250    | Deposit                         | 19/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Village Hall                    | WCVH Hirer                 | X        | 50.00   |       | 50.00   |
| 251    | Grant Expenditure - Staff Salar | 19/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Grant Expenditure - Village Hal | Gini Bryant                | X        |         |       |         |
| 252    | Grant Expenditure - Staff Salar | 19/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Grant Expenditure - Village Hal | Rachael Jennings           | X        |         |       |         |
| 253    | Grant Expenditure - Staff Salar | 19/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Grant Expenditure - Village Hal | Aster Chatton              | X        |         |       |         |
| 256    | Village Green                   | 25/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Open Spaces                     | AMP Electrical             | S        | 280.70  | 56.14 | 336.84  |
| 260    | Councillor Training             | 25/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | General Administration          | Essex Association of Local | X        | 216.00  |       | 216.00  |
| 257    | Grant Expenditure - Staff Salar | 25/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Grant Expenditure - Village Hal | Gini Bryant                | X        |         |       |         |
| 258    | Grant Expenditure - Staff Salar | 25/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Grant Expenditure - Village Hal | Rachael Jennings           | X        |         |       |         |
| 259    | Grant Expenditure - Staff Salar | 25/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Grant Expenditure - Village Hal | Aster Chatton              | X        |         |       |         |
| 261    | Electricity                     | 28/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Village Hall                    | Scottish Power             | L        | 91.30   | 4.57  | 95.87   |
| 262    | Salary                          | 31/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Staff salary                    | Jim Morris                 | X        |         |       |         |

PAYMENTS LIST

| Vouche | Code                     | Date       | Minute | Bank                  | Cheque No | Description  | Supplier         | VAT Type | Net      | VAT    | Total    |
|--------|--------------------------|------------|--------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------|------------------|----------|----------|--------|----------|
| 262    | Work from Home Allowance | 31/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Staff salary | Jim Morris       | X        |          |        |          |
| 263    | PAYE/NI                  | 31/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | PAYE/NI      | HMRC             | X        |          |        |          |
| 264    | Booking Secretary        | 31/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Village Hall | Jade Lock        | X        | 143.00   |        | 143.00   |
| 265    | Banking Fees             | 31/03/2025 |        | Unity Trust Bank - Ci |           | Subscription | Unity Trust Bank | X        | 6.00     |        | 6.00     |
| Total  |                          |            |        |                       |           |              |                  |          | 4,806.97 | 319.73 | 5,126.70 |

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**JANET E STOBART FCCA**

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COLCHESTER  
Essex CO6 1PU

—  
Telephone 07817 089326

White Colne Parish Council  
c/o J Morris – Clerk and RFO to the council  
78 Manor Road  
Colchester  
Essex CO3 3LY

13 May 2025

Dear Councillors

**Internal Audit 2024/25**

I attach my report and invoice.

My report explains the work undertaken and evidence gathered. Please pass my thanks to Jim for the very well organised presentation of the information required to undertake the internal audit.

There are a few matters to which I would like to draw your attention, highlighted in [pale blue](#) in sections B, C, D, E, G, H and I of my report. The comments in Section G require attention but in all other sections they are observations and suggestions that can be easily remedied at the next policy review.

The wording that I suggest accompanies my report when submitting the AGAR to PKF is as follows:

The parish council has not enrolled the clerk / RFO into a pension scheme. The council agreed to increase the SCP and number of hours per week with effect from 01/01/25 with the effect that the annual salary then exceeded the auto enrolment threshold. This is a genuine oversight that will be remedied in 2025/26

If you would like to discuss anything in the report, please let me know.

Yours sincerely

Jan Stobart

## WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL INTERNAL AUDIT 2024/25

### A Proper Bookkeeping

- Is the cash book maintained and up to date?  
*Yes. Cash book is updated monthly using Scribe package.  
The council agreed to move to Scribe at their meeting on 16 July 2024 (minute 026/24iii) and the new clerk entered transactions for the half year before getting into a regular pattern (minute 048/24i). The clerk now updates the cash book every couple of weeks, corresponding to payment runs.*
- 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 were adopted at the meeting on 21 May 2024 (minute 013/24) and the new model FR at the meeting on 18 March 2025 (minute 103.25iii). [I can't see an FOI / Publication Scheme on the website.](#)*
- 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 013/24, 065/24).*
- Has a Responsible Financial Officer been appointed with specified duties?  
*Yes. The clerk is the RFO. Appointed on 21/05/24. 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). [This does not agree with SO 18a v which requires a tender process for expected spend over £25,000 \(presumed ex VAT although not stated\).](#) FR 5.7 requires use of Contract Finder (Public Contracts Regulations) for contracts over £30k inc VAT which agrees with SO s18 assuming the threshold of £25k excludes VAT. 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). [The tender thresholds can be brought into alignment when the new model SO are adopted in 2025/26.](#)  
*There are several individual payments of over £3000 in the year thereby requiring 3 fixed price quotes, all of which relate to the project to improve the Village hall, for which £42000 grant funding was received (minute 050/24). Minutes refer to discussions about obtaining quotes but none resolved upon during the year, often seeking grant income before agreeing to expenditure (even though reserves are high) e.g. minutes 045/24 fencing, 104/24 xmas lights at the green.  
The chair and clerk have a Lloyds Multipay card as a facility offered by Unity Trust bank. The card balance is reimbursed by Direct Debit around the middle of each month. Multipay limits have been previously agreed as £50 for café expenses (minute 541f) and £1000 for council expenses (minute 590f). [I](#)**

*recommend that section 8 of the Financial Regs is updated to reflect the council's practice of having 2 cards, and the spend limits.*

- Are payments in the cash book supported by invoices, authorised and minuted? *The meeting agendas include a standing item for 'Financial Matters'. The minutes record approval of the payments since the last meeting (and still to be made), income received, bank reconciliation and amounts held in reserve. A scribe payments list showing net VAT and gross (with staff pay redacted) is appended to the minutes in accordance with new model regs FR6.7. FR5.2 in the previous version of the financial regulations (i.e. until the March 2025 meeting adopting the new model) allowed the council to make payments between meetings if 4 councillors give email approval. As this is your adopted process for approving expenditure, I recommend writing this into the new model financial regs, maybe as part of section 6.5 which offers alternatives to full council authorisation by resolution (suggestions in the brackets). It might be worth looking at the wording in Tiptree PC regulations.*

*As the council meets bi-monthly 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 the list is emailed with the 'batch' of source documents to the councillors. Once approved by email by at least 4 councillors, the clerk sets up the payment on Unity Trust bank and advises the 3 signatories so 2 of them can release payment. The clerk keeps all the agreement emails. We discussed possible other ways of evidencing councillor scrutiny of source documents against the payments list as the email trail is a bit clunky. Maybe some sort of poll, or use of a WhatsApp group. It would be better to have a cleaner evidence trail but I appreciate it is difficult with an online system used between meetings.*

- Has VAT on payments been identified, recorded and reclaimed?  
*YES, brought up to date. VAT refunds received: £3132.57 for 2023/24, £4567.20 for 01/04/24 to 31/07/24 and £5834.37 for 01/08/24 to 31/01/25. VAT on payments in Feb and Mar 2025 will be reclaimed in 2025/26. We discussed the potential for linking Scribe to making tax digital systems for auto submission of tax returns in the future. This can be hampered by fixed amount direct debit payments to utility suppliers, which, as amounts paid on account, will differ from the supplier invoices needed for the VAT returns. A solution is to change the direct debit to be payment of full invoice, rather than a spread over amount on account.*
- Is s137 expenditure separately recorded and within statutory limits?  
*No donations / grants were made this year: S137 limit is £10.81 per registered elector.*

## **C Risk Management**

- Does a scan of the minutes identify any unusual activity?  
*Change of clerk (649); new accounting system (minute 026/24iii); VH Improvement project (minute 014/24, 050/24); Vacancies and co-option (minute 074/24, 085/24, 105/24); Hub project and employment of additional staff (minutes 050/24ii), Community Garden Project (minute 077/24).*
- Do the minutes record the council carrying out a risk assessment?  
*Not this year. Risk Assessment last adopted at meeting 16 May 2023 (minute 534a). It has columns for subject area, description of the risk, level of risk, management / control measures and review / assess / revise. It is broken down into sections for Management, Finance, Assets (street furniture and play*



equipment), Liability, Councillor Propriety and Clerk. There is a suite of risk assessments for the Village Hall, Allotments, Community Café and Hub, the pond at the meadows, and Events. The minutes do not record a review of these assessment but the Community café and hub assessment was updated in October 2024. *I recommend that the council's strategic risk assessment is reviewed in 2025/26, along with the other assessments. A 'checklist' might also be useful for the hall (to include the café and hub activities) showing annual, monthly, weekly and specific event tasks as they relate to premises management.*

- Is insurance cover appropriate and adequate?

*Insurance renewal 1<sup>st</sup> June 2024 with Clear Council (formerly BHIB). Insurance cover for Property Damage, Money, business interruption, 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 *we assume ECC insures the building under their global buildings cover and is aware of the addition of solar panels to the roof.**

- 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. The emails are kept as evidence of this scrutiny and approval but as a wholly electronic system, there is no means by which source documents can be initialled.

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. *If not already in place, I would recommend that one other person is able to 'submit' payments, as a back up for the clerk*

Review of bank recs and evidence of scrutiny against the bank statements – Bank statements are seen and initialled at every meeting exceeding the requirement of FR2.6

Monitoring of actual v budget – Actual expenditure is reported against budget at the time of precept setting (minute 088/24ii). In 2025/26 the aim is to provide councillors with quarterly AvB reports on Scribe.

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: it is assumed that councillors check this against contracted pay but the only evidence is the emailed approval of the whole payment list rather than specifically the salary item.

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. A volunteer undertakes regular play inspections and village hall safety inspections, using word document templates: there is a column for works to be actioned which the clerk keeps on file. The day-to-day operation of the village hall is undertaken by the council

(there is no VH Management Committee). The previous clerk had an excel checklist which listed the statutory requirements for the hall (e.g., boiler/gas service, music licence, servicing of fire extinguishers etc.) the date they were last done and the next due date. *I did not get round to looking at this checklist during the audit but as mentioned above I recommend it is reviewed as part of a wider update of all risk assessments. I also recommend considering the implications and risks associated with new projects (such as the warm hub) at the time they are proposed to ensure compliance with FR 2.3*

- Are all risks identified and actions undertaken to mitigate risks?  
The risk assessment document has columns for subject, risk identified, risk rating, management / control of risk and review/asses/revise. There are sections for Management, Finance, Assets, Liability, Councillor's Propriety and Clerk. It is comprehensive in its identification of risks and the mitigating actions in relation to regular council business and damage to council assets. It does not cover risks associated with the management of the allotments, village hall, community hub or the café which have their own risk assessments. Mitigating actions are evidenced by the minutes i.e., training volunteers for inspections (010/24), VAT cash flow issue (014/24), play area inspections (027/24), emergency repairs to VH car park (065/24iv).

## D Budgetary Controls

- Has the council prepared an annual budget in support of its precept?  
At their meeting on 21 January 2025, the council agreed a 2025/26 budget and a precept of £12652 (minute 088/24).
- Is actual expenditure against the budget reported to the council?  
There are no minuted references to monitoring of actual expenditure against the budget but the reports appended to the minutes of the January meeting show that AvB to the end of Qtr 3 was reviewed as part of the 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 has reduced but the council is fortunate to have very healthy reserves that are more than double annual precept and nothing 'ear-marked' as far as I can see. It is commendable that the council seek grants as a first option for new projects (allotment fence 045/24, xmas lights 104/24). *Note that the council has sufficient reserves to fund such projects, should grants not be available, and perhaps they need to be kept on the action tracker (matters arising) to ensure they do not fall through the net.*

## 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, BDC street scene contract, Grants, bank interest.
- 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 has not been grossed up in 2024/25 accounts but will be separated out to show the fees as expenditure in 2025/26.* 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 £12,243 received as £6122 in April 2024 and £6121 in Sep 2024.

- Are security controls over cash adequate and effective  
*No cash is handled.*

**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?  
*The previous clerk resigned with effect from end of May (minute 642b) final pay in June 2024. New clerk/RFO initially contracted for 10 hours per week, increased to 12 hours per week (2.4 hours per working day). at meeting on 19/11/24 (minute 070/24). Minutes do not record the appointment of the new clerk (attending meeting 21/05/24 as deputy), nor the appointment of Hub assistants (employed Nov 2024 to Easter 2025 using grant funds). **Major council decisions such as employment of staff, and taking on associated responsibilities and risks should be minuted as resolutions of the council.** Hub assistants are employed on national living wage with rolled up holiday pay in their contract. Contract of clerk/RFO includes annual SCP increments and NJC cost of living awards The NJC 2024/25 pay award backpay was paid with month 8 salary. The payslip notes the number of hours and the additional information box includes a calculation. Backpay for the previous clerk has been paid in April 2025. At the meeting on 19/11/24 the council increased working hours (minute 070/24) and SCP (not minuted), from 01/01/25. There is a contractual spinal point increase from 01/04/25 to SCP 27 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.*
- 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. Clerk salary was initially below the threshold for auto enrolment but from 01/01/25 (with increase in hours and SCP) now exceeds the £10,000 per year limit. **It is a legal requirement for the council to set up a pension scheme and auto enrol the clerk / RFO. The clerk can opt out of the scheme but if remaining in, the council will need to pay contributions from 01/01/25. This will affect the 2025/26 budget but the council has sufficient reserves to cover this cost.***
- What controls exist over management of staff time and duties?  
*The clerk keeps a time sheet and has regular 1:1s with the chair, usually a zoom call every few weeks. The hub staff are managed directly by the chair. A probationary meeting was held with the new clerk and recorded at the November meeting (070/24).*

## **H Asset Control**

- Does the council keep an asset register of all material assets owned?  
*Yes. The Register was on an excel spreadsheet and has now been input to Scribe. The old excel sheet has a column for disposals showing what was*



removed and the additions are at the foot of the page. The scribe list has assets in alphabetical order with asset description, date acquired, purchase value (cost), Current value (replacement value) and location. Assets on the old excel sheet were not grouped into headings that match the insurance renewal (Land, Street Furniture, Gates and Fences, Play Equipment, Office Eq, Pavillion / Meadows and VH Contents) but the scribe list has no groupings.

- Is the register regularly updated?  
*At the year end. AGAR brought forward is £145020.50, additions £48194 (Solar panels, VH roof and facias, EV charging point, freezer, rangemaster, benches), disposals (which includes prior year adjustment) £16879.26 Closing AGAR £184769.39.*
- Do asset insurance valuations agree with those in the asset register?  
*Clear council insurance (formerly BHIB) property damage cover is for Buildings £14131, Contents £52525, Street Furniture £36000, walls Gates & fences £15000, Play equipment £60000, War memorial £36000, ground surfaces £3852, mowers & machinery £6000, sports equipment £12000 (note the standard cover on this policy includes items the council does not own). Buildings 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 recommend checking that £14131 is sufficient for total loss of the pavilion.* All other cover looks (at a quick scan, but tricky without the assets grouped together by type) to be sufficient. This can be checked at the next renewal by sending the asset register to prospective insurers when seeking quotes. I have assumed that the village Hall building and the new solar panels are covered under ECC insurance, as owners of the property.*

#### **I Bank Reconciliation**

- Is there a bank rec for each account?  
*Yes. One bank account with Unity Trust Bank. *Opening a savings account with Unity is a relatively straightforward process and would earn interest for the council**
- 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 2023/24 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 Transparency code for smaller authorities. *Minutes and policy information published on the website.*

*Payments are appended to the minutes (staff info redacted) meeting the requirements of the Transparency Code and FR 6.7.*

#### **M Public Rights in Summer 2024**

The council agreed the dates for the period for the Exercise of Public Rights commencing 3 June 2024 and ending 12 July 2024 and displayed the notice [2023-24-Exercise-of-Public-Rights.pdf](#)

#### **N Publication of Annual Return 2023/24**

The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).

<https://whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk/assets/Parish-Council/Accounts/2024/31.03.2024-Annual-Governance-Accountability-Return-External-Audit.pdf>

#### **O Trustees**

- If the council is a trustee, has it met its responsibilities?  
*White Colne PC is not a sole trustee*

Jan Stobart, FCCA  
13 May 2025



# Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

## White Colne Parish Council

www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2025, 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 2024/25 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. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty 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 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 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 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 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 2023/24 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).   | ✓   |     |                |
| O. (For local councils only)   | Yes | No  | Not applicable |
| 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

13/05/2025

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

Mrs J E Stobart, FCCA

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

13/05/2025

**\*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).**

## CONFIRMATION OF THE DATES OF THE PERIOD FOR THE EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS

**This form is only for use by smaller authorities subject to a review  
and should not be published on your website**

Please submit this form to PKF Littlejohn LLP with the AGAR Form 3  
and other requested documentation

Name of smaller authority: **White Colne Parish Council**

County Area (local councils and parish meetings only): **Essex**

**On behalf of the smaller authority, I confirm that the dates set for  
the period for the exercise of public rights are as follows:**

**Commencing on: 03.06.2025**

**and ending on: 14.07.2025**

The dates set by the smaller authority as appropriate which must be 30  
working days (i.e. Monday – Friday only, and not Bank Holidays)  
inclusive and must include the first 10 working days of July 2025 (i.e.  
Tuesday 1 July – Monday 14 July). The period should not commence  
before the approval of the AGAR.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Role:** White Colne Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

## Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

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 2025, that:

|   | Agreed |     |  |
|---|--------|-----|--|
|   | Yes    | No* | 'Yes' means that this authority:   |
| 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 took all reasonable steps to assure 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>   |

**\*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 2024/25 for

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

|  | Year ending           |                       | Notes and guidance   |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
|  | 31 March<br>2024<br>£ | 31 March<br>2025<br>£ |  |
| <b>1.</b> Balances brought forward                                 |                       |                       | <i>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must 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. Must 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 | N/A |  |
|---|-----|----|-----|--|
| <b>11a.</b> Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable) |     |    |     | <i>The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.</i> |
| <b>11b.</b> Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable) |     |    |     | <i>The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.</i>                                |

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 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



## Appendix I

# 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)

## Scheme of Delegation

### Introduction.

This document sets out the manner in which this Parish Council has delegated powers and responsibilities. This document 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 their 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 press and 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 Councils annual accounts
- considering an auditors 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 call any extra meetings of the Council as necessary, having consulted with the Chairman of the Council and/or the Chair of the appropriate Committee.
- 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: 15 August 2023; Minute ref: 576**

**Reviewed: May 2024**

**Next review: May 2025**



## **Delegated Responsibilities 2024-25 (Minute ref 016/24)**

Councillors' responsibilities. Members resolved the following areas of responsibility:

- Allotments and Community Garden: Cllrs Brace, Drizen, & Wilson
- Climate Action, inc. Community Energy Project: Cllr Taylor
- Community Liaison: Cllr Taylor
- Defibrillator: Cllrs Bell & Drizen
- Environment, inc. Footpaths, Litter & Dog Waste Issues: Cllrs Batchford & Wilson
- Grant Funded Projects: Cllr Taylor
- Highways, inc. Reporting Defects & Potholes, 20 is Plenty, Public Transport, SID: Cllrs Bell & Bond
- Meadows: Cllr Batchford
- Planning, Applications & Liaison with Tree Warden: Cllr Wilson
- Policies: Cllr Wilson
- River, inc. Drainage & Planning Issues: Cllrs Batchford & Wilson
- Village Green, inc. Christmas Lighting & Maintenance: Cllr Bond
- Village Hall: Cllr Taylor
- Village Hall – ECC Land at Rear: Cllrs Bell, Bond, & Taylor
- Website, inc. IT & Social Media: Cllrs Bell & Drizen



## Appendix J

# WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

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

## Arrangements with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies, and businesses

| Organisation                            | Arrangements                            |
|---|---|
| Braintree District Council              |   |
| Braintree Association of Local Councils | Annual membership                       |
| Essex County Council                    |   |
| Essex Association of Local Councils     | Annual membership                       |
| National Association of Local Councils  | Annual membership via EALC subscription |
| Essex Police                            |   |
| 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                                   |   |
| Hallmaster                              |   |
| Stripe                                  |   |
| SumUp                                   |   |
| Scottish Power                          | Electricity supply                      |
| JPB Landscapes                          | Grasscutting                            |
| Gallen Windows                          | Village Hall window cleaning            |
| Jade Lock                               | Village Hall bookings                   |
| Samantha Mason                          | 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    |                                      |                |
| National Association of Local Councils |                                      |                |
| Essex Police                           | Attendance at Parish Police meetings | Cllr Wilson    |
| Rural Community Council of Essex       |                                      |                |
| The Allotments Society                 |                                      |                |

Adopted: 20.05.2025; Minute ref:  
Next review: May 2026

**Whitecolne Parish Council**  
**Fixed Assets and Long Term Investments**

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

**Whitecolne Parish Council**  
**Fixed Assets and Long Term Investments**

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

**Whitecolne Parish Council**  
**Fixed Assets and Long Term Investments**

| Asset Description                 | Date Acquired | Purchase Value    | Current Value     | Location /Responsibility | Estimated Life | Usage/Capacity | Charges |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------|
| Seat                              | 31/03/2021    | 800.62            | 800.00            | Village Green            |                |                |         |
| Shed                              | 31/03/2023    | 1,600.00          | 1,600.00          | Village Hall grounds     |                |                |         |
| SID                               | 31/03/2023    | 3,378.00          | 3,378.00          | Street furniture         |                |                |         |
| Smart key fob                     | 31/03/2023    | 133.00            | 133.00            | Village Hall             |                |                |         |
| Smoke / Carbon Monoxide detectors | 31/03/2023    | 251.00            | 251.00            | Village Hall             |                |                |         |
| Solar light                       | 31/03/2023    | 1,020.00          | 1,020.00          | Village Hall grounds     |                |                |         |
| Spider climber                    | 31/03/2023    | 10,500.00         | 10,500.00         | The Meadows              |                |                |         |
| Stepping stones & matting         | 31/03/2023    | 7,271.80          | 8,000.00          | The Meadows              |                |                |         |
| Telephone box                     | 31/03/2023    | 193.00            | 193.00            | Street furniture         |                |                |         |
| Television & fittings             | 31/03/2023    | 1,182.00          | 1,182.00          | Village Hall             |                |                |         |
| The Meadows - 6 acres             | 01/01/2001    | 36,000.00         | 36,000.00         | The Meadows              |                |                |         |
| Trestle tables (in shed)          | 31/03/2023    | 110.00            | 110.00            | Village Hall             |                |                |         |
| Wave shelter                      | 31/03/2023    | 10,000.00         | 10,000.00         | Village Hall grounds     |                |                |         |
| Wifi equipment                    | 31/03/2023    | 350.00            | 350.00            | Village Hall             |                |                |         |
| Wooden seat                       | 31/03/2021    | 785.11            | 785.00            | Village Green            |                |                |         |
|                                   |               | <b>184,222.39</b> | <b>197,310.34</b> |                          |                |                |         |
| <b>004 Miscellaneous</b>          |               |                   |                   |                          |                |                |         |
| Laptop & printer                  | 31/03/2023    | 547.00            | 547.00            | 78 Manor Road            |                |                |         |
|                                   |               | <b>547.00</b>     | <b>547.00</b>     |                          |                |                |         |
| <b>Grand Total:</b>               |               | <b>184,769.39</b> | <b>197,857.34</b> |                          |                |                |         |



# WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

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## Complaints Procedure

### Introduction.

White Colne Parish Council is committed to providing the best service it can for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. This Complaints Procedure sets out how any dissatisfaction regarding the standard of the service that has been received from this Council or any action, or lack of action, by this Council can be brought to their attention and how the Council will try to resolve any issues. White Colne Parish Council believes a complaints procedure demonstrates that the Council:

- Wishes to provide a good service
- Values feedback
- Undertakes its business in an open and honest manner
- Wishes to deal with complaints fairly

The Council believes that complaints and suggestions provide a valuable opportunity for improving its services and performance. This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns.

### What is a complaint?

For the purposes of this procedure, a complaint is defined as: *An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the Council or its staff affecting an individual, group or organisation.* This definition covers most complaints – such as:

- Dissatisfaction with the administration of policy and decisions
- Delays in responding to service requests
- Failure to achieve standards of service
- Failure to fulfil statutory responsibilities
- Employee's behaviour or attitude

### How we deal with complaints

Most complaints will be reviewed by the Clerk whose responsibility it is to investigate, as necessary, and respond as quickly as possible. On receipt of a complaint, the Clerk, Chairperson of Committee or Chairperson of the Council, whichever is applicable, shall (except where the complaint is against their own actions) try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant in a timely and efficient manner. If the complainant is not satisfied with the action taken, the complainant will be asked to put the complaint officially in writing to the Clerk. This may be by letter or by e-mail. The Clerk will usually acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five working days. In normal circumstances a response should be sent within ten working days. Where this is not possible an interim response should be sent giving

an indication of when a full reply can be expected. If a complainant is dissatisfied with the full response, this fact should be drawn to the attention of the Chairperson of the Council. In consultation with other Members, as necessary, and after obtaining any further relevant information, the Chairperson will issue a further response.

Should the complainant indicate that he would prefer not to put the complaint to the Clerk he shall be advised to put it in writing to the Chairperson of the relevant Committee or the Chairperson of the Council. The Clerk or the Council (as appropriate) will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from the complainant and/ or staff or members of the Council. The Clerk or Chairperson shall bring any written complaint which cannot be settled to the next meeting of the council, and the Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered. The Council shall consider whether the circumstances surrounding any complaint should be discussed in the absence of press and public, but any decision on a complaint dealt with in this way shall be announced at the next Council meeting in public session.

The Clerk or Chairperson of the Council will notify the complainant of the outcome of the complaint and of what action (If any) the Council proposes to take. The time frame for this is usually 20 working days but, in exceptional cases, this may be extended. The complainant will be notified.

#### **Complaints about Members of White Colne Parish Council**

All Councillors have signed an undertaking that they will observe the Council's Code of Conduct. The Code – which is the Model Code of Conduct for Members approved by Parliament – specifies a Councillor's obligations. Alleged breaches of the Code must be reported in writing to the Monitoring Officer at Braintree District Council.

#### **Complaints about services provided by other public organisations**

Given that some public services in White Colne are provided by either Braintree District Council or Essex County Council – and that the division of responsibilities between public bodies can often be confusing – White Colne Parish Council will advise and, if appropriate, assist those wishing to pursue complaints against other public organisations providing services in the parish.

#### **This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:**

- Complaints from one Council employee against another Council employee, or between a Council employee and the Council as an employer. These matters are dealt with under the Council's disciplinary and grievance procedure.
- Complaints against Councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members. If a complaint against a Councillor is received by the Council, it will be referred to the Monitoring Officer of Guildford Borough Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against Councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer.
- Complaints concerning financial irregularities should be directed to the Parish Council's external auditors. Contact details may be obtained from the Clerk.
- Complaints concerning criminal activity which should be reported to the Police.

**Adopted: May 2025; Minute ref: 019/25**

**Next review: May 2026**





Appendix N

## WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

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### ***Schedule of Meetings 2025-26***

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <i><b>15.07.2025</b></i> | <i><b>Full Council</b></i>                |
| <i><b>16.09.2025</b></i> | <i><b>Full Council</b></i>                |
| <i><b>18.11.2025</b></i> | <i><b>Full Council</b></i>                |
| <i><b>20.01.2026</b></i> | <i><b>Full Council</b></i>                |
| <i><b>17.03.2026</b></i> | <i><b>Full Council</b></i>                |
| <i><b>21.04.2026</b></i> | <i><b>Annual Parish Meeting</b></i>       |
| <i><b>19.05.2026</b></i> | <i><b>Full Council Annual Meeting</b></i> |



# 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)

**To:** Planning Department

Braintree District Council

Date: 08/05/2025

Ref: 25/00915/FUL

Details: Proposed agricultural workers dwelling

- Baggarets Farm , Dawes Hall Road, White Colne

**White Colne Parish Council response:**

Jim Morris

Parish Clerk

White Colne Parish Council

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

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**To:** Planning Department

Braintree District Council

Date: 07/05/2025

Ref: 25/00943/TPOCON

Details: Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area:  
Remove 2 No. Thuja Plicata

- 40 Colneford Hill, White Colne, Essex

**White Colne Parish Council response:**

Jim Morris

Parish Clerk

White Colne Parish Council

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

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**To:** Planning Department

Braintree District Council

Date: 07/05/2025

Ref: 25/00966/TPOCON

Details: Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area:

T1 - Fig to crown reduce by 3m in height

T2 - Conifer to reduce by 1 m in height

T3 - Conifer to reduce by 1 m in height.

- The Kings Head , 19 Colchester Road, White Colne

## **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)

**Guidance for queries regarding the Local Plan Review**

**09.05.2025 11:15**

Dear Parsh/ Town Clerks,

I am writing with further advice to assist the Parish/Town Council in managing queries regarding the forthcoming Local Plan Sub Committee meetings which is as follows:

The Council is not currently undertaking a consultation exercise for the Local Plan. However, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the Council will be undertaking a public consultation (Regulation 18 consultation) during Autumn 2025. This consultation will include details of draft site allocations and the public will be invited to comment on these proposals and all other information published during this public engagement exercise. All of the submissions received from that "Regulation 18" consultation will then be reported back to the Local Plan Sub Committee who will agree any amendments to the draft Local Plan before it then goes out for a further public consultation exercise in early 2026.

Should you wish to address the Local Plan Sub Committee regarding any item of business published within the agendas for any of the forthcoming meetings, a request to register to speak can be submitted using the following link: [Asking a question at a committee meeting – Attending a committee meeting – Braintree District Council](#)

Space within the public meetings is limited and allocated on a first come, first served basis however all meetings are broadcast live on our YouTube channel which can be found here: [Braintree District Council Webcasts - YouTube](#)

Kind Regards,

**Sarah Ashton MRTPI**  
**Head of Planning**

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

## VH Canopy

14.05.2025 09:45

Hi Jane,

I noticed that the eaves trim was hanging off the edge of the canopy so I went over there yesterday evening and removed it.

While I was there with my ladder I had a look round the rest of the canopy. It's in a pretty bad state - there are some broken roof sheets, broken capping trims and missing bolts. I think it really needs to be completely dismantled and refurbished.

It also could do with a gutter that discharges into a drain or soakaway.

While I was looking at it I did come up with a possible solution for lowering the edge of the canopy so it drains away properly (this doesn't involve any digging!).

I've attached a couple of photos showing the defects.

Cheers

Mike

Sent from my Galaxy





## Appendix S

# WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

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

## Action Plan 2025-26

### 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.

### 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.



**REPORT ON POLICE, PARISH COUNCIL FORUM 28<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2025**

The forum was held as a teams meeting present was PC James Draper and representatives from Rayne, Panfield, Black Notley, Great Notley and Coggeshall Parish Councils whilst I was present as the representative for White Colne.

James started the meeting with an outline of the issues raised in the previous forum in March. This was predominantly concerned with speeding and what were car meets in the area in the vicinity of the Chelmsford racecourse. He covered the action that could be taken rather than action already taken including future use of a piece of kit called Tru Cam which could be used by PCSO's with minimal training. The fact that there had already been three road deaths in the Braintree area in April was raised.

He also covered the recent arrests following the raid on the Cannabis growing operation at the disused care home in Halstead. He advised that whilst drug dealing is acted on by the Police the personal use by individuals can also be dealt with by local councils as a Public Order Offence.

We were advised that the Facial Recognition Team were to be deployed in Braintree Town Centre on 9<sup>th</sup> May. He answered queries concerning the team and confirmed that this was a specialised unit rather than an AI (Artificial Intelligence) system.

The meeting was opened to issues that the Parish Council representatives wanted to raise. Without exception the main issue of concern was that of speeding traffic. I raised our concerns with regards to Colchester Road, Bures Road and Colne Park Road and these were added to the growing list. We were reminded of the Extra Eyes initiative launched by the Safer Essex Roads Partnership.

PC Draper finished by saying he would like to introduce us to a different initiative at each meeting. He then covered an Interactive Map Commonplace Essex which can be used to see as well as add to areas where you feel unsafe. Whilst this is aimed predominately at women and girls it is not gender exclusive. The easiest way to find the website is to type CommonPlace Essex into Google.

The next meeting is scheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup> June.

## Update on Local Government Reorganisation

09.05.2025 18:02

Dear all,

On 21 March, the 15 councils across Greater Essex and the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) submitted an [interim plan](#) for Local Government Reorganisation to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Although the plan does not include final recommendations for the future structure of local government in the area, it sets out that most Leaders of the councils have expressed an in-principle preference to work toward five new unitary authorities for Greater Essex.

Other councils, including Braintree District Council, have yet to confirm a preference, and all councils are agreed that any recommendations must be evidential and soundly based, in response to the government's criteria, before a final business case is submitted in September. Early conversations are taking place at Leader/CEO level around possible proposals for local government reorganisation across North East Essex e.g. Braintree, Colchester, Tendring and Essex County Council.

Last week, MHCLG provided feedback on that interim submission in the form of a letter to the Chief Executives of all 15 Councils and the OPFCC, and we wanted to share the feedback [for you to read here](#). You can also access a press release issued [here](#).

Collectively, Council Chief Executives and Leaders will be working through the points, issues and questions raised by MHCLG, in parallel with the development of more detailed proposals which MHCLG require by 26 September this year. This is to help the Secretary of State to decide the future structure of local government in Greater Essex.

Please do let me know of any questions arising on MHCLG's letter, and I will do my best to clarify. At this stage in the process there are still many more questions than answers, but we are working closely with MHCLG officials and will keep you updated as required.

Kind regards,

Graham

**Graham Butland**  
**Leader of the Council**  
**Braintree District Council | Causeway House, Bocking End, Braintree, CM7 9HB**