



## WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

WHITE COLNE VILLAGE HALL,  
BURES ROAD, WHITE COLNE, CO6 2QA.

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[CLERK@WHITECOLNEPARISHCOUNCIL.GOV.UK](mailto:CLERK@WHITECOLNEPARISHCOUNCIL.GOV.UK)

# RCCE VILLAGE OF THE YEAR 2025

**Minutes of the White Colne Parish Council Meeting held at White Colne Village Hall on  
Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2025 at 19:30hrs.**

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

**Absent:** Cllr Chris Siddall, Halstead Division

### **047/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Jim Bond, Cllr Jason Pryke, and Cllr Gabrielle Spray, Colnes Ward.

### **048/25 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS**

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

### **049/25 PUBLIC SESSION**

No public in attendance.

### **050/25 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the White Colne Parish Council Annual Meeting held on 15.07.2025 were approved as being a true and correct record by council and signed by the Chairperson.

### **051/25 MATTERS ARISING**

Members considered the parish council's list of matters arising and ongoing. An event for Allotment plot holders had been held; issues with parking, unworked Allotment plots, and the canopy adjacent to the Village Hall had been resolved. An issue with a kissing gate, and a request for a new dog bin had been submitted. Neighbourhood Plan had been removed from the council's Action Plan. Christmas lights, and Employment Policies were due to be considered at the meeting. Cllr Batchford offered to represent White Colne, along with Cllr Taylor, at a meeting with Wakes Colne, Earls Colne, and Chappel scheduled for 30<sup>th</sup> September. Other matters were due to be considered at the meeting or were scheduled for future meetings.

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

### **052/25 CO-OPTION OF NEW MEMBER**

Members considered co-opting a parishioner to the parish council. Cllr Taylor proposed the co-option of Michael Field, unanimously agreed.

**It was RESOLVED: that Michael Field be co-opted as a White Colne parish councillor.**

Cllr Field completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Parish Councillor and joined the meeting as member of the council.

### **053/25 REPRESENTATIVES' REPORTS**

Colnes Ward Cllr George Courtauld offered a report to the meeting. BDC had met to resolve its position on Local Government Reorganisation and had favoured the proposal for three Unitary

Authorities. There was the possibility of four or five. The four options were slightly eccentric, but the reality was, that it would be decided by home office. Cllr Courtauld had been told that previous discussions were completely irrelevant, which was heartbreaking. The reorganisation was un-local, on the basis that the new Unitary Councillors would be representing between 12 and 16 parishes. It may make parish councils much more important, much more powerful, and maybe get more funding. The District Council will be abolished, and the county council would be abolished at the beginning of April 2028 but for a whole year, the elected unitary council would cover BDC's duties. Cllr Courtauld did write to Yvette Cooper, but didn't get a reply.

Essex County Council had inspected dangerous trees on footpaths and highways, condemning 200. Cllr Courtauld was desperate to get a Tree Preservation Order list published, hopefully within six months. "Other than that, I have very little to report. We've had rather a quiet summer."

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>).

**RESPONSE: the representatives' reports were noted.**

## **054/25 FINANCE**

i. Members received and considered quotes for electrical installation works on the Village Green (tabled at meeting). A revised scheme had been sent to the potential contractors, resulting in one of which amending their quotation.

**It was RESOLVED: that the work be awarded to AMP Electrical.**

ii. Members confirmed the successful contractor appointed to carry out works to the Village Hall's adjacent canopy was Summit Essex, following consideration of two quotes since the previous meeting. Further contractors had declined to offer quotes for the work. Some remedial work had been undertaken, and the canopy had not leaked during subsequent rainfall.

**It was RESOLVED: that the awarding of the work to Summit Essex be approved.**

iii. Members received and considered information on a Staff Pension Scheme for the Parish Clerk (tabled at meeting). A letter to the pension provider had been prepared.

**It was RESOLVED: that the scheme and letter approved. Cllrs Batchford and Wilson signed the letter.**

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### **<sup>1</sup> REPORT FOR PARISH COUNCILS SEPTEMBER 2025**

**Local Plan:** The meetings to look at the Large Sites, those over 500 dwellings, start at the end of this month on 24<sup>th</sup> September with two to follow on 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> October; there are 44 sites in total. The Colne Valley Golf Club has been submitted for housing development; as soon as I know which meeting agenda this site is appearing on, I will let the Parish Councils know.

*BDC Officers have now confirmed to me that the sites for the North of the District, including Earls Colne, will be on the agenda for 24<sup>th</sup> September. Agenda will be published on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup>.*

Subsequent meetings on 20<sup>th</sup> October and 6<sup>th</sup> November will be looking at Local Plan Policies and technical documents. I will then bring the first draft copy of the Local Plan to a special meeting of Full Council on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> November for approval before the Plan goes out to public consultation in December. This is still early stages with another public consultation due in early 2026 before the final draft Plan goes to the Planning Inspectorate.

**Local Government Reorganisation (LGR):** There will be a meeting of Full Council on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September for Braintree District Councillors to decide which Unitary model they prefer for Essex. The other fourteen Essex authorities have held, or will be holding, similar meetings over the next two weeks before the chosen model is submitted to the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) by 26<sup>th</sup> September. There are four options currently under discussion but, ultimately, it will be a Government decision to decide which one is adopted and goes forward for elections in May 2027.

**Bramford-Twinstead Energy Scheme:** I attended an online briefing given by National Grid (NG) to update District Councillors on the progress of this scheme which is to upgrade the electricity supply. Along with other Councillors on the briefing, I questioned whether NG felt they had consulted sufficiently with landowners (farmers especially) on how the construction of the haul road will affect their land. I remain unconvinced that this issue has been properly managed by NG despite their assurances that they have fully consulted with residents.

**Anti-Social Behaviour:** Braintree District Council has launched a new set of dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) web pages to support residents and partners e.g. Parish & Town Councils, in understanding, reporting and managing ASB concerns. The website link is: [www.braintree.gov.uk/community/antisocial-behaviour](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/community/antisocial-behaviour). The pages are designed to provide a victim-centred approach to tackling ASB, set out clear definitions of ASB and how to report issues. The attached leaflet can be forwarded or printed for reference.

With best regards, Cllr Gabrielle Spray

## 055/25 PLANNING

### i. Applications

a) Ref: [25/01895/TPOCON](#) (attached to record Minutes).

Location: 42 Colneford Hill, White Colne, CO6 2PJ.

Proposal: Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area: T1 English oak - reduce lateral branches by 4m overhanging the road. T2 common ash - request to fell to ground level.

**RESPONSE:** White Colne Parish Council supports application ref 25/01895/TPOCON. The council agrees that the ash does not look healthy. In the photos it is not clear whether the bracket fungus is on the ash tree or the oak. The oak tree overhangs the road at quite a height and is not causing an obstruction, but to have 4m of lateral branches pruned will not compromise its well-being. The parish council questions why the oak has been singled out for pruning, however. Overhanging branches of hornbeam and yew, which seem to originate on the same property, but might belong to no. 44, are a more pressing matter than the oak itself. The branches of the hornbeam are lower than the oak and overhang the road to a greater extent. The yew branches overhang the pavement and are pedestrian head height.

ii. Decisions – none received.

iii. Appeals – none received.

iv. Members considered and approved the type, location and number of Village of the Year signs (attached to record Minutes). One would be installed coming into the village on the side on the Village Green, and two on the approach from Colchester. The council agreed an aspiration to install Village Gateways.

**It was RESOLVED: that three signs be purchased and installed. Procurement of Village Gateways would be added to the council's Action Plan.**

v. Footway encroachment on Colneford Hill. A household on Colneford Hill had enclosed the gap between the property and the flood wall. This is effectively an encroachment onto the pavement, possibly stopping access for pedestrians and householders either side behind the flood wall when the gates needed to be closed. The works included the erection of a log store and fencing, erection of a decorative streetlamp, and painting of wooden flood gate black. The Environment Agency maintained the flood gates, which were historically stained with preservative. The issue had been reported to both ECC Highways and BDC Planning Enforcement.

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

vi. Road Safety Week 16.11.2025-22.11.2025. The charity BREAK was running a campaign week in November. It could provide equipment, advertising, and materials, including 20 mile per hour stickers. The council owned a 20 is Plenty banner that could be installed on the Village Green. The item would be discussed with the parishes at the meeting scheduled for 30<sup>th</sup> September.

**It was RESOLVED: that the council would take part in Road Safety Week and discuss it with adjacent parishes.**

## 056/25 LEISURE & FACILITIES

i. Community Café (attached to record Minutes): A lack of volunteers had led to a recent Café having to be cancelled. Four volunteers were needed for each bi-monthly session. Forthcoming Cafés were covered, however, and Cllr Taylor would continue to seek recruits via social media.

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

ii. Community Garden: Some of the raised beds adjacent to the Village Hall had become unused. It was suggested that they could be let to residents as mini-allotments.

**It was RESOLVED: that three of the raised beds be let as "mini-allotments" at £10/year each, with signage to clarify use.**

iii. Apple Day: A working party in the Orchard would be held in October, with refreshments.

**It was RESOLVED: that an Apple Day working party be held on 21<sup>st</sup> October.**

iv. Tree Survey: The council's previous tree survey had been carried out in 2022. The report noted that high-risk zones should be re-surveyed every three years, with low-risk zones surveyed every five years. A fresh survey was therefore due on high-risk areas that the council owned or managed.

**It was RESOLVED: that SD Arboriculture be asked to quote for works to carry out a tree survey. Further quotes would be sought if necessary.**

v. Recycled Clothing Banks (attached to record Minutes): It was likely that recycling bins at the far end of the Village Hall site would be removed in 2026, and it was suggested that a clothes recycling facility could be beneficial in their place.

**It was RESOLVED: that the proposal be revisited when the recycling facility was removed.**

vi. Just Some Theatre Company – *Eyes Down* – 11.04.2026 (attached to record Minutes): A contract with Applause had been prepared for a performance of *Eyes Down*. The council would pay £375 for the performance, charging £12 per ticket and needing to sell thirty-two tickets to cover the cost. Previous performances had sold around fifty tickets.

**It was RESOLVED: that the contract be completed and a Temporary Event Notice be sought.**

vii. White Colne Celebration – 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of White Colne Village Hall & 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of The Meadows – 20.06.2026: Midsummer Eve's mini music fest on the Meadows had been proposed at the Village Picnic held in August. Running from midday to 10pm, it was suggested to budget £1,500 for music acts plus cost of Temporary Event Notice. Securing confirmation from the bands would be crucial, and a contract had been prepared offering a percentage of the fee in the event of cancellation.

**It was RESOLVED: that a cancellation fee of 25% be proposed, and preparations for the event be progressed.**

#### **057/25 COMMUNITY LIAISON**

i. Village Hall Solar Energy Report: The Village Hall had produced 14MWh of solar energy since commissioning its panels, which was 2MWh over the estimation. Scottish Power had backdated the council's income and paid £930 for electricity supplied to the Grid. Urban Chain had not responded to requests to move supply.

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

ii. Essex Climate Action Commission meeting – 09.09.2025: Professor Jules Pretty had attended the Village Hall to talk about progress made by the Commission, and setbacks experienced. Prof. Pretty had been very appreciative of White Colne's Community Energy project. The Commission had produced leaflets about how to cut your carbon, but also how to improve nature (attached to record Minutes).

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

iii. Allotment Plot holders' event – 12.09.2025: A successful holders' meeting was held, and there was interest in reviving the "Best Kept Allotment" competition, although the cup for 'Best Kept Allotment' may be unretrievable.

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

iv. Joint meeting with Chappell, Earls Colne, and Wakes Colne Parish Councils – 30.09.2025: An Agenda for the meeting would be produced, to include Road Safety Week and local Planning issues. The other parishes would be asked for further items.

**It was RESOLVED: that the item be noted. Cllr Batchford would confirm availability for the meeting.**

v. *Community Agents, supporting people in your parish* (attached to record Minutes).

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

vi. Supported Local Bus Services 2025 Consultation (attached to record Minutes).

**It was RESOLVED: that the item be noted. A response regarding poor service on the 88 route would be submitted.**

#### **058/25 GOVERNANCE**

i. Correspondence from the council's website provider: *Exciting news* (attached to record Minutes). Members discussed revamping the council's website and offering an e-newsletter.

**It was RESOLVED: that the correspondence be noted. Cllr Field would seek advice from a local website provider.**

ii. Policy review: HR & Conduct Policy (attached to record Minutes). The Policy was an amalgamation of existing Policies reviewed in November 2024 and May 2025.

**It was RESOLVED: that the HR & Conduct Policy be adopted.**

#### **059/25 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON THE AGENDA OF A FUTURE MEETING**

Finance Q2, and Budget 2026-27 would be included as items on a future Agenda.

#### **060/25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of White Colne Parish Council was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at White Colne Village Hall at 1930hrs.

#### **061/25 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC & PRESS**

In accordance with White Colne Parish Council Standing Order 3(d), members of the public were excluded for the remaining Agenda item.



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# RCCE VILLAGE OF THE YEAR 2025

**Minutes of the White Colne Parish Council Meeting held at White Colne Village Hall on  
Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2025 at 20:45hrs.**

Present: Cllr Paul Batchford  
Cllr Michael Field  
Cllr Jane Taylor (Chairperson)  
Cllr John Wilson  
Jim Morris, Parish Clerk

062/25

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The meeting closed at 21:00hrs.

Signed.....

Date.....

DRAFT

[REDACTED]



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# RCCE VILLAGE OF THE YEAR 2025

## MATTERS ARISING & ONGOING

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

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

### **009/25 MATTERS ARISING**

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

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

ACTION ARISING: Clerk to add further detail.

### **038/25 FINANCE**

ACTION ARISING: Clerk to revise misattributed spending and earmarked reserves in accounts software.

ACTION ARISING: Council to budget for member allowances in 2026-27.

### **040/25 LEISURE & FACILITIES**

ACTION ARISING: Enter application for outdoor gym to Enover Community Trust.

### **055/25 PLANNING**

ACTION ARISING: Purchase and installation of *Village of the Year* signs.

ACTION ARISING: Add aspiration for Village Gateways to the council's Action Plan.

ACTION ARISING: Make preparations to participate in Road Safety Week.

### **056/25 LEISURE & FACILITIES**

ACTION ARISING: Make raised beds available as mini-Allotments.

ACTION ARISING: Promote Apple Day.

ACTION ARISING: Seek quote(s) for Tree Survey.

ACTION ARISING: Reconsider recycled clothing banks at a future meeting.

### **057/24 COMMUNITY LIAISON**

ACTION ARISING: Prepare Agenda for meeting with Chappell, Earls Colne, and Wakes Colne; Cllr Batchford to confirm availability.

ACTION ARISING: Enter response to ECC bus services Consultation.

### **058/24 GOVERNANCE**

ACTION ARISING: Cllr Field to seek advice from website provider.