



WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

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

www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk

clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk

Village of the Year 2025

Minutes of the White Colne Parish Council Meeting held at White Colne Village Hall on Tuesday 17th March 2026 at 19:30hrs.

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

098/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

099/25 CO-OPTION OF NEW MEMBER

No potential new councillors came forward.

100/25 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

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

101/25 PUBLIC SESSION

No members of the public in attendance.

102/25 MINUTES

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

103/25 MATTERS ARISING

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

It was RESOLVED: that the matters arising be noted.

104/25 REPRESENTATIVES' REPORTS

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

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

RESPONSE: Cllr Taylor thanked Cllr Courtauld for the report.

Colnes Ward Cllr Gabrielle Spray had provided a written report for the meeting to consider (attached at Footnote¹). Halstead Division Cllr Chris Siddall had offered apologies for absence.

105/25 FINANCE

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ REPORT FOR PARISH COUNCILS JANUARY 2026

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

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

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

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

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

It was RESOLVED: that the precept confirmation be noted.

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

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

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

It was RESOLVED: that the correspondence be noted.

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

It was RESOLVED: that the training calendar be noted.

106/25 COMMUNITY LIAISON

i. Joint meeting with Chappell, Colne Engaine, Earls Colne, Halstead, and Wakes Colne Parish Councils held 11th March 2026 (notes attached at Footnote²). Cllrs Field and Taylor had attended on

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

1. Welcome & Apologies

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Braintree Local Plan

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

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

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

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

It was RESOLVED: that the correspondence be noted.

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

It was RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

107/25 PLANNING

i. Applications

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

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

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

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

3. Colchester Local Plan

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

4. Halstead Empire Theatre Community Arts Centre

Cllr Bond presented plans to develop the Empire Theatre site into a Community Arts Centre. **Overview.**

Extension to the existing theatre building; Creation of a new community arts hub; Facilities to include: café/bar, exhibition space, improved theatre facilities. **Funding.** Estimated project cost: £1.7–£2 million.

Potential funding sources include: Arts Council, Section 106 contributions, local fundraising, and grant funding. **Purpose.** The facility would serve Halstead and surrounding villages, providing cultural and community activities that are otherwise difficult to access due to transport limitations. **Support Requested.**

The project team was seeking assistance with: fundraising, communications and publicity, social media, photography, and arranging corporate partnerships. Parish councils were invited to support the project where possible.

5. Any Other Business

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It was RESOLVED: that the item be noted.

ii. Decisions – none received.

iii. Appeals – none received.

iv. The Braintree District Council Local Plan Review Regulation 18 Consultation (attached to record Minutes) had been published. Members discussed supporting the proposal to designate land adjacent to White Colne Village hall as Local Green Space (response attached at Footnote³).

³ White Colne Parish Council strongly supports the proposed designation of the land to the rear of the Village Hall (former railway line and goods yard) as a Local Green Space. The Parish Council considers that the site clearly meets the emergent December 2025 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) criteria for Local Green Space designation, complying with paragraphs: **HC1: Planning for healthy communities** 1. To promote the creation of healthy and inclusive places, and the provision, retention and enhancement of appropriate community facilities and public service infrastructure, development plans should, at the most appropriate level: c. Allocate land specifically for community facilities and public service infrastructure where it is appropriate to do so, and assess whether any land is suitable to designate as Local Green Space in accordance with policy HC2; d. Set local standards for the provision of different types of outdoor recreational land, including for play, sport, informal recreation and allotments. In doing so they should draw upon relevant national standards and best practice, tailoring these as necessary to local circumstances and evidence³.

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

1. Close Proximity to the Community

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

2. Demonstrably Special to the Local Community

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

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

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

108/25 LEISURE & FACILITIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Local in Character and Not an Extensive Tract

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

4. Stewardship and Positive Management

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

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

5. Overlapping Designations

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

It was RESOLVED: that the item be noted.

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

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

109/25 GOVERNANCE

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

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

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

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

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

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

111/25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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

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

The meeting closed at 21:30hrs.

Signed.....

Date.....



WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

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

www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk

clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk

Village of the Year 2025

MATTERS ARISING & ONGOING

Minute Ref.	Action
066/24	Local Council Award to be considered at a future meeting.
009/25	Cllrs Pryke & Siddall to assess possible SID sites in Bures Road.
040/25	Enter application for outdoor gym to Enover Community Trust.
056/25	Reconsider recycled clothing banks at a future meeting.
065/25	Clerk to follow up with ECC Highways over the missing streetlight.
072/25	Plan for Road Safety Week 2026.
073/25	Seek quotes for grass cutting.
	Develop Meadows Management Plan.
	Write to Allotment plot holders regarding netting; update 2026-27 Allotment Agreement.
079/25	Seek advice on installing a bin at the layby on Bures Road.
083/25	Write to Cllr Siddall re footways, streetlight, and pole for SID
084/25	Notify Hall users of price increases
	Enter precept requirement
085/25	Invite Essex Sight to attend Warm Hub
086/25	Write to owners of property adjacent to former railway line
087/25	Revise and publish Village Hall Hirer's Terms & Conditions
	Enter Outdoor Gym grant application
	Seek tree works quotes
088/25	Publish reviewed Fol, Complaints, & Feedback Policy
095/25	Draft and deliver a household leaflet with closure/bus/DaRT/support info. Post laminated Parish Council notices at bus stops and key locations. Request up-to-date printable info from Konectbuses, IPTU, and Cadent. Follow up Cadent re printing cost support for repeated updates. Obtain Post Office quote for door-to-door delivery. Promote Priority Services Register and gather needs via Hub/leaflet returns.

Membership of Rural Community Council of Essex

02.03.2026 11:03

Dear Clerk,

I must begin by thanking you most sincerely for supporting Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) as a member in 2025/26. We are the only charitable organisation in Essex working exclusively to help people and communities in rural areas build a sustainable future and the past year has again seen us working across Essex to help village halls, parish councils and other local groups improve the provision of community facilities, provide more affordable housing for local people, encourage community engagement, and tackle social isolation.

The bedrock of RCCE is its membership. We offer a range of membership categories relevant to the needs of organisations, community groups and individuals that care for our rural communities. In readiness for the 2026/27 financial year, the attached booklet will provide you with more information about RCCE membership, the services we provide, the categories we offer, and the wider benefits membership brings to those who join us. Attached with this is a contact list for RCCE staff together with a list of events we are organising in 2026. All are available to members either free of charge or at a subsidised cost.

A reminder also for Parish and Town Councils that own or manage a village hall or community building, as more are now doing, we have a bespoke category of membership that means you do not have to affiliate separately as both a parish council and a village hall. One payment will provide you with access to the full range of services. If you do not currently subscribe to this category but would like further information about it, please contact Sara Ward at sara.ward@essexrcc.org.uk

As a Parish Council member your membership category will be Band 1- population under 500, the membership fee for 2026/27 will be £53.00 plus VAT @ 20%. A membership form is attached for your convenience.

I do hope you will renew your membership for the coming year. This will play a valuable role in securing RCCE's future so we will be there to support you as you work to keep our rural communities thriving.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Shuttleworth,
Executive Director
Rural Community Council of Essex
Threshelfords Business Park
Inworth Road
Feering
CO5 9SE
Website: www.essexrcc.org.uk

RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF ESSEX

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM FOR PARISH & TOWN COUNCILS

1st April 2026 – 31st March 2027

MEMBERSHIP – Please tick the applicable box below

- Renewal – please tick this box if you are already a member and are renewing your membership
- New member

MEMBER DETAILS

Parish/Town Council: White Colne Parish Council

Number of Councillors: Seven

CHAIRMAN

Title: (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Other) Mrs

Full Name: Jane Taylor

Postal Address: Fox & Pheasant Farm, Colchester Road, White Colne, Essex,

Post Code: CO6 2PS.

Telephone: 07521 312778

Email Address: chairman@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk

PARISH CLERK

Title: (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Other)

Full Name: Jim Morris

Postal Address: 78 Manor Road, Colchester,

Post Code: CO3 3LY

Telephone: 07976 645090

Email Address: clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk

MEMBERSHIP FEE

BAND	ELECTORATE	MEMBERSHIP FEE
1	Under 500	£53.00 plus 20% VAT = £63.60

Rural Community Council of Essex is registered for VAT – VAT Registration Number 159 6313 88

DONATIONS

Please tick if you would also like to make a donation. Please specify the amount: £

PAYMENT

Total Amount to Pay: £

- I enclose a cheque made payable to Rural Community Council of Essex
- I would like to pay by BACS or standing order. Please use the following bank details:

Account Name: Rural Community Council of Essex **Account Number:** 20520913 **Sort Code:** 60-83-01

PRIVACY NOTICE

RCCE is a not-for-profit organisation providing services to communities and people in need. All our paying members are contractually entitled to receive a basic level of advice and support from our staff as part of their membership package (see attached letter). In order to meet our contractual obligations, we need to keep basic personal data pertaining to our members and their representative officers so that we can communicate with them. We will only keep this personal data for as long as the individual or organisation is a member of RCCE. In the case of representative officers (for example, parish clerks and chairmen), we will only keep their personal data for as long as they remain a representative officer of the organisation concerned. At all times, members and representative officers have the right to access the personal data we hold for them, to erase or update their personal data and to restrict the ways in which we use their personal data to communicate with them - our contact details are at the bottom of this form. We will never share an individual's personal data with a third party unless we have their express permission.

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: 17.03.2026

Please return your completed form, along with payment if paying by cheque, to Sara Ward at Rural Community Council of Essex, Threshelfords Business Park, Inworth Road, Feering, Essex CO5 9SE

Tel: 01376 574330 **Email:** sara.ward@essexrcc.org.uk

PARISH & TOWN COUNCIL PRECEPT 2026/27

Important Notice - Requires Attention Now

Braintree District Council will be setting the District and Parish/ Town Council/ Meeting tax rates for 2026/27 at its meeting on the 16th February 2026. This notice provides details of the parish precept and resultant tax rate for your parish/ town council based on your returned precept form.

If you disagree with the figures below or have any other query relating to the information given, please email vicfa@braintree.gov.uk as soon as possible (but in any event before 2nd February).

WHITE COLNE

Tax Base for 2026/27 calculated by Braintree District Council	218.88	A
Precept determined under Local Government Finance Act 1992 for 2026/27 (taken from Precept Form)	£13,435	B
Parish element of the Band D Tax Rate for 2026/27	£61.38	C
Your precept for 2026/27 represents an increase (-decrease) over 2025/26 of	£783	D
Your Parish/ Town Council Band D Council Tax Rate has increased (-decreased) by	5.0%	E

For information only:

2025/26 Precept	£12,652
2025/26 Tax base	216.43
2025/26 Parish element of the Band D Council Tax Rate	£58.46

Note on calculations:

C equals B divided by A

D equals B less 2025/26 Precept

E equals (C less 2025/26 Band D Tax Rate) divided by 2025/26 Band D Tax Rate multiplied by 100

Item	Year End 2024-25	Budget 2025-26	Q3 2025-26	Year-End Forecast	Budget 2026-27
1010 Precept	£ 12,243.00	£ 12,652.00	£ 12,652.00	£ 12,652.00	£ 13,435.00
1020 Allotment Fees	£ 299.90	£ 365.00	£ 377.75	£ 377.75	£ 365.00
1021 Community Event Income (new)	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
1030 WCVH Hire	£ 12,329.43	£ 13,000.00	£ 8,526.65	£ 11,368.87	£ 11,500.00
1031 WCVH Community Events	£ 3,058.35	£ 3,000.00	£ 1,881.03	£ 2,508.04	£ 2,500.00
1033 WCVH Other Income	£ 155.39	£ -	£ 64.21	£ 85.61	£ 75.00
1040 Misc Income	£ 60.65	£ -	£ 767.15	£ 1,022.87	£ 650.00
1041 VAT126	£ 5,834.37	£ -	£ 1,375.82	£ 2,243.37	£ -
1042 Bank Interest	£ -	£ -	£ 56.56	£ 75.41	£ 120.00
1050 Grant Income	£ 70,640.74	£ -	£ 4,136.58	£ -	£ 999.00
1060 Energy Income	£ -	£ -	£ 1,338.88	£ 1,785.17	£ 1,750.00
Total Income	£ 104,621.83	£ 29,017.00	£ 31,176.63	£ 32,119.09	£ 31,394.00

Item	Year End 2024-25	Budget 2025-26	Q3 2025-26	Year-End Forecast	2026-27 Budget	2026-27 EMR
4010 Salary	£ 9,555.54	£ 11,981.00	£ 8,923.79	£ 11,898.39	£ 12,402.00	£ -
4011 PAYE/NI	£ 395.69	£ -	£ 175.89	£ 234.52	£ -	£ -
4012 Employee Pension	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 653.00	£ -
4013 Employer Pension	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 392.00	£ -
4015 Work from Home Allowance	£ 78.00	£ 312.00	£ 234.00	£ 312.00	£ 312.00	£ -
4016 Member Allowance	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 1,790.00	£ -
001 General Admin TOTAL Expenditure	£ 10,029.23	£ 12,293.00	£ 9,333.68	£ 12,444.91	£ 15,549.00	£ -
4020 Allotments	£ 3.75	£ -	£ 107.67	£ 143.56	£ -	£ -
4021 Meadows	£ 2,731.48	£ 2,150.00	£ 2,665.85	£ 3,554.47	£ 2,150.00	£ -
4022 Play Areas	£ 156.00	£ 950.00	£ 160.00	£ 213.33	£ 750.00	£ -
4023 Village Green	£ 1,359.74	£ 1,200.00	£ 712.44	£ 949.92	£ 1,000.00	£ -
4024 Defibrillator	£ 165.21	£ 240.00	£ 115.00	£ 153.33	£ 125.00	£ -
4025 Christmas	£ 265.36	£ 265.00	£ 1,749.72	£ 1,749.72	£ 100.00	£ -
4026 Outdoors Community Events (new)	£ -	£ -	£ 1,203.78	£ 1,605.04	£ -	£ 1,000.00
002 Leisure & Facilities TOTAL Expenditure	£ 4,681.54	£ 4,805.00	£ 6,714.46	£ 8,369.37	£ 4,125.00	£ 1,000.00
4030 WCVH Booking Secretary	£ 1,753.60	£ 1,500.00	£ 1,157.00	£ 1,542.67	£ 1,500.00	£ -
4031 Cleaning	£ 2,775.15	£ 2,300.00	£ 2,053.57	£ 2,738.09	£ 2,750.00	£ -
4032 Deposit	£ 675.00	£ 500.00	£ 866.00	£ 1,154.67	£ 550.00	£ -
4033 WCVH Open Spaces	£ 270.66	£ 500.00	£ 2,714.50	£ 3,619.33	£ 275.00	£ -
4034 Community Event Expenditure	£ 5,851.78	£ 2,554.00	£ 1,231.61	£ 1,642.15	£ 1,320.00	£ -
4035 Electricity	£ 709.07	£ 150.00	£ 1,080.71	£ 1,440.95	£ 800.00	£ -
4036 Gas (deleted)	£ 484.95	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
4036 Fees	£ -	£ -	£ 418.79	£ 558.39	£ 475.00	£ -
4037 Water	£ 728.03	£ 750.00	£ 786.40	£ 1,048.53	£ 750.00	£ -
4038 WiFi	£ -	£ -	£ 13.32	£ 17.76	£ -	£ -
4039 WCVH H&S	£ 13,002.09	£ 1,000.00	£ 368.65	£ 491.53	£ 400.00	£ 2,300.00
003 WCVH TOTAL Expenditure	£ 26,250.33	£ 9,254.00	£ 10,690.55	£ 14,254.07	£ 8,820.00	£ 2,300.00
4040 Staff Training	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
4041 Councillor Training	£ 216.00	£ 200.00	£ 32.68	£ 43.57	£ 500.00	£ -
4042 General Maintenance	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
4043 General Expenditure	£ 503.51	£ 240.00	£ 200.62	£ 267.49	£ 200.00	£ -
4044 Subscriptions	£ 1,753.72	£ 750.00	£ 677.48	£ 903.31	£ 325.00	£ -
4045 Office	£ -	£ -	£ 409.93	£ 546.57	£ 500.00	£ 500.00
4046 Audit	£ 455.00	£ 500.00	£ 680.00	£ 906.67	£ 680.00	£ -
4047 Insurance	£ 887.98	£ 890.00	£ 536.00	£ 714.67	£ 540.00	£ -
4048 Banking Fees	£ 71.40	£ 85.00	£ 114.00	£ 152.00	£ 155.00	£ -
004 Miscellaneous TOTAL Expenditure	£ 3,887.61	£ 2,665.00	£ 2,650.71	£ 3,534.28	£ 2,900.00	£ 500.00
4050 Grant Exp Warm Hub EMR	£ 1,081.80	£ 4,000.00	£ 880.91	£ 1,174.55	£ -	£ -
4051 Grant Exp Warm Hub Staff Salary EMR	£ 4,314.18	£ 6,000.00	£ 3,050.70	£ 4,067.60	£ -	£ -
4052 Grant Exp WCVH EMR	£ 50,278.60	£ 1,400.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
4053 Grant Exp Projects EMR	£ 3,847.16	£ -	£ 1,643.71	£ 2,191.61	£ -	£ -
4054 Grant Exp Street Cleaning	£ -	£ 1,036.58	£ 901.49	£ 1,201.99	£ -	£ -
4055 Grant Exp Summer Hub	£ -	£ 600.00	£ 928.81	£ -	£ -	£ -
4056 Grant Exp Summer Hub Salary	£ -	£ 1,800.00	£ 1,193.99	£ -	£ -	£ -
005 Grants TOTAL Expenditure	£ 59,521.74	£ 14,836.58	£ 8,599.61	£ 8,635.75	£ -	£ -
Total Expenditure	£ 104,370.45	£ 43,853.58	£ 37,989.01	£ 47,238.37	£ 31,394.00	£ 3,800.00
Income minus Expenditure	£ 251.38	-£ 14,836.58	-£ 6,812.38	-£ 15,119.28	£ -	-£ 3,800.00

Notes:

1010 Precept	4.99% increase to a Band D property: £2.92
1030 WCVH Hire	WCVH Hire rates to be resolved
1050 Grant Income	Grants applied for as necessity or availability dictates
4039 WCVH H&S	Quote for floor being sought
4045 Office	The council's laptop is now unable to update - possibly new one required
EMR' is Earmarked Reserve	

CouncilWise Subscription - Commencing 1st April 2026

27.02.2026 14:13

Dear Clerks, Chairs & Councillors,

As we approach the new financial year, we would like to remind all Councils that the CouncilWise annual subscription commences on 1st April.

Over the last two months, CouncilWise has:

- Delivered tailored training and support to six Parish Councils at their own venues.
- Run five sessions with Mark Tomkins from Aubergine on Understanding the 2025 SAPP Practitioners Guide & Assertion 10 Compliance, attended by over 90 Clerks and Councillors, supporting compliance with the new AGAR assertion in effect from 1st April 2025, which must be adhered to before 31st March.
- Formed a working partnership with James Corrigan (Council HR & Governance Support) to deliver a series of specialist HR training sessions tailored for Parish and Town Councils—providing clarity, confidence and compliance for Clerks, Councillors, and the corporate body. Two further HR courses are currently in development and will be available to Councils in July.

Our Clerk Networking Coffee Mornings held in January, and early February were exceptionally well received, offering Clerks a valuable opportunity to meet, share experiences, and discuss topics including Section 137 Expenditure, Investment Strategies, and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025. We look forward to welcoming you to the next sessions at the end of April and beginning of May.

From January through to the end of March, all Councils have been able to access our training and support at the introductory subscription rate, as part of our commitment to sector-wide development through an innovative training programme delivered by specialist trainers and experienced qualified tutors.

From 1st April:

- **Subscribed Councils** will continue to receive discounted training and full access to subscriber support services.
- **Non-subscribing Councils** will remain very welcome at all CouncilWise training programmes; however, training courses will incur an additional 20% fee.

Most importantly, every Council, Clerk, Chair, and Councillor will continue to have access to the training they require—subscription status will never prevent participation.

The subscription to CouncilWise simply offers enhanced value, greater savings, and increased levels of support for those who choose it.

An updated training programme is attached. All new courses added to the training programme throughout the upcoming year will be added to the programme and advertised out by email to all Councils. Information for the subscription to CouncilWise is also attached for your reference.

If you would like to subscribe or require further information from us, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to supporting your Council throughout the coming year.

Warmest Regards

Pearl Willcox, CiLCA, Director of Training & Networking

Ann Wood, LL.B, Cert. HE, DMS, PIALC, Director of Finance & Support



*“Empowering Collaboration, embracing innovation and
moving your Council forward – together”*

**Services Offered, Subscriptions and Benefits
April 2026-March 2027**

**42B High Street, Great Dunmow, Essex, CM6 1AH
Telephone: 01371 829148 www.councilwise.co.uk**

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions to CouncilWise Training & Support will run from 1st April to 31st March in each year

Up to 15k Precept	£ 75.00
15k – 75k	£150.00
75k – 150k	£300.00
Over 150k	£500.00

SERVICES OFFERED

- ✚ Innovative training courses that keep pace with the fast-evolving sector delivered in the Great Dunmow office and online by specialist trainers and qualified and experienced tutors
- ✚ Networking events for Clerks and Councillors
- ✚ Tailored training on topics of your own choice for individual Councils either at the Great Dunmow office, at your own premises or on Zoom (pricing on request)
- ✚ 1 to 1 Training and support for Clerks at their workplace (pricing on request)
- ✚ Audit Health Checks and Support (pricing on request)
- ✚ Regular Newsletters and Training Bulletins

BENEFITS OF SUBSCRIPTION

- ✚ Free invitations to the Clerks and Councillors Networking Events
- ✚ 20% discount on training courses
- ✚ Weekday out of hours support service between 5.00pm and 7.00pm Monday to Thursday for urgent business
- ✚ Weekdays Monday to Friday (by appointment) F2F support in the Great Dunmow office
- ✚ Weekdays Monday to Thursday e.mail and telephone support for Clerks and Councillors (up to 30 minutes per call) when you are tackling challenges or questions, or simply to discuss ideas and concerns with people who understand

Training and Networking – pearlwillcox@councilwise.co.uk
General – enquiries@councilwise.co.uk

Support – annwood@councilwise.co.uk



*“Empowering Collaboration, Embracing Innovation and
moving your Council forward – together”*

**Training Programme
April 2026 – December 2026**

42B High Street, Great Dunmow, Essex, CM6 1AH
Telephone: 01371 829148 www.councilwise.co.uk

Date	Day	April 2026	Course Time	Course Tutor	Location	Subscribers + VAT	Non-Subscribers +VAT
1 st	Wednesday	Understanding your Councils Financial Regulations	10.00am – 1.00pm	Ann Wood, LL.B, Cert HE, DMS, PIALC	Great Dunmow	£60.00	£75.00
2 nd	Thursday	Parish Councils & Charities	10.00am – Midday	Community Action Norfolk	Zoom	£50.00	£60.00
9 th	Thursday	Introduction to Cemetery Management for New Clerks	9.15am – 12.30pm	ICCM	Zoom	£110.00	£132.00
14 th	Tuesday	Addressing the Biodiversity Crisis	10.00am – Midday	Mike Deegan Consultants	Zoom	£50.00	£60.00
15 th	Wednesday	Council Roles & Responsibilities – Foundation of Good Governance	10.00am – 1.00pm	Amanda Hilton, CiLCA	Great Dunmow	£60.00	£75.00
16 th	Thursday	Make Your Council Documents Accessible	10.00am – 11.30pm	Mark Tomkins Aubergine	Zoom	£25.00	£30.00
21 st	Thursday	Project Management	9.30am – 4.00pm	Egerton Consulting Caroline Egerton	Great Dunmow	£140.00	£168.00
22 nd	Wednesday	Handling Difficult Situations	10.00am – Midday	Mike Deegan Consulting	Zoom	£50.00	£60.00
24 th	Friday	Understanding your Councils Standing Orders	10.00am – 1.00pm	Matt Cooke, CiLCA, MA, MDX, ARPS, FHEA	Great Dunmow	£60.00	£75.00
28 th	Tuesday	Allotment – Session 1 Covering Tenancy Agreements and Policies	10.30am – 12.30pm	National Allotment Society Tyler Harris	Zoom	£35.00 per session or both sessions £60.00	£42.00 per session or both sessions £72.00
29 th	Wednesday	Council Governance	10.00am – 3.30pm	Sarah Gaeta, CiLCA, FdA Community Governance	Great Dunmow	£90.00	£112.50
30 th	Thursday	Clerk Networking Coffee Morning	10.00am – 12.30pm	Hosted by CouncilWise	Great Dunmow	FREE	£10.00
30 th	Thursday Evening	HR for Councillors	6.30pm – 8.30pm	James Corrigan Council HR & Governance	Zoom	£50.00	£60.00

				Support			
		May 2026					
1 st	Friday	Planning Community Events	10.00am - Midday	Mike Deegan Consulting	Zoom	£50.00	£60.00
6 th	Wednesday	Allotment – Session 2 Covering Site Facilities and Health & Safety	10.30am-12.30pm	National Allotment Society Tyler Harris	Zoom	£35.00 per session or both sessions £60.00	£42.00 per session or both sessions £72.00
7 th	Thursday	Risk Assessment – Level 2 Certificated Course including cost of exam & course booklet	9.30am – 4.00pm	Debbie Jones	Great Dunmow	£135.00	£162.00
12 th	Tuesday	Clerk Networking Coffee Morning	10.00am-12.30pm	Hosted by CouncilWise	Great Dunmow	FREE	£10.00
13 th	Wednesday	Community Special Constables Scheme Briefing	10.30am-11.30am	Essex Police, Les Hawkins, BEM, MCMi	Zoom	FREE	FREE
14 th	Thursday	Community Special Constables Scheme Briefing	1.30pm – 2.30pm	Essex Police, Les Hawkins BEM, MCMi	Zoom	FREE	FREE
15 th	Friday	Neighbourhood Planning & How it Fits	10.00am – 1.00pm	Matt Cooke, CiLCA, MA, MDX, ARPS, FHEA	Great Dunmow	£60.00	£75.00
19 th	Tuesday	Community Special Constables Scheme Briefing	10.30am-11.30am	Essex Police, Les Hawkins, BEM, MCMi	Zoom	FREE	FREE
20 th	Wednesday	Exclusive Rights of Burial	9.15am – 3.30pm	ICCM	Great Dunmow	£160.00	£192.00
21 st	Thursday	Chair & Councillor Networking Coffee Morning	10.00am-12.30pm	Hosted by CouncilWise	Great Dunmow	FREE	£10.00

June 2026

		June 2026					
1 st	Monday	Health & Wellbeing for Town & Parish Councils	10.00am – Midday	Mike Degan Consulting	Zoom	£50.00	£60.00
2 nd	Tuesday	Chairing with Confidence Session 1	10.00am -3.30pm	Judith Farr & Ann Wood, LL.B, Cert HE, DMS, PIALC	Great Dunmow	£90.00	£108.00
3 rd	Wednesday	Allotment Inspection Course	10.00am –3.30pm	National Allotment Society Tyler Harris	Great Dunmow	£160.00	£192.00
4 th	Thursday	Introduction to being a Councillor Session 1	10.00am - 3.30pm	Judith Farr & Ann Wood, LL.B, Cert HE, DMS, PIALC	Great Dunmow	£90.00	£108.00
8 th	Monday	The Clerk as Employee and HR Advisor	10.00am – Midday	James Corrigan Council HR & Governance Support	Zoom	£50.00	£60.00
9 th	Tuesday	Chairing with Confidence Session 2	10.00am-3.30pm	Judith Farr & Ann Wood, LL.B, Cert HE, DMS, PIALC	Great Dunmow	£90.00	£108.00
10 th	Wednesday	Routine Playground Inspection Course Certificated Course	9.15am – 4.00pm	PSS Ltd Louisa Hill	Great Dunmow	£200.00	£240.00
10 th	Wednesday	Routine Playground Inspection Exam	To follow on from Course	PSS Ltd Louisa Hill	Great Dunmow	£200.00	£240.00
11 th	Thursday	Introduction to being a Councillor Session 2	10.00am–3.30pm	Judith Farr & Ann Wood, LL.B, Cert HE, DMS, PIALC	Great Dunmow	£90.00	£108.00

13 th	Saturday	Navigating the Planning System	9.30am – 3.00pm	Adriana Jones, CiLCA	Great Dunmow	£105.00	£125.00
17 th	Wednesday	Chair & Councillor Networking Coffee Morning	10.00am–12.30pm	Hosted by CouncilWise	Great Dunmow	FREE	£10.00
23 rd	Tuesday	Health & Wellbeing for Town & Parish Councils	10.00am – Midday	Mike Deegan Consulting	Zoom	£50.00	£60.00
July 2026							
1 st	Wednesday	Basic Tree Survey & Inspection Course	10.00am – 3.30pm	EasTec UK Ltd Dane Wood	Great Dunmow	£195.00	£234.00
1 st	Wednesday	Developing Effective Action Plans	10.00am – Midday	Mike Deegan Consulting	Zoom	£50.00	£60.00
2 nd	Thursday	Motivation in your Council What motivates Employees & Councillors and how to harness this for peak performance	10.00am – Midday	James Corrigan Council HR & Governance Support	Zoom	£50.00	£60.00
9 th	Thursday	Catastrophic Bleeds	9.30am – 12.30pm	Marie Kelly	Great Dunmow	TBC	TBC
14 th	Tuesday	Managing Projects	10.00am – Midday	Mike Deegan Consulting	Zoom	£50.00	£60.00
15 th	Wednesday Evening	Parish Councils & Charities	6.00pm – 8.00pm	Community Action Norfolk	Zoom	£50.00	£60.00
16 th	Thursday Evening	Neighbourhood Planning & How it Fits	6.30pm – 9.00pm	Matt Cooke, CiLCA, MA, MDX, ARPS, FHEA	Zoom	£60.00	£75.00
21 st	Tuesday	HR Managing Staff Performance Management, Appraisals, Sickness, Absences & Employee Relations	10.00am – 1.00pm	James Corrigan Council HR & Governance Support	Zoom	£80.00	£96.00

23 rd	Thursday	Development for Clerks Course	10.00am – 3.30pm	Sarah Gaeta, CiLCA, FdA Community Governance	Great Dunmow	£90.00	£112.50
28 th	Tuesday	HR Basics – A reminder of the basics including Employment Legislation & being prepared for up and coming Legislation	10.00am – 1.00pm	James Corrigan Council HR & Governance Support	Zoom	£80.00	£96.00
August 2026							
September 2026							
16 th	Wednesday	Council Roles & Responsibilities – Foundation of Good Governance	10.00am – 1.00pm	Amanda Hilton, CiLCA	Great Dunmow	£60.00	£75.00
17 th	Thursday	Navigating the Planning System	10.00am – 3.30pm	Adriana Jones, CiLCA	Great Dunmow	£90.00	£112.50
29 th	Tuesday	Sustainability & Climate Change	10.00am – Midday	Mike Deegan Consulting	Zoom	£50.00	£60.00
30 th	Wednesday	Budget & Precept for Clerks & RFO's	10.00am – Midday	Do the Numbers Eleanor Greene	Zoom	£45.00	£54.00
October 2026							
1 st	Thursday	Allotment – Session 1 Covering Tenancy Agreements and Policies	10.30am–12.30am	National Allotment Society Tyler Harris	Zoom	£35.00 per session or both sessions £60.00	£42.00 per session or both sessions £72.00
1 st	Thursday Evening	Budget & Precept for Councillors	6.30pm – 8.30pm	Do the Numbers Eleanor Greene	Zoom	£50.00	£60.00

6 th	Tuesday	Routine Playground Inspection Course Certificated Course	9.15am – 4.00pm	PSS Ltd Louisa Hill	Great Dunmow	£200.00	£240.00
6 th	Tuesday	Routine Playground Inspection Exam	To follow on from course	PSS Ltd Louisa Hill	Great Dunmow	£200.00	£240.00
7 th	Wednesday	AI for Town & Parish Councils	10.00am – 1.00pm	AI Consultants Essex Dee Khabra	Great Dunmow	£60.00	£72.00
8 th	Thursday	Allotment – Session 2 Covering Site Facilities and Health & Safety	10.30am-12.30pm	National Allotment Society Tyler Harris	Zoom	£35.00 per session or both sessions £60.00	£42.00 per session or both sessions £72.00
9 th	Friday	Understanding your Councils Standing Orders	10.00am – 1.00pm	Matt Cooke, CiLCA, MA, MDX, ARPS, FHEA	Great Dunmow	£60.00	£75.00
13 th	Tuesday	Addressing the Biodiversity Crisis	10.00am – Midday	Mike Deegan Consulting	Zoom	£50.00	£60.00
14 th	Wednesday	Writing Effective Meeting Agendas & Minutes	10.00am – 1.00pm	Amanda Hilton, CiLCA	Great Dunmow	£60.00	£75.00
15 th	Thursday	Foundation Essentials for New Clerks	10.00am – 3.30pm	Sarah Gaeta, CiLCA, FdA Community Governance	Great Dunmow	£90.00	£112.50
20 th	Tuesday	Understanding your Councils Financial Regulations	10.00am – 1.00pm	Ann Wood, LL.B, Cert HE, DMS, PIALC	Great Dunmow	£60.00	£75.00
21 st	Wednesday	Project Management	9.30am – 4.00pm	Egerton Consulting Caroline Egerton	Great Dunmow	£140.00	£168.00
28 th	Wednesday	Handling Difficult Situations	10.00am-Midday	Mike Deegan Consulting	Zoom	£50.00	£60.00

November 2026							
4 th	Wednesday	Council Governance	10.00am – 3.30pm	Sarah Gaeta, CiLCA, FdA Community Governance	Great Dunmow	£90.00	£112.50
5 th	Thursday	Procurement for Town & Parish Councils	10.00am – Midday	Mike Deegan Consulting	Zoom	£50.00	£60.00
17 th	Tuesday	Funding for Town & Parish Councils	10.00am – Midday	Mike Deegan Consulting	Zoom	£50.00	£60.00
20 th	Friday	Neighbourhood Planning & how it Fits	10.00am – 1.00pm	Matt Cooke, CiLCA, MA, MDX, ARPS, FHEA	Great Dunmow	£60.00	£75.00
21 st	Saturday	Navigating the Planning System	9.30am – 3.00pm	Adriana Jones, CiLCA	Great Dunmow	£105.00	£112.50
24 th	Tuesday	Development for Clerks Course	10.00am – 3.30pm	Sarah Gaeta, CiLCA, FdA Community Governance	Great Dunmow	£90.00	£112.50
26 th	Thursday	Health & Wellbeing for Town & Parish Councils	10.00am – Midday	Mike Deegan Consulting	Zoom	£50.00	£60.00
26 th	Thursday	Navigating the Planning System	10.00am – 3.30pm	Adriana Jones, CiLCA	Great Dunmow	£90.00	£112.50

Training E-Bulletin

10.03.2026 16:18

Dear Chairs, Councillors, Clerks, and Partners,

We're excited to announce a series of 2-hour webinar training sessions designed specifically for Local Councils. These short, focused courses equip Clerks, Officers, and Councillors with the skills to communicate effectively with the community, manage challenging situations, and enhance professional engagement.

Cost: £50 per delegate, per course

Explore the full programme below and book your place for the sessions most relevant to you.

Canva Part 1: Getting Started

 17 14 April 2026 |  10:00 – 12:00 pm

A beginner-friendly introduction to Canva. Learn how to create posters, newsletters and social media graphics to improve your council's communications. [-For further details and to book your place, please select here.](#)

Dealing with Difficult People and Conversations in our Local Councils

 17 21 April 2026 |  10:00 – 12:00 pm

Learn practical techniques for managing challenging conversations and professional relationships within local councils. [-For further details and to book your place, please select here.](#)

Canva Part 2: Advanced

 17 05 May 2026 |  10:00 – 12:00 pm

Build on your Canva skills by exploring advanced features, including branding, social media videos and scheduling tools for council communications. [-For further details and to book your place, please select here.](#)

Freedom of Information for Local Councils: Obligations, Procedures and Exemptions

 17 08 May 2026 |  10:00 – 12:00 pm

Learn how local councils can manage FOI requests, understand obligations, implement procedures, and apply exemptions effectively. [-For further details and to book your place, please select here.](#)

Social Media Part 1: Getting Started with Social Media for Local Councils

 17 12 May 2026 |  10:00 – 12:00 pm

Learn the basics of social media for councils, including creating a strategy, using Facebook, and time-saving tools to communicate confidently with your community. [-For further details and to book your place, please select here.](#)

Social Media Part 2: Advanced Social Media Strategies and Tactics for Local Councils

 17 19 May 2026 |  10:00 – 12:00 pm

Explore advanced social media strategies, platform best practices, and advertising techniques to help your council achieve its communication goals. [-For further details and to book your place, please select here.](#)

Crisis Communications for Local Councils

 27 May 2026 |  10:00 – 12:00 pm

Learn how to prepare for and respond effectively to crises, from unexpected events to media challenges, with practical tips and guidance for your council. -[*For further details and to book your place, please select here.*](#)

Emotional Intelligence and Resilience in Practice for Clerks, Officers and Councillors

 16 June 2026 |  10:00 – 12:00 pm

A practical workshop exploring emotional intelligence, resilience and how to respond effectively to challenging situations in council roles. -[*For further details and to book your place, please select here.*](#)

Communicating with Your Community Part 1: Creating a Communications Strategy

 15 September 2026 |  10:00 – 12:00 pm

Learn how to create an effective, sustainable communications strategy that supports your council's priorities and resources. -[*For further details and to book your place, please select here.*](#)

Communicating with Your Community Part 2: Engaging with Your Community

 29 September 2026 |  10:00 – 12:00 pm

Put your council's communications strategy into action and learn practical tools to connect, engage, and communicate effectively with your community. -[*For further details and to book your place, please select here.*](#)

Booking Information

To book any of the above mentioned courses, please complete the [**booking form**](#) and send it to: [!\[\]\(5d1236892fa2d2fe9c75eccd9edb8b57_img.jpg\) training@ealc.gov.uk](mailto:training@ealc.gov.uk)

'Healing Meadows' - The Underdog Crew CIC

10.03.2026 09:59

Good morning Mr Morris,

My name is Dom Morgan and I wanted to introduce myself as a White Colne community project leader with The Underdog Crew CIC. We are multi award winning for our empowerment work with SEN young people.

Ive attached our project proposal for 'Healing Meadows', a restorative nature initiative Id love parish council support on and a discussion at the next council meeting.

With my kindest regards,

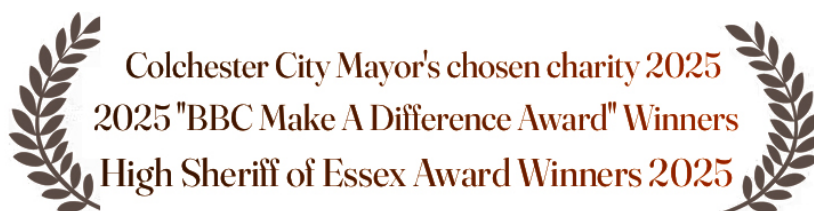
Dom Morgan
www.underdogcrew.org



A Natural Meadow Restoration and Citizen Science Sanctuary

“A living landscape where nature restores people, builds confidence and reconnects communities with the natural world.”

Healing Meadows is a **community nature sanctuary** developed within a long-untouched meadow landscape behind Underdog Crew Studios. The project focuses on **environmental stewardship, wildlife observation and nature-based wellbeing**, preserving the meadow while carefully enhancing habitats for pollinators, birds and aquatic life.



The Underdog Crew CIC

underdogcrew.org db@underdogcrew.org

Project Philosophy

Protect the meadow. Learn from nature. Leave the landscape largely untouched. Healing Meadows is built on the belief that nature itself provides the most powerful therapeutic and educational environment. Rather than constructing buildings or introducing noisy activities, the project focuses on:

- protecting a historic meadow habitat
- restoring pollinator ecosystems
- creating wildlife observation opportunities
- enabling quiet nature learning
- encouraging community stewardship of the land

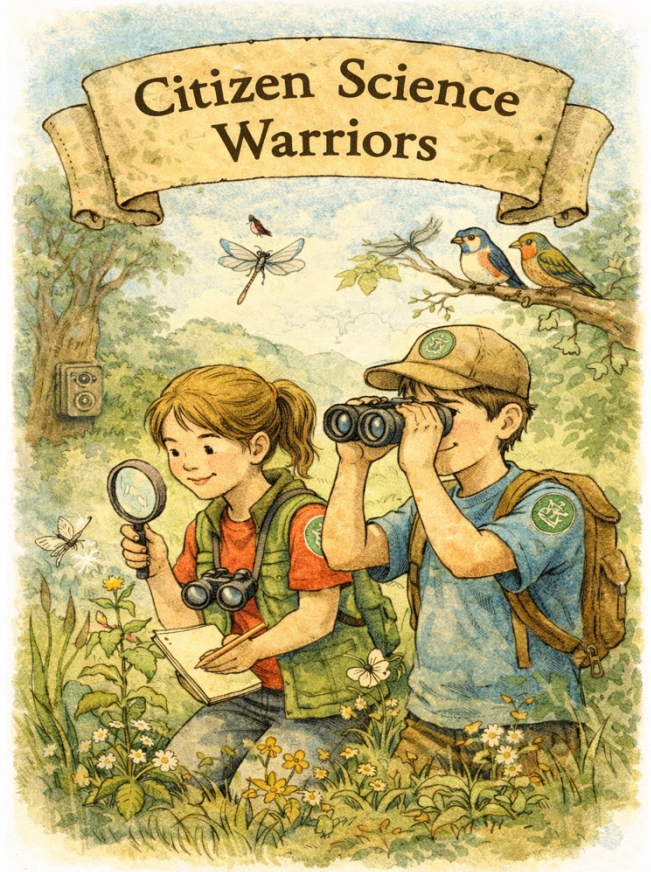
“The British meadow as a sanctuary and living classroom.”



‘Citizen Science’ - Environmental Focus

Citizen science empowers everyday people to contribute to real environmental research. At Healing Meadows, young people and community volunteers will work alongside nature by observing, recording and monitoring local wildlife. From identifying pollinators and tracking badger activity on trail cameras to surveying birds of prey at the White Cone Raptor Observatory and studying pond life in the restored stream pool, participants will gather valuable ecological data that helps build a clearer picture of local biodiversity.

This approach transforms curiosity into meaningful contribution. Young people are not just learning about nature - they are helping to protect it. Citizen science builds confidence, scientific thinking and environmental responsibility, while creating a deeper connection between people and the landscape around them. For many participants, this will be their first opportunity to take part in real-world conservation research within their own community.



Kingfisher Stream Restoration & Flood Pool

The ecological heart of the project is the restoration of the small stream running along the rear of the meadow. A **6-metre section** of the stream will be carefully widened to create a shallow wildlife pool which will:

- **improve natural water flow**
- **support flood management during heavy rain**
- **create habitat for amphibians and aquatic insects**
- **provide a safe area for pond life investigation**

This flood pool will become the **main citizen science zone**, allowing participants to study:

- **dragonflies**
- **aquatic insects**
- **amphibians such as newts**
- **water plants and wetland ecology**



Learning activities include:

- **pond life surveys**
- **water ecology monitoring**
- **amphibian observation**
- **environmental recording**

The aim is to **restore natural water habitat while increasing biodiversity.**



The Kingfisher Stream Restoration & Flood Pool offers a calm, sensory-rich environment that is particularly beneficial for children with Special Educational Needs. The gentle sounds of flowing water, wildlife movement and open natural space provide a soothing setting that supports emotional regulation and reduces anxiety. Hands-on activities such as pond dipping, observing aquatic life and recording wildlife encourage curiosity, focus and confidence without the pressures of a classroom environment. For many SEN children, nature provides a safe space to explore at their own pace. The stream environment encourages sensory engagement, patience and discovery, helping young people build independence, resilience and a deeper connection with the natural world.


White Colne Raptor Observatory



Rare birds of prey, including a **White-tailed Eagle** (March 2026) and a **Red-footed Falcon** (May 2025), have recently been spotted in the Colchester and Colne Valley area. Other notable sightings in the vicinity include a male **Marsh Harrier** at Colne Point and **Red Kites**, which are frequent in the region.

Specialist Commentary

“The Colne Valley landscape provides an unusually rich mosaic of habitats - open meadow, hedgerows, river corridor and mature woodland. This combination creates exceptional hunting conditions for birds of prey. It is rare to find such a compact area that can support multiple raptor species including red kites, kestrels, buzzards and occasional visiting falcons.

For the birdwatching community, locations like this are incredibly exciting because they allow observers to witness natural hunting behaviour and migration activity within a relatively small landscape. Establishing a quiet observation point here will not only support local wildlife monitoring but could become a valuable citizen science location for recording raptor activity across the wider Colne Valley.” - Regional Ornithological Commentary 

A dedicated wildlife observation area focusing on birds of prey.

The meadow sits within an active raptor corridor where species such as:

- **Red Kite**
- **Buzzard**
- **Kestrel**
- **Sparrowhawk**

Minimal infrastructure will include two or three raptor perch poles, binocular and photography viewing point, several trail cameras and rustic wildlife observation seating in a natural ‘boma’ style viewing area.

Participants will learn:

- **bird identification**
- **flight behaviour**
- **migration patterns**
- **ecological balance**

Citizen science data will be shared with organisations such as Essex Wildlife Trust, RSPB and British Trust for Ornithology.

Squirrel Observatory



The meadow supports a healthy population of squirrels. The Squirrel Observatory allows visitors to observe their **remarkable intelligence and dexterity**.

Using simple natural rope routes and branches between trees, squirrels can be seen navigating aerial pathways as they search for food.

Visitors will learn about:

- **animal problem-solving**
- **memory and food caching behaviour**
- **woodland ecology**
- **predator awareness**

Quiet observation areas allow children and families to watch squirrels naturally exploring their environment and using their amazing skills to access food as part of their daily natural play.

[Check out this amazing Youtube video where man attempts to outsmart Squirrel.](#)



Wildlife Monitoring & Trail Cameras



The meadow already supports a variety of wildlife including badgers, foxes and small mammals.

Trail cameras will be installed along known wildlife routes to monitor:

- **badger activity**
- **nocturnal wildlife**
- **seasonal behaviour**

This initiative will form an engaging **citizen science wildlife monitoring programme**, giving young people the opportunity to take part in real environmental observation and species recording. Footage captured by the trail cameras will be shared through a dedicated page on the Underdog Crew website, allowing participants to review new sightings, identify species and contribute to ongoing wildlife records.

By sharing these moments online, the project creates a sense of anticipation and discovery, with supporters able to check in regularly to see what wildlife has visited the meadow. In many ways it will capture the same spirit as programmes like **Springwatch**, bringing the hidden life of the meadow to a wider audience and allowing people locally and further afield to remain connected with the project.



Trail camera observation provides a powerful way for children with Special Educational Needs to experience wildlife even when physical access to outdoor environments may be difficult due to mobility needs, allergies or sensory sensitivities. Through the '**Healing Meadows online hub**', young people can remotely observe badgers, foxes, deer and other nocturnal wildlife captured on our discreet trail cameras.

This approach creates an inclusive pathway into nature-based learning. Children can log in, review new footage and take part in identifying species, recording behaviour and contributing to simple wildlife monitoring projects. The anticipation of checking what may have been captured overnight builds excitement and curiosity while encouraging patience and observation skills.

For many SEN young people, this slower and structured engagement with nature can support focus, emotional regulation and confidence. It also introduces early scientific thinking, allowing participants to feel part of real environmental discovery even from home or classroom settings.

🌻 Wildflower Meadow Stewardship

Large areas of the meadow will remain untouched, with small sections enhanced through careful wildflower restoration.

Activities include:

- **sowing native wildflower seeds**
- **supporting pollinators such as bees and butterflies**
- **monitoring plant diversity**
- **learning meadow management techniques**

The goal is to increase biodiversity while **preserving the natural character of the landscape.**



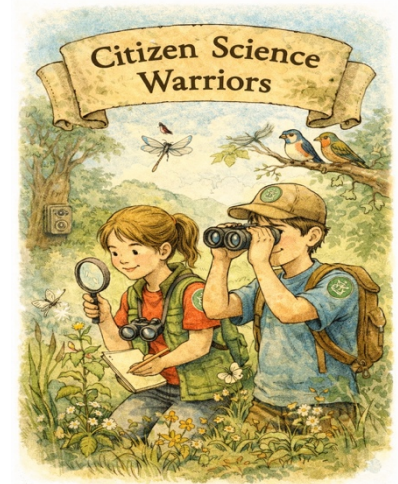
Citizen Science Programme

Healing Meadows will host a **community wildlife monitoring programme** where participants help record local biodiversity.

Areas of study include:

- **birds of prey surveys**
- **pollinator monitoring**
- **pond life recording**
- **wildlife camera analysis**

This programme encourages people to **actively contribute to environmental knowledge and conservation.**



"Keep close to Nature's heart... and break clear away, once in a while, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean." -The Ladybirds' Adventures

"There's no Wi-Fi in the forest, but I promise you'll find a better connection."

Nature Ranger Training Programme

Participants can build environmental skills through accredited learning using **Training Express courses**.

Recommended courses include:

- **Environmental Awareness**
- **Environmental Science**
- **Horticulture Fundamentals**
- **Sustainable Gardening**
- **Ecology & Conservation**
- **First Aid Awareness**

These courses allow participants to develop **real environmental and land stewardship skills**.



Engagement with Young People

Healing Meadows will engage **50 young people during the first year**, including those who benefit from calm outdoor environments such as young people with Special Educational Needs.

Participants will take part in:

- **wildlife observation**
- **environmental monitoring**
- **meadow stewardship**
- **citizen science projects**

At least **20 participants will complete accredited Training Express courses**, gaining recognised learning certificates in environmental and safety subjects.

Expected Outcomes

Healing Meadows will deliver measurable benefits:

- **improved biodiversity within the meadow**
- **increased pollinator habitat**
- **better flood resilience through stream restoration**
- **community participation in conservation**
- **environmental education for young people**
- **improved wellbeing through nature connection**

The meadow will remain a **protected natural landscape first and foremost**, while becoming a space where people can quietly reconnect with wildlife and the environment.

Community Support and Evidence of Need

During the development of Healing Meadows, we have undertaken informal consultation with local families, home education groups and community members. These conversations clearly demonstrate a strong demand for calm, nature-based environments where young people can explore, learn and regulate outside of busy or technology-dominated spaces.

Many families highlighted the growing challenge of **digital dependency among young people**, and the need for safe outdoor environments where children can reconnect with nature.

Michelle H., a local parent of a young person with Special Educational Needs, explained how important outdoor spaces are for wellbeing:

“Having somewhere calm and natural where my son can spend time outside and away from his phone would make a huge difference. When he’s in nature he becomes much more relaxed and focused. A space like Healing Meadows would give him the chance to explore and reset away from screens.”

Claire M., another local parent, spoke about the importance of **safe environments where neurodivergent young people can regulate and explore their interests**:

“My son has a huge fascination with insects and wildlife. Having a controlled, quiet space where he can explore that safely would be amazing for him. When he’s able to focus on nature and small creatures it helps him regulate and feel calm.”

There has also been strong interest from local alternative education networks. **Charlotte B.**, who coordinates a local home education group, emphasised the potential impact of the project:

“For our home education group of over 20 young people, having access to a space like this would be a game changer. Opportunities for outdoor learning and wildlife exploration are incredibly valuable and difficult to find locally.”

These early conversations demonstrate clear community demand for a project that provides safe outdoor learning, environmental engagement and nature-based wellbeing opportunities for young people and families across the **West Colchester, Colne Valley parishes and Halstead area**.

Healing Meadows aims to respond directly to this need by creating a calm, natural space where young people can reconnect with the environment, develop confidence and take part in meaningful citizen science activities.

Local Authority and Youth Service Support

Early discussions with members of the local parish council have highlighted that there are currently **no dedicated nature-based educational environments within the Colne Valley parishes** offering structured opportunities for young people and families to engage with wildlife, environmental stewardship and outdoor learning.

Although the area is surrounded by countryside, much of this land is privately owned farmland or unmanaged rural space and is **not designed for safe public engagement, educational activities or citizen science programmes**. As a result, schools, home education groups and youth groups have limited access to spaces where young people can meaningfully connect with nature.

Parish representatives have been highly supportive of the Healing Meadows concept, particularly because of its **low-impact environmental approach**. The focus on protecting the meadow, restoring pollinator habitats, improving the stream ecosystem and creating opportunities for wildlife observation aligns closely with local priorities around environmental stewardship and community wellbeing.

In addition to parish support, early conversations with **Essex Youth Service teams operating in Halstead and Stanway** have highlighted significant enthusiasm for the project. Youth workers identified the growing challenge of **digital addiction among young people**, particularly the impact of excessive screen time on mental wellbeing, concentration and social confidence.

Youth Service representatives recognised that Healing Meadows could provide an important **alternative environment for young people**, offering calm outdoor experiences centred around nature observation, environmental learning and quiet therapeutic engagement with the natural world.

They highlighted that projects like Healing Meadows could become a valuable resource in helping young people **disconnect from digital environments and reconnect with nature**, supporting wellbeing, resilience and positive mental health through what is increasingly recognised as **nature-based therapy**.

Together, the support expressed by parish representatives, local families, home education groups and youth service providers demonstrates a clear and growing demand for a project that offers **accessible outdoor learning, environmental engagement and nature-based wellbeing opportunities for young people across the Colne Valley area**.

Healing Meadows has the potential to become a **unique environmental learning resource for West Colchester, Earls Colne and Halstead**, helping young people build confidence, curiosity and a lifelong connection with the natural world.

Demonstrated Community Need

Taken together, discussions with local families, parish representatives, youth workers and home education groups clearly demonstrate a strong and immediate need for a project such as Healing Meadows.

Parents of young people with Special Educational Needs have highlighted the importance of calm natural environments where children can regulate, explore their interests in wildlife and take a break from screen-based lifestyles. Home education groups have identified a significant lack of accessible outdoor learning environments within the Colne Valley area, while early conversations with Essex Youth Service teams working in Halstead and Stanway emphasised the growing challenge of digital addiction and the need for nature-based activities that support mental wellbeing.

Parish council representatives also confirmed that there are currently no dedicated environmental education spaces of this kind within the Colne parishes. The consistent feedback across all discussions has been overwhelmingly supportive of the Healing Meadows vision: a quiet, restorative meadow landscape where young people and families can reconnect with nature, participate in citizen science, and develop confidence through hands-on environmental learning. Collectively, these voices demonstrate clear local demand for a project that protects the meadow while transforming it into a shared community resource for wildlife observation, environmental education and nature-based wellbeing.

Why Underdog Crew Are the Right Organisation to Deliver This Project

Underdog Crew Studios is often recognised for its creative work in filmmaking and media, but the true strength of the organisation lies much deeper. At its core, Underdog Crew is built on lived experience and a deep understanding of how to re-engage marginalised young people who have become disconnected from education, community and opportunity.

For many years the team has worked directly with young people facing challenges including anxiety, school avoidance, social isolation and digital dependency. Through innovative, trauma-informed and empathy-led interventions, Underdog Crew has consistently helped young people rediscover confidence, curiosity and a sense of belonging.

Creativity has always been one pathway into that process - but it is not the only one. The real expertise of Underdog Crew lies in creating safe environments where young people feel seen, valued and able to explore the world again at their own pace.

Healing Meadows is a natural evolution of this work. The project builds on Underdog Crew's proven ability to connect with young people who often struggle in traditional settings, offering a calm outdoor environment where curiosity, exploration and wellbeing come first.

By combining nature-based learning, citizen science and quiet environmental stewardship, Healing Meadows will extend the organisation's existing digital detox and youth empowerment work into a landscape where young people can slow down, reconnect with the natural world and rebuild confidence through discovery.

This approach reflects Underdog Crew's core belief that meaningful change happens when young people are given space, trust and the opportunity to explore their own potential.

Partnerships and Strategic Collaboration

Healing Meadows builds on the established work of The Underdog Crew CIC and 'Underdog Crew Studios', strong track record of delivering youth engagement projects focused on wellbeing, creativity and digital detox. Through previous programmes, Underdog Crew has supported young people to step away from screen-based environments and reconnect with hands-on learning, community activity and the natural world.

Our many recent awards show our status as innovative and pioneering during a mental health crisis and wide acknowledgement that SEN care and education need a complete overhaul. This experience forms a strong foundation for the development of Healing Meadows as a calm, restorative nature environment for young people and families.

Established Partnerships

Angling Trust

Underdog Crew already has an established relationship with the **Angling Trust**, the national governing body for angling and freshwater conservation. Their expertise supports the ecological approach behind the **Kingfisher Stream Restoration and Flood Pool**, ensuring that improvements to the stream habitat promote healthy freshwater ecosystems while also providing valuable educational opportunities around river health, aquatic biodiversity and responsible stewardship of waterways.

iCARP CIC – Dr Mark Wheeler 

Healing Meadows will also benefit from the expertise of **Dr Mark Wheeler and iCARP CIC**, whose work focuses on freshwater ecology, fish welfare and environmental education. Through this partnership the project will gain access to specialist knowledge around aquatic habitats and citizen science monitoring, helping young people and volunteers understand the delicate balance of freshwater ecosystems while contributing to real environmental observation and data collection.

Together these partnerships help ensure that the stream restoration and wildlife observation elements of the project are guided by **credible environmental knowledge and best practice**.

Strategic Affiliations and Future Collaboration

As the project develops, Healing Meadows will also seek to collaborate with a range of organisations whose work aligns with environmental stewardship, youth development and citizen science.

Potential collaborations include:

- **Essex Wildlife Trust** – biodiversity advice and wildlife education
- **RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds)** – bird monitoring and raptor observation initiatives
- **The Mammal Society** – support for trail camera wildlife recording and mammal observation
- **Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust** – pollinator conservation and meadow biodiversity
- **Essex Youth Service** – connecting local young people with outdoor wellbeing programmes
- **Local schools and home education networks** – outdoor learning opportunities for young people

Through these partnerships and affiliations, Healing Meadows will become part of a wider network of organisations working to **protect biodiversity, support youth wellbeing and encourage responsible engagement with the natural environment**.

Long-Term Vision

Healing Meadows aims to become a **model for community-led environmental stewardship**, demonstrating how a small natural landscape can support biodiversity, education and wellbeing without heavy development or disturbance. It will remain: **a meadow first — a place where wildlife thrives and people learn gently from nature**.

Project Deck compiled by: Dom Morgan. 07498 606258. db@underdogcrew.org





WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

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

www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk

clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk

Village of the Year 2025

To: Planning Department

Braintree District Council

Date: 11/03/2026

Ref: 26/00189/FUL

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

White Colne Parish Council response:

Jim Morris

Parish Clerk

White Colne Parish Council

Email: clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk



WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

White Colne Village Hall, Bures Road, White Colne, C06 2QA.

www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk

clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk

Village of the Year 2025

To: Planning Department

Braintree District Council

Date: 11/03/2026

Ref: 26/00414/TPO

Details: Notice of intent to carry out works to tree protected by Tree Preservation Order 1/81- T1 Trim Yew reduce new growth with hedge trimmer and cut back the bulbous lower area marked in photo to improve crown symmetry by approximately 1.5 meters. - 63 Colchester Road, White Colne, Essex

White Colne Parish Council response:

Jim Morris

Parish Clerk

White Colne Parish Council

Email: clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk

Local Plan Review - Regulation 18 consultation is now live

03.03.2026 18:05

Dear Parish Clerks,

You will be aware Braintree District Council are currently going through a review of Braintree District Council's Local Plan, which will cover development across the district over a 15-year period.

Today we are pleased to launch the Regulation 18 consultation as the next crucial stage in the process, following agreement by councillors at our Full Council on 2 February. This will run for **just over six weeks until 5pm on Friday 17 April 2026**.

This is where the council consults on the full draft updated Local Plan document, which sets out early ideas for how the district could develop over the next 15 years, including potential locations for new homes and jobs, supporting infrastructure, and protection of countryside and green spaces.

It's important to flag that **nothing in the draft document is final**. These are not planning applications, and no decisions have been made. This consultation is about listening to residents' views and gathering their feedback to help shape the final plan which we will consult on later this year.

The plan outlines that some growth will continue on existing allocated sites in the current Local Plan, while others have been newly proposed following last year's call for sites exercise. All new proposed sites that are being considered will be from 2033 to the early 2040's (our current Local Plan caters for development up to 2033).

We expect this consultation will generate a lot of conversation and debate. Below are some communications messaging to support you with informing your constituents about the current stage of the Local Plan Review and answering queries you may receive on social media, face-to-face or email:

- The Local Plan is more than just housing. It identifies the future of the district's employment spaces and job creation, green spaces, nature recovery, community facilities, road improvements and much more. It's also about protecting our district from development that's not right for the Braintree district.
- Once the final plan is adopted in 2027, it will allocate land for development in the Braintree district over a 15 year period. This is why it's important for residents, businesses, communities and all interested parties to have their say, engage with the proposed plan and share ideas for shaping the district's future.

Housing target

- The council has a housing target that it has to meet, that is set by central government and is mandatory. For the Braintree district, it must allocate land to deliver around 1,264 new homes per year over a 15-year period. We need to allocate an additional 11,000 approximately during this period to meet the government housing target.

- Without an updated Local Plan, the district is more vulnerable to speculative or piecemeal development without the right infrastructure. This means that applications for development are more likely to be granted at appeal by Inspectors who act for the national government. This would reduce the council's and community's influence over what kind of housing is built and where. National policy gives more weight to Local Plans that are less than 5 years old when determining planning applications.
- There is also demand for housing across the country and in our district. Having a Local Plan can help us improve the level of housing supply to reduce waiting times for people on the housing register.
- Over 300 sites have been submitted to the council for consideration, which would be able to provide over 100,000 new homes. The Local Plan Sub-Committee has undergone a detailed process of assessment, supported by officers, to determine which of those 300 sites are most suitable to be included in the current draft of the Local Plan.

Evidence base

- The Regulation 18 consultation also asks for views on the supporting evidence gathered so far. The full evidence base documents can be found on the planning portal.
- As it's the first official consultation the evidence base can still be in draft form, but it will be complete for the second consultation (Regulation 19) which will happen in the autumn of this year. Some of the evidence base work has however already been completed and will be published alongside the Regulation 18 consultation - comments can be made on any aspect of the evidence base during the consultation, and any suggested additions, or amendments to the evidence base documents will be considered. Further work has been commissioned to support the submission of the updated Local Plan which will be completed later this year.
- There have been questions and comments specifically about the current highways evidence to support the updated Local Plan. Essex Highways has studied how future development could affect our roads, public transport, walking and cycling. Reports have been completed, and the Local Plan Sub-Committee agreed to add them to the official evidence that supports the new draft Local Plan. Although we have included modelling for some sites for the purposes of the highways evidence base, some are not being proposed for development in the draft Local Plan. These are: Land North of B1053, Finchingfield, Land South of Chapel Road, Ridgewell, Land South of Haverhill and Land North of Witham. More detailed modelling will take place in early 2026. This will help us respond to public feedback and understand what transport improvements may be needed to support future growth.

Infrastructure

- We know residents expect new homes to be supported by the right infrastructure such as roads, schools, healthcare and transport.
- Regulation 18 is the stage where statutory bodies (such as National Highways, Essex County Council, NHS) tell the council what level of growth their services can support.
- The Local Plan can identify what infrastructure is needed and secure developer contributions (Section 106), but the council does not build or run GP surgeries, schools or major roads.
- The council works closely with partners to make sure growth is planned in sustainable locations with the right services in place.

- Without an up-to-date Local Plan, it is harder to secure funding from developers for essential local infrastructure.
- We continue to press government to prioritise investment in the A12 widening and A120 dualling, both vital for safety, reducing congestion and supporting planned growth.
- Even without progress on these national road schemes, the council is still required to meet government housing targets which makes a strong Local Plan more important than ever.

How residents can have their say

- The quickest, easiest and preferred way for you and for residents to share their views is via the council's online planning portal: www.braintree.gov.uk/consultip. There is guidance on there on how to use the portal.
- For those unable to use the online portal, hard copies of the document and paper response forms will be available at Braintree district libraries and the Reception area at Causeway House, Braintree. They will also be available at in-person events planned for March. Details of these events including our online virtual webinar can be found on our website: www.braintree.gov.uk/localplanreview.
- Paper comment forms can be sent back via post to: Braintree District Council Planning Policy, Causeway House, Bocking End, Braintree, Essex CM7 9HB or emailed to planningpolicy@braintree.gov.uk.

Materials and assets

We have produced a set of assets to assist you in promoting the consultation to your constituents which we would appreciate you using on your own channels. This includes a summary leaflet about the Local Plan review, social media assets, and a poster which we'd be grateful if you can display in your community noticeboards.

A link to download the assets can be found here: https://braintreedistrictcouncil.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/ExternalSharing/lgC6-MmhTIPURLYMigm1bve6ATcK_5G_ftPfrS8Q1zkgSbg. If you have any problems accessing these assets, please e-mail marketing@braintree.gov.uk. If you would like us to print any copies and send them to you, please email planningpolicy@braintree.gov.uk.

We'd also be grateful for your support in sharing our social media posts promoting the Local Plan over the coming weeks.

I trust this assists you however should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards,

Sarah Ashton MRTPI
Head of Planning

Braintree District Council | Causeway House, Bocking End, Braintree, CM7 9HB
www.braintree.gov.uk

HAVE YOUR SAY...

on the draft updated
Braintree district Local Plan



Braintree District Council is now consulting on an early draft of its updated Local Plan (known as Regulation 18). It sets out a blueprint for how the district will develop over the next 15 years.

It plans for new homes and jobs in the most sustainable places, alongside supporting infrastructure like roads, schools, healthcare and community facilities.

This is the time for you to comment on early ideas about how the Braintree district could change over the next 15 years.

CONSULTATION RUNS UNTIL 5PM ON FRIDAY 17 APRIL 2026.

This marks the beginning of the next major stage in shaping the district's future. Feedback will help shape the final Local Plan document and we will ask for further comments later in 2026 before it is submitted for examination.

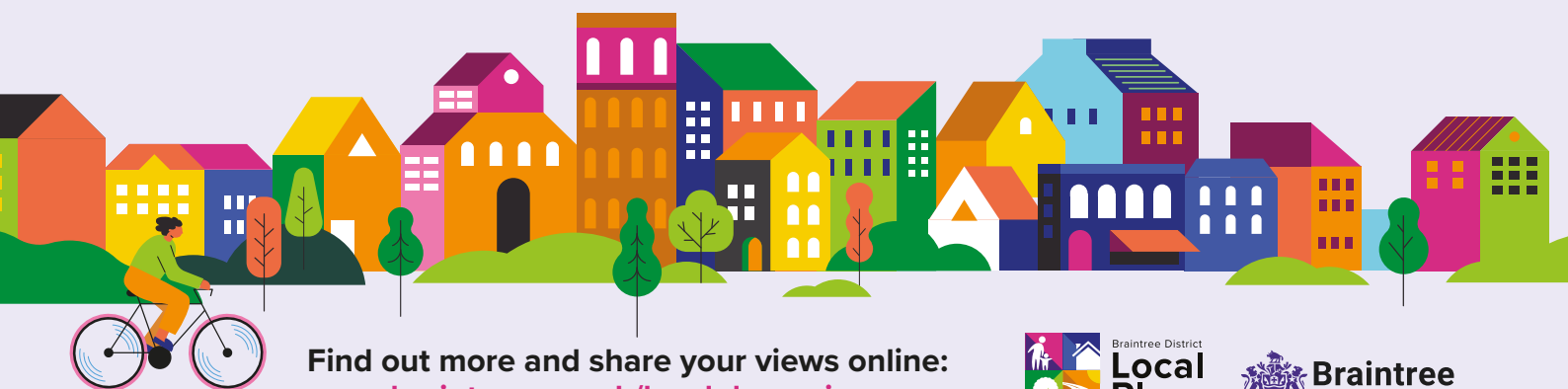
View our draft Local Plan in-person

We are holding a series of drop-in events where you can learn more about the Local Plan, ask questions and share your feedback. If you can't attend in person, we are also holding one virtual webinar.

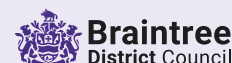
Paper response forms available at:

Causeway House, Braintree, CM7 9HB and Braintree district libraries.

VENUE	DATE	TIME
Hatfield Peverel Village Hall	Monday 9 March	3pm-7pm
The Institute, Kelvedon	Tuesday 10 March	3pm-7pm
Coggeshall Village Hall – Main Hall	Wednesday 11 March	3pm-7pm
Braintree Town Hall	Tuesday 17 March	3pm-7pm
Queens Hall, Halstead	Wednesday 18 March	3pm-7pm
Cressing Sports and Social Club	Thursday 19 March	3pm-7pm
Virtual webinar via Microsoft Teams	Tuesday 24 March	6pm-7pm



Find out more and share your views online:
www.braintree.gov.uk/localplanreview



Braintree District Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation - summary document



INSIDE:

- **Find out more about our updated Local Plan for the Braintree District**
- **See where sites are proposed**
- **Find out how to have your say**

What is a Local Plan and why do we need one?

A Local Plan is an important document which guides decisions on planning applications. It provides the Council with an opportunity to guide growth within the Braintree District.

It is important we plan for sustainable development which protects the environment, supports biodiversity, tackles climate change alongside providing new homes where people can afford to live and local jobs.

In addition, planning for social infrastructure such as schools, health facilities and new leisure provision is really important so that new places become a great place to live.

The current adopted Local Plan is over 5 years old and planned to deliver 716 homes a year. National Government has set a new mandatory target requiring the Council to deliver around 1,300 homes per year which means that our existing plan is out of date.

This makes it easier for developers to obtain planning permission on a site which is not allocated for development. An up-to-date Local Plan will help address this challenge so that

we can retain control on where we would like to see growth and protect the places where growth would not be sustainable.

The draft updated Local Plan is accompanied by a wide range of technical and other evidence including a highway impact assessment, retail studies and employment studies. These supporting documents are used to help shape the policies and site allocations within the updated Local Plan. The evidence base will continue to be refined and updated as the plan progresses. This includes developing a detailed highways mitigation package and infrastructure delivery plan.

Once this consultation is finished, we will use the feedback to shape a final draft. At this point, we will ask for further comments before submitting the plan to an independent inspector for examination.

Once adopted, the plan will provide the framework for development across the district for the next 15 years.

You can find out more about the Local Plan on the Council's website at: www.braintree.gov.uk/localplanreview.



Our emerging strategy

The Council needs to allocate sufficient land to provide 18,959 new homes over the next 15 years – to 2041. This figure has been calculated in accordance with the government's standard method. Around 9,327 of these will be built on sites which were allocated previously within the existing Local Plan. They are proposed to be carried forward into the new plan and involve sites which have already been granted planning permission.

We need to make sure we plan for development in the most sustainable way, minimising the need for travel and maximising opportunities for walking, cycling and accessing public transport.

Homes need to be sustainable, near to jobs, shops, services and other facilities. We also need to ensure the plan meets all the government's requirements and we must have a range of sites of different sizes, types and locations. On the sites we have proposed, we want to deliver high-quality homes that people expect and we must make sure the homes being provided meet the needs of residents – in terms of affordability, size and type.

Affordability is a key issue and the plan seeks to ensure that 30-40% of the housing allocation is affordable for local people.

Given the housing target that has been set by National Government, we are proposing strategic scale developments in some areas as these provide the opportunity to create more sustainable places. Built around local services such as schools and health facilities, including land which will provide local jobs, strategic scale development gives us the opportunity to improve public transport and connectivity for everyone living, working and visiting the area. In addition, new areas of open space can be provided which everyone can enjoy.

We need to support existing towns and village centres and ensure any new infrastructure benefits as many people as possible.

For these reasons, our draft plan focuses development in the most sustainable existing locations or where development of a strategic scale can be achieved to provide high levels of sustainability. This includes allocating land on the edges of main towns at Braintree, Halstead and Witham and at Key Service Villages such as Kelvedon, Hatfield Peverel and Coggeshall where there is the ability to access major roads like the A12 and the A120.

The plan does not propose any development in the smaller villages, other than very modest infill, or in the open countryside.



A Strong Economy

The plan seeks to support prosperity for all in the district. We are proposing a number of new employment allocations within the District which are set out in the table below:

Site	Proposed uses Area	(ha)
Extension off Barlow Tyrie, Springwood Drive Industrial Area, Braintree	Employment Policy Area	2.1
Slamseys Farm, Braintree	Employment Policy Area including for Uses E(g), B2 and B8	6.9
Shardloes Workshop, Cressing	Employment Policy Area	0.3
Additional extension to Bluebridge Industrial Estate, Halstead	Employment Policy Area	4
Extension to Gosfield Business Park, The Old Airfield	Employment Policy Area	3
Land West of Horizon 120 Phase 2	Approved hybrid application comprising full permission for 15,925sqm Storage and Distribution (Use Class B8), with ancillary office (Use class E(g)(i)) and outline for 39,075sqm of employment space for Research and Development (E(g)(ii)), and/or Industrial Process (E(g)(iii)), and/or General industrial (B2), and/or Storage or distribution (B8) with ancillary office (Use class E(g)(i))	13.6
Total New Provision Proposed		29.9

Housing allocations and infrastructure

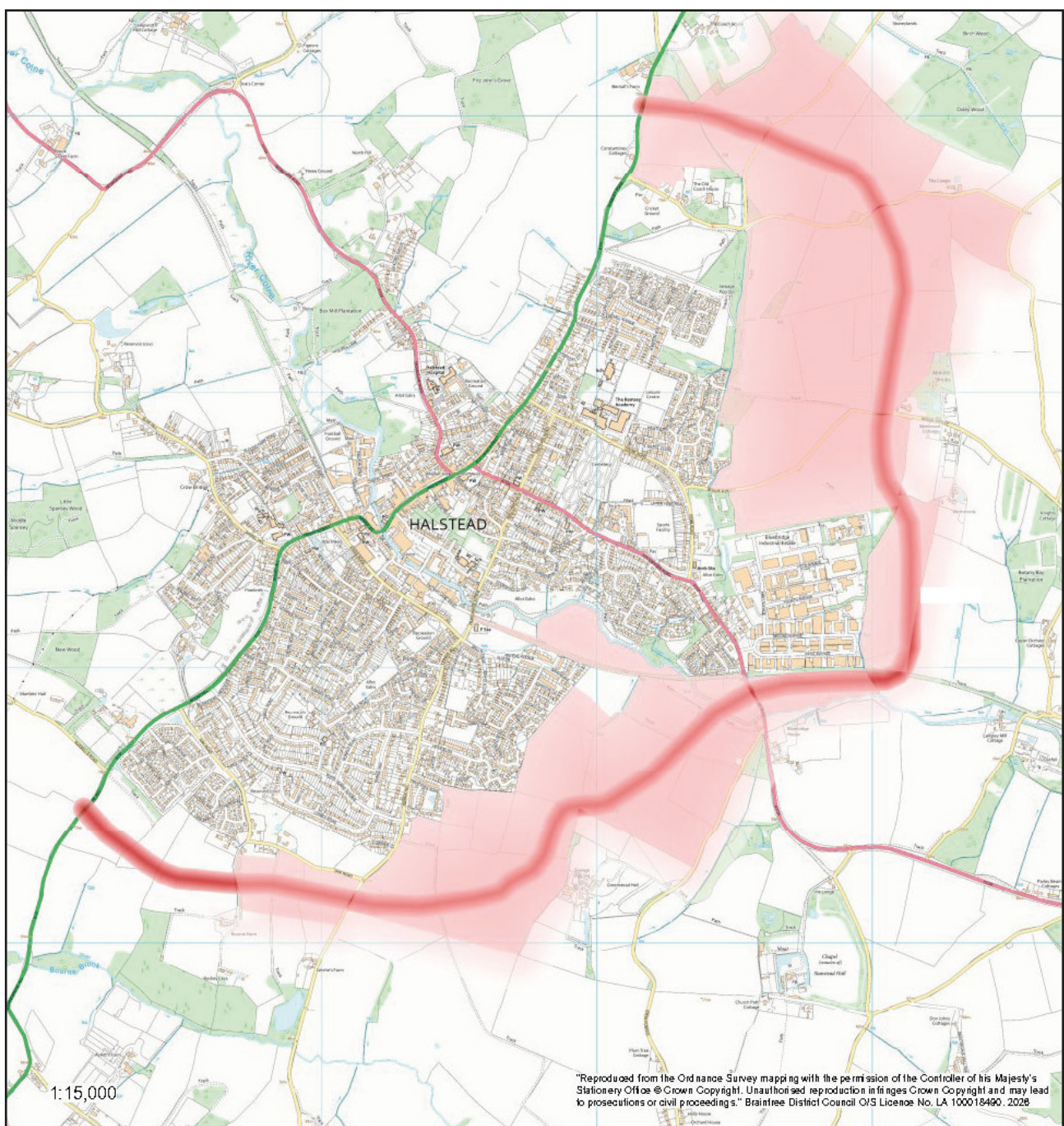
The table below lists our Strategic Growth Locations being carried forward together with the proposed draft sites and the number of homes they are expected to provide.

Strategic Growth Location	Total number of houses (number within the plan period in brackets)	Existing allocation (E)/Proposed allocation (P)
Hayeswood, East of Great Notley (in Black Notley Parish)	1,750	E
Land East of Broad Road, Braintree	1,000	E
Former Towerlands Park Site, Braintree	575	E
North West Braintree – Panfield Lane	825	E
East of Braintree	2,500 (1,350)	P
Land NE/SE of Halstead	2,850 (2,730)	P
Land NE Feering	835	E
Kings Dene – North, West and South West of Kelvedon	5,600 (1,850)	P
Wood End Farm, Witham	400 (395)	E
Land North of the A12, Hatfield Peverel	1,123	P
Total	17,458 (12,433)	



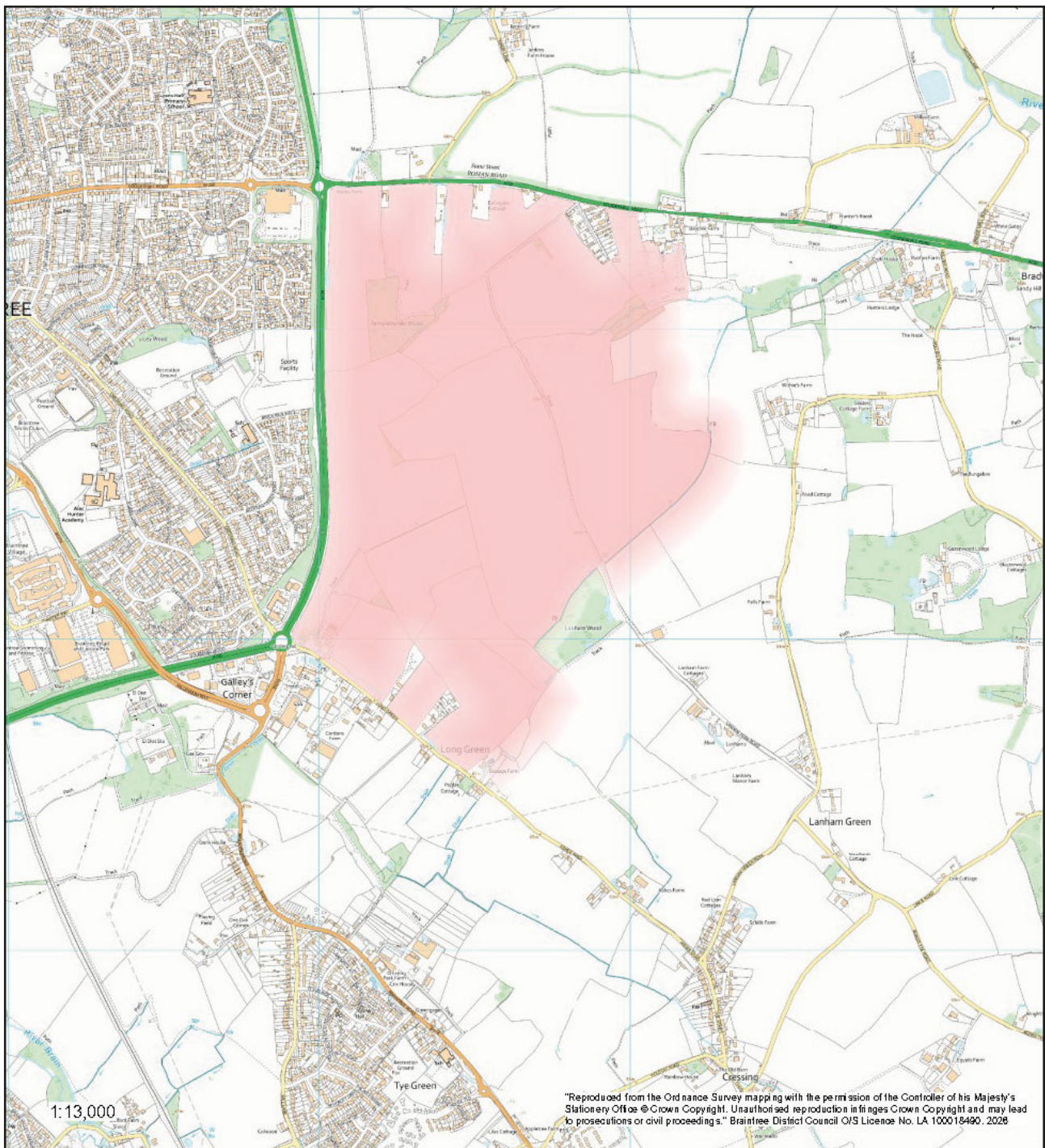
Halstead:

- Up to 2,850 homes
- A bypass linking the A131 south of Halstead to Colchester Road, then on to the A131 Sudbury Road north of Halstead
- New primary school provision with early years and childcare
- Secondary school education contributions
- Community facilities including new or expanded NHS facilities
- A new local centre
- Public open space



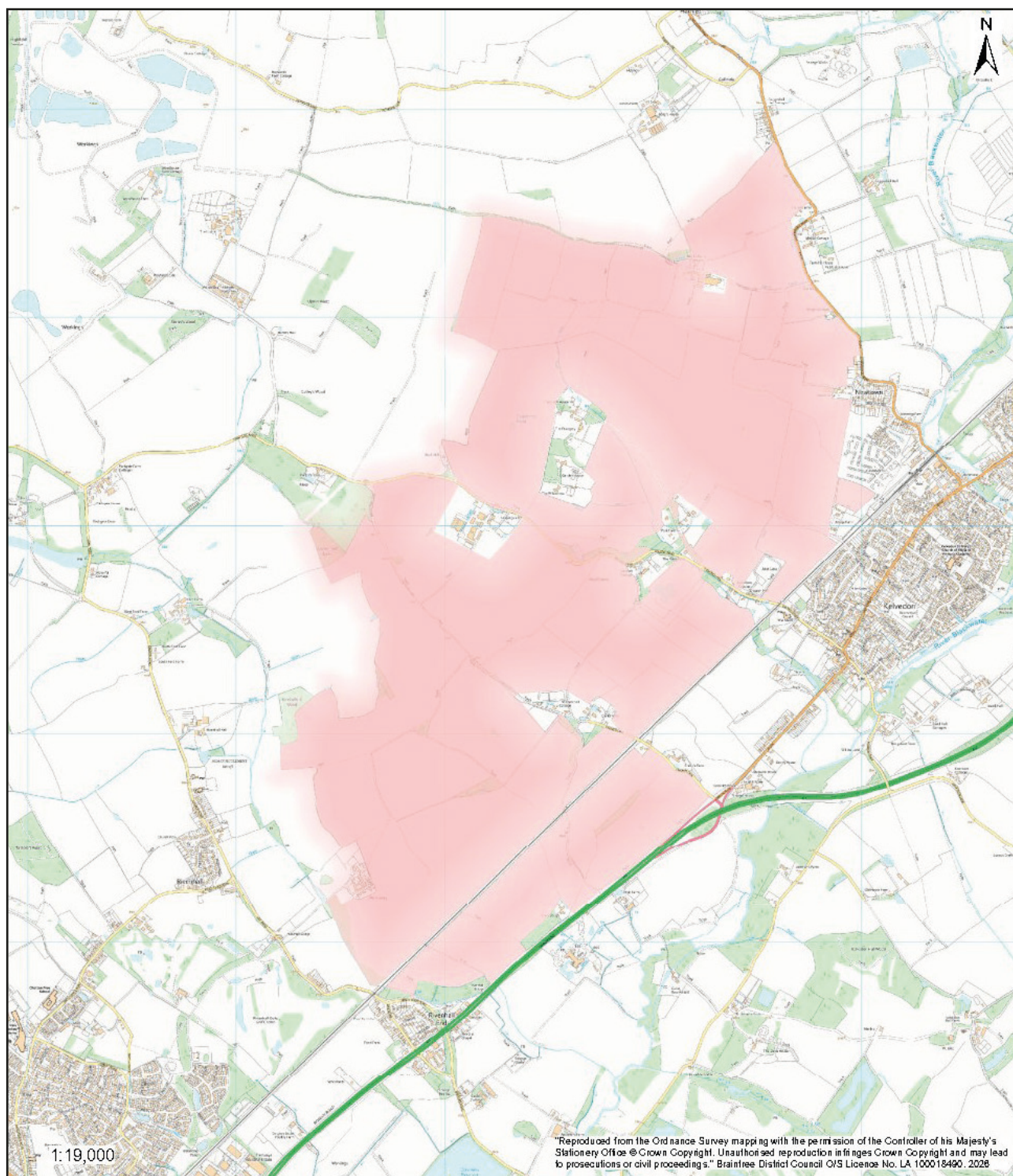
East of Braintree:

- Up to 2,500 homes alongside a local centre, health facilities, education (including early years provision and childcare)
- Significant improvements to Galleys Corner and other road infrastructure in the area
- Sustainable transport options
- Formal and informal recreation
- Safeguarded future dual A120 route and landscaping.



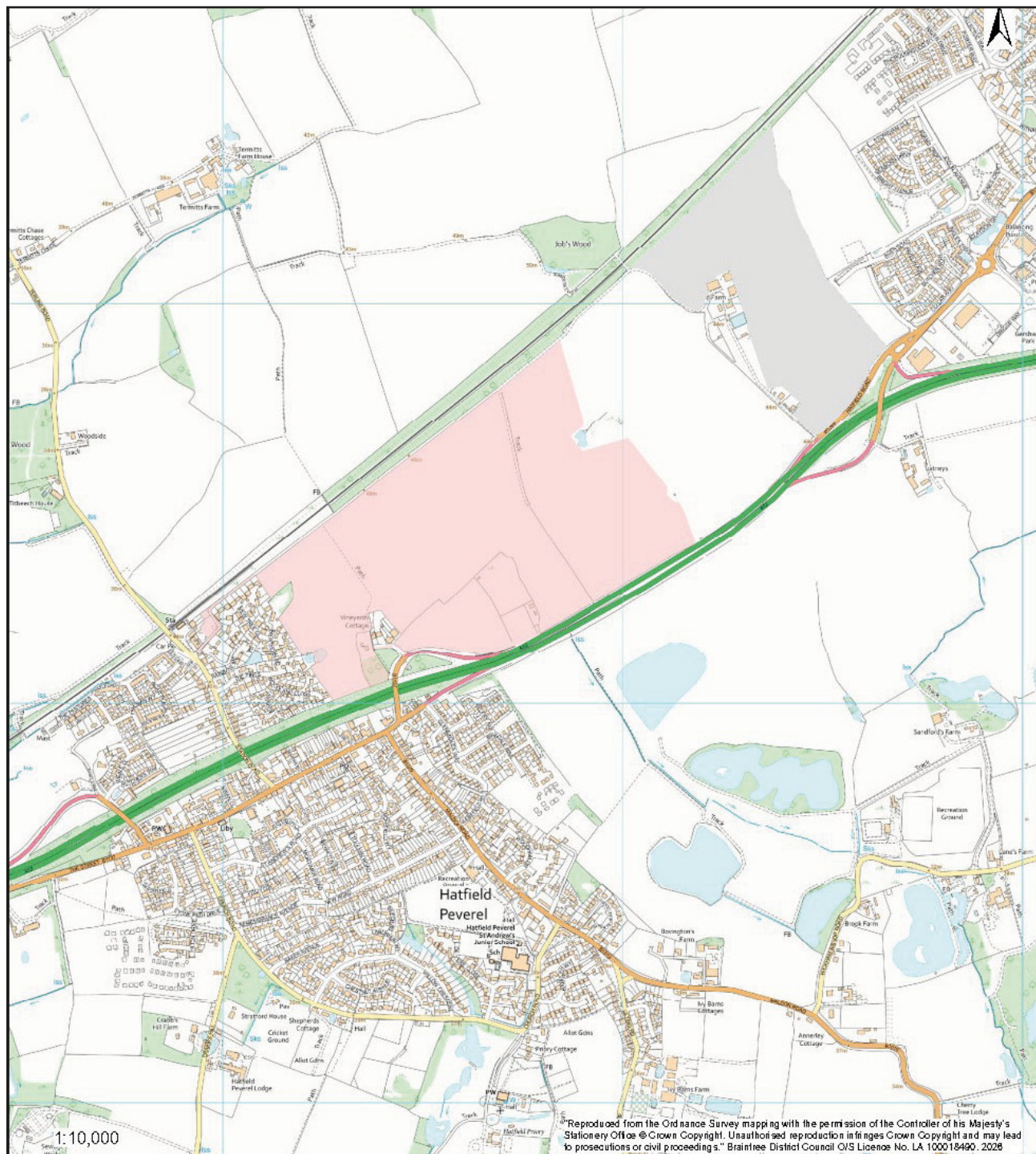
Kings Dene, Kelvedon:

- Up to 5,600 homes alongside new access from the A12, improvements to the local road network
- Amendments to Church Hill Level Crossing and access over the Great Eastern Main Line railway
- Appropriate employment land including local centres
- Education provision, community facilities including new or expanded NHS facilities and formal and informal recreation provision.



Land North of the A12, Hatfield Peverel:

- Up to 1,123 homes alongside new link road connecting Hatfield Peverel and Witham
- New green buffer between the site and Woodend Farm at Witham
- Public open space, education provision
- Community facilities (including NHS) and links to Hatfield Peverel Railway Station including connection to Witham.



Other proposed allocations

Non-strategic development (i.e. sites where capacity is likely to provide less than 500 homes) will make a meaningful contribution towards the overall housing requirement. The current proposal for non-strategic sites is shown in the table below.

Site Address	Settlement	Number of homes
John Pease Manor Street	Braintree	45
B and M Home Bargains	Braintree	35
Land at Friars Farm	Black Notley	480
Land adj to the Coach House, Panfield Lane	Braintree	44
Land East of A131	High Garrett	125
61 Broad Road	Braintree	30
Land at Old Barn Road Mount Bures	Bures	8
Land South Colchester Rd	Coggeshall	200
Land to the south of West Street	Coggeshall	80
Mill Lane	Cressing	78
Halstead Hall, Braintree Road	Halstead	34
Land at Mount Hill	Halstead	55
Land at 110 London Road	Great Notley	20
Land north of Little Yeldham Road	Little Yeldham	30
Land West of Nuns Walk	Great Yeldham	10
Land between 18-20 Toppesfield Road	Great Yeldham	5
Land South of Toppesfield Road	Great Yeldham	1
Land off Maldon Road	Hatfield Peverel	103
Adj Crabbs Hill Farm	Hatfield Peverel	20
Land south west of Windmill Road	Halstead	70
West St Dominics London Road	Kelvedon	50
Land North-East of Cranes Lane	Kelvedon	100
Land adj Davey House	Kelvedon	10
Land North West of Panfield Lane	Panfield	100
Land north of Rickstones Road	Rivenhall	45
Wethersfield Road	Sible Hedingham	4
Land west of North Street	Steeple Bumpstead	10
Land off Park Lane	Toppesfield	2
Land off Park Lane	Toppesfield	4
Land at Wood End Farm	Witham	78
Land North of Witham	Witham	65
Cut Throat Lane Car Park	Witham	133
Land north of Gershwin Boulevard	Witham	32
Ullswater, Maldon Road	Witham	1
Total		2,107

Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities

The new draft Local Plan strives to achieve healthy and sustainable communities.

In practice, this means ensuring existing and future residents are served by the homes and facilities which promote healthy choices and social cohesion.

The design of new places can substantially contribute to this goal by delivering the necessary services and facilities.

The plan will set the standard for the appropriate mix of housing – such as addressing affordability issues, specialist needs, number of bedrooms, and custom or self-build housing.

The plan also sets out design criteria against which the appearance and functionality of new development is assessed. This includes policies which protect and support the conservation of the district's landscape and historic environment, which are key to providing a sense of place.

At the same time, the plan seeks to ensure that future development preserves and enhances the experience of existing communities.

Providing a range of new facilities and infrastructure, whilst ensuring these are well integrated and accessible to current residents, will mean the vitality and sustainability of existing communities can be supported.



How to view the consultation documents

Copies of the Draft Local Plan, the evidence base and background studies used in preparing the plan can be found online: www.braintree.gov.uk/localplanreview

Paper copies of the draft Local Plan document are available to view at:

- Braintree district libraries
- Our consultation events
- Causeway House, Braintree, Essex CM7 9HB

Details of our in-person events where you can learn more, ask questions and share your feedback:



Hatfield Peverel Village Hall
Monday 9 March

The Institute, Kelvedon
Tuesday 10 March

**Coggeshall Village Hall
(Main Hall)**
Wednesday 11 March

Braintree Town Hall
Tuesday 17 March

Queens Hall, Halstead
Wednesday 18 March

Cressing Sports and Social Club
Thursday 19 March

**All events will take place
between 3pm and 7pm**

We are also holding a virtual webinar where our Planning Policy team will outline what the Local Plan is, what it covers, explain the consultation process, and highlight how the Local Plan will shape the future of the district.

**Microsoft Teams
Tuesday 24th March
from 6pm-7pm**

Register via the QR code
or visit our website.



SCAN ME

The webinar will be recorded and shared on **Local Plan Review webpage** for anyone who is unable to attend on the day:
www.braintree.gov.uk/localplanreview.

How to submit your views

There are number of different ways to send in your comments:



Online

Visit www.braintree.gov.uk/consultip

This is the quickest and easiest way of submitting comments and ensures you will be kept informed of future stages of the plan preparation.

It is a requirement of the Local Plan process that comments can only be accepted if they are received in writing (online, email and post). Comments made verbally or anonymously cannot be accepted. We will make all representations available for public inspection on our website as soon as possible following the closure of the consultation.



Email

Responses should be sent to planningpolicy@braintree.gov.uk.

A comments form is available to download from the website.



Post

A paper copy of the comments form can be used which is available on the website, at the District Council offices and local libraries. Written responses should be posted to:
**Planning Policy, Braintree District Council,
Causeway House, Bocking End, Braintree,
CM7 9HB.**

Consultation closes 5pm on Friday 17 April 2026

Proposed Communication for White Colne Parishioners

Support the Proposed Local Green Space Behind the Village Hall

Braintree District Council is currently consulting on its Local Plan Review. The draft plan proposes designating the land behind the Village Hall (part of the old railway line) as Local Green Space.

This designation would give the area long-term protection from development.

The land:

- Is publicly accessible and used as a walking link
- Connects the Village Hall, allotments and the Meadows
- Has remained largely undisturbed for over 50 years
- Forms part of the former railway alignment
- Links into the Local Nature Reserve along the railway corridor
- Provides valuable habitat for wildlife

The Parish Council supports the long-term, sensitive care of this area as part of the village's green corridor. Any future management would focus on biodiversity and would seek to involve community volunteers and external funding where appropriate, so as not to create additional pressure on council finances.

Residents who value this green space, its wildlife, or its role in linking village facilities are encouraged to submit supportive comments via the BDC consultation portal. Personal observations — such as wildlife seen or how you use the area — are particularly helpful.

Village Hall - National Lottery Community Fund

Application for Winter Hub 26/27 and 27/28

The National Lottery has invited us to re-apply for their two year grants programme for a total of £20,000.

We are all aware that the Hub has been very successful, and I hope fully agree that it should continue. With the increase in the cost of living and increases in the minimum wage it is extremely difficult to get a hub budget for two years within £20,000. I am also aware that I am providing several hours every week to support the hub and this may not be sustainable in the future. In order to safeguard the running of the hub we need to employ one of the girls for longer hours. Therefore, the costings will be.

Staff 23 hours per session at £14.24 for 21 sessions 26/27:	£6,877
Staff 23 hours per session at £14.86 for 21 sessions 27/28:	£7,177
Food £80 per session for 42 sessions:	£3,360
Hall hire 7 hours per session £84 for 42 sessions:	£3,528
Total costs:	£20,942
Support from PC:	£942

The PC support would take the form of reducing the hall hire fee to approx £61 per day.

The most import energy we have used on a hub day is 55kw which equates to approx £15 per day with cleaning at £30. Our fixed hall costs for the Hub are therefore £45 session. During the last two years our revenue for the Hub has been at £63 per session.

Village Hall - Energy Report – March 2026

Please see the up-to-date figures attached.

You will notice that we imported quite a large amount of electricity during December, January and February, and exported very little – similar to last year. This is mainly due to the poor winter weather, along with the increased electricity use on busy Hub days on Mondays.

Last November the Clerk and I spent some time looking for a new electricity supplier, as our standing charge with Scottish Power was over £1 per day. We were pleased to find a much more competitive business supplier with a significantly lower standing charge.

However, we have since discovered an unexpected consequence. By leaving Scottish Power as our import supplier, they automatically reduced our export rate for solar electricity from 12p per kWh to 6p per kWh. This only became clear when we received our most recent SEG payment.

This obviously affects our expected income. We had anticipated receiving over £1,000 from solar exports in the next financial year, but this will now be roughly halved. That said, if there was ever a good time for this change to happen, the winter months are probably the least damaging as our seasonal export figures are normally very low anyway.

I have also taken another look at the wider energy market. It appears that most of the major suppliers now offer higher export rates only if you hold a dual contract with them. Where export is taken on its own, the rate is typically about 50% lower. So at present it seems we may be tied to this lower rate.

One option we may be able to revisit is the idea of a Local Energy Club. Previously, when we were receiving 12p per kWh for our exports, the additional work involved in setting up and running a club did not seem worthwhile. In addition, our solar generation alone was not really large enough to benefit many households in the village.

The situation may now be slightly different. Browning Brothers have installed a 50kW solar array on their glamping field and have indicated that they would be interested in selling surplus electricity for the benefit of the local community. Having a larger generator involved could potentially allow 20 to 30 local homes to participate in a local energy club, with the possibility to offer electricity to members at a rate higher than 12p per kWh. ECC is now supporting the formation of Energy Clubs by funding the early set up costs and aggregation services through [Energy Local](#).

One of the earlier drawbacks was that if club members did not use all the available electricity, any surplus would still be sold back to Energy Local at around 6p per kWh. (but that now looks attractive!)

If we wish to pursue this further, it would be prudent to set up a small working party.

For information the export contract is a rolling month. The import contract is now on a 3 year fix.

Appendix L

Energy useage 2024-25	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total
Production kWh	1000	758.2	352.6	200.9	373.2	474.1	774.8	1850	1890	2010	1620	1570	12873.8
Export kWh	731.7	366.1	16.3	0.8	50.2	45.5	390.5	1270	1470	1570	1250	1270	8431.1
Grid Purchase kWh	4.9	52.1	400.6	537.5	691.1	483.8	126.2	63.4	20.3	29.4	3.8	15.9	2429
Consumption kWh	249.4	378.2	696.2	709.4	960.1	848.3	462.4	618.4	411.5	456.3	345.6	294.2	6430
Monta EV income			£ 22.28		£ 42.66			£ 39.65	£ 29.00	£ 47.00		£ 28.36	£ 208.95
Scottish Power income												£ 930.36	£ 930.36
Total Income													£ 1,139.31

Energy useage 2025-26	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total
Production kWh	1240	615.3	412.4	306.8	336.1	395.9							3306.5
Export kWh	881.9	196.8	55.7	44.9	18.7	180.5							1378.5
Grid Purchase kWh	15	66.4	431.2	400.4	692.9	480.3							2086.2
Consumption kWh	345.2	459.7	765.9	631.2	1030	689.7							3921.7
Monta EV income		£ 23.28		£ 20.49		£ 35.42							£ 79.19
Scottish Power income			£ 279.36			£ 5.22							£ 284.58
Total Income													£ 363.77

Total Income to date: £ 1,503.08

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

Pump Track

16.11.2025 13:27

Hi

I was wondering if there is any land in the village where a pump track could be built for biking particularly BMX (like the ones in Rayne and Haverhill)

I have asked Earls Colne Parish Council too

Regards
Cath Gregory

Sent from [Outlook for iOS](#)

Yellow-legged Asian hornet information to the public - we need your help

11.02.2026 09:35

Good morning.
Please could the PC take the recommended actions?
Many thanks,

Lynne
Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

As we approach a new year for monitoring for any over wintered Asian hornet queens, we are asking you to use the attached information file to educate the public in your local area about the threat of this invasive insect. It could be asking your local Parish magazine to include it in their publications, arranging for it to go up in your local notice boards, your local GP practice, dentists, sports club, social clubs, schools, colleges, library, etc. The idea is that it is emailed (or printed and hand delivered if you are willing and able) so that as many of them are pinned up, published and emailed out to clubs'/organisations' mailing lists.

Our next club meeting on Thursday 26th February will then further educate us on the what/where/when/how we are asked to help combat this threat and stop it becoming established in the UK. Look out for a reminder on that nearer the time.

As usual please get in touch if needed.
Thank you.

Yellow-legged Asian Hornet – do you know what it looks like and do you know what to do if you spot one? And why it matters to us all.

You may have read about the non-native invasive species Yellow legged Asian hornet last summer when a nest was spotted in Frinton. The nest, like all others discovered in our country, was destroyed and analysed as part of an ongoing campaign to stop this insect becoming established in our country. **This insect poses a significant threat to our honeybees and many other pollinators. It is a highly aggressive predator of native insects and if allowed to become established in Britain, will cause a major concern to our soft fruit growers, vineyards, outdoor markets, and outdoor catering events such as festivals, not to mention beekeepers and bee farmers.** It's sting is also more powerful than the European hornet, wasps, or bees. The Yellow-legged Asian hornet varies their diet throughout the year and will hunt our native insects as well as fruit and meat/protein. Where they are already established in Europe, they are a public nuisance and have impacted honey production and other food sectors.

The Yellow-legged Asian hornet is not easily confused with any other species. They have a dark brown or black velvety body. Characteristically dark abdomen and yellow tipped legs (hence the name). They are very slightly smaller than the native European Hornet. Introduced to France in 2004 where it has spread rapidly. Hundreds of sightings have been recorded in the UK since it was first spotted in 2016, but only really regarded as a threat in the last couple of years. High possibility of introduction through, for example, soil associated with imported plants, cut flowers, fruit, garden items (furniture, plant pots), freight containers, in vehicles, or in/on untreated timber. The possibility that it could fly across the Channel has not been ruled out. We all need to keep a look out. Overwintered queens will start to come out of hibernation from February, weather dependent, and will look for somewhere to build a primary nest and start laying eggs -this may be a in a shed or similar. They will then usually move to a higher location, such as trees, and build a larger secondary nest. In the autumn more queens will be produced who will leave the nest to mate and look for a suitable place to hibernate over the winter. It is only the queens that survive into the winter – the other hornets die and the nest is abandoned.

Further information can be found on the National Bee Unit's website <https://www.nationalbeeunit.com/diseases-and-pests/asian-hornet>.

It is vital that we all play our part in spotting, photographing and reporting any sightings.

- **with the iPhone and Android recording app: Asian Hornet Watch**
- **online at: www.nonnativespecies.org/alerts/asianhornet**
- **by email: alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk**

Colchester Beekeepers' Association are happy to give talks to clubs, groups, schools, or other organisations. Please contact ylah.colchester@gmail.com.



Identifying the Yellow-Legged Asian Hornet

Know the insects you might see out and about and how to tell the difference between them.

Please report any yellow-legged 'Asian' hornet sightings, along with an image if possible.



BUMBLE BEE

- **FEATURES:** Large and furry, colouring may be black and yellow, or black and red/orange, short wings.
- **SIZE:** Up to 2.5cm
- **WHEN WILL I SEE IT?** April-October
- **WILL IT STING?** Can sting more than once, but not likely if left alone.



COMMON WASP

- **FEATURES:** Shiny, black and yellow striped abdomen, long antennae.
- **SIZE:** Up to 2cm
- **WHEN WILL I SEE IT?** April-October
- **WILL IT STING?** Not naturally aggressive but will sting if threatened. Can sting multiple times.



MEDIAN WASP

- **FEATURES:** Larger than Common Wasp, variable markings, some dark with narrow yellow bands on abdomen.
- **SIZE:** Up to 2.2cm
- **WHEN WILL I SEE IT?** May-October
- **WILL IT STING?** Not naturally aggressive but will sting if threatened. Can sting multiple times.



HONEY BEE

- **FEATURES:** Dark brown head, brown/dark orange and black bands on abdomen, slightly furry.
- **SIZE:** 1.5cm
- **WHEN WILL I SEE IT?** March-September
- **WILL IT STING?** More docile than wasps. Will only sting once, if threatened.



HORNET MIMIC HOVERFLY

- **FEATURES:** Largest hoverfly in UK. Black and yellow striped, big eyes, wide body, tiny antennae.
- **SIZE:** 2cm
- **WHEN WILL I SEE IT?** May-October
- **WILL IT STING?** No - this one might look like a hornet, but it's harmless.



WOOD WASP

- **FEATURES:** Large, elongated body, yellow and black-banded abdomen, long ovipositor for egg-laying, long yellow antennae.
- **SIZE:** Up to 4cm
- **WHEN WILL I SEE IT?** May-August
- **WILL IT STING?** No. Despite appearances, this one won't hurt you.



DARK GIANT HORSEFLY

- **FEATURES:** Large dark brown eyes, black/brown bands on abdomen, loud buzzing in flight, small antennae.
- **SIZE:** Up to 2.5cm
- **WHEN WILL I SEE IT?** June-September
- **WILL IT STING?** Not a sting, but this one will give a painful bite.



EUROPEAN HORNET

- **FEATURES:** Larger than Asian Hornet. Yellow and brown abdomen, brown/dark red legs.
- **SIZE:** Up to 3.5cm
- **WHEN WILL I SEE IT?** May-November
- **WILL IT STING?** Only if threatened, more docile than wasps and Asian Hornets.
- **EUROPEAN HORNETS ARE NATIVE TO THE UK AND DO NOT POSE A THREAT.**



YELLOW-LEGGED ASIAN HORNET

- **FEATURES:** Dark black/brown body with a broad orange/yellow stripe near the tail, yellow-tipped legs.
- **SIZE:** Up to 3cm
- **WHEN WILL I SEE IT?** April - November
- **WILL IT STING?** One hornet unlikely to sting, but will become aggressive if it perceives a threat to its nest.
- **YELLOW-LEGGED HORNETS ARE AN INVASIVE SPECIES AND SHOULD BE REPORTED IF SEEN.**



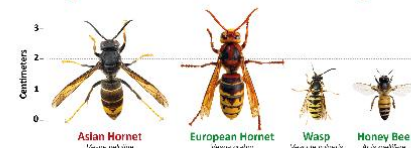
Google Play store

Yellow-legged Asian hornets are an **INVASIVE SPECIES** and a threat to honey bees and other pollinators. Any sightings should be reported, along with an image if possible. Scan the QR code to download the Asian Hornet Watch app - **SEE IT, SNAP IT, APP IT!**



Apple store

Think you've seen an Asian Hornet? Report it!



Report through the Asian Hornet Watch app or www.bit.ly/asianhornetreport



Animal & Plant Health Agency



WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

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

www.whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk

clerk@whitecolneparishcouncil.gov.uk

Village of the Year 2025

Information Technology (IT), Press, & Social Media Policy

1.01 Introduction

White Colne Parish Council recognises the importance of effective and secure information technology (IT) and email usage in supporting its business, operations, and communications. This policy outlines the guidelines and responsibilities for the appropriate use of IT resources and email by council members, employees, volunteers, and contractors.

1.02 Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who use White Colne Parish Council's IT resources, including computers, networks, software, devices, data, and email accounts, **regardless of their working location or pattern, including those who are home-based, office-based, or work on a flexible or part-time basis.** It sets out the expectations for the appropriate use of IT equipment and systems provided by the council.

1.03 Monitoring of IT use

As an IT provider, the council has the right to monitor the use of its IT equipment and systems, provided there is a legitimate reason for doing so and councillors, employees and other authorised users are informed that such monitoring may take place. Any monitoring must be proportionate and comply with relevant data protection and privacy laws. Other persons may be included if they access or use council systems e.g. if they have a council e-mail address.

2. Computer use

2.01 Hardware

2.02 Council computer equipment is provided for council purposes; however reasonable personal use is permitted (reasonable interpreted as in the opinion of the Clerk. Any personal use of our computers and systems should not interrupt our daily council work in any way. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users are asked to restrict any personal use to official lunch breaks or before or after working hours.

2.03 Locking computers when leaving desk, all councillors, staff, and other authorised users must lock their computers when leaving their desks to prevent unauthorised access. This applies to all council and personal devices used for work. Failure to comply may lead to disciplinary action.

2.04 All computer and other electronic equipment supplied should be treated with good care at all times. Computer equipment is expensive, and any damage sustained to any equipment will have a financial impact on the council.

2.05 Computer and electronic hardware should be kept clean, and every precaution taken to prevent food and drink being dropped or spilled onto it.

- 2.06 All computer and mobile equipment will carry a number which is logged against the current owner of that equipment. A database of equipment issued will be kept.
- 2.07 Equipment should not be dismantled or reassembled without seeking advice.
- 2.08 Councillors, staff, and other authorised are not to purchase any computer or mobile equipment (including software). Unless previously authorised.
- 2.09 Personal disks, USB stick, CDs, DVDs, data storage devices etc cannot be used on council computers without the prior approval of the Clerk.
- 2.10 Any faults or necessary repairs must be reported to the Clerk.

3.0 Portable equipment

- 3.01 Portable equipment includes laptop computers, netbooks, tablets, mobile and smart phones with email capability and access to the internet etc.
- 3.02 It is particularly emphasised that council back-up procedures specific to portable equipment should be followed at all times.
- 3.03 All portable computers must be stored safely and securely when not in use in the office, i.e. when travelling or when working from home. Portable equipment (unless locked in a secure cabinet or office) should be kept with or near the user at all times; should not be left unattended when away from council premises and should never be left in parked vehicles or at any council or non-council premises.
- 3.04 It is important to ensure all portable devices are protected with encryption in case they are lost or stolen. All smartphones or tablets that hold council data, including emails and files, must be protected with a pin code. Where possible, these devices should also be programmed to erase all content after several unsuccessful attempts to break in. Any security set on these devices must not be disabled or removed.
- 3.05 Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) is a security process that requires users to verify their identity using two or more independent methods—for example, entering a password (something you know) and confirming a code sent to your mobile device (something you have). This significantly reduces the risk of unauthorised access to systems and sensitive data and is best practice to enhance information security and support compliance with data protection obligations under the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 3.06 If an item of portable equipment is lost or damaged this should be reported to the Clerk. If the loss or damage is due to an act of negligence, the individual responsible may be liable to meet the first £250 of the loss/damage.
- 3.07 To protect confidential information, unless it is a requirement of the job and this has been authorised, it is forbidden for photographs or videos to be taken on council premises, without the prior written permission of the council. This includes mobile telephones with camera function, camcorder, tape or other recording device for sound or pictures - moving or still.
- 3.08 Under no circumstances should any non-public meeting or conversation be recorded without the permission of those present. This does not affect statutory rights (under The Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014).

- 3.09 In addition, the council does not permit webcams (which may be pre-installed on many laptops) to be used in the workplace, other than for conference calls for council purposes. If there is any doubt as to whether a device falls under this clause, advice should be sought from the Clerk.
- 3.10 Use of own devices
- 3.11 The Council recognises that some councillors, staff, and other authorised users may wish to use their own smartphones, tablets, laptops etc to access our servers, private clouds or networks for normal council purposes, including, but not limited to, reading their emails, accessing documents stored on the council's network or to store data on the council's server(s) or access data in other services. Any such use of personal devices will be at the discretion of the council, but consent for standard systems (MS Windows, Mac OS X, Linux - in commercial configurations) will normally be permitted. Such devices should be kept up to date so that any vulnerabilities in the operating system or other software on the device are appropriately patched or updated.
- 3.12 However, the same security precautions apply to personal devices as to the council's desktop equipment. For continuity purposes, calls made to external parties should be made on council phone numbers to ensure that only these numbers are used and/or stored by the recipient, rather than personal numbers. Any emails sent from own devices should be sent from a council email account and must not identify the individual's personal email address.
- 3.13 Councillors, staff, and other authorised persons that use council systems are expected to use all devices in an ethical and respectful manner and in accordance with this policy. Accessing inappropriate websites or services on any device via the IT infrastructure that is paid for or provided by the council carries a high degree of risk, and, for employees, may result in disciplinary action, including summary dismissal (without notice). For Workers or Contractors, we may terminate the worker agreement. This is irrespective of the ownership of the device used. An example would be downloading copyright music illegally or accessing pornographic material.
- 3.14 In cases of legal proceedings against the council, the council may need to temporarily take possession of a device, whether council-owned or personal to retrieve the relevant data.
- 3.15 Wherever possible the user should maintain a clear separation between the personal data processed on the council's behalf and that processed for their own personal use, for example, by using different apps for council and personal use. If the device supports both work and personal profiles, the work profile must always be used for work-related purposes.
- 3.16 Councillors, staff, and other authorised users who intend to use their own devices via the council's infrastructure must ensure that they:
- use a strong password, touch ID, or other biometric system to protect their device(s) from being accessed. For smartphones and tablets this should lock the device after failed login attempts;
 - configure their device(s) to automatically prompt for a password after a period of inactivity;
 - always password protect any documents containing confidential information that are sent as attachments to an email, and notify the password separately (preferably by a means other than email);
 - for smartphones and tablets, activate the automatic device wipe function (where available). Note that use of the remote wipe function may also involve the removal of the individual's personal data. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users are therefore advised to keep personal data separate from council data where possible;

- ensure secure WiFi networks are used;
 - ensure that work-related data cannot be viewed or retrieved by family or friends who may use the device;
 - inform the Clerk if their device(s) is/are lost, stolen, or inappropriately accessed where there is risk of access to council data or resources. To prevent phones being used, they will need to retain the details of their IMEI number and the SIM number of the device as their provider will require this to deactivate it.
- 3.17 Personal information and sensitive data should never be saved on councillors, staff, or other authorised users own devices as this may breach confidentiality agreements, especially if the device is used by other people from time to time.
- 3.18 If removable media are used to transfer data (e.g. USB drives or CDs), the user must also securely delete the data on the media once the transfer is complete.
- 3.19 Any work done on user's own equipment should be stored securely and password protected and should always be backed up in accordance with the council's standard backup procedures.
- 3.20 Prior to the disposal of any device that has work data stored on it, and in the event of a user leaving the council, councillors, staff, and other authorised users are required to allow the Clerk access to the device to ensure that all passwords, user access shortcuts and any identifiable data are removed from the device.
- 3.21 Councillors, staff, and other authorised users must take responsibility for understanding how their device(s) work in respect to the above rules if they are accessing council servers/services via their own IT equipment. Risks to the user's personal device(s) include data loss as a result of a crash of the operating system, bugs and viruses, software or hardware failures and programming errors rendering a device inoperable. The council will use reasonable endeavours to assist, but councillors, staff, and other authorised users are personally liable for their own device(s) and for any costs incurred as a result of the above.

4. Password and Authentication Policy

- 4.01 All user accounts must be protected by strong, secure passwords. The council follows the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) recommendations for creating passwords using three random words (e.g. PurpleCandleRiver). This method helps create passwords that are both strong and easy to remember, while offering effective protection against common cyber threats such as brute-force attacks. This approach is endorsed in NALC guidance.
- 4.02 In addition to strong passwords, Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) should be enabled wherever possible. MFA requires users to provide two or more independent forms of verification—for example, a password (something you know) and a code sent to your phone (something you have). This significantly reduces the risk of unauthorised access to systems and personal data.
- 4.03 To further strengthen account security:
- Initial user account passwords must be generated by the IT provider.
 - Default passwords provided by vendors or the IT provider must be changed immediately upon installation or setup.
 - Service or System (e.g. Website) account passwords are generated and managed by the IT provider.
 - The council recommends these practices as part of its commitment to robust information security and to support compliance with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

For more guidance, see the NCSC's advice on password security: [NCSC Password Guidance](#)

4.04 Access to Passwords:

- Passwords are personal and must not be shared under any circumstances.
- Only the assigned user of an account may access or use the associated password.
- In exceptional cases (e.g., incident response or employee offboarding), access to system credentials may be granted to authorised personnel from the IT provider with appropriate approvals and logging.
- Administrative credentials must be stored securely and only accessible to authorised personnel with a copy provided to the Chairperson, in a sealed envelope, only to be accessed in an emergency.

4.05 Password Storage and Management:

- Passwords must not be stored in plain text or written down in insecure locations.
- Passwords must be stored using a council-approved, encrypted password manager.

4.06 Password Change Requirements:

- Immediately change password if compromise is suspected.

4.07 Password Access Control and Logging:

- All access to administrative or shared credentials must be logged and auditable.
- Attempts to access unauthorized passwords will be treated as a security incident.

4.08 Responsibility:

Users are responsible for creating and maintaining secure passwords for their accounts. The IT security provider is responsible for:

- Managing system/service credentials.
- Enforcing password policies. Auditing and monitoring password-related security practices.

5. Remote working

5.01 Increased IT security measures apply to those who work away from their normal place of work (e.g. whilst travelling, working from home or at any other different venue), as follows:

- if logging into the council's systems or services remotely, using computers that either do not belong to the council or are not owned by the user, any passwords must not be saved, and the user must log out at the end of the session deleting all logs and history records within the browser used. If the configuration of the device does not clearly support these actions (for example at an internet café), council services should not be accessed from that device;
- the location and direction of the screen should be checked to ensure confidential information is out of view. Steps should be taken to avoid messages being read by other people, including other travellers on public transport etc;
- any data printed should be collected and stored securely;
- all electronic files should be password protected and the data saved to the council's system/services when accessible;
- papers, files or computer equipment must not be left unattended at a non-council premises unless arrangements have been made with a responsible person at the premises for them to be kept in a locked room or cabinet if they are to be left unattended at any time;
- any data should be kept safely and should only be disposed of securely;
- papers, files, data sticks/storage, flash drive or backup hard drives should not be left unattended in cars, except where it is entirely unavoidable for short periods, in which case they must be locked in the boot of the car. If staying away overnight, council data should be taken into the accommodation, care being taken that it will not be interfered with by others or inadvertently destroyed;

- where possible the ability to remotely wipe any mobile devices that process sensitive information should be retained in the case of loss or theft;
- Councillors, staff, and other authorised users who work away from the office with sensitive data should be equipped with a screen privacy filter for mobile devices and should use this at all times when accessing such data away from the office.

5.02 Use of paid for Wi-Fi access, for example at airports, should be carefully monitored and restricted to essential council use.

6. Email

6.01 All councillors, staff, and other authorised users who need to use email as part of their role will be given their own council email address and account. The provided email address must be used for all council-related business. The council may, at any time, withdraw email access, should it feel that this is no longer necessary for the role or that the system is being abused.

6.02 Council email facilities are intended to promote effective and speedy communication on work-related matters. Although the use of email is encouraged, it can be risky. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users need to be careful not to introduce viruses onto council systems and should take proper account of the security advice below.

6.03 On occasion, it will be quicker to action an issue by telephone or face to face, rather than via protracted email chains. Emails should not be used as a substitute for face to face or telephone conversations. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users are expected to decide which is the optimum channel of communication to complete their tasks quickly and effectively.

6.04 These rules are designed to minimise the legal risks run when using email at work and to guide councillors, staff, and other authorised users as to what may and may not be done. If there is something which is not covered in the policy, councillors, staff, and other authorised users should ask the Clerk, rather than assuming they know the right answer.

6.05 Acceptable use of IT resources and email

White Colne Parish Council IT resources and email accounts are to be used for official council-related activities and tasks. Limited personal use is permitted, provided it does not interfere with work responsibilities or violate any part of this policy. All users must adhere to ethical standards, respect copyright and intellectual property rights, and avoid accessing inappropriate or offensive content.

6.06 Email messages sent on the council's account should be for council use only. Personal communications are permitted provided they do not encroach upon working time or interrupt council business in any way. Employees and other authorised users are asked to restrict their personal use to official lunch breaks or before or after working hours, and to use their personal email accounts, rather than council addresses. Emails should be professional and respectful in tone. Confidential or sensitive information must not be sent via email unless it is encrypted.

6.07 Be cautious with attachments and links to avoid phishing and malware. Verify the source before opening any attachments or clicking on links.

6.08 Email monitoring

White Colne Parish Council reserves the right to monitor email communications to ensure compliance with this policy and relevant laws. Monitoring will be conducted in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR.

- 6.09 Emails should be retained and archived in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. Regularly review and delete unnecessary emails to maintain an organised inbox.

7. Use of the Internet

7.01 Copyright

- 7.02 Much of what appears on the Internet is protected by copyright. Any copying without permission, including electronic copying, is illegal and therefore prohibited. The Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 set out the rules. The copyright laws not only apply to documents but also to software. The infringement of the copyright of another person or organisation could lead to legal action being taken against the council and damages being awarded, as well as disciplinary action, including dismissal, being taken against the perpetrator.
- 7.03 It is easy to copy electronically, but this does not make it any less an offence. The council's policy is to comply with copyright laws, and not to bend the rules in any way.
- 7.04 Councillors, staff, and other authorised users should not assume that because a document or file is on the Internet, it can be freely copied. There is a difference between information in the 'public domain' (which is no longer confidential or secret information but is still copyright protected) and information which is not protected by copyright (such as where the author has been dead for more than 70 years).
- 7.05 Usually, a website will contain copyright conditions; these warnings should be read before downloading or copying.
- 7.06 Copyright and database right law can be complicated. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users should check with the Clerk if unsure about anything.

7.07 Trademarks, links and data protection

- 7.08 The council does not permit the registration of any new domain names or trademarks relating to the council's names or products anywhere in the world, unless authorised to do so. Nor should they add links from any of the council's web pages to any other external sites without checking first with the Clerk.
- 7.09 Special rules apply to the processing of personal and sensitive personal data. For further guidance on this, see the council's data protection policy.

7.10 Accuracy of information

- 7.11 One of the main benefits of the internet is the access it gives to large amounts of information, which is often more up to date than traditional sources such as libraries. Be aware that, as the internet is uncontrolled, much of the information may be less accurate than it appears.

7.12 Use of social media

- 7.13 Social media includes blogs; Wikipedia and other similar sites where text can be posted; multimedia or user generated media sites; social networking sites; virtual worlds; text messaging and mobile device communications and more traditional forms of media such as

TV and newspapers. Care should be taken when using social media at any time, either using council systems or at home.

- 7.14 Personal use of social networking / media and chat sites should be restricted to breaks during working hours, or after hours with permission.
- 7.15 The council recognises the importance of councillors, staff, and other authorised users joining in and helping to shape sector conversation and enhancing its image through blogging and interaction in social media. Therefore, where it is relevant to use social networking sites as part of the individual's position, this is acceptable.
- 7.16 However, inappropriate comments and postings can adversely affect the reputation of the council, even if it is not directly referenced. If comments or photographs could reasonably be interpreted as being associated with the council, or if remarks about could be regarded as abusive, humiliating, sexual harassment, discriminatory or derogatory, or could constitute bullying or harassment, the council will treat this as a serious disciplinary offence. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users should be aware that parishioners or other local organisations may read councillors, staff, and other authorised users' personal weblogs, to acquire information, for example, about their work, internal council business, and employee morale. Therefore, even if the council is not named, care should be taken with any views expressed.
- 7.17 To protect both the council and its interests, everyone is required to comply with the following rules about social media, whether in relation to their council role or personal social networking sites, and irrespective of whether this is during or after working hours:
- Contacts from any of the council's databases should not be downloaded and connected with on LinkedIn or other social networking sites with electronic address book facilities, unless this has been authorised.
 - Any blog that mentions the council, its current work, councillors, employees, other users associated with the council, partner organisations, local groups, suppliers, parishioners, should identify the author as one of its councillors or employees and state that the views expressed on the blog or website are theirs alone and do not represent the views of White Colne Parish Council. Even if the council is not mentioned, care should be taken with any views expressed on social media sites and any views should clearly be stated to be the writer's own (e.g. via a disclaimer statement such as: "The comments and other content on this site are my own and do not represent the positions or opinions of my employer/ the council.") Writers must not claim or give the impression that they are speaking on behalf of the council.
 - Any employee who is developing a site or writing a blog that will mention the council, must inform the Clerk that they are writing this and gain agreement before going 'live'.
 - The council expects councillors, staff, and other authorised users to be respectful about the council and its current or potential staff and members and not to engage in any name calling or any behaviour that will reflect negatively on its reputation. Any unauthorised use of copyright materials, any unfounded or derogatory statements, or any misrepresentation is not viewed favourably and could constitute gross misconduct.
 - Photos or videos that include employees or other workers wearing uniforms or clothing displaying the council's name or logo should not be posted on social media if they could reflect negatively on the individual, their role, their colleagues, or the council. Additionally, photos, videos, or audio recordings must not be taken on council premises without explicit permission
 - Comments posted by councillors, staff, and other authorised users on any sites should be knowledgeable, accurate and professional and should not compromise the council in any way.
 - Inappropriate conversations should not take place on any social networking sites, including forums.

- Any writing about or displaying photos or videos of internal activities that involves current councillors, staff, and other authorised persons, might be considered a breach of data protection and a breach of privacy and confidentiality. Therefore, their permission should be gained prior to uploading any such material. Details of any kind relating to any events, conversations, materials or documents that are meant to be private, confidential or internal to the council should not be posted. This may include manuals; procedures; training documents; non-public financial or operational information; personal information regarding other councillors, staff, and other authorised users anything to do with a disciplinary case, grievance, allegation of bullying/harassment or discrimination, or legal issue; any other secret, confidential, or proprietary information or information that is subject to confidentiality agreements. This does not affect statutory requirements to publish information including under the Freedom of Information Act.
- Councillors, staff, and other authorised users must be aware that they are personally liable for anything that they write or present online (including on an online forum or blog, post, feed or website). Councillors should always be mindful of the Members Code of Conduct and Nolan Principles. Employees may be subject to disciplinary action for comments, content, or images that are defamatory, embarrassing, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libellous, or that can create a hostile work environment. They may also be sued by other organisations, and any individual or council that views their comments, content, or images as defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libellous or creating a hostile work environment. In addition, other councillors, staff, and other authorised users can raise grievances for alleged bullying and/or harassment.
- Postings to websites or anywhere on the internet and social media of any kind, or in any press or media of any kind, should not breach copyright or other law or disclose confidential information, defame or make derogatory comments about the council or its staff or members, or disclose personal data or information about any individual that could breach data protection legislation.
- Contacts by the media relating to the council, should be referred to the Clerk.
- Councillors, staff, and other authorised users who use sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook must ensure that the information on their profile is accurate and up to date and must update their profile on leaving the council.
- Councillors, staff, and other authorised users who use X.com, LinkedIn, or other social media/networking sites for council development purposes must ensure they provide the council with login details, including password(s), so that these sites can be accessed and updated in their absence.
- Councillors, staff, and other authorised users who have left the council must not post any inappropriate comments about the council or its councillors, staff, and other authorised users on LinkedIn, Facebook, X.com or any other social media/networking sites.
- During your employment/ involvement with the council, you may create or obtain access to a variety of professional contacts and confidential information. This includes, but is not limited to, contacts made through professional networking platforms such as LinkedIn, where those contacts have been established or maintained in your capacity as a councillor, member of staff, or other authorised user. All such contacts will be considered council property and may be subject to disclosure upon request.

7.18 Note that the council may, from time to time, monitor external postings on social media sites. Any employee who has a profile (for example on LinkedIn or Facebook) must not misrepresent themselves or their role with the council. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users are also advised that social media sites are not an appropriate place to air council concerns or complaints: these should be raised with the council or formally through the grievance procedure.

7.19 It is important to note that contact details and information remain the property of the council. In addition, councillors, staff, and other authorised users leaving the council will be required

to delete all council-related data including contact details from any personal device / equipment.

8. Press & Media Policy

- 8.01 The purpose of this policy is to guide both Councillors and staff of the Council in their relations with the media and press organisations, in such a way as to ensure the smooth running of the Council.
- 8.02 This policy does not seek to be either prescriptive nor comprehensive but sets out to provide guidance on how to deal with some of the practical issues that may arise when dealing with the media and press.
- 8.03 Above everything else, a Councillor must observe White Colne Parish Council's adopted Code of Conduct whenever they conduct the business of the authority, conducts the business of the office to which they have been elected or appointed, or acts as a representative of the authority.

8.04 Staff

- 8.05 An officer of the Council must not disclose information that is of a confidential nature. This includes any discussion with the press on any matter which has been discussed under confidential items on the Council's Agenda or at any other private briefing.
- 8.06 An officer of the Council should act with integrity at all times when representing or acting on behalf of White Colne Parish Council.
- 8.07 Both the Chairperson and the Parish Clerk, as the Proper Officer of the Council, are authorised to receive communications from the media and press and to issue Press Releases on behalf of the Council. In the absence of the Chairperson and Clerk, a member of the Council may handle media and press communications.
- 8.08 All communications made by the Parish Clerk will relate to the stated business and day to day management of the activities or adopted policy of the Council. The Clerk is not expected or authorised to speculate on matters that have not been considered by the Council. Where such questions are put to the Parish Clerk, the Clerk should refer the enquirer to the Chairperson.
- 8.09 No other officer of the Council nor member of staff apart from the above, unless authorised by the Parish Clerk, is permitted to speak or communicate with the media and press on any matter affecting the Council or its business.

8.10 Members of the Council

- 8.11 A Councillor must not disclose information that is of a confidential nature. This includes any discussion with the media or press on any matter which has been discussed under confidential items on the Council's Agenda or at any other private briefing.
- 8.12 A Councillor should act with integrity at all times when representing or acting on behalf of White Colne Parish Council.
- 8.13 When speaking or providing written material to the media or press, members should make clear the capacity in which they are providing the information. For example: as Chairperson of the Council; as a Parish Councillor; as an individual (such as a letter to the press for publication); as a spokesperson or as Press Officer for a political party.

- 8.14 The prefix “Cllr” should never be used when writing to the media or press as an individual as it implies a statement of Council policy.
- 8.15 Take particular care when approached by the media or press for comment on a potentially controversial subject, and do not be led into making statements. Do not comment upon policy unless there is certainty as to its provenance. Contact the Parish Council Office for clarification.
- 8.16 Councillors should be aware that case law states the role of Councillor overrides the rights to act as an individual. This can mean that Councillors should be careful about expressing individual views to the media or press, whether or not they relate to matters of Council business.
- 8.17 Councillors have an obligation to respect Council policy once made and whilst it may be legitimate for a Councillor to make clear that they disagreed with a policy and voted against it (if this took place in an open session), they should not seek to undermine a decision through the media or press.
- 8.18 A Councillor should not raise matters relating to the conduct or capability of an officer or member of staff at meetings held in public or before the media or press.

8.19 Dealing with media and press

- 8.20 When dealing with media or press verbally, members and officers should be aware of the following:
- Be informed and certain of the facts
 - Ensure that when making comments on behalf of the Parish Council that you are aware of Council Policy and that comments reflect that policy
 - Remain calm
 - Ensure that comments and views expressed will not bring the Council, its Councillors, or its staff into disrepute and ensure that comments are neither libellous nor slanderous

8.21 Issues to be aware of

- 8.22 Councillors and officers unused to dealing with media or press may be surprised when statements made in all innocence appear very different when in print than they did when spoken. It is advantageous to prepare a written statement or position beforehand.

8.23 Press Releases

- 8.24 All Press Releases made on behalf of the Parish Council will be prepared by the Chairperson and/or Parish Clerk.
- 8.25 The Parish Clerk, in consultation with the Chairperson, has delegated authority to publish Press Releases on any urgent matters.

9. Misuse

- 9.01 Misuse of IT systems and equipment is not in line with the council’s standards of conduct and will be taken seriously. Any inappropriate or unauthorised use may lead to formal action, including disciplinary proceedings or, in serious cases, dismissal.

10. Monitoring

- 10.01 The council reserves the right to monitor and maintain logs of computer usage and inspect any files stored on its network, servers, computers, or associated technology to ensure compliance with this policy as well as relevant legislation. Internet, email, and computer usage is continually monitored as part of the council's protection against computer viruses, ongoing maintenance of the system, and when investigating faults.
- 10.02 The council may monitor the use of electronic communications and use of the internet in line with the Investigatory Powers (Interception by Councils etc for Monitoring and Record-keeping Purposes) Regulations 2018.
- 10.03 Monitoring of an employee's email and/or internet use will be conducted in accordance with an impact assessment that the council has carried out to ensure that monitoring is necessary and proportionate. Monitoring is in the council's legitimate interests and is to ensure that this policy is being complied with.
- 10.04 The information obtained through monitoring may be shared internally, including with relevant councillors and IT staff if access to the data is necessary for performance of their roles. The information may also be shared with external HR or legal advisers for the purposes of seeking professional advice. Any external advisers will have appropriate data protection policies and protocols in place.
- 10.05 The information gathered through monitoring will be retained only long enough for any breach of this policy to come to light and for any investigation to be conducted.
- 10.06 Councillors, staff, and other authorised users have a number of rights in relation to their data, including the right to make a subject access request and the right to have data rectified or erased in some circumstances. You can find further details of these rights and how to exercise them in the council's data protection policy.
- 10.07 Such monitoring and the retrieval of the content of any messages may be for the purposes of checking whether the use of the system is legitimate, to find lost messages or to retrieve messages lost due to computer failure, to assist in the investigation of wrongful acts, or to comply with any legal obligation.
- 10.08 The council may put software and systems in place that can monitor and record all internet usage. Any activity log, which details the names of all websites accessed, along with the date and time of access, by individual councillors, staff, and other authorised users will normally be retained for a period of six months.
- 10.09 The council reserves the right to inspect all files stored on its computer systems in order to assure compliance with this policy. The council also reserves the right to monitor the types of sites being accessed and the extent and frequency of use of the internet at any time, both inside and outside of working hours to ensure that the system is not being abused and to protect the council from potential damage or disrepute.
- 10.10 Any use that the council considers to be 'improper', either in terms of the content or the amount of time spent on this, may result in disciplinary proceedings.
- 10.11 All computers may be periodically checked and scanned for unauthorised programmes and viruses.

11. Health and safety

- 11.01 Councillors, staff, and other authorised users who work in council offices will be provided with an appropriate workstation.
- 11.02 The council has a duty to ensure that regular appropriate eye tests, carried out by a competent person, are offered to employees using display screen equipment. Further details are set out in the council's Health & Safety Policy.
- 11.03 Any VDU user who feels that their workstation requires changes to make it compliant must speak to the Clerk.
- 11.04 If any hazards are detected at a workstation, including 'noises' from the IT equipment, this should be reported immediately to the Clerk.

12. Compliance and consequences

- 12.01 Breach of this IT and Email Policy may result in the suspension of IT privileges and further consequences as deemed appropriate.

13. Policy review

- 13.01 This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Updates may be made to address emerging technology trends and security measures.

14. Contacts

- 14.01 For IT-related enquiries or assistance, users can contact the Clerk in the first instance. All staff and councillors are responsible for the safety and security of White Colne Parish Council's IT and email systems. By adhering to this IT and Email Policy, White Colne Parish Council aims to create a secure and efficient IT environment that supports its mission and goals.

Adopted: 15.07.2025

Reviewed and updated: 17.03.2026

Next review: 03.2027