



Broomfield Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of Broomfield Parish Council held in Broomfield Village Hall on Wednesday 12th March 2025 at 7.30 p.m.

24/204	Members attending. Chair: Cllr Bleet, Cllrs Faulds, Perera-Morris, Blake, Bowman, Howell, Scott, Thomson and Travis. Also present, Clerk, Mark Hembury. And Cllr Mike Steel, City and County Councillor. Six members of the public were present. Resolved. Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Barnes, Taylor and Odelana. Other absence Cllr Boreham. Proposed by Cllr. Bowman and seconded by Cllr. Travis. All in agreement.
24/205	Declarations of interests Cllr Bowman declared an interest in the agenda item reference the allotment fencing.
24/206	To approve the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 12th February 2025. Resolved. The minutes of the Full Council meeting are accepted as a true record. Proposed by Cllr. Travis and seconded by Cllr.Perera-Morris Two abstentions and all others in agreement.
24/207	Public Question Time. No questions asked.
24/208	To receive a report from the County Council for items not on agenda. The following report was received from Cllr.Mike Steel. Devolution and Unitary Councils – an update and overview Devolution and LGR started off as two separate initiatives. The point of devolution was a simplistic devolution of powers (such as bus franchising) from Central Govt to the County Council, which would bring decision making closer to the electorate. Whereas, Local Govt Reform (LGR)/Unitary Councils is about replacing Essex County Council (ECC), 2 existing Unitaries (Southend and Thurrock) and 15 District Councils (such as Chelmsford City Council CCC) with 3, 4, or 5 Unitary Councils – which cover all the responsibilities of ECC and the District Councils. So, instead of there being one County Council responsible for Roads, Social Care, Education, Children’s services, etc) with 15 District Councils (Planning, Waste Collection, Housing etc), Essex would be split into a small number of Unitary Councils, each having responsibility for all these services. So, CCC will need to merge with some of its neighbouring towns, yet to be determined). The number of Unitaries hasn’t been determined yet – it is aimed at around 500,000 people per unitary. The other change will be that there will be a directly elected Mayor, not for each Unitary, but a single one across all of Essex. The Mayor will also take on the role of the Police Commissioner. In order to do this, the May 2025 County Council elections have to be postponed by a year. The reality is that a year isn’t enough and further legislation will be required to postpone further. So, the best prediction at the moment is that: May 2025 – ECC elections postponed by at least a year. Further extensions will be required and Cllrs will probably serve another 3 years until March 2028 May 2026 – elections for cross-Essex Mayor

May 2027 – CCC elections postponed for a year

May 2027 - Unitary Councils “shadow” elections, ready to take control in March 2028. They will spend their first year setting up the organisation and budgets,

March 2028 - ECC, Southend & Thurrock Unitaries and all the 15 District Councils abolished and replaced by TBD Unitary Councils

For me, this means that I was expecting to have to stand again for ECC in May 2025, but I won't and I probably have a 3 year extension. As a City Cllr for Broomfield and the Walthams, I would have also had to stand for election in May 2027, but I will likely get a year extension on that. I know many people feel that this is a suspension of democracy, but the overriding factor seems to be that if we don't sign up to this approach, we will have it done to us! I reserve judgement on the whole concept! Chelmsford City Council, whether under the Conservatives, or Lib-Dems, is one of the better managed authorities, with good services and low debt. Many of the other councils carry a large debt and this is likely to be shared out. However, I can see the benefit of Unitaries, after all as an ECC, CCC, and PC Cllr, I personally operate as one. But, this is all going to be a big upheaval, and you might have detected that I'm not a big fan of the direction we are going in!

I believe there is a public consultation -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/greater-essex-devolution>

Love Your Bus

Two of my Parish Councils have applied to this initiative – Good Easter and Chignal, jointly. I have provided my written support. Deadline for submission was 21st Feb – I don't know the outcome yet, but I have also given my verbal support to the Head of IPTU

Member Highways Initiative

I have continued to make use of the additional “Winter Maintenance” Members’ Highways Initiative. This scheme was added because, unlike me, not all Cllrs used their MHI allowance, so there was spare capacity. Some holes in Highwood and Broomfield (at the crossing) have already been fixed. Also, on the list now are the road to Pleshey, Writtle (St Johns Green and Bridge Street), Chignal (outside Gardening Express) and the A131 near Gt Leighs.

School Crossing Patrol (SCP) in School Lane:

I am not aware of any applications for the vacancy, which is disappointing.

Road Safety Issues

In terms of road safety, I am a big advocate of reducing speeds on the fast rural roads of Essex and Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) <https://saferessexroads.org/> and especially their Vision Zero initiative. I am pleased to say that there is a proposal to reduce the speed limits on the A414 between the Widford Roundabout and the B181 Tylers Green. This speed limit reduction is being sought for safety reasons following a high number of fatal collisions in the past 12-18 months. Whilst investigations are still underway, a reduction in speed is seen as a positive measure by which to mitigate the risk of future fatal collisions. Of course I have said that I welcome any initiative that would improve the situation, but that I would propose going further. The current situation does create some confusion in that travelling from

Chelmsford to the M11 junction, a driver goes through 7 different speed limits. The proposal lessens this to 6, but still has numerous changes, which leaves a driver wondering what speed limit they are in. My suggestion is that the whole road is made 40mph, except the 30mph through a couple of populated areas.

Also, I stated that I would welcome similar consideration for the A1060.

The Casualty Reduction Team tell me that the Police's investigation / Forensics report is still be ongoing so they can't publish their internal report yet which is still being collated ready for internal review

Whilst we could raise an LHP request, I think Casualty Reduction recommendation is the quickest way to go.

The LHP budget is already allocated for 25/26. So, it would have to wait until 26/27 for design (if even selected by the LHP), and then 27/28 for implementation. Since we don't make a decision on 26/27 budget until Feb 27, we might as well wait for Casualty Reduction to report.

Pylons – targeted consultation

The targeted consultation has now opened for the Essex (and Thurrock) region and will run until 27th March 2025.

Feedback can be provided at www.nationalgrid.com/norwich-to-tilbury

Most of these changes have been identified from feedback from the last consultation and NGET have stated that before they make any decisions, they want to consult with those people living near these proposed changes.

The changes can be found here - [Norwich to Tilbury | Document library | National Grid ET](#)

There are also a series of Webinars and events that can be accessed from the website.

I had a call with NGET 26th Feb (for the City Cllrs – affects around 6 Cllrs, but only 2 of us attended – myself and Cllr Whitehead). On the call NGET made it clear that this consultation is purely about the changes, and is not about off-shore, or underground options, although I suspect that people will still comment on this. I did ask about these and was told that NGET are operating within the framework of Central Govt, and options such as underground, would only be considered if Central Govt changed the rules – e.g., moved away from the requirement of providing the cheapest solution.

The latest proposal includes just 3 areas around Chelmsford:

- Essex 7 – around Gt Leighs – this is mainly about timing and synchronising with the ECC new Minerals Plan
- Essex 8 – the Waltham Gap – lower height pylons (37m rather than 50m), but wider. From what I can see, this would reduce visibility of the pylons from a distance, but brings one closer to the road (and a house) and so be more intrusive close up.
- Essex 9 – around Margaretting – temp construction laydown area repositioned north of Ivy Barnes Lane

It seems all other areas have not experienced sufficient change to warrant comment.

NGET assured me that the proposals were subject to feedback and if, for example, the Waltham residents would rather have the previous proposal, it would be considered. It is the

Waltham Gap which seems to be the major change in this consultation, and is a trade-off between lower height pylons but they are more intrusive (being nearer the road and housing). I will probably comment that we would like the lower height pylons, but in the old positions, in the middle of the fields. I don't know if that is possible, as the lower height pylons may have less span.

Pylons – Central Govt

As stated above, NGET are operating within the rules set down by Central Govt which pushes totally towards a overhead pylon solution. Alternatives such as off-shore, or underground, would need a change of approach from Govt. Hence, our MP Kemi, and myself, continue to push on this. At ECC and CCC level I have pushed both organisations to resist pylons, and ECC has joined forces with not only Suffolk and Norfolk, but also Lincolnshire.

If you are keeping up with it on the press, you will know that the Labour Govt, and Ed Miliband in particular, is not only pushing the Development Consent Order (DCO), but also clearing the path in front of it, to make National Infrastructure projects get a smoother run through. The DCO is likely to be mid/late 2025.

Kemi has continued to join forces with other Conservative MPs - Bernard Jenkins, James Cartlidge, Alex Burghart, Jerome Mayhew, James Wilde, Priti Patel, Victoria Atkins, Steve Barclay, James McMurdock, to oppose this blight on the countryside. We even seem to have Nigel Farage aligning with us "*Farage called the proposed 114-mile pylon network from Norwich to Tilbury an "absolute disaster and aesthetic blight on landscapes and seascapes "* – what strange bedfellows such controversy makes!

Jointly, Kemi and I, have:

- *Expressed concerns about the 'Pylon Presumption' and sought constructive solutions for transmission infrastructure*
- *The group of MPs have requested that NESO include a national strategic option in the CSNP for an onshore grid that prioritized underground HVDC (U-DC), mirroring the East Anglia approach but on a nationwide scale.*
- *Promoted underground HVDC on the basis that it is cheaper if the target date of 2034 is accepted.*
- *Promoted shorter sections of HVAC underground past areas such as the Waltham Gap and West of Chelmsford where the conversion to AC short runs, is less onerous.*

We accept that the push to net zero is necessary, but we need to take the people with along with us and look at technologies that are acceptable, even if they cost more in the short term!

Lamppost SIDs

I am working with a Cllr colleague to try to push this through as an LHP scheme, so that any Parish Council can request it – by paying a set price to have a number of lampposts assessed for installation of a SID. The mechanics and proof of concept have been worked through by Highways, but we are still waiting for approval by Cabinet Highways Member to open the scheme for applications. Until such approval, I can't say that it is available for use!

City Council

Well done on getting the Broomfield Neighbourhood Plan approved and adopted by City Council.

24/209	To receive a report from City Council for items not on the agenda. See report under 24/208.
24/210	Correspondence 1. Broomfield Allotment Associatiion letter. Following a discussion between members, it was agreed that further research is necessary before any decisions can be made. Cllr. Blake would explore the agreement to take over Broomfciel Place from the City Council. The Clerk would contact the City Council to check whether any money spent on deer fencing could be allocated from the CIL money held. 2. Angel Green banner request. The Council agreed to allow the banner to be erected one week before the event and the organisers needed to liaise with the village attendant re the location. Proposed by Cllr.Bowman and seconded by Cllr. Scott. All in agreement. 3. Love your Parish Day. The Clerk would return the activity sheet with a request to clear the litter from the ditch alongside the cycle path near Chelmaer Valley High School. 4. The Big Chelmsford Spring Clean – this was noted.
24/211	Consultations Greater Essex Devolution – this was noted.
24/212	Reports from Councillors on outside bodies Local Highways Panel – Councillor Steel (County and City Councillor) see report under 24/208. Woollards Charity – Councillor Faulds reported that a new treasurer had been recruited. Broomfield Hospital liaison – Councilor Blake. Awaiting a confirmation of dates for a meeting from the Travel Coordinator. Football Sports Clubs – The Events Manager reported that the car park was full last Saturday due to training on the fields. The football club have been told they must use the football club car park in future. Anyone who has paid to use the MUGA is allowed to use the car park. The situation will need to be monitored. Elderly Care Homes – The Events Manager reported that Madelayne Court has had an outbreak of norovirus. The new care home is busy and now has thirteen new residents. Transport – Councillor Thomson. There are no changes taking place in the near future. First Bus have circulated an email advertising ‘Strut Safe’ which is a phone number to contact for those who feel unsafe when walking home from a bus stop. Available during limited hours. Schools – Councillor Bowman. A visit is still to be arranged to discuss a number of issues. Chelmer Valley High laid on a special lunch for the girls following their ‘Make Space for Girls’ presentation. Police – Councillor Scott. No report. North West Parishes – Councillor Blake. No update.
24/213	To note financial reports for February 2025 To approve the bank statement and reconcillation report for February 2025 To note cashbook, income and expenditure for February 2025 To note salary payments for February 2025 Resolved: The Council approves the financial records for February 2025 noting the current account reconciliation figure of £4204.74. Proposed by Cllr.Faulds and seconded by Cllr. Travis. All in agreement.

24/214	Spencer Clarke will provide a presentation on the ‘Make Space for girls in the park’ project. Spencer Clarke, the Public Protection Manager for Chelmsford City Council reported that he was partnering with the ‘Making Spaces for Girls’ charity and focusing on green spaces and making them safer for girls to use. He is working with year 9 girls from Chelmer Valley High and their findings were presented to the Council recently. This is a funded project with £25,000 available for Angel Meadow. The parish council is asked to explore the report and decide what they want to do. Another project started recently in Central Park. Maldon district has placed an emphasis on a skate park. A celebration event to thank pupils for their involvement can be organised as a launch of the project. Staff from the Parks Department at the City Council will be able to assist with plans.
24/215	To appoint an internal auditor for the accounts for this financial year. Resolved. The Council approves of appointing Heather Heelis as the internal auditor for the current year accounts. Proposed by Cllr. Bowman and seconded by Cllr. Blake.
24/216	The Chairman will provide an update on the PIIP process and in particular will focus upon the prioritisation of projects considered in recent workshops. It was agreed that this item would be deferred to the next meeting when decisions will need to be made. Cllr. Blake confirmed that the Broomfield Neighbourhood Plan was ‘Made’ on 3 rd March and before the Bloor sec.106 was signed off – this will mean significantly more income in the future.
24/217	To approve an amended date for the Annual Parish Meeting. Resolved. The Council approves of moving the date of the Annual Parish Meeting from 7 th May to 28 th May. Proposed by Cllr. Blake and seconded by Cllr. Faulds. All in agreement.
24/218	To consider a request for a grant from the Village Hall for a replacement to their gas boiler. Following a discussion between the members, it was decided that this item would be deferred to a later meeting as more information is needed.
24/219	Clerk’s Update The Clerk will provide the Council with an update on matters considered at previous meetings and any other issues that would be of interest. The Clerk reported that the signposts had now been installed on the site and thanked the Village Attendant, Steve Earley and the Premises Manager, Stuart Jones, for the work to put the sign posts in place. The Clerk further reported that the Council van had been issued a parking ticket whilst emptying the bin on Hospital Approach. The necessary forms have been returned to the City Council to appeal against the ticket.
24/220	To approve the Parish Council’s response to the Chelmsford Local Plan pre-submission document. Resolved. The Parish Council approves of the response to the Chelmsford Local Plan pre-submission document as published. Proposed by Cllr. Thomson and seconded by Cllr. Bowman. All in agreement.
24/221	To note minutes from the following Committees:
24/221.1	Finance and Personnel Committee – draft minutes from 17 th February. These were noted.
24/221.2	Environment Committee – draft minutes from 19 th February. These were noted.

24/221.3	Planning Committee – draft minutes from 5 th February. These were noted.
24/221.4	Communications Committee – No recent meeting
24/221.5	School Lane Working Group – Chairman to provide an update. Cllr. Bleet stated that a meeting would be taking place on 18 th March. The meeting was updated by the Speed Watch co-ordinator, Geoff Garfield, that 2 new volunteers had joined the group. New locations are to be considered. An 8 am start for an operation in School Lane is being planned.
24/221.6	Health and Wellbeing Group – Cllr.Bowman reported that a meeting would be taking place on 4 th April.
24/222	Matters for the next meeting The meeting concluded at 9.32 p.m.