

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting on 2nd April 2026
Meeting of Elmstead Parish Council
Community Centre, School Road, Elmstead Market, CO7 7ET

Present: Cllrs Adam Gladwin (Chairman), Amanda Brennan, Maxine Jeggo, Liz Richfield, Tony Sanders and Martine Ward.

Also Present: One member of public.

District Councillors: Gary Scott and Ann Wiggins.

Absent: Cllrs James Chable and Michael Hare.

26/073 Chairman's welcome and notifications.

Cllr Gladwin welcomed everyone and explained that the clerk was unable to attend.

26/074 Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Cllr Hare. Apologies were also received from County Councillor Guglielmi.

26/075 Declaration of Pecuniary Interests and Personal Interests.

None.

26/076 Approval and signing of the minutes from 5th March 2026.

This was held over until the next meeting.

26/077 To receive an update about the progress of resolutions from the meetings above not covered in this agenda.

No updates.

26/078 Public Speaking

No public speaking.

26/079 County Councillor report.

Cllr Guglielmi was sorry he couldn't attend, as this would have been his last meeting with us as our County Councillor. Cllr Gladwin and Mrs Baxter will have a meeting with him before he leaves to discuss anything relevant to a handover to our new County Councillor.

26/080 District Councillor report.

Cllr Scott read through the report. This can be viewed at <https://www.elmsteadparishcouncil.org.uk/meeting-reports>.

Cllr Scott reported that there has been an increase in planning application across the District, including Elmstead despite the new Local Plan having no allocation for Elmstead. This is because the new Local Plan is coming and they know they won't get approval when it is adopted.

Cllr Scott added that an officer has now visited an empty house that has received complaints and he will investigate a way to get the owner to do some repairs and maintenance. There have been reports of anti-social behaviour at this property. The officer does have the power to condemn properties if they are not fit to live in. Council tax on long term empty properties in Tendring has been doubled. Cllr Scott will also make enquires about another long term empty property in Elmstead.

Cllrs responded to the comment in the report regarding a complaint about a dog bin on Vuaghan Drive causing a smell. The bin was purchased with a specific lid to stop smells escaping and so it should only smell when it is being opened and closed. Councillors have been keeping an eye on it and it hasn't been full. Also the lid can't be left open. We are monitoring the situation.

Cllr Scott has received e-mails from the proposed Bromley Road development applicant. He hasn't responded.

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Regarding Local Government Reorganisation the government has approved 5 Unitary Authorities for Essex. Our UA will have 100 councillors. There will be area committees to deal with local issues such as planning. The new UA will start from 1st April 2028. Parish Council elections will go ahead as usual in 2027.

Cllr Scott met with Mr Davidson (CEO of TDC) who recommended that we go back to the lottery to ask why they turned down us down for a grant towards the new community centre. Mrs Baxter met with our lottery representative. There were more applications than funds available, and Elmstead's deprivation factors were not as high as other areas so they were prioritised. There was nothing wrong with our project or application.

The Mr Davidson also suggested a public works loan, Cllr Gladwin responded that this is a back up plan.

He's also suggested in the past that we contact Sports England.

Cllr Scott left the meeting.

26/081 Planning

i) A report from the planning committee meeting held on 19th March 2026.

There was a very large public turnout. About a dozen people spoke, all objecting. Cllr Gladwin has drafted an objection response to the application for 85 houses off Holly Way. We'll use that as a template for the 30 houses too as it has a lot of the same issues.

Cllr Brennan pointed out that in the past Mr Guiver (TDC) has said that if the Garden Community went ahead there would be no need for any more building in Elmstead.

However TDC is still approving planning. There is no infrastructure.

Cllr Wiggins responded that the government has raised the number of houses that have to be built in Tendring every year. TDC is having to use the tilted balance method to decide on applications. TDC is also waiting for the new Local Plan to be adopted which has caused speculative planning applications.

The Neighbourhood Plan did help with the application in front of Beth Chatto's.

ii) Any other updates?

The developers are seeking feedback on the proposed development on Bromley Road.

Once the planning application has been received we'll need to see what our Neighbourhood Plan policies say.

The Garden Community planning application has been submitted.

26/082 Estates

i) Allotments. Any updates?

Cllr Sanders is meeting an allotments consultant on Monday and Mrs Baxter is sending Cllr Richfield details of fencing contractors. Cllr Richfield has two quotes for fencing and is waiting for a third.

ii) North Green. Any update on a replacement tree. To discuss sponsorship to potentially cover the costs of the new tree/s, the Christmas lights and the Christmas tree.

Cllr Brennan proposed that we write to the landowner and ask him to purchase the tree, and we will install that for him. Seconded: Cllr Gladwin, all in favour.

iii) Parking at the bottom of Church Road, near the junction.

Cllr Gladwin is discussing the situation with our potential County Councillors. The concern is that if we put red lines we'll be moving the problem further up.

Cllr Richfield said that vehicles are still parking outside Budgens. We'll raise this when we meet with Cllr Guglielmi to ask for the red lines to be enforced. People are now using the area as a left

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turn lane. The junction of Holly Way and Church Road is really bad with vehicles parking on the junction.

It was raised that it's similar around the Primary School during school run times.

26/083 Events

i) Wednesday hub.

Cllr Richfield reported that it's going well, they have had a nice easter event.

ii) Opening of crossing.

Cllr Jeggo said the path is now reopened. No discussions have been had so far. There needs to be an event meeting. The opening may be before the next council meeting.

iii) Any other event updates?

None.

26/084 Finance.

i) To look through the finance report and approve payments. See appendix 1.

The finance report was approved. Proposed: Cllr Sanders, Seconded: Cllr Richfield, all in favour.

ii) An update on banking (accounts and deposits).

The clerk can share this once the summary is completed.

iii) Income generation – to consider a working party to bring suggestions back to the council.

Cllr Brennan spoke to the clerk about this.

It was resolved to form a working party. Proposed: Cllr Brennan, Seconded: Cllr Ward, all in favour.

Cllrs Brennan, Ward and Gladwin will be members of the working party.

26/085 Playing Field

Any updates?

We had an update meeting with Mr Smith after the last PC meeting. Market Field School still wants the field permanently and the council wishes to keep use of it for the benefit of residents. We have asked to meet the decision makers at Essex County Council to put our case forward. The trust is looking into the purchase of the current community site.

Cllr Sanders spoke to an estate agent regarding the value of the site with and without planning permission. His general feeling was that it would probably break even between those two options.

26/086 Council vacancies and community engagement

i) To consider communications with residents to improve engagement. To consider a monthly social media/website update from the meetings. To consider a periodic newsletter.

Residents aren't as aware about what is going on as they were when Upmarket was running. We could put out an article on social media and our website in a similar way as we did in Upmarket. For residents not using social media they can request receipt by e-mail. We don't have the network to deliver to houses. It was thought we need to put headlines on social media rather than the whole meeting and then signpost to the website. Cllr Gladwin is thinking of doing social media updates of what we've done. It might also help to clarify what the Parish Council is responsible for as opposed to the District Council, for example in planning.

For a newsletter we could do one quarterly or twice yearly. However it is difficult to find the time.

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We'll try for a newsletter over summer. We can put copies in Budgens and other businesses. Also have drop boxes. We could try and deliver but so many people put it in the bin it would be a waste of money. People can access it if they are interested.

Could each councillor do an article for the newsletter to spread the load? To add to the May agenda.

ii) How to fill council vacancies.

We do have two people interested, but one is unable to join due to their citizenship. They would like to still get involved though.

26/087 New Community Centre and Open Space land.

i) An update from the committee meeting held on 11th March.

Cllr Gladwin reported that the meeting was not very productive. No resolutions were made and the meeting closed quickly. It was suggested that as it's an advisory committee it would be better to hold meetings when advice is needed. It was felt that it's wrong for staff members to be subject to abuse at meetings.

ii) A general update on the phasing of works.

Cllrs Gladwin and Sanders met with Lexden with DCB and our QS. It was a productive meeting and a Phase 1 plan was agreed for about £1million. Phase 2 will start whilst Phase 1 is ongoing and will include the car park. Budget wise it's very close. The changing rooms are still an issue as we have £200k funding for them. It's suggested that we start with a minimal fit out. The changing rooms are about 15% of the floor area so could be argued 15% of the cost. We don't know if we will have a football pitch in future.

The QS is writing a draft letter of intent which we send to Lexden to confirm we want them to build the new community centre. There is a 6 week lead in from when they get the letter.

They suggested that instead of hiring the fencing for the site we buy it, so that if there are periods between phases we are

They also suggested getting wireless cameras whilst they are building.

There is a suggestion that we commit to £300k now as part of the letter of intent, although we don't have the final costs.

It was proposed that we appoint Lexden as the principal contractor.

A concern was raised that until we have the BNG approved we don't know the timing, or what might happen to costs if that takes a

Lexden suggested a mid-April meeting. Also to have an extraordinary meeting.

iii) Biodiversity net gain planning condition.

To be followed up with Mrs Baxter as soon as possible.

iv) Funding. Ideas for additional fundraising.

Potentially the Tarmac Community fund. They offer up to £100k. SRC may also have a fund. We need to figure out what we need after Phase 1.

v) Any other updates.

There was a discussion at the last committee meeting about the funding they have raised towards the new community centre. The Community Centre were reluctant to share the total amount that has been raised. They said that they will be using it for soft furnishings.

We need to approach the trustees officially. It was proposed that we write a letter to the trustees to ask them to confirm how much money they have, what those funds are to be spent on and explain our financial situation. Proposed: Cllr Gladwin, Seconded Cllr Ward, all in favour.

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vi) *To discuss timing for meetings for upcoming decisions.*

It has been suggested that we commit to £300k now to get the ball rolling but we don't have the updated breakdown yet. It's for Lexden to go and buy building materials.

Cllr Richfield asked about due diligence on Lexden. We received their account information as part of their tender, they have credibility in that they have done work for other Local Authorities, their figures are what you would expect for a company of their size, our QS also checked them out. They are more accountable as they are located in the village.

It was proposed that we appoint Lexden as our principal contractor, subject to getting the breakdown of their costs. Cllr Sanders added that we also need to consider the BNG. If we don't get it for a long time then a builder will not be able to do anything. We need to get some comfort from TDC regarding how long that will take.

Lexden has suggested mid-April for a pre kick off meeting, so we need to have an extra ordinary meeting before then to review the BNG and costings.

It was resolved that Lexden Contracts Limited will be the principal contractor. Proposed: Cllr Gladwin, Seconded: Cllr Sanders, all in favour.

26/088 Exclusion of press and public for private and confidential matters under Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s.1(2) as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted for items 26/089 and 26/090.

The above was resolved. Proposed Cllr Gladwin, Seconded: Cllr Sanders, all in favour.

The members of public left the meeting.

26/089 New Community Centre.

To hear an update on Phase 1 costs and work that can be included. To discuss the contract required.

Discussed above.

26/090 Staff salaries and contracts

i) *To consider the recommendation of the Personnel Committees following on from the staff appraisals with respect to the handyman's salary for the year 2026/27.*

Cllr Brennan did an appraisal with Mr Dingwall. We spoke about safety. He still uses the lone worker alarm. He is doing a great job. The recommendation from the committee is that he moves one point up the pay scale. We don't have the final agreed figures for the 2026/27 pay scales. The recommendation was resolved. Proposed: Cllr Brennan, Seconded: Cllr Gladwin, all in favour.

ii) *To consider the recommendation of the Personnel Committees following on from the staff appraisals with respect to the clerk's salary for the year 2026/27.*

It was recommended that the clerk also moves one point up the scale. There also need to be a discussion about her hours.

The clerk and Cllr Brennan spent hours clearing out the office. They will go through everything and get rid of as much as possible.

The recommendation was resolved. Proposed: Cllr Brennan, Seconded: Cllr Gladwin, all in favour.

We can also look at getting another member of staff at a lower level in future.

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Cllr Brennan spoke about the last new community centre meeting and the impact on the clerk. Any action would be best to come from the personnel committee. Committee members are obliged to follow the code of conduct. The clerk is no longer expected to attend the meetings. There is still a duty of care to the other members of the committee. Councillors could get in touch with EALC for advice.

26/091 Items for the next agenda or for information only.
None.

26/092 Date of next meeting
Due to the community centre being used as a polling station on 7th May an alternative date will need to be agreed for the May meeting.
It was agreed to hold the meeting on Thursday 14th May.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.
There being no further business councillors were thanked for their attendance.
Minutes written by Mrs. A Baxter.