Noak Bridge Parish Council

Meeting of: Noak Bridge Parish Council

Date: Wednesday 21st October 2026

Time: 7.00pm

Place: Noak Bridge Village Hall, Coppice Lane, Noak Bridge

Members are hereby summoned to attend the above meeting to transact the following business. Members are respectfully reminded that each item on the Agenda should be carefully examined. If you have any interest, it must be duly declared.

Councillors to be present: M. Cottrell (Chairman), P. Daft (Vice-Chairman) C. Bateman, J. Dowton, L. Gilliam, P. Hawkins and T. Sargent

L Townend
Parish Clerk

14th October 2026

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive, consider and approve any apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are reminded that they are required to disclose the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Registerable Interests and Non-Registerable Interests relating to items of business on the agenda having regard to paragraph 9 and Appendix B of the Code of Conduct for Members. Members are reminded that they are also required to disclose any such interests as soon as they become aware should the need arise throughout the meeting.

3. Minutes

To receive, approve and sign the Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on the 16th September 2026, Minutes 98/2026 to 110/2026 inclusive (attached).

4. Public Participation Session

With respect to items on the Agenda and other matters of mutual interest.

5. Borough and County Councillor Reports

To receive updates from Borough and County Councillors if in attendance.

6. Banking and Finance

6.1 Accounts for Payment

To agree the accounts for payment for the period 1st September to the 31st October 2026. Payment schedule attached.

6.2 Monthly Bank Reconciliation

To receive and note the bank reconciliation to the 30th September 2026. Attached.

6.3 Budget Comparison

To receive and note the budget comparison to the 30th September 2026. Attached.

6.4 Budget Considerations 2026/27

To discuss and suggest expenditure to be included in the 2026/27 budget.

7. Policies and Procedures

7.1 Biodiversity Policy

To review and adopt a draft Biodiversity Policy. Report attached.

7.2 Complaints Procedure

To review and re-adopt an amended Complaints Procedure. Report attached.

8. Planning

8.1 To consider planning applications detailed below and any planning applications published by Basildon Borough Council between the circulation of this agenda and the meeting.

8.1.1 26/01087/FULL - Raise ridge height, replacement roof to form second storey. Two storey front extension and first floor rear

extension at Braeside 14 Wash Road Laindon, SS15 4ER. View planning application.

9. Environment

9.1 Handyman Taks

To consider areas within the village which require improvement and to approve any quotes obtained for areas requiring improvement in the village.

10. Christmas

10.1 Lighting Electrical Supply

To agree an electricity supplier for the Christmas lights. Report attached.

10.2 Christmas Lights Switch-on

To discuss the current plans for the Christmas lights switch on scheduled to take place on Friday the 11 December 2026

11 Correspondence

To note correspondence received.

12 Items to be Included on the Next Agenda

13 Date of Next Meeting

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on the 18th November 2026

14 Chairman to Close the Meeting

Noak Bridge Parish Council

Minutes

Held at Noak Bridge Village Hall, Coppice Lane, Noak Bridge SS15 4JS on Wednesday 16 September 2026 at 7:00pm

Present

Chairman:	Cllr M Cottrell
Councillors:	Cllr C Bateman, Cllr P Daft, Cllr P Hawkins and Cllr T Sargent
In attendance:	Annie Carol, Basildon Borough Council, Cllr Z Hockton, Essex County Council, Lynda Townend (Clerk) and 2 members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

98/2026 Apologies for Absence
Apologies were received from Cllrs J Dowton and L Gilliam.

Cllr T Sargent advised that she would arrive late due to a prior engagement.

It was noted that Borough Cllr Alex Meyers had asked Annie Carol to attend the meeting and provide an update on Borough matters in his absence.

99/2026 Declarations of Interest
To receive any Declarations or Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Pecuniary Interests or Non-pecuniary Interests by Members relating to any agenda items.

No declarations were received.

100/2026 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 August 2026 (Minutes 84/2026 to 97/2026 inclusive) were considered.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 August 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

101/2026 Public Participation Session

A member of the public raised a query regarding the removal of the sheltered housing designation at Kenilworth Lane and asked whether clarification could be provided regarding the type of housing proposed as part of the Westgate Park development.

Annie Carol advised that she would pass the query to Borough Cllr Alex Meyers for a response.

The Chairman thanked the member of the public for their input.

102/2026 Borough and County Councillor Reports

Annie Carol provided an update on Borough matters in the absence of Borough Cllr Alex Meyers. She advised that a new dog waste bin had been installed on Oakley Path in addition to the existing bin to provide additional capacity.

It was also noted that the deadline for responses to Basildon Borough Council's Regulation 19 Consultation on the emerging Local Plan was 22 September 2026.

103/2026 Banking and Finance

103/2026/01 Accounts for Payment

The Council approved the following accounts for payment:

SEPTEMBER	Reference	Description	Total	VAT	Net
03/09/2026	At Last Events	50% deposit for Christmas lights	**£4,170.00**	£695.00	£3,475.00
05/09/2026	ICO	Annual registration	**£52.00**	£0.00	£52.00
15/09/2026	P Thomas Landscapes	Agreed works	**£1,182.00**	£197.00	£985.00
16/09/2026	NALC	Community Planning webinar	**£42.00**	£7.00	£35.00
16/09/2026	NBCA	Hall hire 16 Sept 2026 - inv 60	**£50.00**	£0.00	£50.00
25/09/2026	Lynda Townend	*September salary	**£844.42**	£0.00	£844.42
25/09/2026	Lynda Townend	*September expenses	**£54.46**	£0.00	£54.46
25/09/2026	Lynda Townend	*September expenses	**£104.99**	£0.00	£104.99
25/09/2026	Nest Pensions	*September submission	**£84.79**	£0.00	£84.79
25/09/2026	HMRC	*September costs	**£242.00**	£0.00	£242.00
30/09/2026	Unity Trust Bank	August service charge	**£7.00**	£0.00	£7.00
TOTAL			**£6,833.66**	**£899.00**	**£5,934.66**

Resolved: That the above payments be approved for payment noting that payments marked with an asterisk are estimated costs which will be confirmed at the next meeting.

103/2026/02 Monthly Bank Reconciliation

The Council **received and noted** the bank reconciliation to the 31 August 2026.

103/2026/03 Budget Comparison

The Council **received and noted** the budget comparison to 31 August 2026, noting that the Council had spent £11,376.58, representing 8% of the budget and 28% of the precept.

103/2026/04 Conclusion of Audit

The Council received a copy of the External Audit's Report and Certificate for 2025/26, noting the comment that the response to Section 2, Box 11 (Trust transactions), was incorrect. This was rectified and a response was submitted to the External Auditor.

Resolved: That the Council received and noted Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate for 2025/26.

103/2026/05 2026 NJC Pay Award – Clerk's Salary Adjustment

The Council noted the 2026 National Joint Council (NJC) pay award of 3.30% and the Clerk's contractual progression from SCP 21 to SCP 22 with effect from 1 April 2026.

Resolved: That the Council authorise the Clerk's progression to SCP 22 with effect from 1 April 2026 and approve payment of the resulting arrears of £270.48 gross for the period 1 April to 30 September 2026.

The Chairman advised the Council that the Clerk's annual appraisal is due and that the Personnel Committee will convene to undertake the appraisal.

104/2026 Policies and Procedures

104/2026/01 Document Retention and Disposal Policy

The Council reviewed the existing Document Retention and Disposal Policy and agreed to re-adopt the policy without amendment.

Resolved: That the Council agreed to re-adopt the Document Retention and Disposal Policy without amendment.

105/2026 Planning

105/2026/01 Planning Applications

There were no planning applications for the Council to consider.

105/2026/02 Planning Decisions

The Council noted the following planning decisions made by Basildon Borough Council:

> **105/2026/02/01 - 26/00669/FUL -** Two-storey extension and replacement of front balustrade at Norfolk House, Wash Road, Laindon, Essex, SS15 4AZ – **Granted**

105/2026/03 Basildon Borough Local Plan – Regulation 19 Consultation

The Council discussed submitting a response to Basildon Borough Council's Regulation 19 Consultation on the developing Local Plan.

Resolved: That the Council submit a written response to the Basildon Borough Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation.

106/2026 Environment

106/2026/01 Handyman Tasks

The Council received and reviewed quotations provided by P Thomas Landscapes to complete the following improvement works:

Area of Concern	Works Required	Price Quoted (net)	Comments
Fencing at Tudor bus stop	Repair fencing/posts – dig out and replace 15 posts and reinstall metal handrail	£1,495	Requires approval from Basildon Council
Coppice Lane pond bench	Option 1 Repair timbers and repaint	£155	
Coppice Lane pond bench	Option 2 Repair timbers	£110	
Coppice Lane bridge	Replacement bridge	£4,260	Further quotations to be sought by Basildon Borough Council

The Council discussed the proposed works, including the need to obtain comparison quotes for the replacement bridge and potential contributions towards the cost from a local business and the Noak Bridge Community Association. It was noted that the bridge works would be progressed via Basildon Borough Council.

Resolved: That the Council approve expenditure of £1,650 excluding VAT to P Thomas Landscapes for the fencing works at the Tudor bus stop and Option 1 for the Coppice Lane pond bench.

Resolved: That the Council agree in principle to fund the replacement of the Coppice Lane Bridge up to a maximum cost of £4,260 excluding VAT, subject to further quotations being obtained and contributions being sought from a local business and the Noak Bridge Community Association.

Resolved: That the Clerk inform Basildon Borough Council of the agreed works and seek its approval, as landowner/asset owner, before the works proceed.

106/2026/02 Durban Lane Pond

The Council discussed the quote provided by Basildon Borough Council to cut back the reeds and clear areas around the perimeter of the pond.

Resolved: That the Council approve the quotation of £1,470 to undertake improvements to the Durban Lane pond.

The Council discussed the future maintenance of the pond and whether provision could be made within future budgets.

County Cllr Hockton offered to fund the cost of the Durban Lane pond maintenance from her locality fund. The Council welcomed the offer.

Resolved: That the Clerk formally request funding from County Cllr Hockton's locality fund to cover the cost of the improvement works required at Durban Lane pond**.**

Cllr P Daft left the meeting at 20:10 and returned at 20:12.

106/2026/03 Village Green Status

Resolved: That the Council agree in principle to support the Friends of Noak Bridge application to obtain Village Green Status for the village green.

County Councillor Update

Cllr Hockton provided an update on changes to the Highways reporting system, advising that Category 3 issues reported through the system will be completed within 90 days. She commented that the current reporting system is outdated and requires significant improvement.

Cllr Hockton left the meeting at 20:20.

106/2026/04 Village Green Improvement Project

Cllr Hawkins explained the strategy document he had circulated, which sets out a proposed approach for managing future projects relating to the Village Green.

Resolved: That the Council hold a separate Zoom meeting to review the strategy document and that the matter be added to a future meeting agenda.

It was noted that quotations for the proposed Village Green improvement works are still awaited from Mark Aldridge at Basildon Borough Council.

106/2026/05 Woodland Walk Brass Rubbing Post

Members reviewed a report and quotation for the installation of six brass rubbing posts on the Village Green.

Resolved: That the Council request that the brass rubbing post project be included within the proposed Village Green improvement project.

Resolved: That the Clerk forward the project information to Mark Aldridge at Basildon Borough Council and request that the project be considered for funding from the available S106 allocation.

Borough Councillor Update

Cllr Sargent provided a brief update in her capacity as a Basildon Borough Councillor. She advised that Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is currently under review by the Government and highlighted the importance of residents responding to Basildon Borough Council's Regulation 19 Consultation on the emerging Local Plan.

107/2026 Correspondence

The Clerk advised that an email had been received from a resident regarding dog fouling outside their property, which Cllr Sargent had dealt with in her capacity as a Borough Councillor.

The Council discussed the proposed letter to Basildon Borough Council's Planning Department regarding the Westgate development.

Resolved: That the Clerk send the letter to Basildon Borough Council's Planning Department seeking clarification regarding the Westgate development.

108/2026 Items to be Included on the Next Agenda

The following items were identified for inclusion on the agenda of the next meeting:

- Budget considerations in preparation for the 2027/28 budget and precept.
- Village Green Improvement Strategy.
- Christmas Lights Switch-On, including the Salvation Army band, sleigh date and school choir.

109/2026 Date of Next Meeting – 21 October 2026.

110/2026 Chairman to Close the Meeting

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20:54.

Signed:_____

Date:_____
Chairman

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Accounts for Payment September 2026

SEPTEMBER	Ref	Desc 2	Minute	Type	Total	VAT	Net
03/09/2026	At Last Events	50% deposit for Christmas lights	92/2026	Community lights project	**£4,170.00**	£695.00	£3,475.00
05/09/2026	ICO	Annual registration fee	56/2026	Subscriptions	**£52.00**	£0.00	£52.00
15/09/2026	P Thomas Landscapes	Agreed works	93/2026/01	Environmental maintenance	**£1,182.00**	197.00	£985.00
16/09/2026	NALC	Community Planning webinar	08/2026/06	Councillor training	**£42.00**	7.00	35.00
16/09/2026	NBCA	Hall hire 16 Sept 2026 - inv 60		Hall hire	**£50.00**	£0.00	£50.00
25/09/2026	Lynda Townend	September salary	155/2024	Salaries	**£876.73**	£0.00	£876.73
25/09/2026	Lynda Townend	September expenses	155/2024	Staff home allowance travel	**£54.64**	£0.00	£54.64
25/09/2026	Lynda Townend	September expenses	155/2024	Office equipment & stationary	**£161.69**	£0.00	£161.69
25/09/2026	Nest Pensions	September submission	21/2025/05	Pension	**£81.64**	£0.00	£81.64
TBC	HMRC	September costs	155/2024	Tax & NI	**£242.86**	£0.00	£242.86
30/09/2026	Unity Trust Bank	August service charge	121/2025	Bank charges	**£7.00**	£0.00	£7.00
SEP TOTAL				**TOTAL**	**£6,920.56**	**£899.00**	**£6,021.56**

Return to agenda

Accounts for Payment October 2026

OCTOBER	Ref	Desc 2	Minute	Type	Total	VAT	Net
22/10/2026	NBCA	Hall hire 16 Sept 2026 - inv			**£50.00**	£0.00	£50.00
25/10/2026	Lynda Townend	October salary	155/2024	Salaries	**£715.20**	£0.00	£715.20
25/10/2026	Lynda Townend	October expenses	155/2024	Staff home allowance travel	**£33.57**	£0.00	£33.57
25/10/2026	Nest Pensions	October submission	21/2025/05	Pension	**£65.87**	£0.00	£65.87
25/10/2026	HMRC	October costs	155/2024	Tax & NI	**£188.00**	£0.00	£188.00
31/10/2026	Unity Trust Bank	September service charge		Bank charges	**£7.00**	£0.00	£7.00
OCT TOTAL				**TOTAL**	**£1,059.64**	**£0.00**	**£1,059.64**

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Bank Reconciliation

BANK RECONCILIATION - Financial year ending 31.03.2027						
Bank Balance as at	30.04.2026	31.05.2026	30.06.2026	31.07.2026	31.08.2026	30.09.2026
Metro Bank	£ 72,228.35	£ 72,274.36	£ 40,801.97	£ 40,827.96	£ 40,853.97	£ 40,879.15
Santander Business Saving Account	£ 18,288.26	£ 18,288.26	£ 18,288.26	£ 18,288.26	£ 18,288.26	£ 18,288.26
Unity Trust Current Account	£ 39,178.16	£ 36,058.47	£ 35,053.36	£ 30,724.53	£ 28,689.14	£ 22,011.44
Unity Trust Fixed Term Account/Savings	£ 85,000.00	£ 85,000.00		£120,000.00	£120,000.00	£120,000.00
Unity Trust Savings Account	£ -	£ -	£ 88,574.82	£ 89.82	£ 89.82	£ 164.57
Total:	**£ 214,694.77**	**£ 211,621.09**	**£ 182,718.41**	**£ 209,930.57**	**£ 207,921.19**	**£ 201,343.42**
Less Unpresented cheques						
August HMRC payment					£ 250.81	£ 493.67
Total of unpresented /Rec. Receipts	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 250.81	£ 493.67
Net Bank Balances as at	**£ 214,694.77**	**£ 211,621.09**	**£ 182,718.41**	**£ 209,930.57**	**£207,670.38**	**£ 200,849.75**
CASH BOOK						
Balance as at 01.04.26	£ 191,904.25	£ 191,904.25	£ 191,904.25	£ 191,904.25	£ 191,904.25	£ 191,904.25
Plus Receipts Metro account	£ 44.50	£ 90.51	£ 133.12	£ 159.11	£ 185.12	£ 210.30
Plus Receipts Bus. Saving account	£ 287.10	£ 287.10	£ 287.10	£ 287.10	£ 287.10	£ 361.85
Plus Receipts Unity Trust Bank	£ 24,709.08	£ 24,709.08	£ 24,709.08	£ 24,709.08	£ 24,709.08	£ 24,709.08
Plus Receipts Unity Trust Saving account	£ -	£ -	£ 3,574.82	£ 3,574.82	£ 3,574.82	£ 3,574.82
Plus Receipts Unity Fixed Term Account	£ -		£ -			
Total	**£ 216,944.93**	**£ 216,990.94**	**£ 220,608.37**	**£ 220,634.36**	**£ 220,660.37**	**£ 220,760.30**
Less Payments	£ 2,250.16	£ 5,369.85	£ 6,374.96	£ 10,703.79	£ 12,989.99	£ 19,910.55
Grand Total	**£ 214,694.77**	**£ 211,621.09**	**£ 214,233.41**	**£ 209,930.57**	**£207,670.38**	**£ 200,849.75**
Difference	**£ 0.00**	**£ -**	**-£ 31,515.00**	**£ 0.00**	**£ -**	**£ -**

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NOAK BRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

Bank Reconciliation

Month		30 September 2026
Balance per bank statements		
Metro Bank Account	(Cashbook 1)	£40,879.15
Santander Business Savings	(Cashbook 2)	£18,288.26
Unity Current Account	(Cashbook 3)	£22,011.44
Unity Trust Bank Savings Account	(Cashbook 4)	£164.57
Unity Trust Bank 12 Month Deposit Account	(Cashbook 5)	£120,000.00
	TOTAL IN BANK	**£201,343.42**

Monthly activity	**Metro Bank Account**
Opening Balance brought forward Aug 2026	£40,853.97
Less Payments for September	£0.00
Plus Receipts for September	£25.18
Un-presented/unreconciled cheques	£0.00
	£40,879.15
	Santander Business Savings Account (Cashbook 2)
Opening Balance brought forward Aug 2026	£18,288.26
Less Payments for September	£0.00
Plus Receipts for September	£0.00
	£18,288.26
	Unity Trust Current Account
Opening Balance brought forward Aug 2026	£28,689.14
Less Payments for September	£6,677.70
Plus Receipts for September	£0.00
	£22,011.44
	Unity Trust Savings Account

Opening Balance brought forward Aug 2026		£89.82
Less Payments for September		£0.00
Plus Receipts for September		£74.75
		£164.57
	Unity Trust Fixed Rate Deposit Account	
Opening Balance brought forward Aug 2026		£120,000.00
Less Payments for September		£0.00
Plus Receipts for September		£0.00
		£120,000.00
	CLOSING BALANCE	**£201,343.42**
	Difference	£0.00

Member/Person	Signature	Date
Clerk / RFO		
Cllr Hawkins		

Return to agenda

Budget Report

NOAK BRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL	MONTHLY BUDGET REPORT
Month	September 2026

INCOME	Budget	Actual (to date)	Variance (+/-)	Income in month
Precept	£41,235.00	£20,642.74	-£20,592.26	£0.00
LCTS Grant	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
CIF Grant	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Interest	£0.00	£4,120.98	£46.01	£99.93
Event Income	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Miscellaneous	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
- VAT reclaim 08/04/2024	£3,511.00	£4,066.34	£555.34	£0.00
INCOME TOTALS	**£44,746.00**	**£28,830.06**	-£15,915.94	£99.93

EXPENDITURE	Budget	Total spent to 30/09/26	Variance (+/-)	Percentage spent	Expenditure in month
Staff Costs					
Salaries	£10,215.00	£4,280.13	£5,934.87	42%	£876.73
Tax & Employer NI	£1,970.00	£1,502.49	£467.51	76%	£242.86
Pension	£500.00	£395.22	£104.78	79%	£81.64
Payroll	£300.00	£120.00	£180.00	40%	£0.00
Home allowance, Travel & Costs	£500.00	£241.69	£258.31	48%	£54.64
Training inc. travel	£2,000.00	£0.00	£2,000.00	0%	£0.00
Office equip & stationery	£1,000.00	£207.15	£792.85	21%	£36.70
General Costs					
Computer & Other Digital Equipment	£500.00	£124.99	£375.01	25%	£124.99
Fixed asset maintenance	£2,000.00	£250.99	£1,749.01	13%	£0.00
Telephone & Internet	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	#DIV/0!	£0.00
Elections/By-election	£2,500.00	£0.00	£2,500.00	0%	£0.00
Professional fees	£2,000.00	£795.93	£1,204.07	40%	£0.00
Hall Hire	£600.00	£200.00	£400.00	33%	£50.00
Insurance	£1,000.00	£754.26	£245.74	75%	£0.00
Subscriptions	£1,219.00	£52.00	£1,167.00	4%	£52.00
Councillor Training	£1,500.00	£35.00	£1,465.00	2%	£35.00
Audit Fees	£515.00	£565.50	-£50.50	110%	£0.00
Bank Charges	£204.00	£42.00	£162.00	21%	£7.00
Publications/newsletters	£1,500.00	£0.00	£1,500.00	0%	£0.00
CCTV & Security	£1,500.00	£0.00	£1,500.00	0%	£0.00
VAT		£195.00	-£195.00	#DIV/0!	£0.00

Community Support					
Community Events Support	£1,500.00	£306.33	£1,193.67	20%	£0.00
Kings Meni Bridge	£500.00	£0.00	£500.00	0%	£0.00
Kings Coronation	£500.00	£0.00	£500.00	0%	£0.00
Community Grants Awards (small)	£2,000.00	£0.00	£2,000.00	0%	£0.00
Community Lights Project	£4,700.00	£3,475.00	£1,225.00	74%	£3,475.00
Support Grants	£100.00	£0.00	£100.00	0%	£0.00
Projects					
Parish Plan	£5,000.00	£0.00	£5,000.00	0%	£0.00
D Day (from reserves) VE Day	£5,000.00	£0.00	£5,000.00	0%	£0.00
Contingency earmarked (from reserves)	£10,000.00	£0.00	£10,000.00	0%	£0.00
Community Projects earmarked (from reserves)	£30,000.00	£1,569.46	£28,430.54	5%	£0.00
Community Projects Play Area earmarked (from reserves)	£25,000.00	£0.00	£25,000.00	0%	£0.00
Environmental Maintenance (From Reserves)	£10,000.00	£2,285.00	£7,715.00	23%	£985.00
Neighbourhood Plan (funded from reserves)	£10,000.00	£0.00	£10,000.00	0%	£0.00
Noak Bridge Pond	£5,000.00				
Nature Reserve/Gates	£5,000.00				
Duck Trail	£3,000.00				
Gym equipment	£10,000.00				
Phone Kiosk/Little Libraries	£6,000.00				
EXPENDITURE TOTALS	**£135,823.00**	**£17,398.14**	£118,424.86	**13%**	**£6,021.56**
PRECEPT TOTALS	**£41,276.54**	**£17,398.14**		**42%**	

AGENDA REPORT ITEM 7.1

Biodiversity Policy

Background

Section 40 of the **Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act)**, as strengthened by the **Environment Act 2021**, places a statutory biodiversity duty on public authorities operating in England, including parish councils.

The strengthened duty requires public authorities to:

- consider what action they can properly take to conserve and enhance biodiversity;
- agree policies and specific objectives based on that consideration; and
- take action to deliver those policies and objectives.

Government guidance published in May 2023 advised that public authorities should complete their first consideration of what action they could take for biodiversity by **1 January 2024** and agree their policies and objectives as soon as possible afterwards. The actions should then be reconsidered at least every five years, although more frequent review is encouraged.

Parish councils are not required to publish the formal biodiversity duty report required of local authorities and local planning authorities, but they remain subject to the statutory biodiversity duty and should be able to demonstrate how they have considered and acted upon it.

A draft Biodiversity Policy and Action Plan was presented to the Parish Council for consideration on **5th August 2026** under Minute Reference **90/2026/01**.

Following discussion, the Council resolved:

"That the draft Biodiversity Policy be reviewed against the Neighbourhood Plan and brought back to a future meeting for further consideration."

The policy has therefore been reviewed against the Made Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Plan, in particular its policies relating to biodiversity, landscape character, the Noak Bridge Nature Reserve and green and blue infrastructure.

Summary

Following the meeting held on the 5th August 2026, the draft Biodiversity Policy and Action Plan

have been reviewed against the Made Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Plan and revised to better reflect the role and responsibilities of Noak Bridge Parish Council.

The revised documents:

- specifically recognise the Made Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Plan as the local planning framework for biodiversity and refer to the relevant policies, including NB5 – Landscape Character, NB6 – Biodiversity, NB7 – Noak Bridge Nature Reserve and NB8 – Green and Blue Infrastructure, Landscaping and Planting;

- recognise that the Parish Council does not own or directly manage land or buildings and therefore its biodiversity actions should be proportionate to its functions and responsibilities;

- clarify that, when considering planning consultations, the Council will have regard to the relevant biodiversity policies and objectives contained within the Neighbourhood Plan;

- make clear that the Parish Council will not undertake specialist ecological assessments itself and may seek or refer to appropriate professional or local expert advice where required; and

- simplify the Action Plan so that it focuses on practical actions within the Council's remit, including planning, community awareness, partnership working and support for appropriate local biodiversity initiatives.

The revised approach is intended to enable the Council to meet its statutory biodiversity duty while recognising the limited functions and resources of a parish council and avoiding duplication of the responsibilities of the Local Planning Authority, landowners and suitably qualified ecological professionals.

Recommendation

Members are recommended to:

1. Adopt the revised Biodiversity Policy and accompanying Biodiversity Action Plan; and

2. Review the Policy and Action Plan annually to ensure they remain appropriate to the Council's functions and reflect any relevant changes to legislation, planning policy or the Made Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Plan.

Noak Bridge Parish Council

Biodiversity Policy

Version	Date Adopted	Minute Reference	Review Date
1			

1. Background

1.1 Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, as strengthened by the Environment Act 2021, places a duty on public authorities in England, including parish councils, to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing biodiversity when exercising their functions.

1.2 Conserving biodiversity includes protecting, restoring and enhancing species, habitats and ecological networks.

1.3 Noak Bridge Parish Council recognises the importance of biodiversity to the character, environment and quality of life of the parish.

1.4 The Council's Made Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Plan 2023–2042 provides an established local planning framework for protecting and enhancing biodiversity within the Parish. The Plan includes Environment and Green Space Objective EGS6, which seeks to conserve and enhance biodiversity, wildlife habitats and ecological corridors and to ensure that development results in biodiversity net gain.

1.5 The Neighbourhood Plan contains specific policies relating to biodiversity and the natural environment, including:

NB5 – Landscape Character

NB6 – Biodiversity

NB7 – Noak Bridge Nature Reserve

NB8 – Green and Blue Infrastructure, Landscaping and Planting

NB9 – Local Green Spaces

NB11 – Flooding and Drainage

NB12 – Sustainable Development

1.6 The Parish Council does not own or directly manage land or buildings. Consequently, its contribution to biodiversity will principally be through its statutory functions, planning consultation role, community leadership, partnership working, communication and support for appropriate local initiatives.

2. Aim

2.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure that Noak Bridge Parish Council has regard to biodiversity when exercising its functions and supports the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity within the Parish.

2.2 The Council will seek to ensure that its actions are proportionate to its responsibilities and resources and do not duplicate the statutory responsibilities of Basildon Borough Council, Essex County Council or other organisations.

3. Objectives

The Council will seek to:

- conserve and enhance biodiversity within the Parish;
- protect and enhance wildlife habitats, ecological corridors, trees, hedgerows, watercourses and other features of biodiversity value;
- support the objectives and policies of the Made Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Plan;

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- encourage biodiversity enhancements associated with appropriate development;
- raise awareness of biodiversity within the local community;
- support partnership working with landowners, local authorities, community organisations, environmental organisations and other relevant bodies; and
- encourage appropriate community-led biodiversity initiatives.

4. Planning

4.1 When considering planning consultations, the Council will have regard to the biodiversity policies and objectives contained within the Made Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Plan, particularly Policies NB5, NB6, NB7 and NB8.

4.2 Where appropriate, the Council will consider whether a planning proposal appears to be consistent with the relevant policies of the Neighbourhood Plan relating to biodiversity, wildlife habitats, ecological corridors, green and blue infrastructure, landscaping, trees, hedgerows and the Noak Bridge Nature Reserve.

4.3 The Council will support, where appropriate, development proposals that protect and enhance biodiversity and provide biodiversity net gain in accordance with the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan and relevant national and local planning policy.

4.4 The Council will not undertake ecological surveys, ecological assessments or other specialist technical assessments itself.

4.5 Where a planning matter raises specialist biodiversity or ecological issues that cannot reasonably be assessed by the Council from the information provided with the planning application and the Neighbourhood Plan, the Council may seek or refer to appropriate advice from Basildon Borough Council, relevant statutory bodies, suitably qualified ecological professionals or recognised local environmental organisations.

4.6 The Council's planning consultation responses will remain proportionate to the information available to it and will focus on whether proposals appear to accord with the adopted development plan and the interests of the local community.

5. Nature Reserve and Green and Blue Infrastructure

5.1 The Council recognises the importance of the Noak Bridge Nature Reserve, the Village Green, trees, woodland, hedgerows, ponds, watercourses and other green and blue infrastructure to the biodiversity and character of the Parish.

5.2 The Council will support the objectives of the Made Neighbourhood Plan in relation to the protection and enhancement of the Noak Bridge Nature Reserve and the maintenance and creation of wildlife corridors.

5.3 Where appropriate, the Council will work with Basildon Borough Council, landowners, the Noak Bridge Nature Reserve Society and other relevant organisations to support biodiversity improvements.

6. Community Engagement and Awareness

- The Council will, where appropriate:

- promote awareness of biodiversity through its website, newsletter and social media;
- encourage residents to consider wildlife-friendly planting and gardening;
- promote measures that can provide habitat for birds, insects, hedgehogs, bats and other wildlife;
- encourage the use of native and pollinator-friendly planting;
- support community initiatives that improve biodiversity; and
- encourage residents and community organisations to share information and good practice.

7. Partnership Working

7.1 The Council will seek to work constructively with relevant organisations to support biodiversity within the Parish.

7.2 This may include Basildon Borough Council, Essex County Council, local landowners, the Noak Bridge Nature Reserve Society, local schools, community organisations, environmental organisations and other appropriate bodies.

7.3 The Council may seek specialist advice where appropriate and available, recognising that responsibility for land management, ecological assessment and statutory planning decisions rests with the relevant authority or landowner.

8. Funding and Community Projects

8.1 Where appropriate and subject to the Council's financial regulations, grant funding policy and available resources, the Council may consider supporting community projects that have a clear biodiversity benefit.

8.2 The Council may support or promote appropriate initiatives such as tree and hedge planting, pollinator-friendly planting, habitat creation, environmental education and community volunteering.

9. Monitoring and Review

9.1 The Council will maintain an accompanying Biodiversity Action Plan setting out practical actions that are proportionate to its role and responsibilities.

9.2 The Biodiversity Policy and Action Plan will be reviewed annually by the Council, or earlier where significant changes in legislation, national policy, local planning policy or the Neighbourhood Plan make this appropriate.

9.3 Any review will consider progress against the Action Plan and identify whether further actions can reasonably be undertaken by the Council.

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Noak Bridge Parish Council Biodiversity Action Plan

Objective	Action	Responsibility/Partner	Timescale
Planning	Refer to relevant Made Neighbourhood Plan policies when considering planning consultations involving biodiversity.	Parish Council / Basildon Borough Council	Ongoing
Specialist Advice	Where specialist ecological matters arise, seek appropriate advice rather than undertaking ecological assessment itself.	Parish Council / Relevant Experts	As Required
Nature Reserve	Support appropriate initiatives to protect and enhance the Nature Reserve.	Basildon BC / NB Nature Reserve Society	Ongoing
Green and Blue Infrastructure	Encourage protection and enhancement of wildlife corridors, trees, hedgerows, watercourses and other habitats through planning responses and partnership working.	Parish Council / landowners / authorities	Ongoing
Community	Promote practical biodiversity advice to residents through Council communications.	Parish Council	At least annually
Community Projects	Consider supporting appropriate community biodiversity projects through existing grant arrangements, subject to budget and policy.	Parish Council / community groups	As opportunities arise
Local Initiatives	Encourage appropriate planting and habitat initiatives consistent with the Neighbourhood Plan.	Parish Council / residents / partners	Ongoing
Review	Review the Biodiversity Policy and Action Plan and report progress.	Parish Council	Annually

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AGENDA REPORT ITEM 7.2

Complaints Procedure

Background

The Council's Complaints Procedure was adopted in 2025 and is due for its annual review in accordance with Section 7 of the procedure.

Summary

The procedure has been reviewed and remains appropriate. Two minor amendments are proposed:

Section 1(c): Update the reference to the Audit Commission Act 1998, which is no longer current, to reflect the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the applicable arrangements for electors' rights in relation to the Council's accounts.

Section 7: Correct the wording from "reviewed on annually" to "reviewed annually".

No substantive changes to the procedure are proposed.

Recommendation

That the Council considers the proposed minor amendments and approves the Complaints Procedure for continued use, subject to any further amendments agreed by the Council.

Noak Bridge Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

Version	Date Adopted	Minute Reference	Review Date
1	22/10/2025	112/2025/01	November 2026

1. Policy Statement

The Council is committed to providing a high-quality service for the benefit of all who live, work, or visit the parish. We encourage open communication so that concerns can be addressed quickly, fairly, and to the satisfaction of all parties.

This policy applies to complaints about Council administration, procedures, services, or how Council employees have dealt with matters.

This policy does **not** apply to:

a) Employee vs employee, or employee vs employer complaints (covered by separate grievance/disciplinary procedures).
b) Complaints against councillors (covered by the Members' Code of Conduct and referred to the District Council's Standards Committee).
c) Allegations of financial irregularity. Local electors may object to the Council's Annual Accounts under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. On other matters, the council may need to consult its internal auditor or the Audit Commission.
d) Criminal Activity which should be reported to the police.

2. Principles

- Complaints should be resolved as close as possible to the point of origin.
- Issues should be openly and fairly considered, with an emphasis on quick resolution.
- Confidentiality will be respected, balanced with the need for transparency.
- Representation: complainants may be accompanied at meetings.
- Time limits are included for both complainant and Council actions to promote prompt resolution.
- Complaints will be handled in line with the Equality Act 2010 and Data Protection Act 2018.

3. Complaints Procedure

The three-stage procedure includes:

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- Complaints may be made in person, by phone, in writing, or by email to the Clerk.
- Wherever possible, the Clerk will seek to resolve the matter immediately.
- If not possible, the Clerk will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days.
- If the complainant does not wish to approach the Clerk, they may write directly to the Chairman.

Stage 2 – Formal Investigation

- A written complaint should be submitted to the Clerk (or Chairman if the complaint concerns the Clerk).
- The Clerk/Chairman will investigate, consulting staff or councillors as necessary.
- A meeting with the complainant may be arranged within 10 working days where reasonably practicable.
- A written response will be provided within 20 working days (or within 4 weeks of any meeting).
- If additional time is needed, the complainant will be kept informed of progress.

Stage 3 – Review / Appeal

- If dissatisfied, the complainant may request referral to the full Council or to an Appeal Panel (at least two members not previously involved).
- The appeal request must be made in writing within 10 working days of receiving the Stage 2 outcome.
- Both parties may present evidence and call witnesses.
- A written decision will be issued within 20 working days from the date of the meeting. This decision will be final.

4. Implementation Guidance

Accessibility & Equality

The Council will ensure its complaints process is accessible to all. Where necessary, assistance will be provided to complainants who may have difficulty communicating in writing (e.g. large print, dictated to Clerk, via a representative).

Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaints

The Council is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially. However, where complaints are found to be frivolous, vexatious, or repeated without new evidence, the Council reserves the right to limit or refuse further correspondence.

Record Keeping

The Clerk will maintain a confidential record of all formal complaints, actions taken, and outcomes. An anonymised summary may be reported annually to the Council to support transparency and continuous improvement.

Data Protection

All complaints will be handled in line with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. Personal information will be kept secure and only shared when necessary for investigating or resolving the complaint.

Status Quo Working

Where appropriate, existing arrangements will remain in place until the complaint is resolved, unless alternative interim arrangements are required (e.g. in bullying/harassment cases).

Continuous Improvement

The Council will use complaints constructively to improve policies, procedures, and services.

5. Escalation Beyond the Council

If a complaint cannot be resolved through this procedure:

- Complaints about councillor conduct may be referred to the Monitoring Officer at Basildon Borough Council.
- Complaints about maladministration may be referred to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (where applicable).

6. Contacts

The Clerk of Noak Bridge Parish Council
Address: Rosewood, The Furze Main Road Mundon CM9 6PU
Telephone: 07852 810 406
Email: clerk@noakbridgeparishcouncil.gov.uk

The Chairman of Noak Bridge Parish Council
Address: c/o Rosewood, The Furze Main Road Mundon CM9 6PU
Telephone: 07852 810 406
Email: cllr.mark.cottrell@noakbridgeparishcouncil.gov.uk

Monitoring Officer Basildon Borough Council
Address: Basildon Borough Council
The Basildon Centre
St Martin's Square
Basildon, Essex
SS14 1DL

Email: standards@basildon.gov.uk

7. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation or operational circumstances.

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AGENDA REPORT ITEM 10

Christmas Lighting Electrical Supply

Background

UK Power Networks requires the Parish Council to register its existing unmetered supply with an electricity supplier before the 2026 Unmetered Supply Certificate can be issued.

Quotations have been obtained from NPower, Valda via Clear Utility Solutions and Conrad Energy.

Summary

Supplier	Unit rate	Standing charge	Meter Administrator	Quoted/estimated cost
NPower	50.188p/kWh + CCL	None	Not required	**Approx. £306.79***
Valda	34p/kWh	55p/day	To be arranged	**£370.75 annual estimate**
Conrad Energy	31.1p/kWh	£1.05/day	£250/year	**£472.92* annual estimate via Clear Utilities**

* Based on estimated consumption of 601.99 kWh.

Conrad has confirmed that, following internal discussions, it will absorb the annual standing charge, so NBPC will only pay the £1.05 daily standing charge for the 34 days the lights are operating, together with the £250 annual Meter Administrator charge.

NPower has confirmed that no Meter Administrator is required and that there are no standing or other charges; NBPC would pay only for electricity consumed during the festive period.

Recommendation

That Members approve NPower as the electricity supplier for the Parish Council's 2026 festive lighting and authorise the Clerk to proceed with registration of the existing unmetered supply.