



Noak Bridge Parish Council

Minutes

Held at Noak Bridge Village Hall, Coppice Lane, Noak Bridge SS15 4JS on

Wednesday 25 February 2026 @ 7.00pm

Present

Chairman: Cllr Mark Cottrell

Councillors: Cllr Cris Bateman, Cllr Paul Daft, Cllr Peter Hawkins and Cllr Terri Sargent.

In attendance: Cllr Malcolm Buckley (Essex County Council), Cllr Stuart Allen (Basildon Borough Council), Lynda Townend (Clerk) and 3 members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

15/2026 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Dowton and Cllr Gilliam.

Borough Councillor Meyers and County Councillor Ball were unable to attend the meeting.

16/2026 Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Pecuniary Interests or Non-pecuniary Interests by Members relating to any agenda items.

Cllr Hawkins declared an Other Registerable Interest regarding agenda item 8.7 as a member of the Friends of Noak Bridge.

No other Declarations of Interest were made.

17/2026 Minutes

Members reviewed the minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on the 21 January 2026, Minutes 01/2026 to 14/2026 inclusive.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2026 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

18/2026 Public Participation Session

A member of the public thanked councillors for supporting the Noak Bridge Litter Pickers on Sunday 22 February 2026.

A member of the public provided feedback following attendance at a meeting of the Basildon Parks and Countryside Volunteers. It was noted that the “Love Your Parks” campaign will be promoted by the Basildon Borough Council during July and August. It was asked whether the Parish Council would also consider supporting and promoting this initiative. Reference was also made to the “Green Guarantee” campaign which is currently being promoted by the Basildon Borough Council.

Concerns were raised regarding several faulty streetlights:

- South Wash Road (from the mini roundabout) – lights reported to have been out for several weeks.
- Bridge Street underpass – intermittent lighting issues.
- Bridgecote Lane – Light No. 1 reported to have been out for approximately one month.
- Parking area at Crouch Street Housing – broken light reported.

Cllr Buckley advised that all faulty streetlights should be reported to Essex County Council Highways and confirmed he would ensure that the issues raised would be followed up.

In respect of the Crouch Street location, Cllr Buckley advised that the lamppost may not have been adopted by Essex County Council. A member of the public agreed to provide the What3Words reference to assist in accurately identifying the location.

Resolved: That the Clerk will share the link to Essex County Council’s fault reporting tool with the Council.

19/2026 Borough and County Councillor Reports

County Councillor

Cllr Buckley reported that:

- Essex County Council has increased Council Tax by 3.95% (2% social care and 1.95% general council tax). This includes £6 million of additional funding for winter highway repairs.
- The Government has announced additional SEN funding and changes to the assessment process to reduce timescales; however, there remains a shortage of assessors.

- The pre-election period (purdah) will commence on 27 March 2026. Essex County Council will only be promoting routine business activities until the election which will take place on 7 May 2026.

Cllr Sargent raised concerns regarding the condition of the road at Bridge Street. Cllr Buckley will investigate.

Borough Councillors

Cllr Allen reported that:

- Basildon Borough Council has set the 2026/27 budget at the same level as 2025/26.
- Borough elections will now take place on 7 May 2026.

Cllr Sargent, in her capacity as a Borough Councillor, referred to concerns raised by residents and Members regarding the initial cancellation of the Borough elections removing the democratic rights of residents.

Cllr Sargent also reported that Basildon's Housing and Scrutiny Committee had recently met and discussed the planning process of the Fore Street Sheltered Housing.

Cllr Daft advised that he attended a recent Housing Scrutiny Committee meeting where officers felt the planning process had run smoothly. Following the meeting he submitted a Freedom of Information request to obtain the costings from before and after the planning decision process, in depth detail regarding the planning and decision-making process and the reasoning for the planning application when sheltered housing is in short supply across the Borough. Cllr Daft will report back to the Council once a response has been received.

20/2026 ABLC and LCLG Meetings

ABLC Meeting

Cllrs Cottrell and Daft attended the ABLC meeting on the 15 January 2026. Matters discussed included:

- The Bowers Gifford Neighbourhood Plan Order was presented to Cabinet in December.
- Wickford Town Council is no longer retaining the services of Basildon Borough Council's handyman due to insufficient allocated hours and are now seeking alternative arrangements.
- Anti-social behaviour, particularly involving the use of quad bikes.
- Burstead Parish Council submitted its Neighbourhood Plan in January.
- Local Government Reorganisation, including reference to Thurrock's debt position.
- The potential cost of polling stations had Borough elections proceeded.

LCLG Meeting

Cllr Sargent and the Clerk attended the LCLG meeting held on 20 January 2026. Matters discussed included:

- A request for clarification on the costs to Parish Councils for elections; it was indicated that costs could be in the region of £9,000 per polling station.
- A Local Plan update, with Regulation 19 consultation scheduled for March and the final plan anticipated mid to late summer.
- A proposal for dedicated CCTV teams.
- Concerns regarding development within the Green Belt and supporting infrastructure.
- Fly posting within the Borough.
- The Basildon Borough Council budget, with core spending reported to have increased by 7.5%.

21/2026 Finance

21/2026/01 Accounts for Payment

The Council received and approved the following accounts for payment:

Resolved: That the accounts for payment from 1 to 28 February be approved.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Supplier</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Net</i>	<i>VAT</i>	<i>Total</i>
03/02/2026	Santander	Bank charge	9.99	0.00	9.99
02/03/2026	L Townend	February salary	680.12	0.00	680.12
02/03/2026	L Townend	February expenses	116.08	0.00	116.08
02/03/2026	HMRC	February PAYE costs	252.05	0.00	252.05
02/03/2026	Nest Pension	February submission	62.70	0.00	62.70
02/03/2026	NBCA	Hall hire - 25th February 2026	50.00	0.00	50.00
02/03/2026	Basildon Borough Council	VE 80 Beacon lighting costs	855.00	0.00	855.00
02/03/2026	EHAA	Grant	100.00	0.00	100.00
28/02/2026	Unity Bank	Bank charge	6.00	0.00	6.00
TOTAL:					£2,131.94

21/2026/02 Bank Reconciliation

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

21/2026/03 Monthly Budget Report

The Council **received and noted** the budget comparison to the 31 January 2026. It was highlighted the council had spent £53,329.26 representing 39% of the annual expenditure budget. This represents 129% of the annual precept.

21/2026/04 Council's Banking Arrangements

The Council received a report providing an update on the Council's current accounts. The Clerk advised, since publication of the agenda, the funds from the Santander Account were transferred to the Unity Trust Current Account on the 19 February 2026. In addition, all signatories now have access to the account and payments will start to be made from this account from February 2026.

Cllr Cottrell confirmed he had applied for a debit card on the Metro account, and this should be received within 5-7 days from Monday.

21/2026/05 Council's Savings Accounts

Members received a report with a recommendation the Council considers opening a new, higher interest paying, account to achieve a higher return on its reserves.

Resolved: That the Council will transfer £50,000 to a new 95-day notice account with Cambridge and Counties Bank from the Metro Current Account.

The new account will be opened with the following access

1. Cllr Bateman – signatory, two to sign, online access.
2. Cllr Daft – signatory, two to sign, online access.
3. Cllr Hawkins – signatory, two to sign, online access.
4. The Clerk, Lynda Townend – main contact and online access to administer the account

The Council suggested looking at longer term investments for the balance of the funds.

Resolved: That the Council will hold an informal meeting to discuss the best accounts/funds for the Council's reserves before formalising its decision at a Council meeting.

21/2026/06 Verification of Quarterly Bank Reconciliations

The Council received a report requesting a councillor, other than the Chairman, be appointed to verify the quarterly bank reconciliations and the year-end bank reconciliation, to comply with Financial Regulation 2.6.

Resolved: That Cllr Hawkins be appointed to verify the quarterly bank reconciliations and the year-end bank reconciliation in accordance with Financial Regulation 2.6.

21/2026/07 Grant to the Friends of Noak Bridge

Cllr Hawkins had declared an Other Registerable Interest.

Members considered a grant application from the Friends of Noak Bridge to pay for the cost of a new duck house for Coppice Lane Pond.

Resolved: That the Council agreed to pay a grant of £139 to the Friends of Noak Bridge.

Cllr Daft left the meeting at 20:19.

Cllr Daft returned to the meeting at 20:20.

22/2026 Policies

22/2026/01 Disciplinary Policy

The Council received and reviewed an updated Disciplinary Policy.

Resolved: That Noak Bridge Parish Council adopt the updated Disciplinary Policy which will be reviewed at least every three years unless a change in legislation occurs beforehand.

22/2026/02 Media and Press Policy

The Council received and reviewed an updated Media and Press Policy and agreed to amended clause 5/5.1 to read 'The Chair of the Council and the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, are the Council's authorised spokespersons and may speak to the media on behalf of the Council'.

Resolved: That Noak Bridge Parish Council adopt the adopt the updated Media and Press Policy, including the above amendment, which will be reviewed at least every three years unless a change in legislation occurs beforehand.

22/2026/03 Social Media Policy

The Council received and reviewed an updated Social Media Policy.

Resolved: That Noak Bridge Parish Council adopt the updated Social Media Policy which will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Resolved: That the Council appoint Cllr Dowton to publish content on the Council's Facebook page.

23/2026 Schedule of Meeting

The Council received a schedule of proposed meeting dates from May 2026 to May 2027.

Resolved: That the Council agreed the schedule of meetings to May 2027, noting the dates from January to May 2027, may be subject to change.

24/2026 Planning

24/2026/01 Planning Applications Considered

24/2026/01/01 26/00001/S211 - 2 x Bird Cherry, fell and poison stump at 2 - 20 Lower Street Noak Bridge Basildon Essex.

Resolved: That the Council has no objection to this application.

24/2026/01/02 26/00002/S211 - 1 x Oak, Crown reduce by 2-3m to clear branch off building at 25 - 31 Kenilworth Place Lower Street Noak Bridge Basildon Essex.

Resolved: That the Council has no objection to this application.

24/2026/01/03 26/00093/TPOBAS - T2 (Oak) of TPO/09/98 Crown Lift 3.95 m above ground level. Crown reduction height reduced by 9m. Spread reduced by 4.5m at 65 Bridge Street Noak Bridge.

Resolved: That the Council has no objection to this application.

24/2026/01/04 26/00148/VAR - Variation of condition 2 (Approved plans) of planning reference 25/00263/FULL, to change the materials of the extension walls and roof to Anthracite Zinc at Willow Park, Wash Road, Laindon.

Resolved: That the Council has no objection to this application.

24/2026/02 Planning Decisions

24/2026/02/01 25/01571/LDCP - To establish the lawfulness of a proposed garage conversion. **DECIDED AND GRANTED.**

25/2026 Environment – Handyman Tasks

Members were provided with a list showing the handyman tasks completed to date and newly suggested tasks which included:

Outstanding works include:

- Treating the benches by Coppice Lane pond
- Cutting back trees and shrubbery at Bridgecote Lane
- Tidy the area along Bridgecote Lane footpath into the Bridge Street underpass and repair the fence pickets which have broken
- Installation of a Christmas tree socket with cover on the Wash Road verge.
- Prepare and Paint Noak Bridge Nature Reserve Gates

Newly identified works include:

1. To replace damaged bollards on Bridgecote Lane at a cost of £604
2. To securely fix the Tommy statues on the new bench at Fore St Green at a cost of £40.

Resolved: That the Council agreed to approve tasks 1 and 2 accepting the quotes for the works, as indicated.

26/2026 CouncilWise Subscription

Members received a report and comparison of training costs of the EALC and CouncilWise and agreed they would not opt into the CouncilWise subscription service.

Resolved: That the Council will not subscribe to the CouncilWise service but will attend any relevant training courses as and when required.

27/2026 Correspondence

The Clerk advised Basildon Borough Council had been contacted in relation to all outstanding invoices.

28/2026 Date of Next Meeting

The next council meeting will be held on the 25 March 2026. The April meeting, the annual Parish Council Meeting, will be held on the 15 April 2026.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20:50.

Signed: _____
Chairman

Date: _____