



Noak Bridge Parish Council

Minutes

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

Wednesday the 24th September 2025 @ 7.00pm

Present

Chairman: Cllr Mark Cottrell

Councillors: Cllr Paul Daft, Cllr Jacqui Dowton, Cllr Lynn Gilliam, Cllr Peter Hawkins, and Cllr Terri Sargent.

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

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

82/2025 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Christopher Bateman.

83/2025 Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, other pecuniary interests or nonpecuniary interests by Members relating to any agenda items.

Cllr Gilliam declared an 'Other Registerable Interest' in agenda item 11.1.6 as the planning application pertains to her property.

Cllr Hawkins declared an 'Other Registerable Interest' in agenda item 15 as a member of the Pétanque Club.

Cllr Sargent declared an 'Other Registerable Interest' in agenda item 15 as the Chairman of Noak Bridge Community Association.

Resolved: That the Declarations of Interest be noted.

84/2025 Minutes

Members reviewed the minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on the 23rd July 2025, Minutes 69/2025 to 81/2025 inclusive.

Resolved: that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd July 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

85/2025 Minutes of Committee Meetings

Members reviewed the minutes from the Personnel Committee which met on the 7th August 2025, Minutes 01/2025 to 09/2025 inclusive.

Resolved: that the Minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 7th August 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

86/2025 Public Participation Session

1. Community Litter Picking

- A member of the public provided statistics and a verbal update on the community litter picking activities.
- There has been less fly tipping and dog waste, though the area around the pub and in the playground remains problematic.
- The Rt Hon Richard Holden MP is planning to join a future litter pick.
- Cllr Alex Myers is requesting either additional dog bins or a survey to identify which bins are best used with a view of moving less frequently used bins to alternative locations. Cllr Sargent confirmed that additional bins have already been requested.
- A member of the public suggested a possible new location for a dog bin and will forward these details to Cllr Sargent.
- The member of the public proposed sites for 'We Are Watching You' anti-fly tipping signs, including along the ridge at the back of New Waverley.

The Chairman thanked the members of the public for his continued support in keeping the village clean.

2. Highways – No Entry Sign

- A member of the public raised concerns that a No Entry sign was obscured by vegetation.
- Councillors advised this has now been cut back by Basildon's Pride Team.

3. Lighting – Underpass

- A member of the public reported that two of the 13 underpass lights are still out.

Resolved: The Clerk will forward the relevant reference numbers to Cllr Buckley.

4. Friends of Noak Bridge – Ponds

- A member of the public, representing the Friends of Noak Bridge, raised concerns about the condition of local ponds.
- It is apparent budget limitations are restricting maintenance work by Basildon Borough Council.
- Basildon Borough Council will be carrying out an assessment of all 58 ponds in the borough.
- A local builder has offered to remove silt free of charge, but Basildon Borough Council's support would be required to ensure protocols are followed.
- Basildon Borough Council has confirmed that silt can be safely dumped or used to fill dips in the woods.
- A notice board is due to be installed in the autumn to provide information about the ponds and other village activities.

87/2025 Borough and County Councillor Reports

Cllr Buckley reported:

- The footbridge was closed at short notice after a routine inspection deemed it unsafe. The closure is expected to last 3–4 weeks.
- Both Cllrs Ball and Buckley have funding available through the Locality Fund, which supports Youth, Environment, and Community Events. Suggestions must be submitted by December. A suggestion was made to apply for funding for mugs or other litter picking equipment which will be progressed by the litter picking group.
- In relation to Local Government Reorganisation, Essex County Council has voted to be abolished in two years' time and have indicated a preference for the three unitary authorities model.
- Once the reorganisation has been completed the method of requesting works through the Local Highways Panel (LHP) will change and new projects will not be considered. Existing projects should be completed.

Cllr Allen reported:

- Options for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) are being considered, including either three or five unitary authorities.
- There is reluctance to be associated with Thurrock, due to its debt levels.
- The Secretary of State will make the final decision which is expected in March 2026.

Cllr Sargent reported:

- She had liaised with Cllr Myers about the recent work undertaken by the Basildon Pride Team. Concerns were expressed over the quality of the work.
- Cllr Sargent will provide a list of works requested and completed and circulate to Members.

Members were asked to forward any suggestions for potential projects that could benefit from Locality Fund support to the Clerk.

88/2025 Neighbourhood Plan Update

Cllr Sargent advised that the Examiner's report is expected imminently. Once received, the recommendations will be considered by the Parish Council prior to Basildon Borough Council arranging the referendum.

89/2025 LCLG Meeting

Members received the Clerk's notes from the LCLG meeting held on the 22nd July 2025.

The notes were noted.

90/2025 Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution

Cllr Sargent provided an update on matters regarding Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution including:

- Basildon Council prefers the 5 unitary authority model which was decided by cabinet instead of at an open meeting.

Cllr Dowton left the meeting at 19.49

- It was noted that different authorities have expressed varying preferences:
 - Majority of councils – 5-unitary model
 - Rochford and Thurrock – two versions of a 4-unitary model
 - Essex County Council (ECC) – 3-unitary model
- Consultants engaged by ECC recommended the 3-unitary model, which Cllr Ball considers the most financially viable.
- ECC has voted in favour of the 3-unitary model. However, they have asked the Boundary Commission to conduct a review of boundaries, including Wickford North, Wickford Park, and Castledon & Crouch. A decision is awaited.
- A Government decision is expected by March 2026.
- Under the 3-unitary model, it is proposed to set up neighbourhood area delivery panels which will be decided by the new authority.
- At this stage, no changes to Parish Councils are proposed.
- A further consultation will take place in November, to which the Parish Council may wish to respond.
- Concern was expressed regarding the proposed reduction in councillor numbers.

Cllr Dowton returned to the meeting at 19.54

91/2025 Finance

91/2025/01 Banking Arrangements

Members received a report regarding the council's current banking arrangements and changes recommended to ensure proper practices were being undertaken.

Cllr Sargent raised concerns due to historic matters where councillors did not have sufficient oversight of the council's finances.

Resolved: that the ex-councillor should be removed as a signatory on the Santander Business account.

Resolved: that the Clerk, Lynda Townend, will be added to the Metro Bank account in the capacity of an administrator to view the account and process payments and transfers for authorisation by two separate councillors. No debit card is required, and the Clerk will not be able to withdraw cash.

Resolved: that once the new mandate is in place, regular payments will be made from the Metro Bank account.

Resolved: that the council will retain the Santander Bank account for limited use, including occasional debit card payments

The Council noted the exemplary management of the accounts by Cllr Sargent following historic issues highlighted by a previous council and acknowledged that the measures outlined above will further strengthen the council's financial controls.

91/2025/02 Accounts for Payment

The Clerk advised an additional invoice from P Thomas Landscapes was received on the morning of the meeting and after the agenda had been published. The amount of the invoice totalled £576.00.

The Council received and approved the following accounts for payment:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Supplier</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Net</i>	<i>VAT</i>	<i>Total</i>
31/07/2025	PKF Littlejohn	External Audit	£ 210.00	£ 42.00	£ 252.00
06/08/2025	RBL Industries	Tommy bench	£ 666.67	£ 133.33	£ 800.00
08/08/2025	VCS Website	Website redirection	£ 25.00	£ -	£ 25.00
08/08/2025	NBCA	Hall hire 7th Aug 2025	£ 25.00	£ -	£ 25.00
08/08/2025	Geosphere	Parish Online subscription	£ 128.00	£ 25.60	£ 153.60
01/08/2025	ICO	2026 renewal	£ 52.00	£ -	£ 52.00
25/08/2025	L Townend	August salary	£ 804.88	£ -	£ 804.88
25/08/2025	L Townend	Expenses	£ 169.97	£ -	£ 169.97
25/08/2025	HMRC	August PAYE costs	£ 291.22	£ -	£ 291.22
25/08/2025	Nest Pension	August EE pension costs	£ 40.31	£ -	£ 40.31
25/08/2025	Nest Pension	August ER pension costs	£ 30.23	£ -	£ 30.23
	Rhino Security	Annual service agreement	£ 500.00	£ 100.00	£ 600.00
	NBCA	Hall hire 24th Sept 2025	£ 50.00	£ -	£ 50.00
	L Townend	September salary	£ 680.12	£ -	£ 680.12
	L Townend	September expenses	£ 8.80	£ -	£ 8.80
	L Townend	September expenses	£ 33.57	£ -	£ 33.57

	HMRC	September PAYE costs	£ 252.06	£ -	£ 252.06
	Nest Pension	September pension costs	£ 62.72	£ -	£ 62.72
	ABLC	Annual subscription	£ 20.00	£ -	£ 20.00
	P Thomas	Handyman tasks - Sept	£ 480.00	£ 96.00	£ 576.00
Total:					£ 4,927.48

Resolved: That the accounts for payment for August and September be approved.

91/2025/03 Bank Reconciliation

The council received and noted the bank reconciliation report to the to the 31st August 2025.

91/2025/04 Monthly Budget Sheet

The Council received and noted the budget comparison to the 30th September 2025. It was highlighted the council had spent £31,617.47 to date representing 23% of the annual expenditure budget.

Cllr Ball left the meeting at 20.22

Cllr Ball returned to the meeting at 20.26

91/2025/05 Budget Forecast

The Council received and noted the budget forecast, showing actual spend to the 30th September 2025 and the expected out turn to the 31st March 2026.

Cllr Sargent noted two invoices were outstanding from Basildon Borough Council for the beacon lighting and the installation of the path to the new bench installation.

Resolved: that the Clerk will make a provision for both invoices on the forecast document.

Members discussed the cost of the handyman, and expense agreed at the meeting held on the 23rd July, but not included in the 2025/26 budget.

Resolved: that costs for the handyman will be paid from reserves and allocated to the Environmental Maintenance budget heading.

91/2025/06 Conclusion of Audit

The Council received a copy of the External Auditors Report and Certificate for 2024/25 noting no concerns were raised.

92/2025/01 Planning

The Chairman abstained from discussions and voting on applications related to 139 Coppice Lane.

The Council considered the following planning applications:

92/2025/01/01 - 25/01048/S211 – willow tree to be felled at 32 Gate Lodge Way, Noak Bridge.

Resolved: that the council objects to this application due to a lack of information pertaining to the reason the tree is to be felled.

92/2025/01/02 - 25/00008/S211 – ash tree crown reduction at 6 Kimberley Drive, Noak Bridge.

Resolved: that the council have no objection to this application.

92/2025/01/03 - 25/00010/S211 – T1 oak crown reduction by 2-3m at 139 Coppice Lane, Noak Bridge.

Resolved: that the council have no objection to this application

92/2025/01/04 - 25/01148/FULL – single storey rear extension at 6 Bridgecote Lane, Laindon.

Resolved: that the council have no objection to this application

92/2025/01/05 - 25/01035/FULL – proposed 2.65m high outbuilding at Noak Bridge Primary School, Coppice Lane, Noak Bridge.

Resolved: that the council have no objection to this application

Cllr Gilliam had made an 'Other Registrable Interest in relation to the following planning application.

92/2025/01/06 - 25/00007/S211 – mixed hedge cut back and face up at 30 Durban Lane, Noak Bridge.

Resolved: that the council have no objection to this application

92/2025/01 07 - 25/01107/TPOBAS – TPO/16/99 – crown reduction and thinning of three oak trees at 31 Durban Lane, Noak Bridge.

Resolved: that the council have no objection to this application

92/2025/01/08 - 25/01147/TPOBAS – TPO/09/98 – 3m crown reduction of oak tree at Handley Court, Handleys Chase, Noak Bridge.

Resolved: that the council have no objection to this application

92/2025/01/09 - 25/01096/FULL – part retrospective change of use for six football pitches with ancillary facilities and parking. Part full planning application for the siting of three football pitches, additional parking and access road at Toby Football Club, Billericay.

Resolved: that the council objects to this application on the grounds of:

1. inadequate parking provision and risk of overspill.
2. highway safety concerns relating to the proposed new access road.
3. the cumulative impact of increased traffic and loss of local amenity.

Cllr Daft left the meeting at 20.43

92/2025/01/10 - 25/00012/S211 – yew and cedar crown reduction at 9 Sailing Green, Noak Bridge.

Resolved: that the council have no objection to this application

Cllr Daft returned to the meeting at 20.45

A member of the public left the meeting at 20.49

92/2025/02 To note planning decisions made by Basildon Borough Council:

92/2025/02/01 – 25/00890/COND – application for approval of details reserved by condition 4 (existing and proposed windows) of consent reference 76/2025/02/01 – 25/00295/FULL proposed new front gates and boundary walls at 33 Durban Lane, Noak Bridge. **GRANTED.**

92/2025/02/02 – 25/00560/FULL – continued use of a relocatable classroom at Noak Bridge Primary School, Noak Bridge. **GRANTED.**

92/2025/02/03 – 25/00004/S211 – crown reduction of T1, T2 and T3 trees at 1 Kenilworth Place, Noak Bridge. **CLOSED.**

92/2025/02/04 – 25/00003/S211 – crown reduction of oak tree at 114 New Waverley Road, Noak Bridge. **CLOSED.**

92/2025/02/05 – 25/00010/S211 – fell dead pear tree at 139 Coppice Lane, Noak Bridge. **CLOSED.**

92/2025/02/06 – 25/00006/S211 – fell dead pear tree at 139 Coppice Lane, Noak Bridge. **CLOSED.**

92/2025/02/07 – 25/00798/TPOBAS – crown reduction of T1 oak tree at 11 Sailing Green, Noak Bridge. **APPLICATION PERMITTED.**

92/2025/02/08 – 25/00744/TPOBAS – various tree works at 1 Handleys Chase, Noak Bridge. **APPLICATION PERMITTED.**

93/2025 **Christmas 2025**

93/2025/01 **Christmas Lights Project 2025**

Members received a report and proposal for Christmas lights illuminations, increasing the display of lights down Bridge Street.

Resolved: that the council agreed to accept the proposal for illumination to be hung from two trees in Coppice Lane as well as 6 lamp post illuminations in Bridgecote Lane, for 2025 only.

Cllrs Ball, Buckley and Allen left the meeting at 21.02.

Resolved: that the £3,750 shortfall between the budget and proposal will be vired from Community Project reserves.

93/2025/02 Christmas Celebrations

Members briefly discussed options for Christmas celebrations but decided to defer the item until the October meeting.

Resolved: that the clerk will seek quotes for a cut tree, a new Nordic pine tree and an artificial tree to be installed on the Wash Road verge.

93/2025/03 Christmas Budget

This matter was deferred until the October meeting.

94/2025 Environment

94/2025/01 Removal of Playground Equipment from the Fixed Asset Register

Members received a report confirming the playground equipment, previously thought to be owned by Noak Bridge Parish Council, was owned and maintained by Basildon Borough Council.

Resolved: that the council agreed to remove the following items from the fixed asset register:

- Teen shelter with a value of £8,272
- Various items of playground equipment with a value of £18,461
- See saw with a value of £3,200

94/2025/02 Durban Lane Pond

Cllr Gilliam advised the water level of the pond is extremely low and the reeds are becoming invasive.

Resolved: that the clerk will contact Rob Baker at Basildon Borough Council to request the removal of the reeds.

94/2025/03 Maintenance Work on Bridge Street

Cllr Gilliam confirmed Peter Thomas had completed the tasks allocated in September to an extremely high standard.

Cllrs Dowton and Gilliam will investigate future tasks to be undertaken.

Councillors were also asked to submit work requests to the Clerk to collate.

Resolved: that councillors will email the Clerk any works they would like to be considered for the handyman, and these will be added to a priority list.

94/2025/04 Completion of Works on Fore Street

Cllr Gilliam thanked all those involved in the bench installation at Fore Street Green, noting the next step is the installation of the planters.

A member of the public will review the prices previously quoted and advise the council accordingly.

95/2025 Policies and Procedures

95/2025/01 Remote Attendance and Proxy Voting in Local Authorities

Members received and **noted** a report detailing the outcome of the Government's consultation on remote attendance and proxy voting in local authorities.

Two members of the public left at 21.23

95/2025/02 Retention and Disposal Policy

Members received an updated draft of the Retention and Disposal Policy.

Members agreed to amend the minimum retention period for all documents, with the exception of insurance certificates to 7 years.

Resolved: that the updated Retention and Disposal Policy be adopted, with the above amendments and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

95/2025/03 Appraisal Policy

Members received a draft Appraisal Policy.

Resolved: that the Appraisal Policy be adopted by the council and reviewed every three years.

96/2025 Pétanque Court

Cllrs Hawkin and Sargent had declared an 'Other Registerable Interest'.

Cllr Sargent advised the Noak Bridge Community Association did not wish to accept the Parish Council's gift of the Pétanque Court or make any changes to the current arrangements.

Members agreed to defer the discussion until further advice was sought.

Resolved: that the Clerk will seek further advice on the Parish Council's position.

97/2025 Correspondence

No correspondence was received or discussed.

98/2025 Date of Next Meeting

The next council meeting will be held on the 22nd October 2025.

With no further business the meeting closed at 21.32