



Noak Bridge Parish Council

Minutes

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

Wednesday 21st January 2026 @ 7.00pm

Present

Chairman: Cllr Mark Cottrell

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

In attendance: Cllr Malcolm Buckley, Lynda Townend (Clerk) and 3 members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

01/2026 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Gilliam.

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

02/2026 Declarations of Interest

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

No Declarations of Interest were made.

03/2026 Minutes

Members reviewed the minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on the 17th December 2025, Minutes 128/2025 to 133/2025 inclusive.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th December 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

04/2026 Public Participation Session

A member of the public requested an update on the installation of additional dog waste bins within the village.

Cllr Sargent advised that Basildon Council's Wickford Area Committee had installed one new dog bin and that confirmation would be sought regarding the installation of any further bins.

No update was available in response to a previous enquiry regarding CCTV. Additional police patrols had been requested in the area, although no specific details were provided.

Ongoing issues with littering in Noak Bridge were raised again. Cllr Sargent confirmed that enquiries would be made and a further update provided once information had been received.

Cllr Cottrell informed the Council that he had recently witnessed three youths wearing hoodies travelling through the village on an electric bike at speed.

A member of the public asked for an update on the replacement of the boardwalk at the Nature Reserve, which had previously been removed due to health and safety concerns. It was noted that the works were originally expected to be completed before Christmas. Members were advised that the start date had been delayed, with a revised commencement date of the week beginning 19 January 2026; however, this had since been further delayed. The resident requested a further update on progress.

Resolved: That the Clerk make enquiries with Basildon Borough Council to obtain an update on the boardwalk works.

05/2026 Borough and County Councillor Reports

Cllr Sargent, in her capacity as a Borough Councillor, provided an update on Borough matters and the Local Council Liaison Meeting held on the 20th January 2026, in which she attended in her capacity as a Parish Councillor:

- Local Elections
 - The promised costs that Parish Councils will be charged for local elections, due to be held in 2026, were not provided. Cllr Aidan McGurran advised he will find out the costs and inform the Parish Councils.
 - Basildon Borough Council responded to the Government's letter asking whether it could continue planning for Local Government Reorganisation while holding elections. This matter was considered at a Cabinet meeting, attended by residents and Members during which the majority of the Shadow Cabinet expressed views opposing the decision to postpone the elections. Basildon's Cabinet responded to the request that the elections be postponed.

Attendees at the Local Council Liaison meeting noted that this decision was extremely unpopular with residents, who felt it diminished their democratic right to vote.

- The final decision regarding the elections will be made by the Secretary of State, and the decision is expected by the end of January.
- Local Plan
 - The constraints and difficulties experienced by residents using the Commonplace platform for consultation responses were raised and a request was made to ensure alternative consultation formats were available for residents.

Cllr Buckley provided the following update on County matters including:

- Essex County Council has prepared their draft 2026/27 budget which will be increased by 3.95%. This will ensure the maintenance of existing services.
- It is expected the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner's budget will be increased by 5%.
- Essex County Council responded to the Secretary of State's letter regarding the feasibility of running the 2026 elections alongside Local Government Reorganisation, stating the Council believes the elections should proceed. A further letter has been received to clarify Essex County Council's position. Their response is being considered at a Cabinet meeting being held this evening.

06/2026 Local Government Reorganisation

Updates were provided by Cllr Buckley and Sargent in the minute point above.

07/2026 Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Plan Referendum Update

Cllr Sargent confirmed the Neighbourhood Plan referendum, which took place on Tuesday the 16th December, resulted in a 'yes' vote ensuing Basildon Borough Council use the Neighbourhood Plan for Noak Bridge to help it decide planning applications. The final plan has not yet been received from Basildon Council. This should be received by the end of the month.

08/2026 Finance

08/2026/01 Accounts for Payment

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>
26/11/2025	Solopress	Referendum banner	56.20	-	56.20
26/11/2025	Solopress	Referendum banner	43.20	8.64	51.84
26/11/2025	Solopress	Referendum banner	25.37	5.07	30.44
26/11/2025	Solopress	Referendum banner	37.26	7.45	44.71
26/11/2025	Solopress	Referendum banner	31.32	6.26	37.58
26/11/2025	Solopress	Referendum leaflets	43.20	8.64	51.84

03/12/2025	Solopress	Referendum banner	29.33	5.87	35.20
03/12/2025	Solopress	Referendum banner	34.29	6.86	41.15
03/12/2025	Santander	November Bank Charge	9.99	-	9.99
04/12/2025	At Last Events	Final balance for Christmas lights	3,475.00	695.00	4,170.00
19/12/2025	NBCA	Hall hire 19/12/2025 - inv 215	25.00	-	25.00
24/12/2025	L Townend	December salary	679.52	-	679.52
24/12/2025	L Townend	December expenses	104.97	-	104.97
24/12/2025	HMRC	December PAYE costs	253.11	-	253.11
24/12/2025	Nest Pension	December submission	62.72	-	62.72
02/01/2026	Santander Bank	Bank Charge	9.99	-	9.99
TBC	Peter Thomas	Oct and Nov handyman works	765.00	153.00	918.00
23/01/2026	L Townend	January salary	679.72	-	679.72
23/01/2026	L Townend	January expenses	54.46	-	54.46
23/01/2026	HMRC	January PAYE costs	52.88	-	252.88
23/01/2026	Nest Pension	January submission	62.72	-	62.72
TBC	NBCA	Hall hire 21/01/2026 – inv 10	50.00	-	50.00
		TOTAL:			£7,682.04

Resolved: That the accounts for payment from the 1st December 2025 to the 31st January 2026 be approved.

08/2026/02 Bank Reconciliation

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

Cllr Dowton left the meeting at 19:32

Cllr Dowton returned to the meeting at 19:33

08/2026/03 Monthly Budget Report

The Council **received and noted** the budget comparison to the 31st December 2025. It was highlighted the council had spent £51,301.51 representing 38% of the annual expenditure budget. This amount represents expenditure costs of 124% of the annual precept.

08/2026/04 Santander Bank Mandate

Cllr Sargent advised she is still waiting for account management forms to remove the signatory from account.

08/2026/05 Council's Banking Arrangements

Members received a report with recommendations relating to the Council's banking arrangements.

The Clerk confirmed the Unity Trust Bank current account is now open with the Clerk set up as the Administrator and three councillors as signatories. All that remains for the account to become operational is for funds to be deposited.

Cllr Sargent requested confirmation all councillors would be made aware of payments being processed for payment, which the Clerk confirmed.

Councillors discussed the current banking arrangements, the requirement for the council to hold a debit card on this account now Santander has started charging a monthly administration fee of £9.99 and alternative saving account products.

Resolved: That the Santander Current account be closed and the balance transferred to the Unity Trust Bank current account with all receipts and payments to be transacted from this account once the transfer has been completed.

Resolved: That a debit card will be requested from Metro Bank current account, ending 3192, for occasional, authorised, use by the council. The signing rules and individuals authorised on the account will be:

1. Mark Cottrell – with debit card, one to sign, full online banking access
2. Paul Daft – No debit card, one to sign, full online banking access
3. Lynda Townend – No debit card, two to sign, view-only online banking

Resolved: That the Clerk will investigate business savings products to be considered at the next Parish Council meeting which will allow higher interest rates to be achieved on the Councils cash assets.

08/2026/06 2026/27 Budget and Precept Demand

Cllr Cottrell reported that an informal budget meeting had been held on the 6th January 2026 where the Council's costs for the upcoming financial year were assessed.

Members received a copy of the draft budget and approved an amended expenditure budget of £159,764.20 including the use of earmarked reserves totalling £118,548.00. The resultant precept requirement is £41,216.20.

Using Basildon Borough Council's Precept calculator this equates to a Band D council tax charge of £41.13 per resident, a decrease of 0.44% from 2025/26 when the charge was £41.31.

Resolved: That the Council agreed to set an expenditure budget of £159,764.20 for the 2026/27 financial year.

Resolved: That the Council agrees to submit a precept demand to Basildon Borough Council of £41,216.20. (rounded to £41,285.47) resulting in a Band D council tax payment of £41.13 per resident.

08/2026/07 Grant to Essex and Herts Air Ambulance

Members considered a request for a donation to the Essex and Herts Air Ambulance.

Resolved: That the Council donate the sum of £100 to the Essex and Herts Air Ambulance.

08/2026/08 Grant to the Friends of Noak Bridge

Members considered a report regarding unexpected costs incurred by the Friends of Noak Bridge.

Resolved: That the council would consider the request on receipt of an official request from the Friends of Noak Bridge.

08/2026/09 Council Process of Obtaining Late Invoices

The Parish Council is currently awaiting three invoices from Basildon Borough Council for works completed: the CCTV service agreement, Beacon Lighting costs and the Tommy bench and path installation.

Cllr Daft left the meeting at 20:22

Cllr Daft returned to the meeting at 20:24

Resolved: That the Clerk will contact Basildon Borough Council's finance department, before the end of the financial year, to request the outstanding invoices and will continue to monitor the accounts regularly.

09/2026 Policies and Procedures

09/2026/01 Civility and Respect Pledge

The Council received and considered a report recommending the Parish Council sign up to NALC and the SSLC's Civility and Respect Pledge.

Resolved: That Noak Bridge Parish Council sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge

09/2026/02 Equality and Diversity Policy

The Council received and considered adopting the NALC model Equality and Diversity Policy.

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

09/2026/03 Dignity at Work Policy

The Council received and considered adopting a Dignity at Work Policy.

Resolved: That Noak Bridge Parish Council adopt the Dignity at Work Policy which will be reviewed on an annual basis.

09/2026/04 Grievance Procedure

The Council received and considered adopting a Grievance Procedure.

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

09/2026/05 Health and Safety Policy

The Council received and reviewed an updated Health and Safety Policy.

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

10/2026 Planning

10/2026/01 Planning Applications Considered

There were no planning applications to consider.

10/2026/02 Planning Decisions

There were no planning decisions to note.

11/2026 CouncilWise

Members received and considered a proposal to subscribe to a new, dedicated, training service provided by CouncilWise.

Resolved: That the Clerk prepare a proposed annual training programme, establish the anticipated costs, and obtain details of CouncilWise's training course fees for comparison before a decision is made.

12/2026 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

Newly identified works include:

1. Repair wooden bollards, Bridgecote Lane – total cost £604
2. Trimming back overhanging trees and shrubbery, Bridgecote Lane – total cost £80
3. Clear neglected area, Bridgecote Lane – total cost £540
4. Installation of Christmas tree fixing – total cost £290
5. Paint the Nature Reserve gates – total cost £750

Resolved: That the Council agreed tasks 1 and 2 be completed within the January budget allocation and tasks 3 to 5 be completed in the February budget allocation.

Cllr Daft left the meeting at 20:57.

13/2026 Correspondence

The Clerk advised Glen Owers from Basildon Borough Council had confirmed S106 funding had been allocated for improvements to the playground at Coppice Lane and that dates to meet to discuss its refurbishment will be forthcoming and circulated to Councillors.

14/2026 Date of Next Meeting

The next council meeting will be held on the 25th February 2026.

With no further business the meeting closed at 21:04

Signed: _____
Chairman

Date: _____