

**Little Bardfield Parish Council
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**



**Minutes of the Meeting on 29nd January 2025 at 7pm
at Little Bardfield Cricket Club Pavilion**

Present: Cllr Andrew Davies (Chairman), Cllr Colin Simpson (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Juliet O'Brien, Sophie Blair-Wolker (Clerk). Also present District Cllr Mike Tayler, and 1 Parishioner in part.

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30th January 2025

- 1. Employment** – To employ Sophie Blair-Wolker as Clerk to Little Bardfield Parish Council. **P: by Cllr Davies, S: Cllr Simpson, All in fav.**
- 2. Chairman's Welcome** – The Chairman welcomed those present.
- 3. Apologies for absence** – Apologies were received from County Cllr Martin Foley.
- 4. Declarations of Interest in any matters on the agenda** – None.
- 5. Minutes** – The minutes for the meeting on 4th December were approved. **P: Cllr Davies, S: Cllr Simpson, All in fav.**
- 6. Public forum** – A parishioner who was present advised that the Council's contact sheet on the public notice boards were incorrect and needed updated with the new Clerk's details and the Councillor's gov.uk email addresses.

Action- Clerk to update contact sheet and put on notice boards.

The parishioner also mentioned that there is an overgrowing hedge on Stones Corner, which is hazardous for road users. Alternatively, there is a pot hole, which the parishioner had already reported, on the same part of the road. It was suggested that the Council reach out to a neighbouring Parish Council who may be able to offer advice on how to minimise the dangers of the hedge, and if such updates are received from Essex Highways regarding the pot hole, they would be shared.

Action- Clerk to contact neighbouring Parish Council for advice on overgrown hedge.

A question was asked by the parishioner as to when there would be an update in the Bardfield Times from the Council. It was suggested that the Council get in touch with the editor with an article to share in the next edition of the magazine.

Action- Clerk to prepare an article introducing the new Clerk, with details of the new Councillor email addresses.

7. County Councillor and District Councillor Reports

Cllr Tayler had given an update on the most recent UDC meeting held on 8th January. He mentioned the expressed concerns the Council had regarding the introduction of a directly-elected Mayor in Essex and implications for local governance. He highlighted the success seen in some regions but noted that in other areas, such mayoral models have not significantly benefited residents, instead by adding an extra layer of government with associated costs. He commented that if Essex County Council cancels the May 2025 County Council elections, Uttlesford's representation would be diminished, failing to accommodate its growing population.

Cllr Tayler also raised the Council's concerns against the potential creation of large unitary councils that could threaten Uttlesford's unique rural identity and lead to inadequate representation. The challenges of merging services and the risks of increased council tax were highlighted, particularly the likelihood of higher bills for residents due to the need to equalize tax rates among existing councils. He underscored the long-term impact on service improvements and cost-saving initiatives due to the resource diversion required for such reorganisations.

8. Planning

8.1 Applications with Uttlesford District Council

Planning Reference	Proposal	Address	Decision
UTT/23/3230/FUL	Planning details here	Pauls Farm Little Bardfield Road Little Bardfield CM7 4TN	Awaiting decision
UTT/24/2786/FUL	Planning details here	Frenches Farm Oxen End Little Bardfield	Approved
UTT/24/2536/FUL UTT/21/3574/FUL	Planning details here	Frenches Farm Oxen End Little Bardfield Essex	Approved

9. Highways Issues

It was noted that a report of significant potholes on Little Sampford Road was initially submitted to Essex Highways in November 2024. Awaiting feedback, it was understood that the report had been assigned to an inspection team by Essex Highways for evaluation. Regrettably, it has been observed that the condition of the potholes has exacerbated over the intervening period. The current state of the lane renders it impassable without traversing through one or more of the numerous large potholes present. Furthermore, nearby potholes are being created as a direct consequence of vehicles attempting to navigate the existing hazards through avoidance actions. All of the information has been forwarded to Cllr Foley for him to pursue.

It has also been reported that a salt bin located at the corner of Dairy Lane and Little Sampford Road has been damaged and is in need of replacement. Given the importance of maintaining public safety, particularly during winter months, it is essential that this issue is prioritised to ensure the continued safety of pedestrians and road users.

Action- Clerk to order a new salt bin.

10. Community Fund – To ratify payments **P: Cllr O'Brien, S: Cllr Simpson, All in fav.**

The following payments have been approved:

Active Fuels Ltd	£314.48
Wethersfield Airbase Scrutiny Committee (WASC)	£315
Uttlesford Food Bank	£200
Thaxted Surgery	£300
Thaxted Community Mini Bus	£150
Essex & Herts Air Ambulance	£150
Creamer Fund	£300

11. Protected Lane – No further updates required.

12. Parish Council Emails – All new gov.uk email addresses for the Clerk and Councillors are now active.

13. Almshouses – Matt Pease-Watkins to be approved as a new trustee to The Charity of Sarah Bernard. Agreed upon appointment.

14. Finance

14a Payments – **P: Cllr O'Brien, S: Cllr Simpson, All in fav.**

The following payments have been approved:

Jessica Ashbridge	Previous Clerks wages (June-Dec)	428.42
Force 36 Ltd	Email Set-up and monthly maintenance	90.52

14b Quarterly Accounts – The accounts were received.

14c Parish Council Treasurer's account balance - £4,925.05 30th January 2025

14c Community Fund account balance - £6756.05 30th January 2025

15. Items for the next agenda

- Clerks report.

16. Date of next meeting – Annual Council Meeting & Annual Parish Meeting- **14TH May 2025**

The chairman closed the meeting at 20.03.