



# Theydon Bois Parish Council

Parish Office, The Village Hall, Coppice Row,  
Theydon Bois, Essex CM16 7ER

Clerk to the Council: Mrs Julia Gale  
Assistant Clerk to the Council: Mrs Sarah Gysbers

## Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of the Council held at the Village Hall 7:30pm on Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025

**Councillors Present:** Cllrs Gooch (Chairman), Purkiss, Amos, Blake, Hannibal, Morton,

**Officers Present:** Sarah Gysbers, Deputy Clerk to the Council,  
Julia Gale Responsible Financial Officer.

**Members of the Public:** The meeting was attended by no members of the public.

**1839. Apologies for Absence.** Cllr Gill, Cllr Cowup, Cllr Holly Whitbread and PC Cook.

**1840. To discuss and approve the minutes from 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025.** [Approved.](#)

**1841. Disclosure of Interests with regard to specific items on the agenda** (existence of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, or existence and Nature of other Pecuniary Interest or a Non-pecuniary Interest). The Council has adopted Essex Public Law Partnership Code of Conduct - [None.](#)

**1842. Public Participation session with regard to specific items on the agenda.** [None.](#)

**1843. Police Report.**

**1844. Clerks Report.**

Dr Neil Hudson MP sent an email to the clerk and some residents in the village:

I am increasingly worried about the increase in the nitrous oxide gas canisters that we are finding; an issue I am going to press at Westminster.

Please pass on my thanks to all the volunteers and the members of the Parish Council for all they are doing to keep the village as it is.

#### **1845. Reports from County/District Councillors.**

Cllr Holly Whitbread sent an update;

##### **THE BELL HOTEL, EPPING**

Recent weeks have been difficult for our community. Like most residents, I want to see the Bell Hotel closed immediately. It is not suitable for asylum accommodation and places significant pressure on local services.

At the same time, I understand the concern around protests and national attention. In moments like this, we need calm, facts and responsible leadership. I urge everyone to rely on trusted sources and avoid misinformation.

I want to thank our local police officers who are working under great pressure. They have my full support.

I recently brought a motion to Full Council calling for the immediate and permanent closure of the Bell Hotel. It was passed unanimously. We continue to press the Home Office through every legal and democratic route available.

In my speech, I recognised that while many protesters are local people with legitimate concerns, a small number are exploiting the issue for extremist or self-serving purposes. We cannot let them hijack this debate. When a nationalist group tore down and burned a sign made by local children, I condemned the action and reported them. I will always speak up for our whole community—not just the loudest voices.

Our town has become a flashpoint in the national debate on illegal immigration. I share residents' frustration. The Government must take stronger action to stop the boats and end the use of asylum hotels, which are failing both those placed in them and the communities affected.

Epping deserves better. The Bell Hotel must be closed now.

##### **SOLAR FARMS**

Large-scale solar farm applications are being proposed across Epping Forest, including locally between Epping Upland and Thornwood Common and in the Tawney Common area. While renewable energy matters, it must not come at the cost of damaging Green Belt land or productive farmland.

I have launched a petition opposing inappropriate solar farm developments. It now has over 1,000 signatures, showing the strength of local opposition.

We need a proper national policy that prioritises rooftops and brownfield sites—not open countryside. I will continue working with residents to protect our rural landscape and ensure development is environmentally and locally appropriate.

##### **EPPING LEISURE CENTRE – OPENING NOVEMBER**

Work on the new Epping Leisure Centre is progressing well. The facility, which includes a swimming pool, solar panels and eco-friendly heat pumps, will open this November behind the High Street on the old Bakers Lane car park.

Local children are particularly excited about the new pool. The construction company, Pelican, has been praised for keeping the site clean and involving schools in biodiversity projects, including bug hotels built by Epping Primary and Ivy Chimneys pupils.

#### PLAY IN THE PARK – THEYDON BOIS

Play in the Park returns this summer with free outdoor sessions for children across the district.

Theydon Bois Village Green

Tuesday 27 August

10:00 am to 12:00 pm

No booking required. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Other sessions in Epping at Stonards Hill Recreation Ground will take place on Wednesday 6 August and Wednesday 20 August, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. For more dates visit: [eppingforestdc.bookinglive.com](http://eppingforestdc.bookinglive.com)

#### HIGHWAYS UPDATE

Road and pavement repairs are underway as part of Essex County Council's £25 million Priority One Scheme. This is the council's largest ever additional highways investment.

Locally, resurfacing has been completed on Graylands. I continue to raise issues and request improvements across Theydon Bois and surrounding areas.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION AND DEVOLUTION

Councils across Greater Essex are developing a business case for local government reform to improve services and reduce duplication while protecting community identity.

A model with three unitary councils (East, West and South Essex) is emerging as the most balanced and financially viable. The alternative five-unitary proposal is now considered unworkable. The three-unitary model is supported by both Essex County Council and Epping Forest District Council, though a final decision will depend on further evidence.

I also note that Cllr Louise McKinlay has been selected as the Conservative candidate for Mayor of Essex.

Please do get in touch if I can help with any local matters.

Cllr Amos reported a special meeting to discuss unitary council is being held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

#### **1846. Reports from Parish representatives on outside organisations.**

**None.**

#### **1847. To review and approve new IT Policy as required under new government legislation. [Approved](#)**

#### **1848. Finance Committee.**

**1848.1 To approve payments made since the last meeting. [Approved](#).**

**1848.2 To approve appointment of Internal Auditor. [Approved](#)**

## **1849. Planning Committee.**

### **1849.1 To receive update on planning matters since the last meeting.**

Planning Committee Report to Full Council – 31st July 2025

Since the Full Council Meeting on 26th June 2025, the Planning Committee has considered one Full Planning Application, one Certificate of Lawful Development, one Tree Preservation Order, and two Approval of Details applications. Whilst raising no objections to the full planning application, the Committee requested removal of some permitted development rights, since the extensions would require the removal of a large outbuilding and the site is located in the Green Belt.

Epping Forest District Council ('EFDC') has refused a 'change of use' application for the conversion to 8 x 2 Bedroom Apartments' of a former care home in Coopersale Lane.

The Planning Committee submitted a response to the Government's open consultation on 'Reform of Planning Committees: Technical Consultation' (with contributions also received from Ward Councillors Clive Amos and Sue Jones). Concerns were raised that a so-called 'national scheme of delegation' would reduce the role of the elected Members of a District Council in making decisions on local planning applications in relation to the majority of proposals for new dwellings, and also remove the right of interested parties, and applicants, to speak at a District Planning Committee. It was felt that these changes would be undemocratic and would allow for less public scrutiny of decisions made by a Local Authority.

EFDC has advised, at its Full Council Meeting of July 2025, that it now has a 6 Year Supply of Land, and has delivered above the threshold of 75% of the Housing Delivery Test (HDT). Therefore, it is no longer considered to be a 'presumption authority', which should assist in preserving the openness of undeveloped Green Belt land within the District. An update on the Green Belt Review is not yet available.

A public consultation re. EFDC's potential charging scheme for the introduction of the planning-related 'Community Infrastructure Levy' (CIL) runs until 9th September 2025.

## **1850. Highways, Cemetery and Environment Committee.**

### **1850.1 To receive an update on Highways, Cemetery and Environment matters within the Village.**

Cllr Purkiss reported.

There have been 3 'SLOW' signs painted on the road in the village, primarily outside the children's play area.

He is pursuing the need to have white lines re-done as some are so faded they are barely visible.

The kerbs in Orchard Drive will be done when Harringtons can allow their work schedule to do them.

The tactiles outside the dry cleaners on Forest Drive have been replaced.

The trees outside the flats on Forest Drive have been reported to EFDC as they are now so overgrown they are reaching the windows of the flats above the shops.

At the cemetery the earth from the graves will be moved into the Haha to fill in the dip. It is cost effective to use this earth and with help from Cllr Gill they will access the side lane to transport the earth.

**1851 To receive update on Community Engagement matters within the Village.**

Cllr Blake reported.

It was asked what our involvement would be in the Open Gardens 2026 but as Carol James is yet to confirm if it is going ahead, it was agreed no discussion was needed until we know. The usual contribution is £100 for printing.

The next Emergency Planning exercise is scheduled for October 29<sup>th</sup>. The Village Hall will be used in the afternoon as an emergency respite centre. A request for volunteers was asked.

The meeting with Sheering Council was cancelled and will be rescheduled for some time in September.

The Community Engagement committee have a meeting on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> August.

**1852 Any Other Urgent Business for report (without decision).**

Cllr Gooch has a meeting with David Dadds on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> August at 9.30am to discuss the appeal regarding Il Baccio.

The water leak in Forest Drive is being fixed.

**1853. Public Participation session with regard to items of interest to the Parish.**

None.

**Meeting closed at 8.20pm**

Signed: Cllr P Gooch.....

Dated: 25<sup>th</sup> September 2025