

Minutes of the Meeting of Broxted Parish Council on 12 March 2026 at 7.30pm at Broxted Village Hall

Present:

Cllr Vere Isham (chair), Cllr Sarah Cousins, Cllr Adam Hume, Cllr David Van Haaren and Cllr Rachel Kesterton.

Kate Rixson (Clerk).

The meeting opened at 7.30 pm. The chair welcomed parish councillors, District Councillors Bagnall, Coletta and Sutton, and County Councillor Foley.

26/03-1 Apologies for absence

Cllrs Wendy Adams and Tony Adams gave apologies due to other commitments. The reasons for absence were accepted.

26/03-2 Declarations of interest in matters on the agenda

No interests were declared.

26/03-3 Public open forum

No members of the public were present other than District and County Councillors.

26/03-4 District and County Councillors' reports.

County Councillor Martin Foley had kindly sent a written report which would be circulated by email. He asked for more details of speeding issues between Mole Hill Green and Elsenham. Cllr Foley advised that issues of safety (the lack of lighting at the junction with Hall Road, and the speed limit of 60 mph) should be emphasised when contacting the Highways Authority and that any correspondence be copied to Cllr Susan Barker, division member for Takeley.

Cllr Foley reported that the county council budget and council tax had been set, with a 3.99% increase in council tax. Local government reorganisation was going ahead. It was not yet clear which district councils would be amalgamated with Uttlesford but it was very likely there would be an administrative hub in the former Uttlesford district. Cllr Foley hoped this would be at the Saffron Walden UDC offices in London Road although currently it was being rented out. County council elections would be taking place on 7 May 2026.

District Councillors invited the council to raise any concerns with them. The current position on two developments outside Broxted parish was discussed: unlawful commercial airport-related parking at a site to the west of the M11 bridge in Elsenham parish, where an enforcement notice was being appealed (Elsenham PC strongly opposing the appeal); and a site opposite the junction of Mill Road, Henham, and the B1051 Thaxted Road, where there were several mobile homes in situ which had no planning permission. Cllr Bagnall advised that the emerging Local Plan approved by the Inspectors included a policy for traveller sites but that this had not yet been adopted. The new Local Plan would be considered by the full council in an Extraordinary Meeting on 25 March 2026.

26/03-5 Approval of minutes of the previous Parish Council Meeting

The minutes of the parish council meeting on 12 February 2026 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the chair.

26/03-6 Reports received

26/03-6.1 Clerk's Report

This had been circulated and made available on the website so was taken as read. A copy is annexed to the hard copy of these minutes.

The Clerk reported in the meeting that the council's comments on the National Planning Policy Framework, asking for local flexibility in environmental standards, had been uploaded to the consultation website.

The Clerk reported also that the tree safety report should arrive soon and that arrangements for the annual accounting and governance review (audit) were in hand.

The draft letter proposed at the last meeting, to the UDC cabinet member for planning to give assurances on development if the Local Plan were adopted, was discussed. It was concluded that until the local Plan was formally adopted the member would be unable to give assurances, and that the recent presentation to parish councils by the Head of Planning at Uttlesford had clarified some matters so that the letter would not be productive. Cllr Isham had details of the Inspectors' comments on the district's 5-year supply of land for housing, which related to the issues the council had planned to raise. He would forward this to councillors. It was therefore decided not to send the letter.

26/03-6.2 Financial Reports

26/03-6.2.1 Balances on bank statements and reconciliation with cash books

Bank statements were reviewed by councillors in the meeting and would be checked against the cashbook by Cllr T Adams at the end of the quarter.

Funds received up to 28 February 2026 were £20,459.47 and expenditure to 28 February 2026 was £11,147.12 plus VAT of £577.42 (total £11,724.54). The increase in reserves since 1 April 2025 was therefore £8,734.93.

Bank balances matched the cashbook with £19,815.91 in the deposit account and £8,313.41 in the current account, so total reserves were £28,129.32 at 1 March 2026.

26/03-6.2.2 Payments made since last meeting and those due before the next meeting

A list of payments made and due (contractual, statutory and previously approved), including salary of £149.46 paid in February, had been circulated and was tabled.

Payments previously agreed and/or due before the next meeting included salary for February hours (to be paid in March) of 369.26. This included the balance of holiday pay from 2024-25.

26/03-6.3 Footpaths and highways issues

Cllr Kesterton reported that a ditch had been dug across the route of Footpath 28 leading from Church End at School Villas. She would report this to Essex Highways.

26/03-6.4 Reports from councillors

Cllr Kesterton reported on the Parish Forum Zoom meeting on 10 March 2026. The Community Safety Partnership had been represented. There had been presentations and discussion of the support and advice available for energy resilience, vehicle-activated signs to discourage speeding and training to recognise risks of domestic violence and measures against antisocial behaviour. Contact details had been provided in relation to these issues. The Head of Planning, Dean Hermitage, had provided details of the Local Plan which had now been approved by the Inspectors so long as it was modified in line with their advice. Cllr Kesterton noted that the Countryside Protection Zone would still cover and protect

areas of Broxton and that, as the Local Plan included no strategic allocation of development in the parish (which was classified as “open countryside”), applications for large developments would not be granted.

The modifications requested by the Planning Inspectors were acceptable to the cabinet and the Local Plan was now being recommended for approval by the full council on 25 March. If approval were delayed, the district council would be subject to revised requirements for house-building, so that it would have to provide plans for another 1,000 houses. The terms of the Community Infrastructure Levy (a payment to be made by developers to the local community) were being finalised and should be complete by the summer.

26/03-7 Planning decisions made and new planning matters to be considered

26/03-7.1 Decisions made by Uttlesford District Council and outcome of appeals

A note of planning decisions had been circulated and was tabled.

26/03-7.2 New applications, appeals and enforcement matters open for comment

Application UTT/26/0488/DFO, regarding land east of Goodacres House – details of appearance, landscape, layout and scale for Plots 1-3 – was considered. After discussion the council concluded that no comments would be submitted.

Application UTT 26/0388/FUL, for land east of Peartrees, Brick End – to build two houses with access and parking, deadline for comments 19 March 2026. The council noted the reasons for decisions to refuse previous similar applications. It was decided to submit comments pointing out conflicts with the current and the emerging Local Plans in relation to the effect on heritage assets and the impact of development on the rural character of the area. **Action: Clerk to circulate a draft for approval.**

Application UTT/26/0512/FUL (notified after publication of the agenda), for land rear of Tudor Hall, Brick End Road – change of use from paddock to residential and construction of two self-build dwellings, deadline for comments 8 April 2026. The council noted the decisions on previous applications, including on appeal, and that the land adjoined the new conservation area at Pledgdon Green. The clerk would liaise with Henham Parish Council which was known to be opposed to the development. The council concluded that the development would conflict with the emerging Local Plan and adversely affect heritage assets and the environment and would request refusal. **Action: Clerk**

26/03-8 Decisions

26/03-8.1 Consideration of the contract for grass-cutting

The clerk had contacted several contractors. Those who had been willing to quote were unable to offer a better price than the current contractor, who proposed a 3% inflationary increase for 2026. The council reviewed the options and decided to renew the contract with Thornwood Grounds Maintenance Ltd. **Action: Clerk**

26/03-8.2 Consideration of subscribing to CouncilWise at an annual cost of £150

It was noted that a subscription would reduce the fee for training courses and that CouncilWise would provide similar advice and benefits as the Essex Association of Local Councils more locally. However it was unlikely that the annual cost would be recouped and there would be duplication with EALC. After discussion it was decided not to subscribe this year but to review for 2027-28.

26/03-8.3 Consideration of donating to the Five Parishes Magazine

It was noted that the magazine provided important community information and support and that donors were able to advertise free of charge. The council decided to make a donation of £100. **Action: Clerk**

26/03-8.4 Approval and ratification of payments

26/03-8.4.1 a fee of £60 for the clerk to attend a 2.5-hour training course on 2 April, on charities run by councils. was approved (CouncilWise) **Action: Clerk**

26/03-8.4.2 The council ratified the payment of £60 to Per Pro Ltd for examining/advising on the Village Hall Trust accounts, as a donation to the Village Hall charity.

26/03-9 Review of the council's Risk Assessment

The risk assessment document had been circulated and was tabled. The degree of risk and the measures taken to mitigate it were considered. The insurance policy terms were noted to cover both the council and the Hall charity. The clerk would be dealing with factual queries raised by the insurer concerning the materials used to construct the hall building. The clerk was working on contingency and business-recovery measures as referred to in the assessment. **Action: Clerk**

26/03-10 Matters to note and/or for future consideration

The council's assets would be checked soon and repairs arranged as needed. It was noted that the concrete base inside the Brick End bus shelter needed attention. The council was very glad to see that the new windows had been installed and painted and grateful to the volunteer who had carried out the work. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr Hume advised that the back panel of the noticeboard at Brick End needed replacement as it was warped due to moisture getting in. It was agreed that the Little Canfield Men's Shed would carry out repairs.

Dates for ordinary council meetings for 2026-27 were agreed to continue on the second Thursday of each month except August and December.

26/03-10 Date of next meeting

This was confirmed as Thursday 9 April 2026 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. It was noted that the clerk would not be present so Cllr Kesterton had kindly agreed to take a note of proceedings.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.25 pm.