Minutes of the Meeting of Broxted Parish Council on 10 September 2026 at 7.30pm at Broxted Village Hall

Present:
Cllr Rachel Kesterton (chair), Cllr Tony Adams, Cllr Wendy Adams, Cllr Sarah Cousins, Cllr Adam Hume and Cllr David Van Haaren.
The meeting opened at 7.30 pm. The chair welcomed Parish Councillors, District Councillor Geoff Bagnall and two local residents.

26/09-1 Apologies

Cllr Vere Isham was unable to attend due to a major family event abroad. The reason for absence was accepted.

26/09-2 Declarations of interest

No interests were declared.

26/09-3 Public open forum

Clive Rixson reported on the work done on the hall cabling for the Gigaclear internet installation. The council conveyed its thanks to Mr Rixson for carrying out the work which had established power-over-internet connections for ethernet cables in the committee room and main hall. Mr Rixson advised that there were substantial areas of softened wood in the coving running around the hall at ceiling level.
Item 8.3 on the agenda was brought forward to this point in the meeting. The council agreed that the name of the guest wifi network in the hall should be changed from "Gigaclear_2341" to "Broxted Village Hall" which should make connection to the right network more straightforward for users. **Action: Clerk**
Footpaths across nearby farmland were discussed with the landowner who kindly agreed to review the walkable width of Broxted footpath 50 from its starting point opposite "Domus" in Brick End to the bend in the path behind 2 Brick End Cottages and spray out a usable width.
He advised the council that hedges across the parish were encroaching on the road, causing problems for agricultural and other vehicles as road signs and other roadside objects were hidden. In some cases he thought Essex Highways would be responsible for cutting back.
Action: Clerk
It was noted that the "Prince of Wales" pub had been withdrawn from an auction today but that it was likely to be listed for sale by auction again soon.

26/09-4 District Councillors' reports

District Councillor Bagnall referred to the "pause" in the plans for local government reorganisation, which in the case of Essex meant that the decision on how districts would be grouped into unitary authorities had been cancelled.
He advised that from 31 October district councillors would no longer be able to call in most planning applications to the planning committee, as the National Scheme of Delegation would be in force. Parish Councils and residents would need to include all their comments in their written submissions before the deadline, following the initial notification. Decisions on applications would nearly always be delegated to officers so there would not usually be any opportunity to address the committee.

Cllr Bagnall said he was aware of strong objections to the major development in the Local Plan 2026 between Dunmow, Lindsell and Little Easton, and encouraged residents to attend consultation meetings and submit their comments as applications were made.
Cllr Bagnall knew there were outstanding planning enforcement matters in Broxted parish and hoped that with the increased head-count in the enforcement team there would be speedier action.

26/09-5 Approval of minutes of the previous Parish Council Meeting on 2026

The minutes of the parish council meetings on 9 July 2026 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the chair.

26/09-6 Reports received

26/09-6.1 Clerk's Report

The clerk's written report had been circulated and made available on the website and the contents noted. It was taken as read. The national pay award for clerks was noted.

26/09-6.2 Financial Reports

26/09-6.2.1 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.
The position at 31 August 2026 for the current financial year was reported as follows:
Funds received: £10,729.24 - the first half of the precept and quarterly bank interest paid. The second half of the precept was due in late September.
Expenditure: £7,052.74 plus VAT of £364.85, total £7,417.59. The increase in reserves since 1 April 2026 was therefore £3,311.65.
Bank balances matched the cashbook with £25,017.35 in the deposit account and £4,092.18 in the current account. Total reserves were £29,109.53 including an earmarked reserve of £4,000 for the Village Hall.

26/09-6.2.2 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 £491.37 paid in July and £365.40 paid in August, had been circulated and was tabled.

Payments previously agreed and/or due before the next meeting included salary due in September (for August hours plus 2026-27 backdated pay and also holiday pay from 2025-26) of £450.15.

26/09-6.3 Footpaths and highways issues

It was reported that the "two-way traffic" road sign at Brick End had been damaged further and was badly bent. This should be reported. Concern was expressed at a recent road accident and the poor state of road signage generally in the parish. **Action: Clerk**

26/09-6.4 Reports from councillors

None, except for as noted above.

26/09-7 Planning decisions made and new planning matters to be considered

26/09-7.1 Decisions made by Uttlesford District Council and outcome of appeals

A list of planning decisions had been circulated and was in the agenda pack online and in the meeting.

26/09-7.2 Clerk's report on planning enforcement matters

The clerk reported that Uttlesford had said they were progressing enforcement at ""Dunwell" in Chapel End and monitoring other matters. No information had been received concerning the flower farm at Woodgates End, where Highways enforcement might also be expected to be concerned in relation to the position of the access gate. A district councillor had recently asked the clerk for details of any enforcement action successfully taken in the parish and the only example appeared to be the airport-related carparking at "Squirrels". However councillors advised that even there the requirement to reinstate to the original condition had not been enforced. The Clerk was asked to contact Planning Enforcement concerning "Squirrels" and the flower farm accordingly, and to monitor responses on other matters including the untidy site near the Prince of Wales pub. **Action: Clerk**

26/09-7.3 New applications, appeals and enforcement matters open for comment

UTT/26/2208/HHF – Poppies Cottage, Chapel End – adding a single-storey extension and repairs to existing building. The council had been notified about this application after the agenda had been published and served. The deadline for comments was 5 October 2026. Councillors reviewed the plans and noted that the extension would be joined to the existing building via a link and would not impinge on the original structure. The modern style would not conflict with local building styles, which had no consistent pattern. They also noted that repairs were needed and the building was not viable as a home without the work applied for. The chair proposed a motion to comment in favour which was passed unanimously. **Action: Clerk**

26/09-8 Decisions to be made

26/09-8.1 To consider quote and next steps for assessing the Village Hall's suitability for installation of solar panels

It was noted that a professional energy assessment, and advice on whether solar panels would be possible or suitable at the hall, were needed before a quote for panels could be obtained or a grant application for the cost could be made. Quotes (all covering the same tasks) from three assessors specialising in village halls were presented, with information on how soon the report could be provided, and the council decided to engage Groundworks at a cost of £1,546 plus VAT. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr Kesterton would be attending a webinar on 14 Oct 26 concerning the Uttlesford Zero Carbon grant fund, which could provide funding for solar panels or other energy-saving measures at the hall. **Action: Cllr Kesterton**

26/09-8.2 Approval of purchase of a poppy wreath for Remembrance Sunday

The order for a circular Type B wreath was approved at a cost of £23 under s137 LGA 1972.

26/09-8.3 See minute 26/09-3 above

26/09-8.4 Decision on next steps in repairing and/or painting bus shelters

The clerk provided two quotes for painting and one for levelling the concrete floor in the Brick End shelter. Following discussion it was decided that a quote from Cllr T Adams for both areas of work should be considered (the council noting that he was a professional builder). **Action: Clerk, Cllr Adams**

26/09-8.5 Decision on engaging a tree surgeon to fell a tree at Cherry Green

Quotes and background information for three tree surgeons were provided and after discussion the council decided to engage HRJ Tree Services Ltd at a fee of £300 plus VAT. **Action: Clerk**

26/09-8.6 Purchase of a bench and plaque to commemorate Jenny and John Oliveira

A detailed quote and a mock-up of the proposed plaque were considered, A question had been raised with a councillor as to whether the bench was beyond repair. It was agreed that Cllr Hume (in an expert capacity) would inspect the bench and report, before a decision to purchase was made. **Action: Cllr Hume, Clerk**

26/09-9 Matters to note and/or for future consideration

The clerk advised that although the grass had not been cut in August due to drought conditions, weeds had been strimmed and she had requested the invoice. The clerk would be attending a course on using the Canva design application in November.

26/09-10 Date of next meeting

It was confirmed that the council would next meet on Thursday 8 October 2026 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9 pm.