

GESTINGTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk / RFO: Kevin B. Money
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Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 19th. November 2025 at 7pm in the Village Hall

Present: Cllrs P. Bagby (Chair), K. Brazier (Vice-Chair), A. Cooper, G. Carey, D. Green, M. Green, T. Flower, and Kevin B. Money (Parish Clerk). There were no members of the public present.

097/2025 Apologies for Absence were received from ECC Cllr P. Schwier and BDC Cllr D. Holland

098/2025 Declaration of Interest

To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary, Pecuniary or non-Pecuniary Interest relating to items on the agenda Cllrs D. Green and M. Green declared an interest in item 103/2025

099/2025 To approve the Minutes of the last meeting of Gestingthorpe Parish Council

To receive and agree the minutes of the GPC meeting held on 17th. September 2025 **All Agreed**

100/2025 Essex County Councillor report – ECC Cllr Peter Schwier No report was given

101/2025 District Councillor report – BDC Cllr David Holland

Cllr D. Holland sent a report prior to the meeting

Unfortunately, I have to attend a Braintree DC Corporate Scrutiny meeting on that evening, which must take priority.

The key point I would have liked to make to the PC is around the very substantial and locally ringfenced Community Benefit scheme of funding that is shortly to be available from National Grid. Gestingthorpe community organisations need to fully capitalise on the opportunity this represents, and should, in my view, identify projects and develop appropriate bids for this one-off opportunity to fund community facility developments. I have published an article with links to the relevant NG websites covering this on Gestingthorpe Facebook Group, and under my Councillor David Holland Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=122154549614771385&set=gm.1426836521737088&idortv=198189147935171> If I can help further with this or anything else, please let me know.

102/2025 Public Participation Session No questions were asked

103/2025 Planning Applications

25/02214/FUL - Rectory Farm Audley End Gestingthorpe Essex CO9 3AU

Relocation of existing steel barn.

Due to the planning timetable. Gestingthorpe Parish Council, under delegated powers, submitted the following planning response on 1st. November 2025

Gestingthorpe Parish Council do not object to the relocation of the steel barn parallel to the road but after a site inspection with the owner we suggest that the barn would be better sited 4m further away from the road with new tree planting between the relocated barn and the existing hedge so that the visual impact of the barn is 'softened' by the additional planting. The reason for this is that when approaching the village from the Halstead direction the landscape of hedgerows and trees dominate the view with buildings are set back a good distance from the road edge until the row of houses adjacent to the Pheasant public house

25/02478/HH - Laurel Cottage Sudbury Road Gestingthorpe Essex CO9 3BL

Proposed cartlodge.

RESOLVED: Gestingthorpe Parish Council has no objection to this application

104/2025 Update on changeover to .gov.uk both the Councillor emails and Website

All Councillors, Clerk and website have been converted to the new .gov.uk system

Facebook page posting access is with Cllr P. Bagby

105/2025 Representative reports

- **Highways** – Cllr M. Green

TRAFFWEB shows no collisions in the parish since the last meeting, the last one being in February 2024, although it is worth noting that TRAFFWEB data is only shown up to 30-9-25.

The village litter pick in October was a great success, thank you to everyone who took part, future litter pick dates to be arranged.

At the last meeting I suggested that we should request slow signs to be painted on the road, either side of the

Pheasant PH which was the location of a serious collision in May 2023. Cllr Schwier suggested that I contact the Local Highways Panel (LHP) to submit this request, however the LHP are not accepting any further applications at this time. I emailed Cllr Schwier to ask him to take the matter forward for us.

The sharp bend sign on Sudbury Road near to JW Pot Kiln Chase has been broken and on the ground for some time. 11/12/23 It was determined it needed a repair. 13/11/25 The following update was posted - We have risk assessed this enquiry and determined that it does not need immediate action. We have recorded this issue and will continue to monitor the area during future inspections. If the issue further deteriorates, we will consider including it in any future works in the area.

- **Playing Field** – Cllr A. Cooper

I visited the Playing Field this morning. I slightly eased the rubber ties around the two recently planted trees, but apart from an outdoor barbeque to be cleared away by the Cricket Club, there was nothing else to report. Michael Sharp has very kindly offered to undertake the trimming of the overhanging branches, for which I am very grateful.

- **Footpath** – Cllr K. Brazier - No issues have been raised to the Council since our last meeting Cllr T. Flower to take over footpath responsibility

- **Village Hall** – Cllr D. Green

Improvements are still ongoing with the village hall, most recently the small hall has been painted, and new bookshelves have been put up, giving easier access to the books.

The committee have agreed not to replace the existing shed, the shed will be cleared out and any items that are not currently of use will be disposed of, hopefully giving more room to store other items.

There was some barn paint left over from when the Pavilion was painted and if the councillors don't object, the village hall could use the left-over paint to re paint the shed.

Fund raising for the proposed new kitchen have begun with a cocktail evening on the 5th of July 2025. Further fund-raising projects will be continued into 2026.

The Village Hall Charity place for the 2026 London marathon is being run by Rachel Patten.

Coffee mornings are still well attended by the villagers.

26th September 2025 McMillan coffee morning which will be held by Chris and Rose Harman.

Late summer BBQ 19th September.

- **Defibrillator** update - Cllr K. Brazier

Current volunteers who check the defibrillator on Church Green regularly have been advised of the proposal to bring the defibrillator under Parish Council management. Rotas are being drawn up for January 2026 – June 2026 and we are trying to make contact with Community Heartbeat Trust to update the VETS line.

The proposal is later on in our Agenda

The Gestingthorpe Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) is located in the old telephone kiosk on Church Green.

The AED is managed by Community Heartbeat Trust (Registered Charity Number 1132824) under an annual service contract which covers both insurance and consumables. The current service agreement is for four years and runs from 01 May 2022 to 01 May 2026. The cost is **£504** paid up front as a single payment **(annual cost £126)**.

The phone box is owned by Community Heartbeat Trust (CHT). It was gifted to CHT by BT to provide Gestingthorpe with an AED. CHT are responsible for any maintenance costs to the kiosk. BT is responsible for the electricity supply to the kiosk and supplies it free of charge.

There is an emergency telephone line in the phone box which allows the user to call the emergency services directly. This costs **£60** p/a payable in September.

We also subscribe to a Village Emergency Telephone System (VETS) which is administered by CHT. This provides a single point of contact via a local number which rings all volunteers simultaneously. While the intention is for this to be used for cardiac arrest and defibrillator needs, it can be used in any situation where local help is required. VETS cost **£100** p/a payable in June.

Changes to the Webnos reporters list and the VETS list are made via CHT.

Under the Service contract we are required to check the equipment on a weekly basis and report readiness status via the CHT WebNos reporting system.

The defibrillator is also registered on **The Circuit**, the national defibrillator network administered by the British Heart Foundation and connected to the **East of England Ambulance Service**.

Funds are held on account at CHT and in a bank account at NatWest.

As of 1st November, CHT hold **£181.00** on account for the Gestingthorpe defibrillator and the balance at NatWest is **£375.22**.

Summary of Annual costs

Annual Service Contract	£126 p/a minimum 4 years payable up front (Renewal due 01 May 2026).
Emergency phone line	£60 (Next due September 2026).
VETS	£100 (Next due June 2026).

Funding for the defibrillator is currently through donations, fundraising and Parish Council grant. The grant allocation for the current financial year is £100 although to date has not been utilised.

- **ROSPA 2025 play inspection report** – Cllr D. Green Nothing further to report
Cllr Karen Brazier and I visited the playground yesterday. The ROSPA report was completed June 2025 and there were some recommendations made by them.
 - **Seating/benches-** strimmer damage to posts. There is damage to the bottom of the posts, but I cannot see a solution as the grass needs to be cut around the bottom.
 - **Fencing (perimeter)** – moderate repairs needed. Some of the fence is now working loose and there are a few fence panels missing causing large gaps in the fence. The top of the fence posts is also very worn.
 - **Litter Bin (bus stop) Missing** – this has been replaced.
 - **Signing (bus stop)-** this needs to be updated with new contact telephone numbers.
 - **Adventure Trail – Chain links notched.** We could not see where this was apparent on the chain. We did note that on the wooden steps that there are some caps missing exposing holes and rough metal.
Timber decaying- all the timber posts are showing wear and tear.
Wire Exposed on cargo net – there are a few places where the rope has worn away exposing some of wire beneath, it would not cause any injury as there are no sharp jagged edges.
Cap Missing- There is a plastic cap missing on one of the pieces of equipment, exposing sharp metal edges.
 - **Swing – Junior 1 bay 2 seat with barrier rails. – Bird fouling-** this is now not present.
Loose swing seat bolt – We could not find loose bolts on any of the swings.
Distance between the swing and support is insufficient- The report does not indicate what this distance needs to be and there is no practicable action.
 - **Slide with ramp- Timber is decayed they recommend and penetration test (at cost).** Most of the timber is showing wear and tear and could benefit from being re-painted. There are some loose wood panels at the side.
Finger Entrapment- eliminate the entrapment. The report shows potential finger entrapment on the base at the top of the steps due to the design of the area.
 - **Adult Fitness Cross Trainer- Minimum instructions are not attached.** Identification of manufacturer will need to be found to see if there are any instructions available.
 - **Rocker Digger – Hand Grip not firmly fixed.** The top metal handrail is loose and spins around.
 - **Rocker Dog – No issues.**
 - **Multi-Play Toddler- Slide bar not fitted across the access to the slide.** There is no bar.
 - **Swing Junior 2 bay 4 seat with barrier rails- Timber decayed, bird fouling, Loose swing eye bolt, Chain wear.** Timber is showing wear and tear but nothing to have concern over, bird fouling is no longer present, there is a loose eye bolt on one of the swings, could not identify any chain wear, just surface rust which easily comes off onto your hands.
 - **Rocker Seesaw- Wear In the bearings.** The seesaw does appear to have some wear in the centre and is easily moved side to side.
 - **Basketball post-no signage and over hanging trees preventing use.** There is no signage, and the tree branches are overhanging making it unusable.
 - **Football Goal- Item is damaged, angle bar is missing.** The football post does need to be replaced.
 - **Rubber Tiles are lifting, and gaps are appearing causing trip hazard.** All the rubber tiling around the play equipment has started to lift and large gaps are appearing with grass growing up in between.

All around this area there is many badger holes.

- **Pavilion** – Cllr D. Green

Since the last Parish Council meeting there is not much new to report in relation to the Pavilion.

The cricket club remain the main user, and the season has now finished.

I will be collating the number of home matches they have played this season and then the parish can raise an invoice to the cricket club.

The lights in both sets of changing rooms are still not working. I have left messages with the electrician who still has not come back to me, I will continue to chase.

The cricket club are in possession of the new kitchen units which I believe are stored up at Hill Farm. Richard Sillitoe has given a verbal quotation of £800.00 to fit new cabinets and clear away the old ones. He is currently on holiday and can supply a written quotation on his return. I do not have a time scale.

Photographs and information regarding the village hall still need to be completed for the new website; I propose to complete this after the new kitchen cabinets have been fitted.

The football team have not been in contact this year, so we must assume that they no longer wish to use the facilities or the pitch

Cllr P. Bagby proposed accepting the quote of £118 for electrical works. Cllr D. Green seconded. **All Agreed**

a) To accept a quotation of £800.00p to fit new cabinets and clear away the old ones. To place this item on hold

106/2025 Village Events Committee - Village Fete 2026
Village Events – Parish Council Meeting 19th. November 2025

Committee formed Chris Harman: Penny Bagby: Dawn Green: Charles Whilems

Agreed to hold village fete in 2026 – Gestupfest26. Proposed date Saturday 12th. September 2026.

Permission sought from Parish Council and Mr & Mrs Sharp for the fete to be held on the Playing Field.

Councillors agreed to hold the fete on the village green

Village Hall to be used for Teas, Coffee & Cake and toilet facilities.

Activity to be focused on church.

Last fete held 14th. Sept 2019 Income generated £4,440 less expenses £1,951. Surplus £2,489.

Distributions made to:

Village Hall	450
Christmas lights for VH & church	250
Church	400
Cricket Club	350
Football Club	100
History Group	150
Defibrillator	150
Playing Field Equipment/maintenance	100
Handbells	50
Total	2000

Balance retained 500

Approx £1100 currently held in the Gestingthorpe Village Events account. Chris Harman & Lindsay Smith signatories. Monies in this account to be used to cover upfront expenses.

Preliminary discussion held on:

Licensing requirements: Insurance: Sponsors: Parking: Food & drink sales: Stalls: Events/Activities

Raffle prizes & ticket sales: Waste: Risk Assessment: Helpers on the day:

Next meeting to be held after permissions received.

107/2025 EALC Training for Councillors All training courses sent to Councillors

108/2025 To bring the Defibrillator into the ownership of the Parish Council
PROPOSAL

The project to bring a defibrillator to the Village and to raise awareness of Cardiac Arrest more generally was driven by former resident Wendy Jones. When Wendy left the village, the management of the defibrillator and funding was taken over by Steve & Penny Bagby. This is an informal arrangement and as such, risks information being lost each time there is a handover of responsibilities between volunteers. This could result in required checks not occurring or having insufficient funds to meet the annual running costs of the defibrillator.

It is proposed to bring the funding and management of the defibrillator under the control of the Parish Council. The PC will fund the annual running costs of the defibrillator via the PC budget. Current costs (without provision for training), equates to **£286 annually** and may result in an increase to the precept.

The bank account at NatWest will be closed with the balance moved to the PC bank account.

The Parish Clerk will be responsible for payments from the PC bank account to Community Heartbeat Trust when required and as directed by the PC.

Donations received for the maintenance of the defibrillator will be received into the PC bank account and designated solely for that purpose.

A designated councillor will be responsible for:

- Maintaining and issuing the defib check rota
- Managing the VETS volunteers
- Ensuring that weekly defib readiness Webnos reports are completed.
- Receipt of donation advices from CHT
- Monitoring of funds held at CHT and advising the PC when a funds transfer is required.
- Renewal of service agreement
- Liaison with Community Heartbeat Trust to resolve any issues.

Some or all these responsibilities could be delegated to someone off council if necessary.

Note: The proposal applies only to the defibrillator on Church Green. The defibrillator at The Pheasant is owned and maintained by The Pheasant although volunteers are used to check defib readiness on a regular basis with any issues reported to the pub management.

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Cllr K. Brazier seconded. **All Agreed**

109/2025 Finance

a) To receive the Bank reconciliations as at 31st. October 2025

Councillors noted the Bank reconciliations as at 31st. October 2025

b) To receive the comparison of Actual to Budget for 2025/2026

Councillors noted the comparison of Actual to Budget for 2025/2026

c) To approve the payment of Accounts for October and November 2025 and to agree a transfer of funds to meet the Parish Councils financial requirements **All Agreed**

110/2025 2026-2027 budget - Councillors to discuss draft 2026-2027 budget

Councillors discussed the 2026-2027 budget. This budget will be finalised at the 21st. January '26 meeting

111/2025 Items for Next Agenda

GPC Website update: Litter picking dates in 2026: Play equipment: Fencing around recreation ground

112/2025 2026 meeting dates: 21.01: 18.03: 20.05: 15.07: 16.09: 18.11.26

113/2025 Date of next meeting is on Wednesday 21st. January 2026 at 7pm

114/2025 Closure of the Meeting

To close the Meeting having considered and determined all items of business.

The Chair then closed the meeting at 8.35pm and thanked everyone for attending

Signed

PBagby

P. Bagby - Chair

21st. January 2026