

## **MORETON, BOBBINGWORTH AND THE LAVERS PARISH COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES**

**Meeting:** Council Meeting

**Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025

**Time:** 7.30 PM

**Venue:** Magdalen Laver Village Hall

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#### **PRESENT:**

**Councillors (7):** Cllr Stuart (Meeting Chairman), Cllr Padfield, Cllr Carpenter, Cllr Offord, Cllr Day, Cllr Darken, Cllr Dawson

**Also in Attendance (1):** Adriana Jones – Clerk

**Members of the Public: (8)** – inc ECC Cllr McIvor, EFDC Cllr Morgan

**Members of the Press (0)**

#### **PC.554 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllrs Crosbie and Collins. EFDC Cllr Balcombe had offered his apologies but had updated the Clerk on a number of matters prior to the meeting.

#### **PC.555 OTHER ABSENCES**

None.

#### **PC.556 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

#### **PC.557 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025 were approved. **PROPOSED** Cllr Offord and **SECONDED** Cllr Darken. Unanimously agreed.

#### **PC.558 PARISHIONERS' FORUM**

The Chairman welcomed members of the public present. A resident expressed his concern regarding the inappropriate use of footpaths, with motorcyclists and quad bikes using the paths going over farm land, specifically Byway 10 in Bobbingworth. The resident advised that this byway had been diverted some years back, however there continued to be a significant use of motorised vehicles using footpaths and areas not suitable or permitted for such use. The resident advised that the farmer who farms this land leaves a perimeter around the land for wilding, however the individuals using the motorised vehicles seem to be a law unto themselves. Following the diversion of the byway, excellent signage had been erected which also makes it clear where the private driveway is. The resident advised that the matter had been raised with the police who simply are not interested.

The Clerk advised that she would contact the other Parish and Town Councils in the Epping Forest Area to see if anybody has had this issue, and come up with any innovative solutions or success stories, and she would report back at the next meeting. It was noted that this was an issue across Essex. The Clerk would also publish information on the Councils Facebook page, and raise the matter with PC Shepherd. Cllr Padfield confirmed that the crime is trespass when they go over fields and private property, but the challenge is catching them.

The same resident advised that the state of the repair of footpaths and gates around Moreton was terrible, specifically by the bridge that had been cordoned off for some time. The meeting Chairman asked the resident to email full details to the Council so that the Parish Council could raise this matter with Alan Roscoe. The resident confirmed he would, and that he would also send photos. Cllr Padfield advised that ECC PRoW representatives were in the area a couple of weeks ago checking up on footpaths. Cllr Day advised he thought it was Moreton 12, over the bridge, first on the left.

#### **PC.559 REPORTS**

- a) Chairmans report – No report

- b) Vice Chairmans report – No report
- c) District and County Councillor reports – EFDC Cllr Morgan advised that there wasn't too much to report from District, other than the Chief Executive had left, and two acting chief executives had been appointed on a temporary basis.

ECC Cllr Mclvor reported on a number of matters, including Devolution and Local Government Reform (LGR), confirming that at some point in the next three years ECC would be abolished, and he believed this was a terrible option, especially considering nobody had been asked about their thoughts on the proposal. Now that a decision had been made, suddenly the Government was carrying out a consultation, after the decision had been made. Cllr Mclvor stated that he felt it was essential the rural communities stepped up as the changes would affect the rural areas. The current proposals were for 5 unitary authorities, with this parish being located within the West Essex area. Cllr Mclvor stated that it was already extremely difficult for residents in rural communities to have a voice, and this would be even harder following LGR, potentially with West Essex going all the way from Waltham Abbey right up to the Cambridge border. He stated it was imperative the Government was aware of the importance of ensuring rural communities continued to have a voice.

Cllr Mclvor stated that ECC voted in an extremely short period of time put themselves forward as a priority Devolution authority, for reasons he was not sure of, meaning the elections in May had now been postponed. He advised that he had a petition with over 5,000 residents signatures, which he had presented to ECC, and suggested that communities should get their member of parliament involved, the majority of which he had spoken to were dead against it. Cllr Mclvor advised that his priority during any transition period would be to ensure front line services are maintained, specifically mental health services, children and adult social care. There was also a discussion that needed to be had about the parishes that border on the edges of new authorities, and how this may affect them. He advised he was very anxious that there was vulnerability to the possibility that the districts which border London may become London boroughs, and that this should be ruled out immediately. Only 10 of the 15 Councils in Essex have agreed to current proposals of having 5 unitary authorities, with Epping Forest District being one of the 5 that has not committed. There is a suggestion they want just 2 larger councils, however the issue with this is that the area would be too large. Cllr Mclvor stated there were so many questions that were yet to be answered, and that he could not understand why there was such a rush, with issues such as finances still not being clear.

With regard to Highways, Cllr Mclvor formally confirmed that the LHP submission for signs and speed issues in Bovinger Mill had been submitted. He advised that Theydon Mount had purchased their own sign, and waited 2 years to get permission to install it. The Local Highway Panel had a huge scheme list, some of which were historic, and allocating funding was challenging with the seven Epping Forest County Councillors having a battle of £100,000 which not much getting done.

Cllr Mclvor confirmed that the £500 Essex County Councillor funding for the new defibrillator at Little Laver was formally agreed, and should now be in the Councils bank account. Cllr Mclvor suggested this Council may wish to look at the Historic England funding, as rural historic areas were losing their identities.

Cllr Offord asked Cllr Mclvor if the Devolution and LGR is a way of the Government trying to get around all the planning laws, to which Cllr Mclvor stated that EFDC voted in favour of not allowing Ward Councillors to vote on planning applications in their own Wards, and as such the whole blame could not be placed at the Government doorstep. Cllr Mclvor stated that there was now a situation where there was lots of fuss being made about 'infrastructure first' then build the houses, but that the Conservate County and District Council had been in place since the adoption of the local plan, and this was all too much too late.

- d) Parish Councillor reports – Agreed to defer Cllr Collins report on the Bobbingworth Salt Bin to the next meeting.
- e) Police Report – PC Shepherd had submitted a written report as follows:  
*Crime stats for last 3mth period - Stats for period 01/12/25 to 01/03/25 - 20 calls to police, of these calls 7 crimes were recorded. Of those 7 crimes the following are crimes considered to have an impact on community: 0 Residential Burglaries., 0 Attempted Residential Burglary, 0 Residential Burglaries of Unconnected Buildings (garage or shed break in etc), 1 Theft of Motor Vehicle, 0 Theft from Motor Vehicles, 0 Vehicle Interference (Trying Car Door Handles etc)*

*Stats for period 01/12/23 to 01/03/24 to compare - 27 calls to police, of these calls 12 crimes were recorded. Of those 12 crimes the following are crimes considered to have an impact on community - 1 Residential Burglaries, 0 Attempted Residential Burglary, 1 Residential Burglaries of Unconnected Buildings (garage or shed break in etc), 0 Theft of Motor Vehicle, 0 Theft from Motor Vehicles, 0 Vehicle Interference (Trying Car Door Handles etc)*  
*As you can see from the stats, the calls to police are down by 25.9% and crime is down 41.6%*  
*The deadline for any Councillor questions for the next meeting is 6<sup>th</sup> May.*

#### **PC.560 REPAIR PEDLARS END SIGN**

As requested the Clerk contacted a local contractor for a quote to complete the works to repair the Pedlars End sign. The contractor advised that prior to progressing any work he would require proof of permission from ECC to confirm the Parish Council was authorised to do the work. The Clerk had requested this permission be obtained by Cllr McIvor, and has chased him regarding this request.

#### **PC.561 LOCAL HIGHWAYS PANEL REQUEST SIGNAGE / SPEED BOBBINGWORTH**

As reported earlier in the meeting, the LHP request for works had been submitted.

#### **PC.562 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY**

Cllr Day advised that with regard to Magdalen Laver 32, as you go down Gould Close, over the Bridge and straight across the field, there had not been a footpath for well over a year. It has been ploughed, sown, harvested, twice over. For over 400 days, there has not been a path. The Clerk confirmed she would report this. It was also noted that the state of the footpaths were diabolical, however given the wet weather there wasn't much that could be done at this time of the year.

#### **PC.563 COMMUNITY DEFIBRILLATORS**

Councillors noted that the Chairman had confirmed that works to install the new unit and defibrillator in the Little Laver phone box and cabinet in Moreton would be completed by the end of March. Councillors noted that the £500 grant funding promised by Cllr McIvor had now been received, and thanks to Cllr McIvor were formally recorded.

#### **PC.564 CHANGES TO PLANNING – GREY BELT / EFDC**

Councillors noted that following publication of the updated NPPF, there had been significant changes to planning with the introduction of Grey Belt. The Clerk tabled at the meeting a summary of what these changes meant, along with providing a brief summary of the position of EFDC in terms of housing supply, and what this meant for how the Parish Council considers planning applications. Councillors noted that they should refer to the Grey Belt hand out when they consider planning applications, and contact the Clerk if they had any queries.

#### **PC.565 SCHOOL PARKING / TRAFFIC**

Cllr Day provided a brief update, advising that he was not aware of any issues over the past 8 weeks. The Clerk advised that EFDC Cllr Balcombe had received correspondence from Cllr Dadd who had been in contact with the school head. It was **AGREED** the Clerk would find out more, and report back at the next meeting.

#### **PC.566 EPPING FOREST DISTRICT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS**

The Clerk provided a brief update on the relevance of this newly formed association. Councillors **AGREED** to the constitution, and to be members of the EFALC.

#### **PC.567 COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH**

No update. It was expected there would be more activity starting in the spring.

#### **PC.568 VE DAY CELEBRATIONS**

Following on from the success of D-Day 80 in 2024, the country is focusing efforts on the celebration of the 80th Anniversary of VE Day which marked the end of the war in Europe and WWII as a whole on 8th May 1945, in a similar way. On Thursday 8th May 2025 communities are being encouraged to light beacons at 9.30pm, and where possible hold parties or celebrations throughout the day in the streets, gardens at home, churches, villages, town halls, pubs, clubs, hotels and all manner of locations throughout the UK. At the January meeting, Cllr Day advised he would liaise with Community Spirit to see if any community events were being held, and if so consideration would be given to providing funding to support any events. Councillors noted that the event must be a free event available to the whole community. Cllr Day confirmed he had liaised with Graeme Cooper, who advised he was currently in discussion with the Dog and Pickle to hold some type of event on their grounds. A further update would be provided at the next meeting.

#### **PC.569 RCCE AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Councillors noted that the meeting arranged for 30<sup>th</sup> January with members of RCCE, representatives of Moreton Village Hall Committee, and the Landowner, to discuss proposals for the village hall alongside a

possible rural affordable housing scheme was postponed, the reason being the landowner wanted to meet with RCCE separately. As such, it was agreed there would be no point in the Parish Council meeting with RCCE until after this had taken place. A new date for the meeting has not yet been arranged, and it is unclear if the RCCE and landowner have met.

#### **PC.570 POWER CUTS IN THE PARISH**

Councillors recalled that a number of complaints had been received regarding the frequency of power cuts in the Parish, and the Clerk had been tasked with obtaining a response from UK Power Networks. A response had now been received as follows:

*I have been liaising with our lead field engineer regarding the power cuts and I can see that the main cause of the power cuts are because of Auto recloses. The short power cuts are due to an item of equipment operating on our overhead network. These devices (auto-reclosers) form part of our protection equipment and automatically cut off the power when a transient (unknown) fault is detected. Wind-borne debris, trees, birds, other animals, severe weather conditions and other unknown cable impacts can cause this to happen. Once the fault has cleared, the power is automatically reconnected, this operation usually lasts a few seconds. We do understand the inconvenience these can cause but we believe that these devices offer better customer service as there is no need for an engineer to attend site to restore power. Without them, it would inevitably result in a much longer power cut. However, when the auto reclose activates on the same span in quick succession line patrols are triggered which are carried out on foot, by radar equipped (LIDAR) helicopter or drones. If no fault is detected, then fault direction devices are employed to narrow the area of the transient fault.*

*The power is fed from an overhead network – and these are unfortunately subject to the whims of the weather – most of these interruptions have been caused by branches, twigs, squirrels, and birds on the line and some of the overhead cables cross water. There are also environmental concerns regarding trees and animals .*

*Trees are the responsibility of councils and other landowners to maintain, and planned shutdowns may be required to carry out this type of work safely. We are regulated to give at least 48 hours notification if we believe a customer will be affected by a planned outage, this is not to be confused with an emergency isolation that can be carried out anytime and is mainly due to safety. UK Power Network's tree cutting policy moved from cyclic to risk based cutting in 2015. This means that, rather than cut every span at 'x' year intervals, we fly the circuits every 2-3 years using laser measurement technology called LIDAR (light Intensive detection & ranging) which returns data informing our control engineers, almost to a leaf, how far vegetation is from above, below and to the sides of our overhead power lines. This is then prioritised as either Very High (<1M), High (1-3M), Medium (4-5M) or Low risk (>5M), which then drives the cutting plan for the next 2 years.*

*Trees, and other shrubs, grow at different rates which, mixed with the abnormal weather conditions, will also impact the cycle of tree trimming. When we are aware of a sequence of outages and believe these to be tree related, our Lead engineers will request line patrols to identify any spans being affected. Once identified a tree manager will then arrange for contracted tree surgeons (Arborists) to complete an inspection and then plan the tree clearance. If an emergency situation occurs, then this process would be resourced but can add to delays with the planned outages required to facilitate the trimming of trees in our network. We recommend that if you see tree branches touching the cables to alert our faults centre by calling 105, we will arrange for a linesman to carry out an inspection and perform immediate work, if necessary, as long as we have the necessary land permissions. If you see areas where the branches are almost touching the cables, a tree-trimming job can be logged via our general enquiries team. The General Enquiries line is open from 9-5 Monday to Friday, the number is 08000 294 285.*

*I would like to apologise again for the supply interruptions, regrettably we are unable to guarantee an uninterrupted power supply as faults occur for many reasons, most of which are beyond our direct control. I can assure you that we are always determined to deliver a reliable supply of electricity and will always attend to faults and carry out repairs as efficiently and as safely as possible. The LFE is doing everything possible to locate these faults and a significant part of the budget has been used to improve network equipment, insulate cables and tree privately owned trims away from the cables. In the meantime, if you experience a power cut or another supply anomaly, please call us anytime on 105. 105 is free to call from UK landline and mobile networks and will enable our advisors to keep you informed by text messages, call-backs or both. If the residents would like to complain they can either call on 0800 028 4587 or they can go on our website, I have provided the link below. <https://www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/help-and-contact/im-unhappy-with-the-service-that-i-have-received>*

### PC.571 CLERKS COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

The Clerk reported the following:

- a) ECC, EFDC, EALC and RCCE communications are emailed to Members on a regular basis and where relevant information is included
- b) Overflowing litter bin Moreton Village Green – reported and cleared
- c) Clerk chased ECC with regard to progress on the Moreton Village Green registration application (submitted 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025) – Confirmation of receipt received, but no date or timelines for processing. The application had been with ECC for over two months, and the Clerk has been advised that confirmation of receipt does not constitute formal acknowledgement of this Councils application at this stage.
- d) Clerk chased EFDC with regard to the review of the Neighbourhood Plan (submitted 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024), and confirmation now received that the update had been accepted, with some minor grammatical changes, and this has now been uploaded onto our website. Noted will be a formal agenda item for next meeting so fully recorded.
- e) Update on Council Tax rates set by EFDC placed on the Parish Councils website.
- f) Clerk contacted EFDC regarding overgrown hedging at the Glebe. Response from EFDC is that they do not have any features (trees) or maintenance at The Glebe, Magdalen Laver, so they will be unable to assist. EFDC stated the hedges may be on Essex Highways maintenance schedule, so suggested the Clerk report this matter to them, especially if they are causing an obstruction to the highway. Clerk checked, and this is not on ECC schedule. Cllr Padfield advised they are still Council properties and as such should be maintained by EFDC Housing, as they had been in the past.
- g) EFDC notified of precept request for 2025/2026
- h) Email received from EFDC Passenger Information regarding Bus Consultation for DaRT7 operated by Epping Forest Community Transport. Essex County Council (ECC) wants to hear views on the proposed route changes of DaRT7 to connect members of the public from Epping Forest to Harlow Town Centre. Consultation Period is between 7 March 2025 – 21 March 2025. The proposal is to extend the area covered by DaRT7 to include Harlow Town Centre Only. Councillors advised they would have no issue with this change.

### PC.572 COMMEMORATIVE BENCH CAROL FOULSER

The Chairman advised that the wording, plaque and layout had been agreed with the village hall committee, however the committee now need to find the words for their recipient. An update is expected in Spring. Cllr Darken asked where the bench would be located, and it was confirmed it would be within the grounds of the Magdalen Laver Village Hall, and would be a joint commemorative bench Carol and Dick Norman. Cllr Darken advised there was a commemorative bench for Mr Norman on Matchen Green, however the plaque had disappeared.

### PC.573 LOVE YOUR BUS GRANT FUND INITIATIVE ECC

As agreed, the Clerk placed a post on the Parish Councils social media pages in order to establish if there was any evidence of need for an additional or extended local service. There were two 'non specific' responses, and as such this would not be deemed sufficient evidence of community need in order to apply for this funding. Therefore, no application was made.

### PC.574 PLANNING

- a) Councillors **AGREED** responses to the following planning applications which may not have been responded to before the date of this meeting:

<b>APPEAL</b> EPF/2136/24 EFDC <b>AP-13451</b> #3356423	Firs House, Moreton Road, Bobbingworth, Ongar, CM5 0LU	Certificate of lawful development for the proposed construction of a swimming pool building with gym and plant room. Deadline for response 19/3/25 PC were not able to comment – As such, the Parish Council would not make any further comment to the planning inspector.
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- b) Councillors **NOTED** the following planning applications below which had been responded to by way of the Clerk's delegated powers following email consultation with Councillors:

EPF/0223/25	Humphreys, Greenman Road, Magdalen Laver, Ongar, CM5 0ER	Extension to patio, construction of a gazebo. <b>NO OBJECTION</b>
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EPF/0237/25	2, Moreton Bridge, Moreton, Ongar, CM5 0LL	Construct single storey rear extension to enlarge a bathroom and replace space to be used as a bedroom by a registered disabled person. <b>NO OBJECTION</b>
EPF/0050/25	3, Gainsthorpe Road, Ongar, CM5 0NG	Single storey rear extension. <b>NO OBJECTION</b>
The Clerk advised Councillors that she had been approached by a neighbour to this property (who was in the public gallery) with regard to a number of concerns she had, including objecting to the planning application and the encroachment onto Council owned land. The Clerk had advised the resident that the Parish Council would not get involved in the encroachment issue as this was a civil matter that the individual would have to address, however the Clerk had advised of the steps that could be taken. With regard to the application itself, the Clerk advised the resident that the Parish Council had not objected to the application. Councillors Stewart and Dawson were the ward Councillors for this area, and it was noted that both the resident, and the applicant themselves (who was also in the public gallery), had invited Councillors to visit their properties to gain an overall view of any future application.		

c) Councillors **NOTED** the following planning applications for which EFDC **do not** accept comment:

EPF/0091/25 CLD Prop	2 Brookside Cottages, Tilegate Road, Magdalen Laver, Ongar	Certificate of lawful development for a proposed hip to gable and rear dormer roof extensions.
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d) Councillors **NOTED** the following planning decisions by EFDC:

EPF/2490/24	Blossom Lodge, Maltings Farm, Maltings Hill, Moreton, CM5 0JY	Revised application to EPF/1877/24) Construction of outbuilding to facilitate home gym and home office.	Approved 16/2/25 <i>PC had no objection</i>
EPF/2567/24 & EPF/2568/24	North Wilmore Barn, Workers Road, High Laver, Ongar, CM5 0DZ	Permission for already constructed lobby which has been built with an eaves level higher than that of the originally consented scheme, and LB application for the same.	Refused 17/2/25 <i>PC had no objection</i>
EPF/0164/25	Maltings Farm, Maltings Hill, Moreton, Ongar, CM5 0JY	Confirmation of conditions 7 and 8 on planning permission EPF/0181/18 allowed on appeal (Outline planning application for removal of outbuildings and existing dwelling. Erection of three detached dwellings. Formation of new highway access and ancillary work	Refused 18/2/25 <i>PC unable to comment</i>
EPF/0050/25	3, Gainsthorpe Road, Ongar, CM5 0NG	Single storey rear extension.	Refused 24/2/25 <i>PC had no objection</i>
EPF/2252/24	Humphreys, Greenman Road, Magdalen Laver, Ongar, CM5 0ER	Grade II listed building consent extension of patio and erection of a gazebo.	Withdrawn 6/1/25
EPF/2215/24	6, Maltings Hill, Moreton, Ongar, CM5 0JY	Proposed front porch, proposed ground floor side and rear extensions and proposed first floor rear extension. Proposed recladding on all elevations. Proposed repositioning and sizing of existing windows. Proposed new roof tiles.	Refused 7/1/25 <i>PC Objected</i>
EPF/2589/24	North Wilmore Barn, Workers Road, High Laver, Ongar, CM5 0DZ	Application for approval of details reserved by condition 3 'Additional Drawings' on planning permission EPF/0909/24 (Grade II listed building application to infill an unauthorized door and reinstate a door).	Approved 20/1/25 <i>DRC – PC unable to comment</i>
EPF/2588/24	North Wilmore Barn, Workers Road, High Laver, Ongar, CM5 0DZ	Application for approval of details reserved by condition 2 'External Finishes' on planning permission EPF/0897/24 (Revised design of flat roof addition).	Approved 21/1/25 <i>DRC – PC unable to comment</i>
EPF/2406/24	4, Mill Lane, Moreton, Ongar, CM5 0DN	Removal of an existing garage at rear of dwelling. Removal of existing residential annexe. Proposed replacement outbuilding on site of existing annexe to provide a single	Approved 21/1/25 <i>PC had no objection</i>

		garage space and a home office and gym. (Revised application to EPF/1914/24).	
EPF/2005/24	Spencers Farm, Tilegate Road, Magdalen Laver, Ongar, CM5 0ER	Approval of Details Reserved by Condition 3 Levels, 5 Surface Water Disposal and 6 Flood Risk Assessment of EPF/0161/24 (The application consists of the construction of an agricultural storage building at Spencers Farm, Greenman Road, Magdalen Laver, Ongar	Approved 21/1/25 <i>DRC – PC unable to comment</i>
EPF/0016/25	Firs House, Moreton Road, Bobbingworth, Ongar, CM5 0LU	Certificate of lawful development for a proposed swimming pool building with gym and plant room.	Lawful 28/1/25
EPF/1944/24	6, Maltings Hill, Moreton, Ongar, CM5 0JY	Proposed new access to highway to provide additional off street parking including gate and landscaping works	Approved 31/1/25 <i>PC had no objection</i>

### PC.575 DEVOLUTION

Councillors were reminded that the Government had agreed that Essex County will be one of the pilot counties for its devolution programme. Essex currently has between 1.5 and 2 million residents. The government want the new Unitary authorities to have around 500,000 residents in each, meaning there is expected to be 3 or 4 unitary authorities in the whole of Essex. ECC have until 21st March this year to submit their initial draft proposals for unitary authorities in Essex. They then have until August to submit their firm proposals. What this will mean for this Council is a unitary authority consisting of EFDC and perhaps 2 or 3 other district councils in Essex. ECC will be responsible for deciding these and will only be consulting with the leaders of the district councils. The 2025 ECC elections have now been postponed which has been agreed by Government. Instead, in 2026 there will be mayoral elections for the mayor of Greater Essex. In 2027 there will be elections for the newly agreed unitary authorities, and these new unitary authorities will run alongside both ECC and EFDC for a period of 1 year. Therefore in 2028 the new strategic unitary authority will be the formal authority for the area, and both EFDC and ECC will no longer exist. It is understood that it is up to the Unitary Authority to decide what happens to parish and town councils, therefore we are not expected to know until 2027 what the potential future for this parish looks like. The government's white paper suggests that Parish Councils will have a role to play in devolution, but it is not clear in which form that will be. In this regard, the Government is currently running a consultation seeking views on the proposal to form a Mayoral Combined County Authority for the local government areas of Essex County Council, Thurrock Council and Southend-on-Sea City Council (referred to as Greater Essex in this consultation).

It was noted that an interim report had been published on Tendring Council website, which states a majority (10 out of 15) of Essex's council leaders have taken an in-principle decision that five new unitary authorities is the right model for Essex's future local governance and retaining a sense of local place and communities, whilst acknowledging that the minority of other leaders do not yet have a settled preference. EFDC was not one of the 10. It was also noted that potentially there may be asset transfers to Parish Councils, however this was not expected to be known for some time.

Councillors **AGREED** that this Council should respond to the consultation, stressing the importance of ensuring that local connectivity and representation via town and parish Councils remains, and should in fact be enhanced.

### PC.576 FINANCIAL MATTERS

- a) Councillors approved the payments below. **PROPOSED** Cllr Carpenter, **SECONDED** Cllr Stuart:

BACS	A Jones	November & December Salary	£1,109.26
BACS	HMRC	November and December PAYE	£277.40
BACS	A Jones	Home Office Nov'24 to March'25	£216.67
BACS	Magdalen Laver VH	Hire of VH 11/3	£22.00

- a) Councillors **NOTED** the Bank Balance and bank reconciliation as at 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025 as attached to the agenda, a copy of which was reviewed against the bank statements and signed by the meeting Chairman.

### PC.577 ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Councillors were asked to contact the Clerk if they had any specific agenda items.

### PC.578 DATES OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 13th May2025 – Moreton VH  
Tuesday 15th July 2025 – Magdalen Laver Village Hall (this is third Tuesday)  
Tuesday 9th September 2025 – Moreton VH  
Tuesday 11th November 2025 – Moreton VH  
Tuesday 9th December 2025 – Moreton VH

Meeting closed 8.27pm

Chairman .....

Date .....