



THAXTED PARISH COUNCIL

The Community Hall
Newbiggen Street
Thaxted
Dunmow
CM6 2QT

Tel: 01371 831952
email: clerk@thaxted-pc.gov.uk
Assistantclerk@thaxted-pc.gov.uk
web: www.thaxted-pc.gov.uk

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OPEN SPACES AND ASSETS COMMITTEES Held Thursday 7th May 2026 at 7.30pm in The Community Hall, Newbiggin Street, Thaxted

PRESENT:

Open Spaces Committee Members:

- Cllr Terry Frostick (Chair)
- Cllr Jenna Perkins (Vice Chair)
- Cllr Victoria Knight
- Cllr Theresa Egan
- Cllr Tom Breen

Assets Committee Members:

- Cllr Robert Silver (Chair)
- Cllr Jenna Perkins (Vice Chair)
- Cllr Victoria Knight

IN ATTENDANCE:

Amanda Collins (Ast. Clerk), Cllr Alexander Young

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (BOTH COMMITTEES)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R Williams, Cllr A Frater.

2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (BOTH COMMITTEES)

No interests were declared.

3. PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME (BOTH COMMITTEES)

No members of the public were present, and no representations were made during the public speaking period.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the Assets & Open Spaces Joint Committee meeting of 5th February 2026, having been circulated with the agenda, were discussed and Cllr name change from Cllr Frostick to Cllr Silver on agenda item 1. Cllr Frostick requested that the Chair of each committee be sent copies of the draft minutes before being published.

OPEN SPACES AGENDA

1. TREE SURVEYS

The Committee considered the matter of obtaining quotes for tree works. Members discussed whether it would be more cost-effective to undertake a full programme of works in one visit or to phase works in sections over three years. A full survey and works programme are proposed for December 2027. The Assistant Clerk was requested to seek a minimum of three competitive quotes for the required work in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations. A quote is currently awaited from Mercer.

RESOLVED: That the Assistant Clerk be instructed to seek competitive quotes for the tree works programme, and that should any quote received be at or below £2,500.00 excluding VAT, authority be delegated to the Chair and Assistant Clerk to proceed with the appointment; and that should any quote exceed £2,500.00 excluding VAT, the matter be referred back to the Committee for consideration.

2. RURAL COMMUNITY AWARDS

The Committee reviewed the entry guidelines for the Essex Village of the Year and Rural Community Awards 2026, issued by the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE). The Committee noted that entries must be received no later than Friday 5th June 2026, with prize winners to be announced at the RCCE Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 8th July 2026.

RESOLVED: The Committee considered the categories available and resolved not to submit an entry. It was agreed that the Assistant Clerk would reach out to Pam's Place for the Community & Voluntary Award and would submit their entry on their behalf.

THE CHAIR OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE HANDED OVER TO THE CHAIR OF THE ASSETS COMMITTEE FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE MEETING

ASSETS AGENDA

1. MARGARET STREET PUBLIC TOILETS

The Assistant Clerk provided a verbal update on the current position regarding the Margaret Street Public Toilets, including matters relating to mechanical air ventilation. The Committee noted that Camsafe Security had been requested to inspect and confirm whether the ventilation system was functioning correctly.

NOTED: The verbal update from the Assistant Clerk on the Margaret Street Public Toilets was noted.

2. COMMUNITY HALL

a) Shutters

The Committee considered the indicative quotes received for the replacement of the roller shutters at the Community Hall. The Committee noted the three quotations for electric shutters. The Committee noted that Camsafe Security has been requested to attend on Tuesday 12th May to inspect and provide a quotation for the associated electrical works, and to submit a quote of their own. Members discussed the appropriate financial threshold. It was resolved that manual shutters be procured, and that authority be delegated to the Chair and Assistant Clerk to approve expenditure up to £5,000.00 excluding VAT; should any quotation exceed that figure, the matter would be referred back to the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the replacement of the roller shutters at the Community Hall be approved, with either electric or manual shutters to be installed; that Camsafe Security be requested to quote for the associated electrical works, and the electrical/ manual shutters; the Assistant Clerk to obtain quotes for manual shutters from the three companies

that provided the electric shutter quotes and that authority be delegated to the Chair and Assistant Clerk to approve expenditure of up to £5,000.00 excluding VAT, with any quotation in excess of that figure to be referred back to the Committee.

b) Chairs

The Committee considered the quotations obtained for the supply of new chairs for the Community Hall. Quotes had been obtained from three suppliers.

Following consideration of the quotations, the Committee resolved to approve the purchase of the Dams Taurus chrome frame stacking chairs from Office Furniture Direct as the most competitive option.

RESOLVED: That the purchase of Dams Taurus chrome frame stacking chairs from Office Furniture Direct at a cost of £1213.33 excluding VAT (for 40 chairs) be approved, subject to confirmation of the final quantity required.

c) Tables

The Committee considered the quotations obtained for the supply of new tables for the Community Hall. Quotes had been obtained from three suppliers as follows:

Furniture at Work — £109.00 per table exc. VAT; Go Pak — £144.88 per table exc. VAT; Office Furniture Online — £114.00 per table exc. VAT. Following consideration of the quotations and discussion regarding the appropriate table height, the Committee resolved to approve the purchase of two tables from the most competitive supplier. Assistant Clerk to measure existing tables to ensure matching heights.

RESOLVED: That the purchase of two tables from Furniture at Work at a cost of £109.00 per table (£218.00 in total) excluding VAT be approved.

3. DOG BINS

The Committee considered the matter of the removal of the six TPC-owned dog bins and the provision of signage for the existing general litter bins to indicate that dog waste is accepted.

The following quotations had been obtained for the removal of dog bins: TBS Hygiene Ltd had quoted £65.00 plus VAT per bin for removal and disposal, with an additional £10.00 plus VAT per bin for post removal. For six bins, the total cost would be £450.00 plus VAT (bin removal only) or £510.00 plus VAT (bin and post removal). A quotation from Uttlesford District Council was also awaited.

The following quotations had been obtained for signage for the existing litter bins: Offsite Digital (Ref 4698619, dated 10 April 2026): Design/layout fee £15.00 exc. VAT; durable A5 vinyl stickers — £51.25 exc. VAT (qty 25) or £91.00 exc. VAT (qty 50). Saffron Signs: Self-adhesive vinyl £3.75 each; 3mm aluminium composite panel signs £8.99 each (for orders of 20 or more). Dog Poo Fairy campaign pack (Keep Britain Tidy): Spring 2026 campaign pack at £150.00 plus VAT, comprising 10 x A3 correx signs and 5 x 21cm vinyl circular bin stickers. Orders to be placed by 8 June 2026.

The Committee agreed that no dog bin should be removed from a location within 5 metres of an existing general litter bin. The Assistant Clerk was requested to visit all six locations and verify the distances accordingly. Members also noted that assistance with mapping had been offered for future planning purposes.

RESOLVED: That no TPC-owned dog bin be removed from any location over 5 metres of an existing general litter bin; that the Assistant Clerk visit all six locations to verify distances prior to any removal being progressed; and that the matter of removal and signage be reported back to the Committee once the UDC quotation and site survey have been completed.

RESOLVED: To approve the quote for vinyl stickers from Offsite Digital for £91.00 for 50 stickers.

RESOLVED: Not to approve the Dog Poo Fairy Campaign stickers.

4. WATER FOUNTAIN

The Committee noted the quotation received from Hughes Water Coolers for an outdoor water fountain at the recreation ground, in accordance with the resolution of 5th February 2026. The following options had been quoted: Acrokool Outdoor Non-Chilled Bottle Filling Station (blue) — £1,250.00 plus VAT per unit. LK4400BF Elkay Floor Standing Outdoor Bottle Filling Station — £3,295.00 plus VAT per unit. Delivery: £60.00 plus VAT per unit. The Committee noted that Cllr Knight would liaise with regard to the grant funding awarded to the Council which was awarded to contribute towards the cost of the unit. It was also noted that the grounds operative would carry out the installation, and that the water fountain would be isolated over the winter months.

NOTED: The quotation received from Hughes Water Coolers for an outdoor water fountain was noted.

RESOLVED: That the Acrokool Outdoor Non-Chilled Bottle Filling Station be approved for installation at the recreation ground, subject to confirmation of the grant funding available; and that Cllr Knight liaise with the Assistant Clerk regarding the grant funding position prior to placing the order.

5. CLARENCE HOUSE GARDEN

a) Structural Review of Garden Wall

The Committee considered the structural review report of the garden wall at Clarence House Conservation Garden, prepared by Davies Maguire (Report Ref DMAG-2424-CHGW-Structural Review, dated November 2025). The report had been commissioned following a section of the east elevation wall collapsing in 2024. Davies Maguire carried out a visual inspection of all four elevations of the existing flint and masonry boundary wall. The report noted that:

— The east elevation (parallel with the pedestrian path) is generally in reasonable structural condition, with areas of the flint wall out of plumb, particularly in proximity to trees within the raised garden. Monitoring of the wall at and adjacent to piers 1 and 2 was recommended, together with repointing of brickwork where mortar is loose or missing.

— The south elevation (parallel with Margaret Street) is generally in reasonable structural condition for its age, with local areas of movement ongoing where trees are in close proximity. Regular monitoring was recommended, together with repointing where required.

— The west and north elevations (boundary walls to private gardens) are generally in reasonable structural condition and relatively plumb, with the exception of an area of localised bulging and cracking at the eastern end of the north elevation, associated with a neighbouring tree. Local stitch repair and monitoring was recommended in this area.

The Committee considered the findings of the report and resolved to note its contents, with any associated works to be considered as a future undertaking subject to further quotations. The Committee noted that Cllr Knight and Cllr Frostick are liaising with a contact in connection with this matter currently and this will be ongoing.

NOTED: The structural review report of the garden wall at Clarence House Conservation Garden, prepared by Davies Maguire (November 2025), was noted, and any associated works will be considered as a future undertaking subject to further quotations.

b) School Room — Repair Works

The Committee noted the interim condition report on the Old School House at Clarence House Conservation Garden. The report had been prepared following a site visit and set out recommendations for works to address damp ingress and fabric deterioration, including removal and replacement of cement-based renders and pointing with lime-based alternatives, reduction of external ground levels, replacement of the internal

ceiling covering, and removal and replacement of gypsum-based plasters. Indicative costs had been provided. Cllr Frostick updated Members that Discover Bushcraft are intending to establish a Community Interest Company (CIC) in connection with Clarence House Garden, and that fundraising is proposed to contribute towards the cost of the survey and associated works.

c) Licence to Occupy

NOTED: The licence to occupy, compiled between the Clerk and Discover Bushcraft with input and approval from the Chair of the Open Spaces Committee, is held in the Council's office and is available to view upon public request.

6. TELEPHONE BOX

a) Defibrillator Relocation and Bleed Kit

The Committee considered the proposal to relocate the defibrillator to the telephone box. The Assistant Clerk advised that a covering letter and method statement had been prepared and submitted to the Conservation Officer at Uttlesford District Council on 1st May 2026, seeking advice on whether Listed Building Consent is required for the proposed repainting works to the Grade II listed K6 telephone box. The Committee noted that Camsafe Security had offered to carry out the relocation of the defibrillator free of charge in exchange for advertising.

It was also noted that Cllr Adams would liaise with the Assistant Clerk regarding the provision of smaller bleed kits, with consideration to be given to obtaining two kits.

RESOLVED: That the relocation of the defibrillator to the telephone box be approved, and that Camsafe Security be engaged to carry out the works free of charge in exchange for advertising; and Cllr Adams liaise with the Assistant Clerk regarding the provision of up to two smaller bleed kits for both defibrillators.

b) Painting of Telephone Box

NOTED: The ongoing discussions regarding the painting of the telephone kiosk, and the submission of correspondence to the Conservation Officer at Uttlesford District Council, were noted.

The Committee noted that a parishioner had offered a donation towards the cost of repainting the box. The Assistant Clerk was requested to contact the parishioner to acknowledge and thank them for their kind offer. It was also noted that a risk assessment would be prepared, and Members expressed a preference for the works to be completed, if possible, before 29th May 2026.

RESOLVED: The Assistant Clerk be requested to contact the parishioner who has offered a donation towards the repainting of the telephone box to acknowledge their kind offer; and that a risk assessment be prepared in advance of any repainting works being undertaken. The Council's ground operative to carry out the work before 29th May 2026. Committee noted this resolution was contrary to the Proper Officer's recommendation.

7. GRANTS

NOTED: The Committee noted that two grant applications submitted on behalf of the Council had been unsuccessful.

8. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Members were invited to submit items for inclusion on the next agenda. The following item was noted for inclusion: quotations for children's play equipment.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Open Spaces & Assets Joint Committee is to be confirmed at the Annual General Meeting.

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.48 pm.

Signed: _____
(Chair of the Meeting)

Dated: _____

