



THAXTED PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF THAXTED PARISH COUNCIL

Held on Thursday, 16 April 2026 at 7:30 PM at The Guildhall, Thaxted

PRESENT

Cllr Andrew Frater (Chairman, presiding)
Cllr Robert Silver
Cllr Terry Frostick
Cllr Alex Young
Cllr Tom Breen
Cllr Theresa Egan
Cllr Victoria Knight
Cllr Jenna Perkins
Cllr Ian Adams (co-opted during the meeting – see Item 2)

Also in attendance:

District Cllr Martin Foley (arrived 19:44; departed 20:10)
Amanda Collins, Assistant Clerk
3 members of the public

FULL/26/1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ray Williams. The Council sent their best wishes to Cllr Williams.

FULL/26/2 CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLOR

2. The Council considered the filling of the vacancy arising from the resignation of Cllr Antoinette Watterbott. Three candidates had come forward: Nigel Carter, Harry Anderson and Ian Adams.
 - 2a. Nigel Carter was invited to address the Council and did so.
 - 2b. Harry Anderson was invited to address the Council and did so.
 - 2c. Ian Adams was invited to address the Council and did so.

All three candidates were requested to withdraw from the meeting to allow the Council to deliberate in private. Candidates were subsequently invited to return.

2d. The Council proceeded to a secret ballot to determine which candidate to co-opt.

RESOLVED: That Ian Adams be co-opted as a Parish Councillor for Thaxted Parish Council.

Ian Adams signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took his place at the meeting.

FULL/26/3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3. The following declaration of interest was received:

Cllr Terry Frostick declared a pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 11 (planning application UTT/26/0733/FUL – Park Street Garage, Park Street). Cllr Frostick left the meeting for the consideration of that application.

FULL/26/4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4. Three members of the public were present.

A member of the public addressed the Council in respect of agenda item 20 (Green Waste Skip). The speaker requested reinstatement of the service. Cllr Knight proposed that the matter be brought forward for consideration at this point in the meeting. The Council agreed to hear the public representation in connection with this item and for the substantive item to be considered under the public participation period.

Cllr Knight proposed that the green waste skip service be reinstated and that it be actively monitored throughout each session, recording the street name and number of attendees, to enable the Finance Committee to assess cost against usage. It was noted that the Finance Committee would need to confirm that the budget could meet the cost, with the matter to be re-addressed at the next budget-setting exercise. Proposed by Cllr Knight, seconded by Cllr Young.

RESOLVED: That the green waste skip service be reinstated monthly with immediate effect, with the first session to take place on Sunday, 19 April 2026 between 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM. Attendance to be actively monitored throughout each session, Cllrs Egan, Knight and Tisseyre recording the street address and number of attendees. The Finance Committee to confirm budgetary provision, with the matter to be re-addressed at the next budget-setting exercise. The Clerk is authorised to reinstate the service accordingly, advertise on social media platforms and the website. Vote: 7 in favour, 2 against, 1 abstention.

FULL/26/5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a. Full Council Meeting – 12 March 2026 [Link to Minutes of Full Council Meeting of 12th March 2026](#)
The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 12 March 2026 were presented for approval.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 12 March 2026 are a true and accurate record and that the Chair be authorised to sign them accordingly.

b. Annual Parish Assembly – 19 March 2026

The minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 19 March 2026 were received and noted. [Link to Minutes of Annual Parish Assembly of 19th March 2026](#)

The Chairman recorded his thanks to all councillors who had supported the event.

NOTED: The minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 19 March 2026 were received and noted.

FULL/26/6 DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Reports were received from District and County Councillors for information only. The written reports of District Cllr Richard Haynes had been previously submitted and circulated to Members.

County Councillor's Report – Cllr Martin Foley

Cllr Foley addressed the Council on his written report. [Link to Cllr Foley report.pdf](#)

Cllr Foley addressed the Council on his written report. He noted that, following the ECC Boundary Changes taking effect from May 2026, this would be his last report to a number of parishes in the current division. He expressed his hope to be returned as the County Councillor for the new division, which would include the growing settlements of Elsenham and Henham.

Local Government Reorganisation: Cllr Foley confirmed that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government had determined that Essex would be reorganised into five unitary authorities.

Uttlesford District Council would merge with Epping Forest District Council and Harlow Borough Council to form 'West Essex Council' with effect from 1 April 2028. Shadow Authority elections were anticipated for May 2027. Cllr Foley noted the hope that the London Road offices of UDC might be retained by the new West Essex unitary authority. He advised that ward boundary arrangements for the new authority were still to be confirmed, but indicated that Thaxted might form part of a 'Thaxted Division' for the purposes of the new council, potentially with two or three members. Cllr Foley expressed his thanks to Members for their input to the Neighbourhood Plan. Uttlesford Local Plan 2021–2041: Cllr Foley confirmed that the Local Plan had been adopted at an Extraordinary Meeting of Uttlesford District Council on 25 March 2026 and had immediate effect. The Council noted the significance of this development.

District Councillor Haynes report - [DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT - Thaxted April 26.pdf](#)

New Local Plan — The Local Plan was adopted at an extraordinary meeting on 25 March 2026. While significant for planning decisions, the NPPF para 11 'tilted balance' still applies until government confirms a 5-year land supply (potentially six months away). The plan has weaknesses — particularly vague landscape policies that give developers flexibility, and poor allocations for Takeley. Both District Councillors voted for adoption on the basis that a flawed plan is better than none. Neighbourhood Plans are now increasingly important.

Local Government Reform — Uttlesford will merge with Harlow and Epping Forest to form West Essex Council, with transition elections next year and vesting day in May 2028. Concerns are raised that future housing allocations may fall disproportionately on the north of the new authority due to Green Belt constraints around Epping and Harlow. ECC may appeal the decision but is unlikely to succeed.

Climate Emergency — UDC's 2030 net zero target is now considered unachievable. A planned decarbonisation of the London Road offices saw costs balloon from around £716,000 to £1.343 million (with loan interest taking UDC's share to ~£950,000). The report's author called this in to Scrutiny Committee, but Cabinet appears to intend proceeding regardless.

Economic Development — A mid-year review focused on tourism and pub support, with grants distributed through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund.

Operational Resilience ('Bingate') — A review was presented to Scrutiny but was so heavily redacted that it failed to explain what actually went wrong.

Housing Maintenance — A contract with Axis to handle housing maintenance proved unsuccessful and has been terminated. The service is being brought back in-house, with early signs encouraging

NOTED: The reports of District and County Councillors were received and noted.

FULL/26/7 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk's Report for April 2026 was received. [Clerks_Report_April 2026.pdf](#)

Actions Required: The Clerk requested that all Chairs of Committees contact the clerking officer a minimum of 14 clear days before scheduled meeting dates. She also requested that a Guildhall Committee meeting date be confirmed for inclusion in the Council's meeting schedule in advance of the May Annual Council Meeting.

NOTED: The Clerk's Report for April 2026 was received and noted.

FULL/26/8 ESSEX STEEL AND GATES LTD – RECOVERY OF OUTSTANDING DEBT

The Council considered the Clerk/RFO's confidential briefing note on the recovery of the outstanding County Court Judgment against Essex Steel and Gates. The Council noted the findings of the TrustOnline Register search conducted on 24 March 2026. The Council considered the enforcement options set out in the briefing note (Options A to F).

RESOLVED: to go with (Option F). The Clerk be authorised to move forward with option F.

FULL/26/9 CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chairman presented his report verbally, including an update on the delivery of the ABC&U service.

NOTED: The Chair's Report was received and noted.

FULL/26/10 CHAIRMAN'S CUP

The Council considered proposals and nominations for the Chairman's Cup. Cllr Frater nominated an Individual with the initials TY in recognition of his contribution as a Morris Man. The nomination was supported unanimously. The Council noted that Cllr Adams had offered to provide the parents' contact details to enable the award to be communicated.

RESOLVED: That TY be awarded the Chairman's Cup. The Clerk is authorised to contact the recipient's family to make the necessary arrangements and confirm agreement of the publication of the recipients full name has been obtained.

FULL/26/11 PLANNING MATTERS

New Applications. The Council considered the following planning applications:

UTT/26/0769/FUL – South View, Bardfield Road

S73 application to vary condition 2 (approved plans) of UTT/25/0781/HHF (proposed new front entrance porch, first floor dormer and loft conversion, fenestration and material changes, PV panels to front aspect with changes to chimney stack/flue and internal remodelling).

NOTED: Application UTT/26/0769/FUL has been withdrawn by the applicant and requires no response.

UTT/26/0733/FUL – Park Street Garage Thaxted Ltd, Park Street

Removal of asbestos roof and replacement with new steel powder coated roofing system.

Cllr Frostick, having declared a non-pecuniary interest in this application, left the meeting for the duration of its consideration.

RESOLVED: That the Council SUPPORTS application UTT/26/0733/FUL.

Cllr Frostick returned to the meeting.

UTT/26/0408/FUL – Land to the North of Mayes Place, Thaxted
Erection of 8 dwellings with associated access and drainage.

The Council noted its previous strong objection to this application at the meeting of 12 March 2026 (FULL/26/10).

RESOLVED: That the Council STRONGLY OBJECTS to application UTT/26/0408/FUL and has not changed position from the previously submitted comment on 14th March 2026.

UTT/26/0661/HHF – Monk Street Farm, Monk Street

Construction of pool house and relocation of greenhouse and associated operational development.

RESOLVED: That the Council SUPPORTS application UTT/26/0661/HHF.

FULL/26/12 GUILDHALL

The Council received the Custodian's Report for March 2026 (Rob Evans). [Custodians report March 2026.pdf](#)

NOTED: The Custodian's Report for April 2026 was received and noted.

FULL/26/13 GUILDHALL – LEASE AND MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Cllr Young reported that he had attended a meeting with representatives of the Guildhall, including Mr. Goetcher and Mr Tiller, who were determined to enhance the visitor experience moving forwards. The Council noted that, with effect from 6th April 2026, Uttlesford District Council no longer had any involvement with the Guildhall; responsibility now rested with Essex County Council. A meeting between ECC and Cllr Frostick has been scheduled to discuss future Guildhall arrangements. Cllr Frostick undertook to provide a further update to the Council at the next Full Council meeting.

NOTED: The Guildhall lease and management update was received and noted. Cllr Frostick will report further at the next Full Council meeting.

FULL/26/14 UPDATE ON LOCAL PLAN

The Council details on the Uttlesford Local Plan 2021–2041, noting its adoption at an Extraordinary Meeting of Uttlesford District Council on 25 March 2026, with immediate effect. Members noted the implications for the determination of planning applications and the continuing importance of the Neighbourhood Plan.

NOTED: The Local Plan update was received and noted.

FULL/26/15 AI-POWERED PUBLIC INFORMATION SEARCH TOOL

The Council received the written report from the Clerk [TPC AI Search Proposal.pdf](#) and a verbal presentation from Cllr Silver on the proposal to implement an AI-powered search tool on the Council's website, enabling parishioners to search council minutes, agendas and policies. The recommended platform was Chatbase, at an estimated cost of £15–£49 per month. Following discussion, the Council did not support the proposal.

RESOLVED: That the proposal to implement an AI-powered public information search tool on the Council's website be not approved at this time.

FULL/26/16 UPDATE ON DEVOLUTION OF SERVICES

Members noted that a further update from UDC was awaited.

NOTED: The Clerk will advise Members when a further update is received from UDC.

FULL/26/17 NOMINATION OF TRANSPORT REPRESENTATIVE

The Council considered the nomination of a councillor to serve as the Council's representative on the Parish Transport Liaison. Cllr Adams indicated his willingness to serve.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Ian Adams be nominated as the Council's representative on the Parish Transport Liaison.

FULL/26/18 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Cllr Young reported verbally on the Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan had been completed in March 2026 and submitted to Uttlesford District Council. A draft had been returned from UDC and Cllr Young was currently working on the required edits. The Plan was expected to be presented to Full Council for approval once complete, after which a public consultation period would follow. The Council agreed that the Assistant Clerk update the 'watch this space' notice for social media and the website. The Council's thanks were recorded to all members of the Neighbourhood Plan working group for their hard work.

NOTED: The Neighbourhood Plan verbal report was received and noted. The Assistant Clerk to update the public-facing communications accordingly.

FULL/26/19 PARKING GROUP UPDATE

Cllrs Silver and Perkins presented the Parking Working Group's PowerPoint presentation to the Council. The Working Group had been liaising with Uttlesford District Council and the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP), with the aim of implementing a parking management scheme across the Council's car parks. The proposals under consideration included permits for residents, season tickets, chargeable hourly and all-day rates, and overnight free parking (provisionally 6:00 PM to 8:00 AM). NEPP would manage and monitor the car parks on the Council's behalf; the aim was to meet maintenance costs rather than to generate a profit. A parking machine was estimated at approximately £1,300. Both car parks are to be considered at the same time. A public consultation of 21 days will also be carried out by Uttlesford District Council as per protocol. Members noted that Bolford Hall car park had reverted to its trustees, who were implementing their own parking restrictions. Cllr Knight recommended that Lowe's be included in stakeholder updates. The Council agreed that the Clerk and Assistant Clerk take the administrative lead. A substantive agenda item would be included at the June Full Council meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Parking Working Group proceed with gathering information and presenting a further report, including the outcome of public consultation, for consideration at the Full Council meeting in June 2026. The Clerk and Assistant Clerk to take the administrative lead on this matter.

FULL/26/20 GREEN WASTE SKIP

This item was brought forward for consideration during the Public Participation period (Item 4 above) in response to a representation from a member of the public. The matter was resolved under that item.

NOTED: This item was considered and resolved under agenda item 4 (Public Participation). The green waste skip service is reinstated monthly with effect from 19 April 2026. See FULL/26/4.

FULL/26/21 PERSONNEL COMMITTEE UPDATE

a. Sickness and Absence Reporting

Cllr Knight proposed that the Council request J&M Payroll to report on sickness and absence at the next meeting, to ensure compliance with the recent change in law.

RESOLVED: That the Council requests J&M Payroll to provide a report on sickness and absence reporting in accordance with the recent change in law.

b. Staff Expenses – Petrol and Mileage

The Council expressed that Members require further clarification on the processing of petrol and mileage expenses through salary payroll would be provided at the next meeting.

NOTED: The matter of staff petrol and mileage expenses processing through payroll to be confirmed with further clarification at the next meeting.

FULL/26/22 MICROSOFT 365 LICENCE RENEWAL

a. Licence Renewal and Upgrade

The Council considered the renewal of Microsoft 365 licences for 15 users. Following discussion, the Council resolved not to proceed with an upgrade to Business Premium.

RESOLVED: That the Microsoft 365 licences for 15 users be renewed at Business Standard tier (£2.52 + VAT per user per month; £453.60 + VAT per year) and that the upgrade to Business Premium be not approved at this time.

b. Dedicated RFO Email Address

The Council considered and approved the creation of a dedicated RFO email address.

RESOLVED: That a dedicated RFO email address (RFO@thaxted-pc.gov.uk) be created, with the minimum required Microsoft 365 Business Basic licence to be authorised by the Clerk.

FULL/26/23 FINANCE

a. Schedule of Payments [Dual Signature report March 2026.pdf](#)

The Council received the Dual Signature Report for March 2026, which had been examined, verified and certified by the RFO.

RESOLVED: That the schedule of payments as presented in the Dual Signature Report for March 2026 be authorised.

b. Bank Reconciliation [GetReconcileAll.pdf](#)

The Council received the bank reconciliation reports for notation. The reconciliation as at 31 March 2026 confirmed a Cash in Hand figure of £393,049.92, reconciling across the Lloyds Deposit Account (£211,381.24), Lloyds Savings Account (£171,836.33) and Lloyds Community Account (£9,621.17), after adjustments for unrepresented items.

NOTED: The bank reconciliation reports as at 31 March 2026 were received and noted.

c. Debtors Report [Year End Debtors report.pdf](#)

The Council received and noted the Year End Debtors Report for the year ending 31 March 2026, reflecting total outstanding debtors of £2,793.00. Members were advised by the Assistant Clerk that all allotment monies were not part of the debt, but purely an administrative error.

NOTED: The Year End Debtors Report for the year ending 31 March 2026, showing total outstanding debtors of £2,793.00, was received and noted.

d. Community Hall Capital Project Expense Report [Year End Debtors report.pdf](#)

The Council received the Capital Project Expense Report for the Community Hall. The report identified a net overspend of £5,742.95 against the agreed contract quote of £24,835.97, after offsetting grant income of £12,000.00. Total capital expenditure amounted to £42,578.92. The Council recorded its thanks to the Clerk for the preparation of this report.

NOTED: The Community Hall Capital Project Expense Report was received and noted.

FULL/26/24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Council noted that the next Full Council meeting would be the Annual Council Meeting on Thursday, 21 May 2026 at The Guildhall, Thaxted.

NOTED: The date of the next Full Council meeting, Thursday 21 May 2026 (Annual Council Meeting), was noted.

PART II – PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

The following item was considered in the absence of the press and public pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraph 3 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, including the authority holding that information).

FULL/26/25 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraph 3 of the Act (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, including the authority holding that information).

FULL/26/26 WALNUT TREE MEADOW – POTENTIAL LAND PURCHASE

The Council received the Clerk's confidential report on the current position regarding the potential acquisition of Walnut Tree Meadow. The report set out the background, current market valuation evidence, financial considerations and options for Members. Cumulative maintenance expenditure on the site over the preceding five years totalled £10,393.00. A lengthy discussion ensued and the report was discussed thoroughly.

RESOLVED: That the Council proceeds with Option C as set out in the Clerk's report. The Clerk is authorised to take the necessary steps to progress this matter accordingly.

The meeting closed at 9:11 PM.

These minutes were confirmed as a true and accurate record at the Full Council meeting held on 21 May 2026.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Cllr Andrew Frater, Chairman