

# ***Little Oakley Parish Council***

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## **Minutes**

of the **Annual Parish Meeting** of the Parish of Little Oakley,  
held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at 7.15pm in the Millennium Room, St Michaels Church,  
Ramsey.

**Present:** Cllrs Coates (Chairman), Attrill, Griggs, Harbour, Lane, Pearce and Sanderson.

**Clerk:** Ms Lucy Ballard

**Also Present:** Paul Woods, Planning Policy Team Leader, Tendring District Council

### **HOUSEKEEPING**

The chairman welcomed Paul Woods from TDC and informed those present of the locations of fire exits.

### **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

With no members of the public present, the chair asked members if they were content for the minutes to be signed as a true record.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025 be approved and signed by the chairman as a true record.

### **PRESENTATION FROM PAUL WOODS, TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Paul Woods (PW), Planning Policy Team Leader from Tendring District Council, proceeded to update those present on the local plan, its review and the impact on the parish.

TDC is responsible for reviewing the local plan, which is principally about housebuilding. It's the blueprint and rulebook for growth across the district. The current plan was adopted in 2 parts; Section 1 in January 2021 and Section 2 in 2022. The current housebuilding target under the existing plan is for 550 homes per year across the district and there are plans for the creation of larger new developments to address this.

The Plan needs reviewing every 5 years to account for changes in circumstances (i.e. Local Government Reorganisation) and under the new scheme, housebuilding targets are now mandatory not advisory with no scope for arguing a lower target. The current target has been exceeded consistently over the last 7 or 8 years at roughly 750 new builds per year. Under the new scheme there is a requirement for 1063 homes per year which will require more land to be sourced to deliver these. The target doesn't reflect the evidence when prepping the local plan or what the market has delivered in recent years however this figure will be set for the next 15 years from the date of adoption so currently they're looking up to 2042. There is a calculation for ascertaining the target, which is laid out in the new NPPF. Whilst the calculation is fairly consistent across the country, there are some variations with more built up areas such as London seeing a reduction in numbers with rural areas increasing.

TDC has consistent in their opposition of these targets, as are many councils. It's unknown what any future government might wish for so it's better to plan for this now particularly since infrastructure is the biggest challenge and early discussion with providers helps to ensure the necessary infrastructure is considered. There is currently no plan for duelling the A120 and any evidence would have to be incredibly robust for any developer to consider funding this. Although other measures may be looked at, such as improvements and upgrades to junctions.

There have been a set of consultation events with various options, which were consulted on. Some of these options presented difficulties which would make their delivery harder to achieve. Their preferred option is the one which would see growth predominantly in Harwich with the addition of 3 new garden village developments and reflects the land that is currently available.

In respect of Little Oakley, the biggest impact is the extension of the Low Road development but does include the extension of the designated green gap. There are other factors which will need to be considered, such as flood plains, habitat protections and the Tarchon project. Additionally, they must provide for additional infrastructure (schools and healthcare provision), community amenity and biodiversity net gain, so there will be parts of the area which aren't developed on with homes. The local plan looks at many aspects of planning including open space, transport and flood risk as well as heritage, landscape and environmental protection. Additionally the infrastructure delivery plan works in conjunction with the Local Plan. Mitigation plans will also be considered, which are to be funded by the developers.

The timescale is tight and more centrally controlled. The deadline is the end of 2026 for local plans to be submitted under the current system and with an update rather than a re-write of the current plan, it's anticipated this may be reviewed fairly quickly. TDC has received several hundred responses to the current set of consultation events which takes times to analyse. Once completed and the key issues are identified, they'll be better placed to understand where the plan needs to be updated. An updated draft should be available by the summer for final consultation in the autumn prior to submission to the Government by the end of the year. They continue to welcome feedback, but not on the numbers of housing since this is fixed.

In comparing the allocation against that of Colchester and Braintree, Colchester's has increased along the similar levels whereas Braintree is finding difficulty with available space. The new local plan will remain in force during the early years of the new unitary authority and once reviewed again in 5 years, a review will take place for all three areas together.

Cllr Coates asked about water and where it's coming from. PW confirmed this will form part of the infrastructure plan. Consultants are working with Affinity Water and Anglian Water to work on solutions to ensure adequate water recycling provision. It's likely that this would be part funded by Government and the developer contributions. Water efficiency standards will be updated in the new local plan for fresh water provision (efficient toilets, flow restriction showers, rain collection measures).

PW is happy to receive further feedback from the council on the draft plan despite the formal consultation having now closed.

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Cllr Coates reported on the year that's been and the coming year ahead. She referred to this being her first APM as chairman as well as the first for the new clerk, Lucy, who she welcomed. Whilst the year has been fairly uneventful, the council continues to focus heavily on improvements to the Oakley Coronation Park, with successful grant funding of over £6k having been received from the Community Initiatives Fund for the installation of a youth shelter. Additionally the council is awaiting the outcome of a further funding application for the installation of a climbing wall. The football pitch is suffering from rabbit damage and quotes have been obtained for the installation of rabbit-proof fencing which is hoped will rectify the problem and which the council has been successful in seeking the support of the adjacent St Michael's Primary School. Further engagement with the school council is anticipated with a view to further improving the facilities available since it's important that local children provide their input.

The council continues to ensure the regular maintenance of the village bus shelters, which were repaired in the autumn and are to be repainted as the weather permits, along with the noticeboards.

The council hopes to enhance the closed churchyard at St Mary's Church to maintain the area as one of quiet contemplation and reflection. Initial urgent work is being undertaken to make safe the trees in the churchyard and discussions are ongoing with the owner of St Mary's House (former church and now private residence) and the neighbouring landowner with a view to completing the project over the course of the year.

The Remembrance service in November was well attended, with in excess of 60 worshippers.

Thanks go to John Wallace for leading the service as well as to the cornet player for their magnificent rendition of 'The Last Post'.

The council's financial position remains stable with account balances at the end of the financial year being £8817.81 (including £6992 CIF funding) and £79645.39 in savings, which is within the recommended levels for a council of this size and includes provision for earmarked reserves. The council has also passed its internal and external audits.

For some time, despite enjoying the facilities offered by St Michael's Church, the council's desire has been to hold its meetings within the parish and is looking at the Memorial Club for this. It's hoped this will make the council more visible and help to development community engagement.

Discussions are ongoing and a final decision will be made in due course. The council would also like to improve and encourage community involvement and it's hoped this can be developed through the relationship with St Michael's Primary School, further community involvement can be encouraged.

A 'thank you' was offered to Katy Coker for her years of organising the local litter picks in both Great and Little Oakley. Katy is moving away and the equipment is being handed over to LOPC. If anyone would like to take on the role of organising these picks in the future, they are to contact a councillor or the clerk. Alternatively, the equipment will be available to anyone wishing to do their bit to keep the village tidy.

Former clerk, Emma Haward, was thanked for her years of service with wishes expressed for the future.

The final 'thank you' was to former chairman, Cllr Dave Attrill, who remains the council's deputy chairman and without whom, the role of chairman would be significantly more onerous, and to all councillors who continue to devote their time voluntarily and whose many skills are invaluable.

#### **QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

There were no public in attendance and no questions.

The Annual Parish meeting concluded at 8.17pm.