

Little Oakley Parish Council

Email: clerk@littleoakleyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 11th March 2026 in the Millennium Room, St Michael's Church, Ramsey starting at 7:15pm.

Ms Lucy Ballard
Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer

Present: Cllrs Coates (Chair), Attrill, C Aubrey, J Aubrey, Griggs, Harbour, Lane (from 7.45pm), Pearce and Sanderson.

Also in attendance: Lucy Ballard (Clerk/RFO) and County Councillor Dan Land

Members of the Public: There were no members of the public present.

25/125 Public Announcements

There were no public announcements.

25/126 Apologies for Absence

None

25/127 Declarations of Interests

None

25/128 Signing of the Minutes

It was proposed by Cllr Coates, seconded by Cllr Harbour and **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Full Council Meeting of Wednesday 11th February 2026 as a true record.

25/129 Public Speaking

There were no public present.

25/130 Report from District Councillor Bush

No report due to absence.

25/131 Report from County Councillor Land

Cllr Land reported that he's been trying to catch up with issues which could've been addressed over last 10 years and his goals have centred around roads and pavements. He referred to specific areas within the division that have since been addressed and more recently has turned his attention to Gt Oakley where there will be full resurfacing of the High Street (from Hamford Drive to Drs Surgery) with completion by the end of March. It transpires that additional to these works, there will also be surface dressing all the way through Little Oakley and down into Harwich. This kind of remedial works usually takes place when the weather improves.

Cllr Land has also chased up the ECC legal team with the council's concerns over the Oakley Coronation Park and, if need be, will take this to Cabinet for some movement on the issue.

The chairman agreed to bring forward discussion under Item 27 (Traffic in Mayes Lane) to enable Cllr Land to respond to concerns about the additional traffic which has already stemmed from new builds opposite the bottom of Mayes Lane without the potential impact from any new developments which are in the pipeline. Cllr Land said action is usually determined by data around accidents which

have already happened and members referred to a map showing incidents which have occurred within the parish. He felt a traffic survey could possibly be carried out to assist the council in determining if there is a problem, which might prove useful in the light of future proposed developments. It was agreed that members decide the locations where the sensor strips should be placed and he will push for a survey to be carried out.

25/132 RCCE Renewal

In considering renewal, members discussed the services offered by RCCE and whether membership was continuing to prove beneficial. It was agreed that if cancelled, it could be taken up again at a later date. It was proposed by Cllr Coates, seconded by Cllr Attrill and **RESOLVED** not to renew the annual membership.

25/133 Finance

Previously circulated.

- It was proposed by Cllr Coates, seconded by Cllr Pearce and **RESOLVED** to approve the retrospective direct debits for February 2026 and authorise the payments for March and projected payments for April 2026. It was agreed that going forward, the data would be provided in Excel format so that any mis-calculations could be more easily identified, and to reference the brought forward and carried forward balances.
- There was a requirement for £1000 to be transferred from the saver account to facilitate the above payments. Cllr Coates proposed, Cllr Pearce seconded and it was **RESOLVED** to authorise the transfer.
- Cllr Griggs updated members on the measures taken to add the clerk to the banking mandate. The clerk confirmed she had received the necessary login details and would now proceed to make arrangements for the two additional signatories to be added.
- Members **noted** that the FSCS limit had increased to £120k WEF 1st December 2025.

25/134 Planning Applications

[26/00255/FULHH](#) Householder Planning Application - Part two storey part single storey rear extension and front porch. 25 Harwich Road Little Oakley. Members noted that this was a large extension but the garden was of ample size to accommodate and this was no different to the neighbouring property. There shouldn't be any privacy issues nor should it affect the light to the neighbours. It was proposed by Cllr Coates, seconded by Cllr Attrill and **RESOLVED** To submit a supportive comment of no objection.

Determinations

Members **noted** applications as determined by the Planning Authority:

[25/01778/FULHH](#) - Householder Planning Application - Single storey side/rear extension. 20 Harwich Road Little Oakley. A condition on approval was that the 4 skylights should be non-opening and be fitted with obscured glass.

[26/00021/FULHH](#) - Householder Planning Application - Proposed two storey and single storey rear extension. 35 Mayes Lane.

[25/01694/FUL](#) - Planning Application - Two detached bungalows and a single garage with associated parking and private amenity areas. Land off Hammond Drive. The planning officer's report referred to a condition on the bathroom windows being obscured however this condition isn't apparent within the decision notice and the clerk agreed to raise this directly with the planning officer.

[26/00003/FULHH](#) Householder Planning Application - Erection of single storey rear and side extension (following demolition of existing single storey rear extension). 112 Rectory Road Little Oakley.

25/135 Polices for Review and Adoption

Members reviewed the following new policies for adoption by the council:

- Data Protection Policy
- Document and Data Retention Policy
- Model Publication Scheme
- Risk Management Policy and Risk Assessment – A query was raised as to some missing text in the Risk Assessment which the clerk agreed to check and refer back to the next meeting for adoption.
- Internal Control Statement – A query was raised regarding a statement about separation of duties and it was clarified that, in relation to payments, there were separate people responsible for the signing off, submission and authorisation of payments.

Members discussed whether to retain the Social Media policy since provisions were now included in the new IT policy, which had been adopted at the February meeting. It was suggested that the two documents be compared to identify any conflicting guidance and if not then to keep the Social Media policy and remove the 'social media' section from the IT policy.

It was proposed by Cllr Coates, seconded by Cllr Pearce and **RESOLVED** to adopt the Data Protection Policy, Document and Data Retention Policy, Model Publication Scheme, Risk Management Policy and Internal Control Statement and to check the Risk Assessment and to review the Social Media Policy against the IT policy before bringing back to the next meeting.

25/136 Oakley Coronation Park

- Cllr Coates provided an update following a very productive site meeting with the headteacher of St Michael's Academy on 27th February, to discuss anti-rabbit fencing options. The school is experiencing similar problems with burrowing rabbit and is supportive of the council's proposals to address the issue. They would prefer to see the former wildlife area fenced off and, subject to ECC permission, are happy for the proposed anti-rabbit fencing to be attached to the existing one. They also had no objection to the gates being placed across the footpath. They were open to further engagement regarding additions to play area and this needs to happen prior to the end of July. The preferred quote was agreed by Council at its January meeting and the next stage is to request permission from the landowner, which Cllr Attrill agreed to submit the request for.
- Cllr Attrill reported the CIF application, submitted on 19th November for the sum of £6992, had been successful. The clerk has completed and returned the grant acceptance form and written letters of acknowledgement to the Leader of Essex CC and County Councillor Land. Two quotes have been considered for a shelter with a further being needed, which would be brought back to the April meeting for consideration. Members also talked extensively on plans to install more extensive play equipment on the site and referred to two designs and costings which had previously been sought. It will be necessary to seek a third quote, and the clerk advised that Contracts Finders was required to seek tenders for works above £25k (ex. VAT). Members were informed that planning permission may need to be sought for any structure over a certain height.
- Cllr Attrill provided an update to members on the measures to obtain funding for a new 'Traverse Climbing Wall' play equipment. It will be 12 weeks before an outcome is known and then landowner permission would need to be sought.

25/137 St Mary's Churchyard

Cllr Coates provided an update following a meeting with the occupants of St Mary's House on 20th February to discuss concerns over proposed clearance works to create a new access to the churchyard with a seating area. Whilst the owners were supportive of the council wishing to make the churchyard more attractive, they had concerns about the proposed positioning of the access and would prefer this remains in its existing location. They would contribute to the cost of new shrubs to create a more secluded environment and help with the aesthetics and suggested a bench is sited to the left of the main house entrance. Subject to permission from the farmer, the resident would be happy to clear the overgrowth along the boundary and place gravelling to ensure better accessibility for visitors to the churchyard. It was proposed by Cllr Coates, seconded by Cllr Attrill and **RESOLVED** to writes to Andrew Strachan (landowner) to relay the council's proposals and seek agreement to the planting of shrubs along the boundary to screen the graveyard and to extend the hardstanding to the left of the church to enable visitors to park more easily.

Cllr Attrill referred to the T1 Lime tree on the site which having become very overgrown was considered a potential danger as some of the branches were quite weighty. It was suggested a quote is sought to attend to the dangerous branches as a matter of urgency, along with the cost of removal of another, unidentified, suckering tree which sits adjacent to the T2 Horse Chestnut. Members discussed the need to identify other works which may be required (specifically to the T1 Lime tree) for which planning permission may be required and agreed to seek a quote for this too. It was proposed by Cllr Coates, seconded by Cllr Lane and **RESOLVED** to seek quotes for urgent removal of dangerous branches on the T1 Lime, removal of the unidentified suckering tree and any other work which might also be needed to the T1 Lime.

25/138 Lodge Road/Recycling Area

TDC has confirmed that owing to the new 'Simpler Recycling Scheme' coming in to affect later this year, which will see the kerbside collection of glass as well as a wider range of plastics, the fencing will not be reinstated and any clearance works are the responsibility of the landowner. The clothing bank comes under a separate agreement with the Memorial Club.

It was proposed by Cllr Coates, seconded by Cllr Pearce and **RESOLVED** to request the reinstatement of the bin which was previously attached and was removed with the fence.

25/139 Electricity

There was no update and this would be deferred to the next meeting.

25/140 Little Oakley Memorial Club/Meeting Venue

Little Oakley Memorial Club has offered availability for council meetings on Mondays (anytime) or Wednesdays at 7.30pm. Members were essentially content with a 7.30pm start time subject to checking the venue has the facilities needed to support the council's need to project the agenda and supporting documents. It was proposed by Cllr Coates, seconded by Cllr Lane and **RESOLVED** to arrange a visit to check the facilities.

25/141 Traffic in Mayes Lane

This item was discussed under the County Councillor report.

25/142 Internal Auditor

Members considered the appointment of an internal auditor for the financial year 2025/26. The clerk has liaised with two providers of internal audit services and confirmed the requirement was for them to be competent and independent. It was proposed by Cllr Coates, seconded by Cllr Lane and **RESOLVED** to proceed with appointing Clacton Business Services at a cost of £200 to conduct a year end internal audit and completion of the AIAR as part of the 2025/26 AGAR submission.

25/143 Litter Picking

Members discussed the potential for litter picks to continue in the village after the current organiser moves away from the area. The suggestion is that the existing equipment is split between Lt. and Gt. Oakley and the organisation of picks is managed by a councillor. Members agreed it may be more productive to hold this as an occasional event rather than bi-monthly. In the meantime it was **RESOLVED** to take some of the equipment in readiness and to send a letter of thanks to Catherine Cocker. Subject to there being a power to spend, to send a card and flowers to be expended from the chair's discretionary fund.

25/144 Items for Next Agenda

- Scheme of Delegation
- Finance Committee Terms of Reference
- Electricity
- Risk Assessment
- IT Policy and Social Media Policy

The meeting was concluded at 9.22pm.

Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting

Wednesday 8th April 2026, 7:15pm – Annual Parish Meeting

Wednesday 8th April 2026, 7:30pm – Full Council