



Cold Norton's Annual Parish Meeting

Held at 8 pm on Wednesday 22nd May 2025

THOSE PRESENT: Parish Councillors:

Cllr B Haydon (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs M Gunn (Vice Chairman)
Cllr T Dixon
Cllr P Jacklin
Cllr Mrs J Luck
Cllr D Myers

Cllr Mrs J Fleming, Essex County Councillor
Mrs Jackie Ralph, Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator
Mrs. M. Dyer (Parish Clerk) and 21 Members of the Public

WELCOME

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Brian Haydon welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proceedings for the evening. Cllr Phil Jacklin spoke about the upcoming 'Play in the Park' event on 28th June and requested help with distributing leaflets and selling wristbands in advance of the event and help to set up on the day.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from District Cllr Mrs Lisa Wiffen.

THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 8TH MAY 2024.

Cllr Mrs Gunn proposed that these be approved; Cllr Dixon seconded the proposal. These were then duly signed as a correct record by Cllr Haydon.

THE PARISH COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT BY CHAIRMAN CLLR BRIAN HAYDON

A full copy of the Chairman's report was distributed to attendees. Cllr Haydon invited residents to read this at their leisure, but at the meeting highlighted the following topics: Members of the Parish Council and their roles, formally welcoming Cllr David Myers who had been co-opted onto the Council in March. Cllr Haydon advised that Cold Norton Parish Council should consist of seven Councillors, but there is now one vacant seat due to the resignation of Alex Romang. Other topics from the report highlighted were the budget and what this is used to finance and the income received from the solar panels on the village hall roof. Planning applications – quiet year for applications – only 20 in the year, seven of which were for works to protected trees (TPO – Tree Protection Order) mainly in St Stephens Road and reminded residents that the final decision is made by Maldon District Council. Other

topics highlighted by the Chairman were Highways and road safety – TRUCAM results, 20mph outside school and Speedwatch Group. The Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC) was thanked for all its work and Cllr Haydon appealed for more people to join the VHMC. Cllr Haydon also picked out salient points relating to the village appraisal published in 2024, Stow Maries Aerodrome and the change to the tenant at The Norton Public House and requesting that the village supports the new tenant.

The full report is reproduced below:

Parish Councillors

The Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council was held prior to the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting on 7th May 2025. The following appointments were duly proposed and confirmed unanimously:

Chairman:	Cllr Haydon
Vice Chairman:	Cllr Mrs Gunn
Playing Field Representative:	deferred to the June meeting
Nature Conservation Area Representative:	Cllr Mrs Gunn & Cllr Dixon
Village Hall Representatives:	Cllr Mrs Gunn & Cllr Mrs Luck
Public Rights of Way (Footpaths) Representative:	deferred to the June meeting
Transport Representative:	Cllrs Mrs Gunn & Mrs Luck
Police/NAP Representative:	Cllr Dixon
Stow Maries Aerodrome Representative:	Cllr Haydon
Dengie Hundred Group of Parish Councils Representative:	Cllr Mrs Luck

Finance

- The Parish Council budget for the year from 1st April 2025 has been set at £47,301 including on-going support for the Playground, Car Park, and Village Hall.
- This represents an increase of £2,337 (5.22%) over the previous year and equates to £0.36 per month per household.
- The Council continues to benefit from income derived from the solar panels on the Village Hall roof amounting this year to £2,130.
- Regular items of expenditure include village caretaking, village hall and general maintenance, grass cutting, litter clearing, street lighting, PWLB loans, and administration.

Planning

- Planning Applications are considered and approved by Maldon District Council who seek opinion from individual residents and the Parish Council which expresses its view according to the planning policy guided by the village surveys. The PC does not have decision making authority.
- This year from April 2024 to March 2025 the Cold Norton Parish Council was asked to comment on 20 applications. The PC submitted views on 19. The PC did not submit a comment on an application for a tree to be felled requested by an insurance company; the PC responded that it did not feel qualified to comment. MDC did, in fact, refuse permission to this application.)
- Of the 19 CNPC submitted views on: the PC had no objections to 11 applications, recommended refusal on 7 and submitted concerns on 1 application which related to the school new heating system – ECC did respond to the PC concerns but did approve installation of the new system.
- Of the 19 views submitted, Maldon District Council agreed with the opinion of CNPC for 11 of the applications, did not agree with 5, two applications were withdrawn, and a decision is still awaited for one application.
- Notably, of the 20 applications made in the last year, 7 were for tree works.

- This total of 20 applications made during 24/25 represents a big decrease over the 37 applications made in our parish during 23/24.

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Highways & Road Safety

- Speeding continues to be an issue along Latchingdon Road and St Stephens Road. Speed traps provided by the Tricam team from Maldon District Council are implemented regularly. In the year April 24 to March 25 a total of 93 drivers were caught speeding, almost double the prior year total of 40. In addition to monitoring the 30 mph limit through the village new locations have now been approved to check speeds in 40 mph locations near Three River Golf Club and beyond the bridge towards Palepit. It is important to note that penalty notices issued by the Tricam team result in either a fine or an invitation to attend a driving course in the same manner as speed cameras.
- The Council has been working with our District Councillor, Jane Fleming, to introduce a 20 mph zone around the school and this was finally implemented this year. The PC extends its gratitude to Cllr. Fleming for her tenacious support of this initiative.
- Spearheaded by Jackie Ralph and supported by an enthusiastic group of villagers, an official Speedwatch group has been established in the village. Transgressors are issued with advisory warning letters that do not carry an actual fine.
- The PC continues to monitor and report issues relating to potholes, footways and public rights of way such as overgrown vegetation, broken signs etc. These matters are the responsibility of Essex Highways, who have an excellent website where issues can be reported directly into the system by members of the public. Roads and pavements, Essex County Council (essexhighways.org)
- Parking by parents dropping off and collecting children from the Primary School continues to create congestion at times and the PC works with the school to encourage use of the village hall car park.

Village Hall

- Activities in the Hall have progressed during the year, and it continues to be used by Pre-School.
- The Village Hall Management Committee has worked hard to maintain the building and thanks are due to Members who have voluntarily given their time to complete various tasks.
- The Chairman's Report will be provided separately and reflects a positive future.
- Grateful thanks are due to the Management Committee for their support and hard work.
- In recognition of the increasing repair and maintenance demands of a gradually aging building The PC has been working more closely with the Village Hall Management Committee to develop and administer a planned Maintenance routine backed by planned budgetary support from the PC.

2023 Village Appraisal

- A new publication, "Cold Norton Village Appraisal: 2023" was completed and distributed to every household.
- This information enables the Parish Council to respond to events such as Planning consultations and Village Hall management initiatives with a documented consensus of residents' aspirations and opinions.

Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome

- The Joint Consultative Committee continues to meet regularly to ensure close involvement of surrounding Parish Councils with the work of the Aerodrome Management and Volunteers.
- The vital importance of the work of SMGWA in preserving both the fabric and heritage of this unique site and, importantly, the history it embodies cannot be overstated.

- The volunteers have contributed enormous time and effort to preserve the aerodrome itself and establish it as an important educational and recreational resource.
- The aerodrome has become a popular destination for the local community, not only for key events such as Propwash and Wings & Wheels but also for educational workshops such as the 'Head in the Clouds' STEM sessions for schools, scouts & guides, and other young people. The Mess Restaurant and Museum Shop contribute greatly to the attraction.
- You can visit their website to book upcoming events such as Wings and Wheels on 26 May and Wings and Wags Dog show on 4 August for very interesting and fun days out.
- There is an excellent café on site operating in the Mess. Entrance is free of charge for those only visiting the Café.

Other Matters

- The Norton pub closed for a short while following the termination of his tenancy by Boris. Thankfully, the Community Pub Committee lost little time in appointing new Tenants for The Norton: Hannah Stacey – Licensee, and her father Gareth Stacey took up the tenancy in January, so please come along and say hello when you can. Refurbishment and improvements both inside and outside the pub are brilliant and Hannah has lost no time in establishing a good kitchen and a regular series of community events and entertainments.
- The Parish Council manages the open spaces in the village including the playing field grass cutting, Cowpiece Nature Reserve and Three Ashes Corner.
- Dog Fouling continues to be an issue at times and is subject to a maximum fine of £1,000 so please be vigilant.

.... and Finally

- The **2025 Party in the Park** will be held on the Playing field on Saturday 28th June, and everyone is welcome to enjoy a fabulous day of fun and entertainment. Further details will be provided by Phil Jacklin who deserves enormous thanks for the time and effort devoted to organising this event. Look out for posters and details about buying wristbands.
- As always, we welcome new residents to our village. We know you will enjoy becoming part of our community.
- I'd like to repeat my thanks to everyone who has helped individual residents and the village community during the last year:
 - NHS heroes
 - Essential workers collecting recycling, making deliveries, staffing supermarkets, doctors, vets
 - Cold Norton Primary School and Cold Norton Pre-School
 - Village Hall Management Committee
 - Seed Library
 - The many unspoken kindnesses between friends and neighbours
 - My fellow Parish Councillors

Cllr Brian Haydon – Chairman

District Cllr Ms Wiffen was unable to attend so Cllr Haydon read out the report supplied by Cllr Ms Wiffen

DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT BY DISTRICT COUNCILLOR MS LISA WIFFEN

Unfortunately, I am unable to attend as we have a District Planning meeting.

- In December 2024 the Government set out plans to move power out of Westminster and back to Local Communities. Local Leaders from Essex, Thurrock and Southend-on-Sea have expressed interest in taking this forward creating a Mayoral Combined County Authority, with the election for a Mayor taking place in May 2026. MDC met on 03 April and have commented that the proposed voting members of the Mayoral Combined County Authority, must be balanced fairly across the county as District Councils need to have voice in stating where funding and investment is required. MDC supports the inception of a Locality Board which would ensure the needs of the district are prioritised. Positive feedback has been received this month from Government officials for the reorganisation of the 15 existing Local Authorities into Unitary Councils.
- MDC in partnership with ECC and four local councils are launching a 2 month campaign to encourage residents to pass on unwanted furniture instead of disposing of it. Donated items are to be given a new lease of life and benefit those in need. The Make Space Not Waste campaign is just in time for your spring clean and a directory is available on the love Essex website. This makes it easy to find those organisations accepting items and, in some cases, free collections are available.
- James Burrell-Cook, the Conservative candidate was elected as the new District Councillor for the Maldon North ward on 27th March with 462 votes.
- MDC has had its Essex Police Community Safety accreditation successfully renewed. The teams have worked hard to meet the standards set by Essex Police, thus allowing a positive impact in the community.
- The U-fest festival has been arranged for Friday, 15th August in the promenade park. Activities will run from 1am to 4pm and provides an opportunity for residents to find support with cost of living, family and personal support.
- MDC held the VE Celebrations in the Promenade Park, and I gather it was enjoyed by many who attended.
- We had the Statutory Annual Meeting on Thursday and all member appointments for the 25-26 municipal year were agreed.

ECC MALDON DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT - COUNTY CLLR MRS JANE FLEMING

Cllr Mrs Fleming advised that her full report would be available to read on the Cold Norton Parish Council Website. At the meeting Cllr Mrs Fleming highlighted topics relating to:

- The postponing of elections that should have taken place in May 2025
- That the 2024/25 financial year was a very challenging year with increased demands for social services for children, the elderly and families in need of financial support
- St Peters Hospital
- Speeding in villages

The full report is reproduced below.

I'm delighted to present my fourth annual report for the Parish Council's Annual General Meeting. Firstly, I want to begin by thanking the Parish Council and community groups in the Parish for all their hard work and time given.

In normal circumstances, this would have been my final report produced at the end of my term as County Councillor for the Maldon Division, however, Greater Essex (Essex County Council, Southend and Thurrock Unitary Council geographies) was selected to join the Devolution Priority Programme and invited along with the 12 District Councils to develop a proposal for local government reorganisation. This meant that the County Council elections due to take place this coming May were cancelled and a consultation launched by Central Government on their Devolution proposals which include the introduction of a directly elected Mayor from May 2026. The rationale for **Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation** can be briefly summarised as 'a vision for simpler, more sustainable, local

government structures, alongside a transfer of power out of Westminster through devolution that will increase value for money for council taxpayers’.

The 2024/25 financial year was a very challenging year. The Council continues to operate in a climate of uncertainty and volatility - inflation remains a concern, as it is still above the Bank of England target rate, interest rates remain high and the Council continues to face a significant level of uncertainty in the medium term. Like many councils up and down the country, Essex County Council experienced pressure on both Adult’s and Children’s Services and Home to School Transport. The care market continues to struggle with capacity, and there is still uncertainty around the impacts of increased Employers National Insurance Contributions and Minimum Wage responsibilities on providers.

Essex County Council has a legal responsibility to operate within a balanced budget. With the changes and reductions in Government grant funding over recent years, coupled with increasing and more complex demand for core services such as caring for the elderly, protecting vulnerable children and supporting those families who need it, the financial situation continues to be very challenging.

In February, Essex County Council agreed its **new Budget for 2025/26**. The Council again had a stark choice in balancing its budget - of increasing taxes or facing unacceptable cuts in services. The budget was balanced against a backdrop of some of the most challenging times that local government has ever faced. New financial pressures caused by measures introduced in the October Budget and continuing cost of living crisis, high energy costs and inflation levels, and the war in Ukraine have all landed on top of existing challenges to reform and reshape our services and respond to huge increases in demand from those who need our help most.

The Everyone’s Essex Annual Plan and budget was approved at Full Council in February and due to the financial challenges facing local government, the budget for 2025/26 is increasing. Gross expenditure to be incurred in the delivery of Council services in 2025/26 is **£2,718m**. After taking income and specific grants into account, the net cost of services amounts to **£1,212m**, which is an increase of **£64m** or 6% over 2024/25. The net cost of services was set at **£1,212.0 million** and the net revenue budget requirement was set at **£1,117.3m** (net cost of services less general government grants) for 2025/6.

The total council tax funding requirement was set **at £891.6m** for 2025/26 – Essex County Council’s element of the council tax was increased by **3.75%** comprising of a 1.75% increase in general council tax and 2.0% adult social care precept. This spending supports the most vulnerable in our communities including older people, people with learning difficulties, mental health difficulties and physical and sensory impairments. The precept is being used to insulate Adult Social Care from having to make higher savings, and support growth in need caused by changes in the demographics of our population and inflation, including the national living wage rise.

This resulted in the Essex County Council element of the council tax being **£1,579.59** for a Band D property in 2025/26 - this is an increase of **£1.09** per household per week.

Breakdown of Total Net Funding

2024/25 - £1,148m
2025/26 - £1,212m



Net expenditure of £1,212m is funded by council tax, business rates, Revenue Support Grant and General Government Grants. Income from Council Tax is the largest funding stream and will make up 75% of our funding in 2025/26.

A public consultation on the proposed budget was undertaken during November and December 2024. Through this exercise, the Council gathered the views of residents and those who run businesses within the county. There were 2,105 responses to the consultation and the key messages from respondents to the consultation are that pressures on healthcare and the NHS are viewed by participants as the most important issue facing Essex today. Participants also see pressures on social care provision and crime/community safety as key issues to be addressed. Topics of most concern for people personally are the condition of roads and pavements, crime levels and anti-social behaviour. When asked about things that should be prioritised for immediate action, participants identified developing Essex's infrastructure as the top issue. This was followed by supporting those who care for the sick or vulnerable people and securing high standards in education.

In January 2024, the Mid & South Essex Integrated Care Board launched a Consultation on 'Proposed Changes to Services at Local Community Hospitals', with the future of **St Peter's Hospital** and medical services in the District at its heart. The Consultation finished on Thursday 11th April 2024 and at its close over 5,000 responses were received. Following the publication of the consultation responses, the Leader of Essex County Council convened a 'Maldon Summit' to discuss health and other infrastructure issues in the District. Following such widespread public concern and intense discussion with NHS partners, it was announced that a working group would be set up to review the situation. The group have just reported back (end March 2025) and recommended that St Peter's Hospital is kept operational for approximately five years while capital funding is assembled for a purpose-built new facility, ideally on a portion of the current site. This new facility would house outpatient

services and create vital new primary care space for local GP services. The group have also recommended that Inpatient Care cannot efficiently be operated from St Peters due to low utilisation and that pre and post-natal appointments that currently take place at St Peter's each year should continue while maintaining midwife led births at the WJC birthing centre at Braintree Community Hospital. The working group's recommendations will be put into a comprehensive Decision Making Business Case and the ICB will then review and consider this business case during the summer.

A further Maldon Summit is planned shortly to continue the discussion about infrastructure issues in the District.

The year sadly featured the loss of Arrows Taxis, which operated the Dengie Dart services, which many residents in the District relied on to access shopping and Broomfield Hospital. In September, the **Maldon & Heybridge Transport Bus User Group** convened a roundtable with Dame Priti Patel & Sir John Whittingdale, Essex County Council Passenger Transport and the major bus operators in the District. A **new 45 Service** has been launched running from Burnham through villages into South Woodham Ferrers and a **new 99 service** running from Maldon through the Woodhams, Little Baddow, Danbury and on to Broomfield Hospital which partially make up for the loss of some of the services. Both local Bus User Groups continue to push for better transport links for the District.

Concerns about **speed and weight of traffic through our villages** continue to feature highly in my email inbox. The Local Highways Panel work continued very slowly this year, with delivery of schemes once again impacted by resource issues at Essex Highways and as a result the Local Highways Panels are currently under review. I continue to argue for schemes within the Maldon Division and District to be a funding priority as speed reduction and highways safety are vital for those living and driving on our rural roads.

On a more positive note, I'm pleased to report that the **Member Led Local Works Scheme** has proved to be a useful vehicle to action repairs to low priority defects such as replacement signs, bollards, and barriers that make our towns and villages look untidy. Many historic defects in the Division have been repaired this year through this scheme.

The **ECC Locality Fund** reopened for applications last May with £5k allocated per Division. Again, I'm pleased to say that every penny of the funding specifically allocated for the Maldon Division Locality Fund was spent. Organisations that benefitted this year were The Saltmarsh Coast Walking Festival, North Fambridge Parish Council for the creation of a community seating area and the Woodham Mortimer Village Hall Committee to fund the renovation of the hall. My thanks go to the councils and community groups who approached me with their projects and for the hard work put in.

The remaining Locality funding was again directed to a new fund – the '**Local Community Fund**.' The Local Community Fund operates as twelve separate funds, each covering the area of a district, borough or city council. The fund for each district was £5,200 for each county councillor representing the relevant area. The fund again had to be spent on one of three areas: Levelling up, Tackling Climate Change, and Youth services.

We (the ECC Division Members for the Maldon District) decided to direct funding specifically to help organisations in the District to purchase educational and pastoral care resources and to projects to support young people in the District. The projects funded were Maldon Rugby Club to purchase training equipment for their thriving youth teams, SEND4All to purchase outdoor play and sport equipment for young people with special educational needs, Action for Family Carers to support their Young Carers Respite Club. We also provided funding to the Vine Schools Trust to provide 1:1 Counselling Service, Maldon & District Community & Voluntary Service for their Community Gaming Initiative and the Beyond the Ballot Conference run by Youth Services for young people in Essex.

The Locality Fund and the Local Community Fund open again for applications this May, so if you have a project or community initiative, please do contact me with your suggestions/applications at the email address below.

Alongside directing funding through the Locality and Local Community Funds, I've also supported organisations in the District to apply for other sources of funding such as the Essex Community Initiatives Fund and the **Essex Passenger Transport 'Love Your Bus' grant** programme launched in December so if you need my support with a project please contact me.

Throughout the year, I have continued to support residents with their concerns and to assist parishes with their issues requiring escalation. If you have concerns about an issue in the Division, please email me: cllr.jane.fleming@essex.gov.uk

Questions for the County Councillor

Question: Will public transport change if the unitary system goes ahead?

Answer: Public Transport would come under the Mayor, which will be better as it would not be franchised. At the moment it is very fragmented because of the number of private companies involved. With a Mayor there could be more cohesive services that link with trains etc. The Mayoral elections are expected to take place in May 2027.

Question: Size of unitaries?

Answer: It is understood that the Government preferred size per unitary is circa half a million people, therefore, with a population in Essex of 1.8million there could be just three unitaries.

Comment: Issues with the 45 bus service in particular as it doesn't allow enough time at destination before catching the return service. New 99 bus from Maldon to Broomfield Hospital is a small bus.

Answer: The operator is aware and residents/bus users are encouraged to complete the current consultation to understand/ascertain bus user requirements

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH (NhW) REPORT & SPEEDWATCH, MRS JACKIE RALPH

Mrs Ralph started the Cold Norton NhW in December 2023 and advised it was working well with 240 members in a WhatsApp Group passing on information. Mrs Ralph reminded those present to call 999 in an emergency or call 101 for less urgent matters. Mrs Ralph advised that due to work commitments she could no longer be the NhW Co-Ordinator for Cold Norton, but that temporarily the Purleigh NhW Co-Ordinator, Colin Horne, had kindly offered to take on Cold Norton as well.

Cold Norton Speedwatch was also set up by Mrs Ralph. In October 2024, a team of residents were trained by the Police, who allocated three safe sites for the team to operate from - four team members needed per session. The objective of Speedwatch is to change people's attitude to speeding. Police have been extremely supportive turning up to assist at sessions.

Mrs Ralph is also stepping down from coordinating the Speedwatch team – it is hoped that a member of the Speedwatch team will take on this role.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Ralph for starting these two groups and presented her with a bouquet of flowers as a 'thank you' from the village for giving up her time, her dedication and hard work with setting up and running these two groups.

VILLAGER OF THE YEAR 2025

This award had been created by the Parish Council in 2011 to recognise services to the village.

Cllr Haydon announced that this year the award was being given to **Mr Alex Romang** for all his work over many years in the village, at the village hall and the parish council allotments and for ensuring that 'Tommy' is kept in good condition and put into position for Remembrance Sunday and other special anniversaries.

Cllr Haydon presented Mr Romang with the shield engraved: "Alex Romang 2025".

OPEN SESSION OF QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

There were two issues raised in this session: the faulty dog waste bin by the bridge and water on Latchingdon Road – these would be investigated and reported to the appropriate bodies.

Alex Romang offered a vote of thanks to the Parish Cllrs, the County Cllr and the District Cllrs for all their work.

The meeting was closed at 9.22pm. Cllr Haydon thanked everyone for attending and invited all present to stay for refreshments, kindly organised by Mrs Chris Hawes who was duly thanked. Residents were advised that the Councillors would all be available to talk to on an informal basis during this time.

Chairman..... Date.....