



## Little Braxted Parish Council

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### **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Little Braxted held at the Braxted Bakery, Witham Road on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 7.00 p.m.**

Present: Councillor James Barke, Chair of Parish Council, District Councillor Morgan and five members of the public.

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

#### **2. To Agree and Approve the Minutes of the Meeting held 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

The meeting agreed and approved the minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025 as a true record.

#### **3. Chairman's Report**

The Chairman gave a report on the past year in the Parish:-

It has been privilege to serve as Chair of Little Braxted Parish Council over the past year — my first in the role, having previously served as Deputy. After well over twenty years in Little Braxted I think I've adjusted to the quiet rhythm of parish life now and the importance of our village community. As well as understanding that leadership is not about permanence, but about stewardship: working with fellow councillors and our whole community, before passing it on, hopefully a little better for our efforts.

This year has reminded us of the enduring tensions that shape rural communities. We have seen how distant, strategic decisions at national government level around reducing the levels of local government can impact the important planning and enforcement matters for our parish. Now we know more about what is to change there will be further focus on the restructure which may delay strategic decisions that directly impact each one of us.

For example, after updating the five-year housing land supply plans where Maldon was recently holding just 2.8 years' supply and the significant shortfall in Gypsy and Traveller pitches. These both have strong influence on planning decisions and appeals as without these plans the balance tilts in favour of the applicants.

Planning is probably the most intractable area with a frustrating chasm between local expectations, Parish Council influence and the pace of enforcement. Concerns have been raised and suggestions made reflecting residents' concerns and we will continue to do so.

I would like to thank John Aldis for his flexibility and focus on keeping the War Memorial and Village Green in excellent condition despite the hot, dry Summer that now seems so long ago. He has also had many repairs to make where vehicles drove over the grass at the War Memorial junction. We have been able to install some bollards to protect the recently cleaned memorial.

For our Remembrance Day service, the task of securing contractors and permits has largely been superbly executed by Gordon, our Parish Clerk. For 2026 our colleagues in Wickham Bishops expressed their strong desire to secure competitive quotes from road closure contractors as well as the necessary permits. This showed how neighbouring villages, working in a spirit of goodwill, can achieve more than any one parish alone. The unfortunate breakdown of the road closure contractor's vehicle on Remembrance Day served as a small but poignant reminder of life's unpredictability; even well-laid plans can falter, yet the service continued, as it always should.

We thanked Michael French for more than five years service on this parish council. We also welcomed Simon Morgan as a co-opted Councillor this year and I would encourage others in the village to come and talk to any of the Councillors or our Clerk if they are interested.

Another of the developments has been the Council's decision to embark upon a Parish Plan. By seeking and obtaining funding from the Essex Community Foundation, we aim to engage residents properly — beginning with a celebratory event at the Braxted Bakery.

To my fellow Councillors: thank you all for your dedication, your insights and your good humour. You have made this year a genuine pleasure as Chair. I am especially indebted to our Parish Clerk, Gordon, whose professionalism and encyclopaedic knowledge of what can be done and how to achieve it has been a guide throughout my time in office. His support has been invaluable.

Although after this meeting I will no longer serve as Chair, I will continue to support our community in whatever ways I can. I leave this role confident that Little Braxted remains in good hands, and with the belief that thoughtful, patient local service continues to matter.

Thank you for the honour of serving as your Chair.

**4. Public Forum**

No members of the public wished speak on matters related to the Parish.

**5. Closure**

The meeting was closed at 7.07pm.