Noak Bridge Parish Council

Minutes

Held at Noak Bridge Village Hall, Coppice Lane, Noak Bridge SS15 4JS on

Wednesday the 22nd October 2025 @ 7.00pm

Present

Chairman: Cllr Mark Cottrell

Councillors: Cllr Cris Batemand, Cllr Paul Daft, Cllr Jacqui Dowton, Cllr Lynn Gilliam, Cllr Peter Hawkins, and Cllr Terri Sargent.

In attendance: Lynda Townend (Clerk) and 8 members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

99/2025 Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received as all Members were present.

100/2025 Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, other pecuniary interests or nonpecuniary interests by Members relating to any agenda items.

Cllr Hawkins declared an 'Other Registerable Interest' in agenda item 11.5 as a member of the Pétanque Club.

Cllr Sargent had previously declared an 'Other Registerable Interest' in agenda items relating to the Pétanque Club as the Chairman of Noak Bridge Community Association.

Resolved: That the Declarations of Interest be noted.

101/2025 Minutes

Members reviewed the minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on the 24th September 2025, Minutes 82/2025 to 98/2025 inclusive.

Resolved: that the Minutes of the meeting held on 24th September 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

102/2025 Public Participation Session

A member of the public advised three lights were currently out in the underpass.

103/2025 Borough and County Councillor Reports

Cllr Sargent, as a Borough Councillor, provided an update on devolution and local government restructuring, including:

- Some or the proposed Unitary authorities are proposing to set up Neighbourhood Committees.
- Cllr Sargent will be attending a Teams Meeting on the subject which will include the future role of Parish Councils in the new structure.
- The new structure will result in a reduction of councillors.
- No new requests for works are being considered.
- Services could be offered to Parish Councils.
- Uncertainty remains over the 2026 elections due to concerns that their timing, one year before the new shadow council is elected, could prove disruptive. A final decision will be made by the Government.
- The new Mayor of Greater Essex will be elected in May 2026.
- A definitive decision on the number of Unitary authorities, and how they are made up, is expected by March 2026.

The Council agreed to bring agenda item 11.2 forward for discussion at this point in the meeting.

104/2025 Coppice Lane Pond

The Council discussed the condition of Coppice Lane Pond following a proposal provided by a Member of the Friends of Noak Bridge, for the Parish Council to part-fund essential improvement works. Cllr Sargent, in her capacity as a Borough Councillor advised Basildon Borough Council (BBC), as the owner of the pond, is aware of concerns with the pond and is developing plans to deepen areas and remove silt to make it more sustainable. Works are expected to begin shortly. BBC has also indicated that, due to limited budgets and the number of ponds across the borough, not all sites will continue to be maintained.

It was agreed that the pond is an important village feature that should be preserved.

Resolved: That the Parish Council agreed in principle to contribute up to £3,000 or 50% of the total cost (whichever is lower), subject to Basildon Borough Council also contributing to the works.

It was further agreed that the Council will write to Basildon Borough Council confirming its commitment and requesting details of how the contribution will be used and the overall cost of the project.

A member of the public left the meeting at 19:38.

105/2025 ABLC Meeting

Cllr Cottrell provided an update from the recent ABLC meeting.

- Reported that a new Clerk, Mel Linwood from Great Burstead and South Green Parish Council, has been appointed.
- Shotgate has received the award for *Little Village of the Year*.
- Christmas markets were discussed.
- Wickford Town Council provided an update on their collaborative work with Basildon Council's Pride Team for handyman services.
- The proposed Bowers Gifford Half Marathon in Pound Lane was noted.
- Continuing building development remains a key topic of concern across all parishes.
- The Highways Committee has come to a standstill due to the impending changes to councils with devolution and Government reorganisation.
- Forthcoming Liaison Meeting dates were confirmed as 20 November 2025, 15 January 2026, and 19 March 2026.

The update was noted.

106/2025 Neighbourhood Plan Update

Cllr Sargent provided an update on the status of the Neighbourhood Plan, advising

- The Examiner's report has been received, reviewed, and fact-checked by the consultant.
- All recommended changes have been accepted, and the plan will now be updated accordingly.
- The referendum is expected to take place before Christmas or early January.
- Once adopted, the plan will become a material consideration in all future planning decisions made by Basildon Borough Council.
- All future costs, relating to the referendum and publication of the plan will be met by Basildon Borough Council.
- The Parish Council will be responsible for informing residents about the plan, its benefits, and the importance of voting.

The Council recognised many residents did not thoroughly understand what a Neighbourhood Plan was and how it would benefit Noak Bridge. They discussed the importance of ensuring residents are well informed about the Neighbourhood Plan and the need to participate in the forthcoming referendum. It was suggested that this could include distributing a newsletter and a very simple, clear, and easy to understand leaflet outlining the key benefits in bullet point form, together with a door-to-door awareness campaign.

Cllr Sargent further advised the council that the Neighbourhood Plan began in 2018 with a mandate from the Parish Council. She felt it was well documented and consulted on by the steering group. The Neighbourhood Plan was delayed during Covid in 2020/2021

when consultation events had to be cancelled. Newsletters produced in the intervening period contained information on how the Plan was being developed and the consultations held.

JD left the meeting at 19:58 retuned 20:00

The update was noted.

107/2025 Finance

107/2025/01 Accounts for Payment

The Clerk advised an additional invoice from Bluestone Planning had been paid on the 27th September being for the costs for reviewing the Examiners initial report.

The amount of the invoice totalled £2,146.20 including VAT.

The Council received and approved the following accounts for payment:

Date	***Supplier***	***Item***	***Net***	***VAT***	***Total***
27/09/2025	Bluestone Planning	Neighbourhood plan examiner's response	1,788.50	357.70	2,146.20
25/09/2025	At Last Events	Christmas lights interim invoice	4,975.00	995.00	5,970.00
11/10/2025	Helping Hand	Children's litter pickers	54.17	10.83	65.00
12/10/2025	Amazon	Mugs for litter pickers	124.80	25.05	149.85
13/10/2025	Amazon	Hi-Vis vests for litter pickers	63.30	12.60	75.90
22/10/2025	NBCA	Hall hire for council meeting	50.00	-	50.00
25/10/2025	L Townend	October salary and expenses	741.09	-	741.09
25/10/2025	Nest Pension	October pension costs	62.70	-	62.70
25/10/2025	HMRC	October PAYE costs	251.86	-	251.86
		TOTAL:			**£9,512.60**

Resolved: That the accounts for payment for September and October be approved.

107/2025/02 Bank Reconciliation

The council **received and noted** the bank reconciliation report to the to the 30th September 2025.

107/2025/03 Monthly Budget Sheet

The Council **received and noted** the budget comparison to the 30th September 2025. It was highlighted the council had spent £33,763.65 to date representing 25% of the annual expenditure budget.

107/2025/04 2026/27 Budget Planning

The Council discussed the planning process for the 2026/27 financial year.

Resolved: that an informal meeting be held to draft the budget prior to formal approval by the Council at its January 2026 meeting.

107/2025/05 Removal of Ex-Councillor as a Signatory on the Santander Account

It was noted that an ex-councillor remained as a signatory on the Santander account.

Cllr Sargent advised that a change of mandate form had been received, which needed to be completed and submitted to Santander.

It was noted that the contact details of the ex-councillor were held by a member of the public, who offered to provide them to the Council. The contact details of the ex-councillor were not discussed in public, only who held them.

Resolved: that Cllr Sargent will complete and submit the necessary forms to Santander to remove the ex-councillor as a signatory.

108/2025/01 Planning

The Council considered the following planning applications:

108/2025/01/01 - 25/0171/OUT – amendments to planning application for up to 300 residential dwellings at Wash Road.

Resolved: that the council continues to object to this application and will resubmit the original objection letter requesting that the planning authority take full account of the Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Plan.

108/2025/01/02 - 25/01254/FULL – Retention of installation of two external air conditioning condenser units to the side and rear elevations (retrospective) at 11 Sailing Green, Noak Bridge.

Resolved: that the Council objects to this application on the grounds that the noise and disturbance caused by the units adversely affect neighbouring properties, they are visually intrusive and detract from the character and appearance of the surrounding area and the exposed mechanical equipment on the side and rear elevations which are visible from the street, fail to preserve or enhance the Conservation Area.

108/2025/02 To note planning decisions made by Basildon Borough Council:

108/2025/02/01 – 25/01147/TPOBAS – Oak of T5 – YPO/09/98 – crown reduction of 3m height and a 2m lateral crown reduction at Handley Court, Handleys Chase, Noak Bridge. **APPLICATION PERMITTED.**

108/2025/02/02 – 25/01035/FULL – Proposed outbuilding to create staff room and storage area at Noak Bridge Primary School, Coppice Lane, Noak Bridge. **PERMISSION GRANTED.**

108/2025/02/03 – 25/00007/S211 – H1 mixed hedge cut back at 30 Durban Lane, Noak Bridge. **CLOSED.**

108/2025/02/04 – 25/00263/FULL – Single storey side extension to existing commercial unit and reconfiguration of front elevation fenestration at Willow Park, Wash Road, Laindon. **GRANTED.**

108/2025/03 Ramsden Bellhouse Parish Council Regulation 14 Consultation

Resolved: that the Clerk will formulate and submit a supportive response on behalf of the Council.

109/2025 Christmas 2025

109/2025/01 Christmas Tree

The Clerk advised that quotes were still outstanding but indicative costs had been provided as follows:

- 10' tree – £300 + VAT
- 14' tree – £500 + VAT
- 18' tree – £700 + VAT

The Council also discussed a local supplier and agreed to contact them regarding supply and liaising with Peter Thomas to ascertain if he can install and remove the tree.

Resolved: that the item be referred to the November meeting for a final decision.

110/2025 Environment

110/2025/01 Handyman Tasks

The Clerk provided Members with a list of tasks which councillors had supplied for the handyman. A quote for the works was provided by Cllr Gilliam.

Cllr Sargent advised that Cllrs Ball and Buckley should be informed the parish council wished to clear up the parking circle by the shop in Coppice Lane as this was a Highway issue.

Resolved: that the Council agreed to spend £685 on the listed tasks, and the Clerk will notify Basildon Borough Council and Cllrs Ball and Buckley from Essex County Council that the Parish Council will be completing the works.

11/2025/02 Coppice Lane Pond

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

110/2025/03 Lights in the Underpass

The Clerk advised that all three malfunctioning lights have been reported to Essex County Council. She also noted that Cllr Buckley had been asked whether protective guards could be installed over the lamps to prevent ongoing damage. A response is expected shortly.

Cllr Daft left the meeting at 20:37.

Leaf litter and clearing was discussed.

Resolved: that Cllr Sargent would review locations where leaf build-up poses a risk to the public.

Resolved: that the clerk will seek a quote from Basildon Council for clearing the leaves in the underpass.

Cllr Daft returned to the meeting at 20:39

110/2025/04 Children's Playground Refurbishment Works

It was noted that a basket is broken and the bin needs replacing. Whilst the equipment is in good condition the playground surface is in poor condition and requires replacing.

It was suggested that the matter of the broken basket be raised with Basildon Council.

Resolved: that the clerk will seek quotes to replace the playground surface and present these at a future meeting.

111/2025/05 Pétanque Court Transfer Update

Cllrs Hawkin and Sargent had declared an 'Other Registerable Interest'.

The Clerk provided an update following the Council's resolution of 24 September 2025 (Minute 96/2025) to seek advice from the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) regarding the Parish Council's position on the pétanque court. The EALC requested further information on who funded and project-managed the installation. The Clerk confirmed that the court was funded and managed by the Parish Council.

Cllr Sargent, speaking as a Parish Councillor and Chairman of the Noak Bridge Community Association (NBCA), noted that the Parish Council had previously agreed at its July meeting to gift the pétanque court to the NBCA, subject to an agreement setting out responsibility for insurance, liability, management and maintenance. She further advised that the NBCA had not been informed of the Section 111 asset transfer prior to that decision being made, and had since declined the offer as they were content with the existing arrangement. The NBCA, a registered charity with responsibility for maintaining the village hall and other commitments under its lease, did not wish to take on the additional insurance and liability for the court.

Members noted that the pétanque court is an asset of the Parish Council, which therefore retains ultimate responsibility and liability, though it currently has no operational input.

It was agreed that advice from the EALC is required before any further action is considered.

4 members of the public left the meeting at 21:06

112/2025 Policies and Procedures

112/2025/01 Complaints Policy

Members received an updated draft Complaints Policy.

Resolved: that the updated Complaints Policy be adopted and will be reviewed on an annual basis**.**

112/2025/02 Grant Funding Policy

Members received and considered a draft Grant Funding Policy.

Resolved: that consideration of the policy be deferred to the next meeting, with Cllr Sargent providing the Clerk with suggested amendments.

Cllr Dowton and Cllr Gilliam left the meeting at 21:10

112/2025/03 Health and Safety Policy

Members received a draft Health and Safety Policy.

Resolved: that consideration of the policy be deferred to the next meeting, with Cllr Bateman providing the Clerk with suggested amendments.

113/2025 Correspondence

The Clerk advised that the Rt Hon Richard Holden MP had emailed offering to attend a Parish Council meeting to provide an update on his work.

The Council agreed that this would be welcomed, and the Clerk will extend an invitation to him.

The Clerk advised an email had been received from Basildon Council advising they are satisfied with the proposal to hang Christmas lights in the trees by the school and pond on Coppice Lane, provided the Arboricultural check comes back positive.

114/2025 Date of Next Meeting

The next council meeting will be held on the 26th November 2025.

With no further business the meeting closed at 21.15

Signed:_____ Date:_____
Chairman