



Minutes of Dedham Parish Council meeting

6th July 2026 6:30pm at Duchy Barn

Attendees: Cllr Bourn, Cllr Harrison, Cllr McLaughlin, Cllr Beeton, Cllr Haines, Cllr Halsall
Cllr Main, Cllr Sneddon, Cllr McLaughlin

Present: Clerk: Carol Harbach
12 Members of the public

26/062 Welcome and apologies of absence.
Cllr Bourn welcomed everyone to the meeting.
Cllr Sara Naylor sent her apologies

26/063 Declaration of Members Interests
No declarations were raised.
Cllr Beeton stated that as there are several things coming up at the Recreation Ground soon, she declared an interest as she backs on to the field.

26/064 Public Open Forum (maximum 15 mins)

A resident raised concerns regarding the incidence of bladder cancer within the community, noting that multiple residents have been affected. Three potential environmental factors were identified, one of which relates to water quality. The water authority has been informed and confirmed that routine monthly testing indicates the water supply is safe; however, this assurance has been questioned. It was agreed that the oncology department would be the most appropriate body to contact, as they hold records of affected individuals within the local area. Cllr McLaughlin will take responsibility for writing to the hospital's oncology department to explore the issue further and to determine appropriate next steps and relevant organisations to engage with in the future.

Action: Cllr McLaughlin

Another resident raised concerns about alleged unlawful trading involving tables at the Old Bakery. It was clarified that the tables were being used temporarily for staff welfare purposes due to the hot weather.

Several highway and footpath maintenance issues were discussed. Large potholes in Royal Square were identified and will be inspected by the council. Further discussion took place regarding footpaths previously raised, including

a partially cut footpath near the Almshouses. Councillor Halsall will follow up on these matters. Additional footpath queries were noted: Footpath 35 is not included in the current cutting schedule, while Footpath 45 is scheduled to be cut this week.

Action: Cllr Halsall

Cooper Lane was highlighted as having two significant potholes—one currently coned and another located within a field. The lane is particularly problematic during winter months, and previous flailing was limited due to the size of the vehicle used. This issue will be reported to Essex County Council and logged accordingly. A large pothole at the corner of Princl Lane/Princl Mews will also be reported again. Concerns regarding problematic manhole covers were noted, and these issues have already been reported. The Drift was identified as an ongoing concern, although some remedial work has been completed in the High Street; the council is continuing to follow this up. The footpath by the Mill near the Therapy Farm (Footpath 16) was also raised, noting that it is not included in the current maintenance schedule.

Action: Cllr Beeton

Cllr Halsall asked if the Council would support Ardleigh with their on-going fight with the Rice Farm company in Ardleigh and requested support in relation to a planning matter, this request was noted for further consideration.

26/065 Approval of the minutes of the of 1st June 2026

The minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting and were taken as accurate and proposed by Cllr Harrison seconded Cllr Haines All agreed.

26/066 Matters arising from these minutes including updates on Action points progress

Several ongoing matters were reviewed, including:

- Mobile phone issues – later on agenda
- River issues – later on agenda
- Highways issues – later on agenda
- Village maintenance and bus service – later on agenda
- Padel tennis proposal on agenda
- Hedge outside Munnings this has been requested to be cut.
- Patient's doctors have had contact with Cllr Harrison and this is on going

Action point form – had been circulated and Cllrs are to follow up actions and to be completed by the next meeting. **Action All councillor**

This was read out and updated.

- 26/067 Visitors Report (Essex County Council (ECC) and Colchester City Council (CCC))**
Cllr Sara Naylor has sent a report covering issues regarding the river, phone masts, potholes and local government reform.
- 26/068 Sports Club/Parish Council**
There was a very productive and constructive meeting held between the Sports Club and the Parish council. Various discussions took place including the views of the club for the future and how the Parish council can be involved. Cllr Bourn summarised the meeting and there had been discussions of future developments of the sports pavilion. There will be another meeting arranged for this discussion shortly.
Action: Cllr Bourn
- 26/069 Football on Sunday's report of meeting 3rd July 26**
Cllr Bourn and 2 parish councillors met with residents regarding the proposal of football on Sundays and summarised the meeting.
At the meeting were 14 local residents and two other parish council members.
It was noted that the Football Club is in need of ongoing new income and having this second team will help with their finances.
Comments from Residents
Residents raised objections to Sunday football. These included foul language, parking problems, clashes with church services and potential impact on general use of the playing fields.
There was also concern about the training session evenings the Club had which often included foul language as well.
It was noted that although the Parish Council owned the land upon which the football was held, there was no formal agreement.
Written comments from other residents were noted which were along similar lines to those raised.
Cllr Bourn reported that the football club has a complaints procedure and aims to work within F.A. guidelines regarding use of foul language. Concern was raised that the guidelines are never implemented.
It was suggested wouldn't it be better for the team who met on Sundays to meet somewhere else where there were better parking facilities and less pressure on use of the playing fields.
Residents had no objections to cricket being played or the tennis.
It was suggested that a possible recommendation from the Parish Council meeting would be to organise a village wide consultation process.
It was also noted also on Sunday morning there is Sunday school class in the Duchy Barn.
Residents were not opposed to children's football on Saturday mornings

Having football on Sundays would have a major impact upon the usage of the play area

Consideration was given to a village wide consultation process.

It was proposed by Cllr McLaughlin that The Parish Council write to the football club to not have any football on the field on Sundays currently while the discussions are taking place. This resolution was put forward and voted upon, but as it was not on the agenda the decision taken was not lawful. The item on the agenda was to hear a report of the meeting of the 3rd June not to take actions.

There will be another meeting arranged with the Football Club to discuss Sunday football further.

26/070

River/Meadows report of meeting 30th June 26

Cllr Bourn summarised the meeting of the Dedham stakeholder meeting (40 people) which addressed ongoing issues concerning use of the meadows beyond the 28 days legally permitted time, parking in the area, anti-social behaviour and jumping off the bridge. It was noted the landowner had exceeded his 28 days and had been informed of this but if he appeals the processes could take over a year.

It was noted that Babergh Council are preparing to look at other options.

Agencies are focusing on enhanced cross-border patrols with NEPP to manage parking, and planning to engage with Suffolk Highways.

Attempts are being made to make closer contacts with the Environment Agency to address safety concerns regarding bridge jumping and river usage, such as paddleboarding.

Further stakeholder meetings are planned to address these ongoing concerns.

Cllr Haines and Andrews had a meeting with police from both sides of the river and are doing what they can. There is no law to stop people jumping of the bridge.

It was noted there had been very few incidents reported to the police and it was agreed the Council needs to do more to encourage local residents to report any incident and get an incident number.

It appears that when people report incidents, they do not get an incident.

Concern was expressed about the debris in the river by the bridge and recent incidents were noted.

Cllr Beeton reported that we had received an email from The River Stour Trust who have been in contact with both sides of the river concerning tree works at the Mill Pond.

The Trust have completed this work free of charge to help with the increased frequency and problems at the Stour Bridge in Dedham also to improve visibility over the river but also to provide material which we can use to camouflage the short stretch of created path utilised by children to provide egress from the river after jumping off the bridge.

Following a communication with both parties a programme of work has been agreed and carried out. It was proposed by Cllr Beeton to send a donation of £100 for this work as they are a voluntary organisation and do incur some costs to undertake this work. Proposed Cllr Beeton seconded Cllr Halsall. All agreed.

Action: Parish Clerk

The River Trust will be contacted for BACS details by the Clerk after Cllr Beeton has sent the contact details.

26/071

Play Equipment on Sports Field

Following previous discussions with the council, a group of local parents conducted a consultation regarding the development of the village play park. Suzy Kelly then presented the report.

The consultation highlights that the play area is highly valued, heavily utilized, and considered crucial for local children's development.

The Council formally thank the parents involved and support the report's general recommendations, which include adding more seating for parents.

While the report contains valuable insights, several specific equipment suggestions from parents are deemed unfeasible or inappropriate for the Dedham playing fields.

It was advised that the Council defer discussions on specific equipment at this stage. However, the report's emphasis on introducing play facilities for older children warrants consideration.

Future plans must involve the Sports Club to ensure any proposals do not negatively impact weekend football matches.

To progress these discussions, it is proposed to establish a dedicated Task and Finish Group with the following suggested composition:

2–3 Council members (including an Infrastructure liaison, a member with children who use the park, and potentially a financial liaison).

2–3 parents, alongside the Village Warden (either as a core or corresponding member).

Quotes will be obtained and further discussions will take place before specifications are set out. This was discussed further and the group will be organised to take this further. This was agreed by the council. Councillors who are interested in this to let the clerk know.

Action: Cllrs Bourn, Harrison, Beeton and Sneddon

26/072

Parish Plan discussion

Update of parish plan was given by Cllr McLaughlin

This will be deferred until September.

26/073

Patients group update

No updates at the moment.

26/074

Padel tennis discussion update

Cllr Andrews updated the council on the Padel tennis 1 email has come in with support for this and they are the head coach for Padel board in England. Other residents have made comments which are noted. Other people that have comments on this are to contact the parish council. Cllrs Andrews, Harrison and Haines will work on this and report back at the next meeting.

Action: Cllrs Andrews, Harrison and Haines

26/075

Finance, standards and Procedures report

075.1 To approve payments in accordance with the 26/27 Budget.

Report only

Footpath cutting for May

Late approval for payment- paid after meeting £1,968.84

Payments for approval:

Warden invoices and receipts for June 26	780.00
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Invoice 1 pd 8/6/26 £390.

Clerks Salary – June 26	595.00
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C. Harbach – mileage	31.20
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HMRC Tax/NI	197.79
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Dedham Works social media works	150.00
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C. Sneddon- reimbursement for Microsoft renewal and Easyspace SSL Forwarding	744.24
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DPCC - Duchy Barn Hire	90.00
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Sage Ground Maintenance Services June 26	1,526.40
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Moser Groundcare – grass cutting on fields	1,572.00
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M. Rich Playground inspections June 26	200.00
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Essex County Council Essex Youth Service – Delivery of Dedham Youth Club	1,872.00
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A Andrew councillor training expenses	93.80
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Colchester Association of Local Councils (CALC) Subscription	35.00
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£7,887.43

Income: £43,411.11

Balance in account: £281,387.51

Expenditure: £27,955.50

£ 1,000.00

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Total £282,387.51

A question regarding an invoice was raised and the original email for this will be forwarded to the council again.

Cllr Main has requested a copy of the Dedham Works contract and the public meeting minute evidencing its approval.

075.2 Internal Audit Report

This was summarised by Cllr Harrison and read out the positive remarks made by the auditor.

The internal auditor report has been received and the following recommendations were made;

Recommendation (1): To update Standing Orders in line with the Financial Regulations regarding the £30,000 threshold of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

This will be looked at by the finance committee and on the next agenda

Recommendation (2): The council should review Standing Orders and Financial Regulations during each financial year and minute the action taken.

This will be looked at by the finance committee and on the next agenda

Recommendation (3): The level of Fidelity cover is below the recommended guidelines of year-end balances plus 50% of the precept.

This has already been increased in this year's insurance requirements - **completed**

Recommendation (4): The Council should publish the missing information below.

Under the requirements of the **Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 13(2b)** the council is required to display AGARs for the five years 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-2025 on their website.

2020 - 2021	No	No	No
2021 - 2022	No	No	No
2022 - 2023	No	No	No
2023 - 2024	No	No	No
2024 - 2025	Yes	Yes	Yes

The new website was under construction at the time of the audit so this will be up dated with the relevant information in readiness for next year.

Recommendation (5): The council should consider the limits of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

This is already being considered by council and are working on new bank accounts

Recommendation (6): It is a requirement to agree Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR separately and record in the minutes accordingly.

Noted

The council recognised that all key controls are in place and thanked Cllr Harrison and the Clerk for the work in undertaking this.

Next finance meeting will be planned soon.

26/076

Planning report recommendations on planning applications listed below:

Update from Planning meeting 6th July 2026

Meeting with CCC planning team on 14th July 2026.

076.1 Planning Applications – Observations conveyed under delegated authority since last meeting.

261005/7 Anglian Water Pipeline, Dedham to Great Horkesley,

Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3 (materials) and 5 (landscape management plan) following planning permission 241580

Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 23 (Traffic and Construction Management Plan), 24 (SUDs during construction), 25 (noise levels) and 26 (Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement) following permission 223183

261026 Sleepy Hollow, Cooper's Lane, Dedham Colchester CO7 6AX
Removal of Existing Single Storey Flat Roof Garage and Replace with New Double Storey Side Extension. Formation of New Timber Entrance Porch

260996 Lindsay House, Brook Street, Dedham Colchester CO7 6AD
G1 - Taxus baccata -Prune back over-hanging vegetation by up to 0.50 meters/as close to the boundary line as possible. Prune back lateral branches overhanging the vegetable patch below, by approximately 1.5/2.0 meters, back to suitable growth points.

260852 Creg-Ny-Baa, The Heath, Dedham Colchester CO7 6BT
Erection of a garden shed and pergola.

261127 Little House, High Street, Dedham Colchester CO7 6HJ
Application to discharge condition 2 (facing & roofing materials) of planning permission 251382 (allowed at appeal - APP/A1530/Y/25/3376659)

261147/8 Little House, High Street, Dedham Colchester CO7 6HJ
Application to discharge condition 4 (external render), 5 (external painting) and 6 (roof, parapet & external joinery) of planning permission 231746
Application to discharge condition 3 (external render), 4 (external window joinery) and 5 (rainwater goods) of planning permission 251382

261145 Little House, High Street, Dedham Colchester CO7 6HJ
Application to discharge condition 6 (fireplaces), 8 (internal joinery), 10 (render), 11 (external painting) and 12 (details of roof, parapet, external joinery) of planning permission 231747

076.2 Planning Applications – Decisions received since last meeting

260397 - Grove Cottage East, Grove Hill, Dedham, Colchester, CO7 6DX
Listed building consent application to erect a timber framed partition
CCC: Decision Approve conditional

260535/6 - Little Georgian House, 5 Royal Square, Dedham, Colchester, CO7 6AA

Replacement of 8 no. sashes to 5 no. windows to front elevation
CCC: Decision Approve conditional

Late report received after publishing of agenda

260616 - Petalo Lodge, Boxhouse Lane, Dedham, Colchester, CO7 6HZ
Alterations to frontage wall to reduce to 1 metre height with the introduction of trellis and pier detailing on the wall to match the existing to the south and realignment of entrance gates and rebuilding of piers
CCC Decision: Approve conditional

250925 Land next to Holiday Inn Express, Birchwood Road, Dedham Colchester CO7 6HX

Erection of a Drive-Thru (Use Class E(a)/(b)) with associated car parking, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, landscaping and other ancillary works.
CCC: Decision approve conditional -30.6.26

26/077

Infrastructure

0.77.1 Agree Trading Bay policy- formal proposal Report and recommendation sent.

It was recommended that the trading bay is utilised for four days (Monday to Thursday) and on Friday for local voluntary groups to utilise the square for community purposes only. The usage of the bays would be for from 8.30 am to 8pm.

Before this can be progressed and to ensure NEPP monitored the usage of the bays there would need to be a formal consultation process which would cost approx. £1200

Proposed Cllr Beeton seconded Cllr Harrison. All agreed

0.77.2 Service Level Agreement for Youth Club HM

Cllr Main reported on proposed agreement. Cost for year is approx. £6,000 with an agreement for a year. There are also rules for the youth and their parents to follow when they join. Agreement was proposed in principle Proposed Cllr Bourn seconded Cllr Beeton All agreed. Cllr Main will update the agreement for next meeting.

0.77.3 Vandalism of playground equipment and RoSPA report SB

There has been vandalism of the climbing tunnel in the play area which has been followed up by Cllr Beeton. Temporary repair has been undertaken but this needs to be removed asap.

0.77.4 Parking Signage SB

The parking signs in the car park will be replaced and some draft text will be sent round to agree.

0.77.5 Update of village sign AA

Cllr Andrews reported that he has been in touch with Men in Sheds and they are coming next Thursday to give their thoughts to help with tis project.

077.6 Cycle Racks - update AA

Cllr Andrews reported that there had been requests for additional cycle racks in Royal Square the only place on Royal Square is at the back of Church wall but this will be discussed further. The public houses will be spoken to see if they would have a cycle rack.

077.7 Speed cameras - update AA/T

An updated report was given on the speed camera and had looked at the one in Langham and will be following this up. Cllr Andrews will report back next meeting.

077.8 Sports Club - Insurance update SB

Cllr Beeton gave an update on the insurance of the sports club and there have been conversations on this and the claim is going through. The loss adjuster hasn't signed this off and is waiting for quotes for cleaning the carpets, redecoration etc.

Quotes have been asked for but not received to date. This would be agreed through email as the council do not meet again until September

077.9. Parish Footpaths - PH

Cllr Halsall stated that these had been cut as per the schedule that were raised earlier.

077.10 Cycling along the Drift SB

There had been requests about the cycling along the Drift and it was suggested that a sign be put up to make pedestrians aware of cyclists using the Drift and that pedestrians have priority.

077.11 Mobile Phone coverage and mast SB

There had been a meeting with other parish councils affected by the lack of signal and Sir Bernard Jenkin/Cllr Rowe regarding this and this has been reported by Sara Naylor in her earlier report. Cllr McLaughlin will follow this up with Cllr Rowe.

077.12 Water on Castle Hill SB/TH

Cllr Beeton updated the council with this issue and the problem is with roots from trees. After looking at this, it is possible to raise the manhole covers to check these but would need heavy equipment to raise them. The water should flow under the road and into a ditch which has been filled in on the other side of the road. As this is a Highways issue they will be contacted again.

077.13 Bus issues -SB

Cllr Beeton had followed up this with the bus companies and there are none at the moment.

077.14 Litter Bin for outside Co-op/Essex Rose SB

There has been a request to have a rubbish bin outside the Co-op/Essex Rose and it was proposed that the Parish Council purchase this. This was discussed and looked at as to see if it is possible to relocate one of the bins near the therapy park to the High Street next to the present bin in Royal Square. Proposed Cllr Beeton seconded Cllr Bourn All agreed.

Action: Cllr Main to follow this up.

26/078

Communications

0.78 Dedham image update

A meeting will be arranged soon.

26/079

Training

Councillor training for all councillors Saturday September 5th 2026 Duchy Barn.

Cllr Andrews completed his initial Councillor Training

26/080 Clerk's Report
Various footpath queries which have been followed up -see above.
The council received a request from Dedham Sports Club for a grant today which will be added to the next agenda after further discussion from the council.
Vagrants sleeping in Church porch have been reported- the council will look into this further.
Street pastors are available in Colchester and information will be gathered and passed on to these.

26/081 Next meeting
7th September 2026 6:30pm – no meeting in August
Sports Club meeting to meet before the end of July.

26/082 Closure of meeting
Meeting was closed 20.30pm

Confidential discussion

26/083 Admin/ fundraising assistant
The Council agreed in principle to the proposal for a further administrator for the Council. Details of the nature of this post to be finalised at the next meeting following further consultation with the Parish Clerk
Action: Cllrs Bourn and Harrison
Inappropriate Correspondence
It was noted that the Council need to follow agreed guidelines regarding correspondence between councillors, employees and contractors
It was noted that there was a need for clarification on the process of appointment and role of the IT consultant.
Action: Cllr Sneddon to re-circulate past correspondence.

Signed

Cllr Bourn

Dated