



Minutes of Dedham Parish Council meeting

7th September 2026 6:30pm at Duchy Barn

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

Present: Clerk: Carol Harbach
14 Members of the public

26/102 Welcome and apologies of absence.

Cllr Bourn welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Cllr Bourn stated that he has to leave the meeting early tonight and if the meeting is not completed by the time he has to leave then Cllr Harrison will carry on as Chair until the end of the meeting. Pro Sneddon second Haynes

Cllr Main also has to leave at 7:20pm tonight.

Cllr Bourn also informed the public that they may ask questions during the Public Open Forum section but not through the agenda as this is a long agenda and we need to get through it.

Cllr Naylor had sent her apologies for this meeting.

26/103 Declaration of Members Interests

None arose.

26/104 Public Open Forum (maximum 15 mins)

- **Wildlife:** A resident reported that kingfishers are still being seen along the River Stour, which was welcomed as positive news.
- **Mobile Phone Coverage:** An update was provided regarding ongoing mobile phone issues. The lack of reliable coverage is now affecting utility companies' ability to access meters remotely.
- **Parking:** Problems associated with football-related parking continue to be an issue.
- **Highways and Traffic:** Ongoing concerns were raised regarding highway conditions and the speed of traffic through the village, which are considered a safety risk. These issues have been raised with the Parish Council, Essex Highways and local Ward Councillors on numerous occasions. Efforts to report the issues through the appropriate website and through direct representations are continuing. The condition of the Drift footpath was also highlighted as a potential safety hazard, with difficulties being experienced in obtaining a response from Highways.
- **Castle Hill:** It was noted that significant expenditure may be required to address the highway issues at Castle Hill. The matter has been referred to Highways again, and Sir Bernard Jenkin has also been made aware of the concerns.
- **River Safety:** The need to improve public awareness regarding potential dangers associated with the river was raised. This matter will be discussed further at a later stage.

- **Council Correspondence:** A query was raised as to whether emails sent to the Council are circulated to all councillors and whether acknowledgements can be provided. The matter concerning the Chair had previously been raised and followed up, and an apology had been given.
- **East Lane Road Surface:** The poor condition of the road surface in East Lane was highlighted. The issue will be formally reported via the appropriate Highways reporting system.
- **Drainage/Flooding:** A blocked ditch and drainage tunnels along the Essex Way, down East Lane towards the bottom corner, were reported. Cllr Halsall is aware of the issue and is following it up. Concern was expressed that the blockage could result in flooding during periods of heavy rainfall. The matter will also be followed up by the Infrastructure Group.

26/105

Approval of the minutes of the of 20th and 27th July 2026

These had been circulated and were proposed by Cllr and seconded by Cllr All agreed.

20th July Proposed Cllr Haines seconded Cllr Harrison All agreed 1 abstained as not present Cllr Sneddon

27th July Proposed Cllr Haines seconded Cllr Harrison All agreed 1 abstained as not present Cllr Sneddon

26/106

Matters arising from these minutes including updates on Action points progress

Action points- these had been circulated, some were still ongoing and others are on the agenda.

The matters arising from the last 2 meetings regarding the situation with the football club were still on-going with the legal team.

Hedge at Munnings completed

Car parking Mill Lane next agenda

Bus service ongoing still no reply to date

Audibility in Barn- will be followed up noted no hearing loop in Barn

Blood cancer letter been written no reply to date

Sports club ongoing

Tree works donation BACS details needs Clerk to follow up.

On Agenda for next meeting, tree has been donated to Council.

Village sign on agenda

Cycle racks discharged

Sports Club insurance discharged

Litter bin moved from Assembly rooms Discharged

26/107

Visitors Report (ECC and Colchester City Council)

None present

Noted that the Local Government Reform (LGR) in Essex and Suffolk has been withdrawn as from today

26/108

Legal update - Playing Fields

A statement was read out – see below - from the legal team to date and this will be on next agenda.

1. DPC is the registered proprietor of the land with title absolute and holds the playing field subject only to the restrictive covenants set out in the conveyance.

2. in summary the DPC do have the authority to regulate the timing, frequency and extent of football use on the playing field, including Sunday use, subject to certain reasonable conditions.

In terms of taking this issue forward the DPC are proposing elsewhere on the agenda a mechanism for doing so.

There are still conversations being completed with the legal team and when we have their results, we will bring these back to this meeting.

26/109 To confirm the establishment, membership and terms of reference of the Dedham Sports Club Working Party

The terms of reference for this group had been circulated and were proposed by Cllr Main and seconded by Cllr Bourn. These agreed references will be published on the website. Members include the sports club with other invited members, including 3 councillors from the Parish Council, residents and people who may be interested in discussing Sunday football.

Meetings will start next month.

Proposed council membership Cllr Main as Chair, Cllr Beeton to represent Infrastructure group and Cllr Harrison to represent the finance group. All agreed.

26/110 Update on river and meadows issues including cost to address jumping off the bridge

The Parish Council received a late notification from Babergh Council regarding an appeal by the landowner concerning the land adjacent to the river and the permitted times of use exceeding the agreed 28-day period.

The notification was received after the Parish Council agenda had been published. Local residents are able to access the appeal documentation online and submit their comments directly. The Parish Council intends to submit its formal response before the deadline of **24 September 2026**.

Although the matter was not included on the published agenda and therefore could not be formally resolved, the Council agreed to discuss it informally due to the approaching submission deadline.

The Council discussed the need to ensure that residents are kept informed of the current matter and the opportunities available for them to respond.

It was agreed that a draft communication should be circulated to Councillors and that relevant information should be highlighted on the Parish Council website. The possibility of providing paper copies was also discussed to ensure that residents without access to, or who do not use, social media or online services are able to receive the information.

It was noted that the parish magazine may not be published in sufficient time to provide the information required. Word of mouth and notices displayed around the village were therefore considered important additional methods of communication. Residents are encouraged to provide any comments or suggestions to the Clerk, who will collate these and pass them to the Parish Council for consideration.

It was reported that the matter had previously been circulated to Babergh District Council, which had subsequently forwarded the information to relevant parties. However, Babergh District Council had decided not to undertake direct communication with residents of the village. The discussions that Cllr McLaughlin had held with Babergh District Council were also reported to the meeting.

The meeting noted that guidance explaining how residents can respond will be made available on the Parish Council website. Residents will be provided with information on the process for submitting their views.

Particular attention was drawn to the opportunity for residents to comment in relation to **non-agricultural use**.

It was noted that the Multi-Agency Group regarding the river has met during the summer and scheduled to meet again at the end of September.

Councillors and residents who have matters they wish to be raised at the meeting were asked to contact the Clerk. The Clerk will pass relevant matters to the Chair for consideration and inclusion at the meeting.

Bridge deterrents – to be discussed at multi agency meeting

The possibility of introducing additional deterrents was discussed with Highways as part of the current financial year's considerations.

The potential cost of police involvement was reported as being approximately £70,000, which is not considered financially affordable at present.

It was agreed that the matter should be raised at the next Multi-Agency Group meeting to obtain the views of the other agencies involved and to explore whether any alternative measures or support may be available.

The meeting noted that various notices have been erected at the river and replaced when they have subsequently been removed.

Concern was expressed that the repeated replacement of notices could result in unnecessary expenditure. It was also discussed that placing the notices at a higher level may not necessarily be appropriate and could potentially create additional safety concerns.

It was noted that the appeal papers and relevant supporting information had been circulated to the multi-agency parties for their consideration.

26/111 Progress on Play Park development

This is still ongoing but developments have been made and are moving forward and these will be reported at the next meeting. This group now need a term of reference.

26/112 Dedham Vale National Landscapes proposal

The parish council had received papers concerning a meeting on the 15th September to facilitate closer working arrangements between Parish Councils and the Partnership. The implications of this to be discussed at next meeting.

26/113 River Safety Signage

The Council discussed proposed signage highlighting river safety, pollution risks and licensing requirements for river craft. It was agreed in principle to purchase and position the signs at a suitable location near the river to ensure public visibility. The matter will be reviewed next year. The proposal was agreed in principle unanimously.

26/114 Padel tennis: To agree Feasibility Study and Terms of Reference (to follow)

The papers for this have been circulated to the council prior to this meeting for the feasibility study and were proposed by Cllr Andrew and seconded by Cllr Main All agreed 1 abstained. These will be published on the website.

The next stage is a detailed study and to set up a working group to move this forward.

Finance, standards and Procedures report

115.1 To approve payment of £2,945.40 to Solicitors for the payment for legal works to date.

This has come in for the legal works to date and will be paid in the regular payment run.

115.2 To approve payments in accordance with the 26/27 Budget

The July payments were read out as there was not a meeting in August.

Warden invoices and receipts for July 26	848.03
Clerks Salary – July 26 including back pay	1,388.30
C. Harbach – mileage	72.81
HMRC Tax/NI	148.80
Dedham Works social media works	150.00
DPCC - Duchy Barn Hire	140.00
Sage Ground Maintenance Services July 26	748.80
Moser Groundcare – grass cutting on fields	704.21
M. Rich Playground inspections July 26	200.00
Playquip Ltd removal of vandalised equipment H&S	687.79
Essex Association Local Council Training Cllr Main	240.00
Essex Association Local Council Training Cllr Main	250.80
Colchester City Council fees for cashless machine	383.16
Colchester City Council fees for car park machine	315.00
Dunmow Training Centre course for clerk	60.00

=====

Total £7,837.70

Payments for August invoices for approval are:

Solicitor's fees see above	2,945.40
Colchester City Council- street lighting paid by DD	42.60
Warden invoices and receipts for Aug 26	944.20
Clerks Salary – Aug 26 including back pay	637.97
C. Harbach – mileage	31.20
HMRC Tax/NI	216.68
Dedham Works social media works	150.00
Sage Ground Maintenance Services Aug 26	57.60
Moser Groundcare – grass cutting on fields	704.21
M. Rich Playground inspections Aug 26	200.00
Craft Nurseries flowers and pots in village	510.00
PKF Littlejohn External auditors	504.00

=====

Total £6,901.26

These were read out and prop Cllr Harrison seconded Cllr Andrews All agreed.

1 abstained Cllr Main.

Monitoring report - highlighted 5 items

Income budget protections are ahead of time on car park

Subscriptions currently 4 times more than last year due to miss cost code will be moved to legal and professional fees

Insurance overspent as policy was amended as was adjusted and values options changed as per auditor's reports.
Village amenities again cost code misplacement one needs to be moved to village maintenance
There is no sustainability budget this will be moved.

115.3 External Auditors report.

These have been circulated to the council and were published on the website and noticeboards for the residents.

These were read out by Cllr Harrison.

This is basically the same as the Internal Auditors report and this is currently being worked on and we have already completed 2 of the 4 recommendations to date.

115.3 Standing order amendment as per audit to be agreed.

This paper has been circulated for review and the only alteration that has been requested is to change the amount under section 18 c. from £25,000 to £30,000 so they are in line with the Finance Regulations as suggested by the External and Internal Auditors. All agreed.

Policy updates are being worked on and these will be revisited.

Proposed Cllr Haines seconded Cllr Andrews All agreed. These will be update on the website

26/116

Planning report recommendations on planning applications listed below:

26/116.1 Update from Planning meeting 6th July 2026

26/116.2 Planning applications

261551 - Coopers Bottom, Coopers Lane, Dedham Colchester CO7 6AX

Proposed canopy to external dining terrace

DPC Comment: No comment

261459 - Hillside, The Heath, Dedham Colchester CO7 6BU

Proposed single storey rear extension

DPC Comment: No comment

261537 - Lamb Cottage, Birchwood Road, Dedham Colchester CO7 6ED

Proposed alterations to existing workshop and proposed gym

DPC Comment: No comment

261498 - 4 Church View, Long Road West, Dedham Colchester CO7 6EX

Installation of a roof-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) system comprising 8 black solar panels (total capacity 3.52kWp, UKSOL) on the front facing roof slope of the dwelling

DPC Comment: No comment

261508 - The Old Bookshop, High Street, Dedham Colchester CO7 6HA

Listed building consent application for replacement of bay window and front door.

DPC Comment: No comment

261506 - Meadow Cottage, Mill Lane, Dedham Colchester CO7 6DH

Remove all conifers inside gate to right hand side. The owner is concerned due to the fire risk of discarded cigarette ends catching these alight and having a thatched roof on the property. I believe this has been confirmed by Manningtree fire services.

DPC Comment: No comment

261241 The Old Post Office, High Street, Dedham Colchester CO7 6HA

T1 - Holly and T2 - Laurel - Reduce in height by up to 2m and then reduce sides in by up to 1m whilst still keeping rounded shape.

DPC Comment: No comment

261299 Brook Street, Dedham Colchester CO7 6AD

Brook Street, Dedham 033478 ¹ Crown lift the Common Ash to provide 6m clearance over the highway to facilitate the safe passage of high-sided vehicles. 033479 ¹ Crown lift the Common Ash to provide 6m clearance over the highway to facilitate the safe passage of high-sided vehicles.

DPC Comment: No comment

261370 1 Hallfields Cottage, Manningtree Road, Dedham Colchester CO7 6AE

The demolition of existing rear extension and outbuilding, and construction of new side and rear extension, providing a new kitchen and playroom at ground floor, and two additional bedrooms at first floor

DPC Comment: General observation to be entered on website as

That the extension should be in red brick to match the surrounding area. Clerk to add to website.

26/116.3 Planning Applications – Decisions received since last meeting

None at time of posting of agenda.

26/117

Infrastructure

117.1 Infrastructure Group report and recommendations noted

117.2 Trading Bay Policy – to consider and approve recommendations in Group Report

The Trading Bay Policy recommendations contained within the Group Report were considered for approval. These had been circulated earlier.

It was noted that the proposal had previously been circulated, with an estimated consultation cost of £1,100. Due to the limited availability of officers, and as the consultation process would normally be undertaken by the City Council, which they now do not complete, it was considered impractical for the Parish Council to proceed with a formal consultation. If undertaken, the process could take approximately 18 months before an application could be completed and submitted to the relevant council.

It was reported that approximately 50% of those currently using the bay are local residents, with the remainder coming from outside the village. Members therefore considered whether an alternative approach would be more appropriate.

The preferred proposal was for the Parish Council to manage and monitor the bay directly, rather than pursue a formal Traffic Bay Policy at this stage. A sign would be installed on the wall clearly stating the permitted times of use, with the bay managed and operated by DPC. Members were invited to submit ideas for clearly defining the bay.

It was also agreed that the stones covering the outside area would be swept regularly to ensure the area remained visible, tidy and well maintained.

The proposed signage and operating arrangements were read out, with the suggested restricted hours being Monday to Thursday, 8:30 am to 8:30 pm, with use by the DPC local organisation on Fridays only.

Following questions from Members, the proposals were discussed and clarification provided. It was proposed by Cllr Beeton that the revised arrangements be adopted

and reviewed after one year to assess their effectiveness. Proposed Cllr Haines seconded Cllr Andrews with one abstention.

117.3 Mobile Phone coverage and mast- update

No update from Cllr Rowe to date.

The Clerk was asked to contact Cllr Tom Rowe re an update of phone masts Once provided an update will be circulated to councillors and put on website.

117.4 To approve circulated Service Level Agreement for Youth Club

This was deferred to the next meeting

117.5 To note completed removal of damaged tunnel in children's play area and associated making good and receipt of ROSPA Report which has a number of minor recommendations which our Village Warden is addressing.

117.6 Parking Signage update- To agree proposals for new signage on Drift regarding priority for pedestrians

It was decided to leave as it currently and to have no signs.

117.7 Cycle Racks - - to note that no proposals to be pursued at this time but position to be kept under review. Discharged.

117.8 Update on Village Sign - To report withdrawal of Men's Sheds

Any ideas of new suppliers with expertise in this to be sent to Cllr Andrews

117.9 Speed cameras - To note report from AA and proposal for approval of two speed cameras for variable sites in village at a cost of £10,333.20.

Members agreed in principle to the proposal for Speed Watch operations twice weekly and to the purchase of two SID units. Potential sites are currently being considered, including mobile locations.

A separate quotation will be obtained for the required groundworks, including provision for battery and solar panel installation. All members were in agreement in principle.

117.10 Parish Footpaths update

Cllr Halsall has been working on the problems which have now been sorted and we are up to date on the cutting.

117.11 Water on Castle Hill nothing else to report than previously, we will report if we know more.

26/118

Communications

26/118.1 Dedham image update

Report which includes the web site operation, development and management as well as Dedham Image update

There is currently no report to discuss Cllr Bourn and Cllr Sneddon will bring this back to next meeting

26/119

Training including initial reflections on training day

In initial reflections have been given out and any other thoughts on this to be added to if needed. This will be on the next meeting agenda

26/120

Clerk's Report

Reminder 13th September 2026 Fun Run on field

The Church will be applying for a grant next month

There is a public meeting regarding the Langham 900 update at Langham Community Centre 1st October 2026 7pm if anyone wishes to attend.

26/121

Next meeting

Consider informal meeting to discuss outcomes of training day -possibly 28th September

Next council meeting Monday 5th October

26/122

Closure of meeting

Meeting closed at 7:53pm

Signed

Cllr Bourn

Date