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MINUTES

GREAT TOTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Date: **Monday, 19th January 2026**

Place: **Village Hall, Great Totham, Maldon, Essex, CM9 8NH.**

Present:	Councillors	C.	Adams (Vice-Chair)
		C.	Atkinson (Chair)
		F.	Delderfield BEM.
		H.	Dundon
		T.	Gregan
		V.	Heaviside
		J.	Keyes
		B.	Marshall
		N.	Snelling
	Parish Clerk	N.	Smith

136. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

137. **INTERESTS**

Councillor Gregan declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 144 a) (2) as the applicant was a relative of his wife. Councillor Snelling declared a pecuniary interest in Item 144 a) (3) as he owns land next to the proposed development.

138. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 15th December 2025 were received and approved.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 15th December 2025 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

139. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the press or public present.

140. ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

An update was given on the outstanding actions from the previous meeting-

Item	Action	Delegated To	Update
Memorial Bench	Repair top slats	Amenities Committee	Completed
Braxted Lane Recreation Ground Gate	Investigate legislation and minimum sizes	Clerk	Completed
Land Registry	Speak with the Little Totham clerk and previous clerk	Clerk	Completed however, further actions to be followed up
Tax Base	Investigate why it is not larger	Clerk	Completed
Dogs on Leads	Speak with MDC regarding PSPO	Clerk	Contact made, waiting on date for meeting
Precept	Submit to MDC	Clerk	Completed
Memorial Bus Shelter	Meet contractor	Cllr Adams	Cllr Adams to meet with the contractor
Community Governance Review	Complete survey	Clerk	Completed
Memorial Bus Shelter	Repair seat	Cllr Marshall	Ongoing
Website	Update with new policies and financial information	Clerk	Financial information updated. Transparency information, policies, Assertion 10 information and Accessibility changes are ongoing
Yeomanry	Investigate whether the resident qualifies	Clerk	Councillor Delderfield provided further information to the Clerk.

141. PARISH CLERK’S REPORT

The Clerk’s report was received. The Clerk also stated that Members would need to undertake Data Protection training as part of the new Assertion 10 governance statement on the 2025/2026 AGAR, which would shortly be distributed.

142. CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS, REPORTS FROM OTHER BODIES AND GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

There was nothing to report.

143. CORRESPONDENCE, APPEALS AND PLANNING DECISIONS

One decision was published after the agenda was noted.

25/00994/HOUSE- Two-storey rear extension	56A Walden House Road, Great Totham,	GTPC- Recommend the granting of permission. MDC- Approve
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144. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

(a) With Councillor Gregan having declared a non-pecuniary interest at Item (a) 1 and Councillor Snelling, a pecuniary interest at Item (a) 2. and leaving the room at 7.50 pm, Members commented on the following planning application-

1.	25/00167/FUL - Installation of ground mount Solar PV system	Land Rear Of Plumtree House Sheepcoates Lane Little Totham Essex	Recommend the granting of permission.
2.	25/01105/HOUSE Proposed outbuilding to front for an Office / Garden Room with associated hardstanding	10 Playle Chase Great Totham Maldon Essex	Raise no objection, subject to the required reports being received to the satisfaction of the arboriculturist
3.	25/00804/OUTM Outline planning application for erection of 30 dwellings seeking determination of access only with all other matters reserved	Land Opposite 34 Hall Road Great Totham Essex	Recommend the refusal of planning permission due to an urbanising effect, harmful to the character and appearance of this location. The application fails to accord with the spatial strategy of the Maldon District Development Plan.

			The proposal conflicts with the GT Neighbourhood Plan's policies on landscape and views, and there are concerns about its adverse effects on habitats and species.
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Councillor Snelling returned at 7.55 pm

(b) The following application was also considered-

26/00017/FUL – Single side storey extension to existing detached 'Treehouse' classroom building	Great Totham Primary School	Recommend the granting of permission.
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145. **COMMUNITY POLICING, SAFETY AND REGULATIONS**

- (a) Members received the previously circulated report.
- (b) The Chairman reported that in the five years that he had been conducting Speedwatch sessions, the number of cars being reported for speeding each session had fallen considerably, which showed the scheme was achieving its aims. It was stated that the Clerk would seek sponsorship for a new Speedwatch gun that meets Essex Police standards.

146. **AMENITIES**

- (a) The Amenities Chair reported that the gate had been altered to stop quadbikes from gaining access; however, a scrambler bike had been seen riding around, and the number plate was noted. Members were also informed that the new signs and telephone number changes had been implemented at the playgrounds, as recommended in the annual play inspection.
- (b) Members discussed a possible extension to the Monkey Climbing Wall and instructed the Clerk to apply for the grant as soon as she was able to. The Amenities Chairman stated that it would not be possible until August, as that would be a year since the previous grant had been received.

RESOLVED That the Clerk proceed with applying for a grant and then, if successful, place an order for the extension to the Monkey Climbing Wall.

- (c) Members discussed the Jubilee Recreation Ground Play Equipment. It was decided that the remaining usable equipment should be re-sited to the council's other play areas as soon as possible. Members spoke about what could replace the equipment at the ground for the benefit

of the children of the village. Members stated that they would like to create a small skate park or BMX track, but appreciated that this would come at a high cost.

RESOLVED That quotes are sought to re-site the remaining usable equipment to the council's other play areas.

RESOLVED That the clerk investigate alternative sources of funding for a small skate park or bmx track and the potential costs involved.

- (d) The quote received from Maldon District Council for the 2026/2027 grounds maintenance contract was discussed. It was felt that this was value for money, that the work was of a high standard, and that the council would like it to continue. Members discussed the possibility of incorporating the hedge cutting into their work.

RESOLVED That the clerk arrange for Maldon District Council to meet with the Chairman to obtain a quote for the annual hedge-cutting requirements.

RESOLVED That the grounds maintenance contract for 2026/2027 of £4,135.80 plus VAT be accepted.

147. **FINANCE**

- (a) The following payments were approved-

Payee	Payment For	Amount
Nikki Smith	January 2026 Salary	£629.84
HMRC	January 2026 PAYE & National Insurance Contributions	£515.11
N Power	Streetlighting	£79.78
Nikki Smith	Volunteers Reception at Prince of Wales	£356.85
	Letter to Barclays	£1.70
	Broadband & Mobile Oct-Dec 2025	£253.62
Colin Atkinson (presented at meeting)	Signs for the playground	£100.80

RESOLVED That the payments for January 2026 be approved, including the additional payment of £100.80 for Colin Atkinson.

RESOLVED That the Clerk open an account with Kemp & Co.

- (b) Members received the bank reconciliations, schedule of receipts and payments and budget statements up to 31st December 2025. Some members stated that they found the current format hard to understand, although the Clerk explained that, apart from the budget statement, the bank reconciliation and the schedule of receipts and payments were in the same format she had been given by the former Clerk. She asked if Members could find copies of previous financial reports for the council, as they were not in her possession. Members also asked whether a Finance Committee could be formed to have three key members scrutinise the accounts.

RESOLVED That the bank reconciliations, schedule of receipts and payments and budget statements up to 31st December 2025 be received and approved.

RESOLVED That a Finance Committee of three members be formed at the next council meeting.

RESOLVED That Members provide the Clerk with financial reports from historical meetings.

148. INTERNAL CONTROLS

- (a) Members noted that the Chairman had signed six months' worth of reconciliations and bank statements that all balanced. The next three months would be signed by another Member to ensure that everything was in order. The Clerk explained that this would need to be completed regularly and presented to the Internal Auditor.
- (b) Members received a report on the effectiveness of the council's internal controls. The Clerk explained that there were a number of checks that the council needed to perform throughout the financial year to ensure good governance and that they could tick yes when considering the AGAR for 2025/2026. She explained that as well as historical work there was now work on the new Assertion 10 that needed to be completed in time for the end-of-year inspections. Members discussed the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and how they impacted the council's work and council meetings.

RESOLVED That Members received the report and agreed that the council's existing arrangements were now effective; however, there was still work to be completed on the new Assertion 10 statement.

149. APPOINTMENT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR

Members discussed the Internal Auditors' Report from 2024/2025 and agreed that it was comprehensive. It was decided to continue with Heelis and Lodge for another year as they were deemed a competent, independent and qualified firm of auditors.

RESOLVED That Heelis and Lodge be appointed as the Internal Auditor for the financial year 2025/2026.

150. ASSET REVIEW

The Clerk explained that, as the copy of the asset register she had at the time of the 2024/2025 audit did not include any figures, it was necessary to approve it now so it could be restated at the next audit. She explained that the asset register should be approved annually, so Members would be asked to approve the 2025/2026 asset register in April. Members discussed the entries on the asset register and agreed on the changes.

RESOLVED That the 2024/2025 asset register be received and approved.

151. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

One member discussed the issue of dog fouling and asked that it be discussed at a future meeting.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.37 p.m.

Councillor C. Atkinson
Chairman

NS/23.01.2025