



RIVENHALL PARISH COUNCIL

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF RIVENHALL AND RIVENHALL
END IN THE BRAINTREE DISTRICT IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX

ANNUAL REPORT

RIVENHALL PARISH COUNCIL - DETAILS

You are hereby invited to attend the
ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

To be held on Tuesday 3rd May 2016, in the Village Hall, Church
Road, Rivenhall, Commencing at 7.00pm.

This Annual Meeting will precede the Annual Parish Council Meeting
and will, therefore, end just prior to 8.00pm thereby allowing time
for the Parish Council Meeting to commence at the usual time of
8.00pm.

*The Parish Councillors hope that you will make every effort to support this
important annual village meeting, which has proved very successful in
previous years.*

Your Parish Council meets each month, usually on the first Tuesday.

Agendas advertised on the Council notice boards and website.

Residents are welcome to attend the meetings and to question Councillors or
comment upon local issues.

CHAIRMAN:

Cllr. James Abbott: (01376) 584576

COUNCILLORS:

Cllr. Dennis Clark (01376) 512418

Cllr. Jack Prime (01376) 514255

Cllr. Sally Anderson (01376) 514351

Cllr. Bob Wright (01376) 503983

Cllr. Howard Bills 07749 251 838

Cllr. Robert Turner (01376) 513659

PARISH CLERK:

Mr. Keith P. Taylor

23 Mersey Road, Witham, CM8 1LL

Tel: (01376) 516975

Email: parishclerk@rivenhallparishcouncil.net

Website: www.rivenhallparishcouncil.net

Budget for 2016/2017

At the Precept Meeting, held in December 2015, the Parish Council agreed the following budget for this financial year:

<u>Parks & Open Spaces:</u>	£5,525
(Incl. maintenance, grass cutting & litter picking, consumables, bulbs and trees etc.)	
<u>Administration:</u>	£7,912
(Salaries, insurance, office consumables, Audit fees, subscriptions, Hall hire etc.)	
<u>Section 137:</u>	£135
(British Legion, CPRE Essex Air Ambulance)	
<u>Capital spending:</u>	£7,000
(Taken from balances)	

TOTAL REVENUE BUDGET £20,572. This being reduced by a Grant from BDC and use of reserves, resulting in a **net Precept of £9,540**. The Parish element of the Band D Tax Rate for 2016/17 is £36.22, a reduction of £0.06 per week.

Parish Council Meeting Dates 2016/2017

3rd May (VH) 7th June (HDH) 5th July (VH)
2nd August (VH) 6th September (HDH) 4th October (VH)
1st November (VH) 6th December (HDH)
14th December (VH) Precept Meeting

3rd January (VH) 7th February (VH) 7th March (HDH)
4th April (VH)

VH = Rivenhall Village Hall

HDH = The Henry Dixon Hall, Rivenhall End

**RIVENHALL PARISH COUNCIL
INCOME & EXPENDITURE FOR 2015/16.**

<u>INCOME</u>	<u>2015/16</u>
<i>Precept from Braintree District Council</i>	£9450
<i>Parish Localism Grant from Braintree District Council</i>	£2165
<i>Street Cleaning Grant from Braintree District Council</i>	£1753
<i>Collection Fund Surplus Grant from B.D.C.</i>	£159
<i>Vat Refund</i>	£230
<i>RCCE Best Kept Village Award</i>	£150
<i>Bank Interest</i>	£13
Total	£13920

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>2015/16</u>
<i>Administration</i>	[£7589]	£8042
<i>Major Works</i>	Nil	£1399
<i>Parks, Open Spaces & Maintenance</i>	[£4336]	£3535
<i>Local Govt. Act Section 137 (Special payments)</i>	[£106]	£131
Total	[£12031]	£13107

Chairman's report 2015/2016.

As highlighted on the front page, the Annual Parish Assembly will be held on Tuesday 3 May 2016 at 7.00pm in the Rivenhall Village Hall. Residents are welcome to attend to raise local issues and to put questions to invited representatives.

2016 will likely see Braintree District Council making more rapid progress on their new Local Plan. There are a large number of development sites within or adjacent to Rivenhall Parish that have been put forward by local landowners and developers. We should know by June which ones BDC intends to allocate, though there will be several rounds of public consultation and an inquiry before sites are fully allocated in 2017. The Parish Council will itself hold further public events to display plans. The session held in January at the village hall was well attended by residents.

There is still no firm news on the Government proposals to widen the A12. The Parish Council has invited Highways England to a local meeting to try to establish what their

intentions are. On local schemes, there is some progress - the extended weight restriction along Oak Road, together with improved signage to try to stop HGVs approaching the railway bridge, remain approved and funded. The bid to allocate Rectory Lane as a "Quiet lane" has been successful - in fact it scored highest of all such bids in the district.

As funding from central Government to local authorities gets ever tighter, there is pressure to increase council tax to make up the shortfall. Rivenhall Parish Council continues to work to keep its precept as low as possible. As residents will have seen by now, council tax is rising in 2016/17 due to demands from Essex County Council, Braintree District Council and the Police. This is likely to be repeated in coming years as the Government reduces funding even further.

Rivenhall once again won the Essex Best Kept Village competition for its class in 2015. It is a reflection of all the work that many organisations and residents put in to maintain public land, gardens, improve planting and pick litter - sometimes in the most challenging of locations such as along the A12. We are also fortunate to have so many groups supporting the social well-being of our parish. The village hall goes from strength to strength, with a pre-school now established and the development of state-of-the-art film and audio equipment. We have many clubs and voluntary groups that provide a wide range of activities - all the way from the Christmas events through to monitoring our local environment to see how species of plants and animals are faring. Thank you to everyone who contributes.

James Abbott, Chairman

Planning

Braintree District Council is expected to sign off its new Draft Local Plan in June which will then be subject to further public consultation and an Inquiry before an Inspector. The Plan has to accommodate changes brought in by the Government to greatly increase housing allocations. For the district as a whole, once sites with planning permission or allocations already made have been subtracted, there needs to be new land found for a further 10,000 houses to the year 2033. This will mean substantial areas of green fields will be allocated as there is only a limited amount of brownfield land available. It also raises questions about how the local infrastructure and services will cope. The proposed Rivenhall sites are concentrated along the A12 and also around the edge of Witham.

Rivenhall already has a large site allocated from the previous plan, which now has planning permission - this is the land off Forest Road/Rectory Lane where 370 houses are to be built.

The Parish Council continues to consider all planning applications in the parish, and the larger ones in neighbouring parishes. In February the waste site at Rivenhall Airfield was given a further planning consent by Essex County Council to "vary" the details, making it far more reliant on

waste incineration. For Rivenhall the 2 main issues are emissions and HGV traffic - if and when the plant is operational. Essex County Council has also, despite objections from both the parish and district councils, approved the quarry at Colemans Farm which is due to operate for the best part of 2 decades with access on to Little Braxted Lane and Braxted Road.

Highways

Maintenance of local roads remains better than it was a few years ago, as Essex County Council continues to hold up its highways budget despite funding pressures. The main issue recently has been slowness to repair streetlights - and, as residents will know, a number have been out for lengthy periods in Oak Road and Rickstones Road. Sometimes these delays are not down to ECC, but the contractors working on power supplies.

The Braintree Local Highways Panel projects for Rivenhall and Rivenhall End continue to progress, although with some delays.

Schemes that the Parish Council has supported that are now complete include:

Rickstones Road: To prevent further flooding and widen the road to allow buses to get around the bend without hitting the bank;

Oak Road: To introduce priority one way working under the railway bridge (with priority from the A12) and widen the footway under the bridge;

Grasscrete parking areas in Oak Road near the railway bridge to reduce verge erosion;

Improved parking at Rivenhall Church.

Schemes which are approved but await delivery include:

Church Road: To extend the 30 mph speed limit northwards from the church for about 100 metres;

An extended HGV weight limit in Oak Road down to the A12 and linked advanced signage to try to reduce incidents of HGVs going down to the railway bridge and getting stuck.

The Panel did not approve a requested safety scheme for Park Road, round into Church Road, where accidents are occurring several times a month on average.

These incidents are mainly due to drivers trying to go around the bends too fast despite the existing warning signage.

There are also separate schemes being delivered by ECC and BDC working together on surface flood prevention. We now have confirmation that Oak Road is to be included in the programme, with ditch clearance and new pipes proposed between Hoo Hall drive and the railway bridge. This is due to be completed this

summer and will require road closures and traffic control. The Parish Council is keen to ensure that ECC gives as much notice as possible of this, and gets the details correct - there have been problems with several road closures in recent years where ECC has not given the correct dates and details.

Highways England has taken over control of the A12 and all other trunk roads. After the best part of 2 decades of lobbying - and many crashes affecting local residents - improvements have at last now been delivered for the Fox junction and the signage on its approach. Details on the proposed widening to 6 lanes of the A12 are not yet known and the Parish Council is to meet with Highways England in May to try to find out what is proposed. For the whole of the A12 widening scheme through Essex, Rivenhall End is one of the most problematic due to the narrow width between homes and businesses.

Highways England are delivering a scheme to improve the footway/cycleway alongside the A12 through the parish. This is welcome, particularly the section between Oak Road and the former Little Chef which had deteriorated. It remains the case however that bus services via our local stops on the A12 are limited due to the bus companies declining to use them on safety grounds. An area of discussion with Highways England will be how they can accommodate safe bus stops as part of the A12 works so that all the local bus services via the A12 can be reinstated.

PARISH DEFIBRILLATOR

The Parish Council has been awarded a First Response Defibrillator from the British Heart Foundation. This will be positioned on the front wall of the Village Hall for everyone to use when necessary.

This unit is very easy and safe to operate.

There will be a FREE training session run by the East of England Ambulance Service on the use of the Defibrillator and how to perform CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) as follows:

7.00 pm Monday 16th May 2016

Rivenhall Village Hall

This session is open to everyone so please come along. Who knows, with this free training and knowledge you may be able to save the life of a loved one, a friend or a member of the local community.

PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE.

www.rivenhallparishcouncil.net

The Rivenhall Parish Council Website is regularly being updated with information relating to Parish Council business and activities. On the site you will find meeting dates, agendas and minutes, the annual budget, information regarding local issues that are being dealt with by the Parish Council and the Parish Clerk's monthly reports upon action taken between meetings. Contact details are also included for other local organisations such as Essex County Council and Braintree District Council; emergency contact details for Police, Gas, Electricity and Flood etc. Annual Reports and official documents such as Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and many others – all of which can be downloaded (in pdf format). To contact the Parish Council you can email

parishclerk@rivenhallparishcouncil.net or
councillors@rivenhallparishcouncil.net

GENERAL MAINTENANCE WITHIN THE PARISH **2015/16.**

During this year the Council's Maintenance Contractor has been kept very busy.

Work has been carried out to keep the grass cut in the main areas of the village (including some road verges) and the grass at Rivenhall End, particularly the large area of grass in Henry Dixon Road below the hotel. In accordance with the Council's 'on-going' planting policy, over 500 daffodil bulbs were planted in various locations throughout the village.

The wooden posts surrounding the Village Green have needed some attention including some replacement of the posts and fittings, plus painting. Further work is still required to some posts and this will be undertaken during 2016.

A number of trees have been planted to replace those vandalised early in the year, which it is hoped will be left to mature over the next 25 to 30 years.

A number of public footpaths have been restricted due to hedges becoming overgrown, and, where necessary, these have been cut back. Other work has been referred to the land owner or Essex County Council (Public Rights of Way). This is an annual problem which the Parish Council regularly monitors.

Litter has been one of the major problems for the Maintenance Contractor during the year, particularly unconsumed food items and food containers

purchased from the local fast food outlets; these include many food and drinks items which are locally recyclable.

It would appear that most of this litter is thrown from vehicles travelling through the village, and anyone witnessing such action is requested, where possible, to take a note of the vehicle registration number and make and then to either contact the Police or a member of the Parish Council for further action to be taken.

The War Memorial located in the Church burial ground has been well maintained by the Council's Maintenance Contractor together with the church maintenance team, and it is hoped this arrangement will continue.

Maintenance of those trees planted by the Parish Council is a continuing activity and, where necessary, low hanging branches causing obstructions to grass cutting have been removed.

During the year the maintenance Contractor has been able to undertake his work during all weathers, particularly litter picking, and the village has benefited considerably from his efforts. Regrettably, however, due to other major commitments he has had to reduce his activities in the village and, in consequence has given up grasscutting but continues with the task of litter picking. The Parish Council would take this opportunity to, once again, thank him for his diligence with grass cutting over the years and to thank him for continuing the litter picking.

The Parish Council has appointed a new contractor for future grass cutting and other maintenance issues within the parish, which will hopefully maintain the high standard already established.

E.C.C. WINTER SALT BAG SCHEME

We were lucky in that the parish was relatively unaffected by snow and ice during the winter. We now have a goodly reserve of salt and grit in secure storage and we intend to remain part of this County scheme for the foreseeable future.

A big thank you must go to our 'salt volunteers'. They each had a supply of salt and grit and were on 'stand by' throughout the winter months to keep the slopes and walkways clear should the snow and ice descend.

We will publish contact details in the autumn for those of you who might feel that this is something you would like to become involved in. Helping the community help itself is a positive way forward that is open to us all.

Community Policing Team

The Parish Council and the local Policing Team have now firmly established clear and open lines of communication. We work closely together to ensure that Rivenhall Parish has its fair share of police time covering everything from Household security advice to traffic speed control. You can contact the local team directly as follows:

Non-emergency report number – 101 Ext. 400362

(If you have to leave a message, don't worry, an officer will return your call as soon as possible.)

In an emergency always dial 999

Email contact: Martin.Richards@essex.plice.pnn.uk

Village Agents Essex

We all need a little extra help and support as we get older. That's where your Village Agent (Lydia Howat) can offer you help and support with things such as:

Benefits/welfare advice Support in the home
Support for Carers Volunteering opportunities
Housing Social & Leisure information
Transport Loneliness & isolation
Supporting Local Groups Bereavement
Home adaptations Form filling support

Village Agents also offer a free visit for a confidential chat to discuss any of the above and more. To arrange a free visit call Freephone 08009 775858 or Mobile 07540 720 606.

For further information you can visit

www.villageagentsessex.org.uk alternatively, you can email

Lydia.howat@vaessex.org.uk

**RIVENHALL PARISH COUNCIL.
ANNUAL AUDIT RETURN: 31 MARCH 2016
EXPLANATORY DOCUMENT**

SECTION 1.

	<u>31/03/15</u>	<u>31/03/16</u>
1. Balances brought forward	22746	23821
2. (+) Annual Precept	8780	9450
3. (+) Total other receipts [excl VAT]	4325	4240
4. (-) Staff costs	3956	5049
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repay	Nil	Nil
6. (-) Total other payments [excl VAT]	8074	8058
7. (=) Balances carried forward	23821	24404
8. Total cash & investments	23591	23828
9. Total fixed assets	45025	46359
10. Total borrowing	Nil	Nil

Explanations:

Box 2:

Precept increased by 7.63% to offset possible cost of election in May 2015.

Box 3:

Total other receipts reduced by 2%. District Council's Localism Grant reduced by £394.00. Received £150.00 Best Kept Village award and District Council's collection fund surplus grant of £159.00.

Box 4:

Staff costs increased by 27.63%. Council corrected salary anomaly and set correct level as per nationally agreed scales up to December 2016.

Box 6:

Total of other payments decreased by less than 0.02% - major variations detailed below:

Primary Increases:

Chairman's allowance	£25
S. 137	£25
Planting	£40
VAS Speed sign	£1399
Subscriptions	£19
Reports	£26
Misc. Administration	£141

Primary Reductions:

Insurance premium	£445
General Maintenance	£841
Hall Hire	£17
Postages	£22
Printing	£21
Training	£20
Stationery	£279

Box 7.

£8,500 is held in reserve against Major Works funding during 2016/2017.

Of this figure £5,000 still remains for a contribution towards the provision of a weight restriction to alleviate a HGV problem, which is, hopefully, going to be determined by the Essex County Council within the next 12 months and £2,000 for repair of posts surrounding the Village Green plus an estimated increase general maintenance costs due to erosion of grass verges.

Boxes 7 & 8.

The difference between box 7 and box 8 relates solely to VAT, paid during 2015/16 and reclaimed during April 2016.

Box 9.

Increased due to purchase and installation of a Defibrillator, valued at £1,334.00.

Keith P. Taylor (Clerk/RFO)