



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 7th May 2013, 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 Council hopes 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:

Mr. James Abbott: (01376) 584576

COUNCILLORS:

Mr. Dennis Clark (01376) 512418

Mr. Jack Prime (01376) 514255

Mr. Bob Wright (01376) 503983

Mr. Howard Bills (01376) 521316

Mr. Stanley Brailey (01376) 512062

Mr. Robert Turner (01376) 512908

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 2013/2014

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

Parks & Open Spaces: £5570

(Incl. maintenance, grass cutting & litter picking, consumables, bulbs and trees etc.)

Administration: £7830

(Clerk, insurance, office consumables, Audit fees, subscriptions, Hall hire etc.)

Section 137: £105

(British Legion, CPRE etc)

Capital spending: £7000

(Taken from balances)

TOTAL BUDGET £13505 giving a **Gross Precept** figure of £9776. This is reduced by a Localism Grant from BDC of £1169 resulting in a **net Precept** of £8607.

The Parish element of the Band D Tax Rate for 2013/14 is £34.27, an increase of 6.89%.

Parish Council Meeting Dates 2013:

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

Provisional for 2014:

7TH January (VH) 4TH February (VH) 4TH March (HDH)
1st April (VH) 6TH May (VH)

VH = Rivenhall Village Hall

HDH = The Henry Dixon Hall, Rivenhall End

**RIVENHALL PARISH COUNCIL
INCOME & EXPENDITURE FOR 2012/13.**

| <u>INCOME</u> | <u>2012/13</u> | |
|--|-----------------|----------------|
| <i>Precept from Braintree District Council</i> | | £9309 |
| <i>Parish Support Grant from Braintree District Council</i> | | £1737 |
| <i>Street Cleaning Grant from Braintree District Council</i> | | £1670 |
| <i>Greenfields CHA Grant re snow clearing equipment</i> | | £250 |
| <i>Vat Refund</i> | | £1050 |
| <i>Bank Interest</i> | | £12 |
| <i>RCCE Best Kept Village award</i> | | £150 |
| Total | | £14178 |
| | | |
| <u>EXPENDITURE</u> | <u>2011/12</u> | <u>2012/13</u> |
| <i>Administration</i> | [£7105] | £7525 |
| <i>Major Works (Election in 2012/13)</i> | [£4691] | £1251 |
| <i>Agency Arrangements re grass cutting</i> | [£235] | nil |
| <i>Parks, Open Spaces & Maintenance</i> | [£3453] | £4809 |
| <i>Local Govt. Act Section 137 (Special payments)</i> | [£119] | £69 |
| Total | [£15603] | £13654 |

Chairman's Report 2012/2013.

Rivenhall was the winner for the second year running in its class of the Best Kept Village Competition run by the Rural Community Council of Essex.

Once again this award is a tribute to all the hard work put in by residents, local authorities, housing associations and not least the Parish Council contractor who often does tasks beyond the normal call of duty.

One area that remains less encouraging is the state of the local roads and footways. Some local roads and paths are reasonably well maintained but others seem to stay in a poor state for months. The Parish Council is in regular dialogue with the County Council about them improving this situation and we are also very keen to see the three local highways improvements schemes delivered.

In future years the Parish Council may need to take on more responsibilities as the funding settlement in local government changes. This may include more minor highways related work. In other areas, local schemes to assist the community are already up and running such as the salting in icy weather. We are still keen to restart the Community Speedwatch so if anyone wants to volunteer to help, please get in touch.

Finally, it is good to note that community spirit remains strong in our parish with lots of local organisations active, a village shop, bus service, well used local halls and regular

events held throughout the year. Not all rural parishes have been so fortunate and it is only by continuing to use and support these facilities that we will retain them.

(On behalf of the Parish Council)

TARECROFT WOOD.

The Parish Council has, over the last year, been considering an option of trying to acquire the freehold of Tarecroft Wood, the ancient woodland off Rickstones Road. This wood is currently owned by Essex County Council, which is able to transfer such assets to the community.

The freehold transfer, if successful, would enable the Parish Council to work with conservation organisations and local people to ensure that the wood is managed sympathetically and sustainably. Freehold transfer costs to the PC are estimated to be in the region of £4 to £5K for legal fees and possible fencing reinstatement estimated at £1930.00 (supply only); £14,000K (supply and erect), both approximate figures subject to final measurement. There may be grants available for future management work.

The Parish Council will have more details available at the APA and would welcome the views of residents, either at the APA or via the Clerk, (contact details on front page) as to whether or not the council should proceed.

PLANNING

The Parish Council responded to 2 major consultations recently. The latest stage of the Braintree District Council Local Development Framework was fairly straightforward and mostly uncontroversial as far as Rivenhall Parish is concerned. Our comments were mainly on matters of detail such as making sure that the local community halls were correctly described and also requesting protection for Little Braxted Lane and Rectory Lane. The next stage will be that BDC will consider responses to the consultation before issuing a further consultation document.

The Essex Minerals Plan was much more challenging. This now proposes a new site at Colemans Farm, with access directly on to Little Braxted Lane and a cluster of extensions and a large new site at Rivenhall Airfield. Our response was very similar to that of Braintree District Council in that we did not oppose 2 of the smaller sites on the airfield as reasonable extensions to the existing quarry, but did strongly object to major new incursions into the countryside and the increased HGV traffic that could affect local roads. In total, around 60% of the new sand and gravel extraction for the whole of Essex to the year 2030 is proposed by ECC to take place in or immediately adjacent to the southern half of Braintree District. The next stage will be a hearing before an Inspector later this year.

On individual applications, there were no new major applications in the last year. We did have significant concerns about the continuing use of a local farmyard as an HGV depot and were pleased to see that BDC refused the latest applications in line with the representations made by the Parish Council and many residents.

All local applications and plans are considered by the Parish Council each month and residents are always welcome to attend to view plans and make comments.

HIGHWAYS.

It has been another difficult year in trying to get ECC Highways to attend to potholes, path defects, local flooding and the three major improvement projects listed for our area.

Whilst some local roads are fairly well maintained, others seem to be left for months and even when contractors are in the parish doing work, they still leave some of the worst maintained areas. Two examples are the poor state of the path under the railway bridge and the very poor state of the road surface and section of paths in Rickstones Road. ECC now say that the former will be fixed by April, so that will be over a year since it was first reported !

The three major schemes on the Highways Panel list for Braintree District are:

7.5 tonne weight restriction to reduce HGVs going down Oak Road to the A12 junction
Widened path, safety rail and 'priority working' under the railway bridge
Rebuild and kerb verge, rebuild drains and investigate flooding in Rickstones Road

Unfortunately the Highways Agency has given only a possible prospect of improvements to the Fox junction and no prospect of any improvement to the Hotel junction. They state this is due to budget cuts and the fact that, in their view the safety record is acceptable.

The Parish Council does not accept that the safety record is acceptable and has continued to correspond and meet with the Agency on the need for the vital work to improve the junctions which was due to have taken place a decade ago. The fact is that residents in Oak Road continue to suffer impacts into their property due to loss of control of vehicles at the A12 junction. The best the Highways Agency say they are likely to be able to do in the short term is improved signage.

BDC PARISH CHANNEL SWEEPING PROGRAMME.

Channel sweeping is scheduled over four dates during 2013/14 as follows:

Monday 1st July 2013, Friday 18th October 2013, Wednesday 5th February 2014 and
Wednesday 28th May 2014.

The sweeper has a programmed route concentrating on main highways where there are kerbs. If there are any areas that require particular attention, please call BDC Customer Services on 01376 552525 or e-mail csc@braintree.gov.uk at least one week in advance of the due visit.

PUBLIC FOOTPATHS.

Footpaths are inspected regularly, but should any Parishioners encounter damaged or missing 'Way Signs' and/or 'Posts' and should any Public Footpath be impenetrable, please contact Parish Councillor Stanley Brailey on (01376) 512062.

A selection of Parish Footpath Walks is included on the Parish Council website (www.rivenhallparishcouncil.net)

PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE.

The Rivenhall Parish Council Website went live in December 2010 and 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

If you would like to be sent regular updates and reminders about meetings and local issues, please email *webmaster@rivenhallparishcouncil.net* with NEWSLETTER in the subject line.

GENERAL MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP WITHIN THE PARISH.

During the year the parish Maintenance Contractor, along with the parish Tree Warden and other members of the Parish Council, has been busy making good, fair wear and tear items in and around the Parish.

Once more bulb planting has been carried out, with in excess of 1,200 daffodil bulbs and snowdrops, both at Rivenhall and Rivenhall End. There are still some areas that could be planted in future years, and residents are invited to let the Parish Council know if they have any suggestions. In addition to bulb planting, trees have been planted at both ends of the Parish. One tree in particular, an oak, was planted on the Village Green at Beech Road to commemorate the sixtieth year of the reign of our present Queen. This tree was donated by Braintree District Council. As the season progresses a close watch is being kept on the symptoms of "ash die back" disease, on mature trees and saplings.

Additional flower planters have been installed in Rivenhall and Rivenhall End. The seat originally installed in the former play area in Rivenhall End has been moved to the green next to the Rivenhall End village sign. The play area has been returned to the original owner, due to the lack of use and funding plus a negative report regarding Health and Safety issues.

Ongoing work has been undertaken by the Maintenance Contractor, including grass cutting (a major task in the growing season) and the clearing of footways. Posts have been renewed and painted around the Village Green and the painting of seats and notice boards where necessary.

The general aim of the work around the Parish is to keep the facilities in good working order, and thanks must go to those in the Parish who make this possible. In particular, the Maintenance Contractor (Tony Walsh) for his regular litter picking and grass cutting. These activities ensure that the village has a high standard of neatness and tidiness.

The Parish Council intends that such work and standards will continue in the future.

WINTER SALT BAG SCHEME

For the second year in succession, the Parish Council was able to secure a supply of salt & grit from Essex County Council. This year we took the decision to spread the salt on hearing the almost certain forecast of heavy snow & ice in January. This proved to be particularly effective in the centre of the village where the salt and grit prevented the snow from settling and then freezing afterwards.

Our small team of volunteers worked hard to keep the many slopes, pathways, steps and bus stops clear throughout the parish. We were not able to clear all walkways due to the limited supply of salt and manpower. It is our intention to continue this scheme and if you are interested in helping out as a volunteer, please call or contact Cllr Howard Bills on 07749 251838 or Rivenhall Parish Council directly, all contact details are displayed on the Parish Notice boards.

Greenfields Community Housing Association.

Over recent years, Greenfields CHA and the Parish Council have been working together for the general benefit of those who live in and visit the parish. Additionally, Greenfields have financially supported several Parish Council initiatives including the supply of a new Salt bin & contents for the slope at the Tusser Close garages. They also assisted with the location and supply of a new concrete pad when the yellow salt bin was relocated.

Again, they provided a grant to supply our team of 'salt & grit' volunteers with snow scoops & high visibility waistcoats. Very recently, they provided financial support to help with the purchase of a modern fold down baby changing unit at the Village Hall for 'Riventots' the play and stay mother and child group. All in all, Greenfields CHA have and are showing great support for the community, so thank you everyone at Greenfields, your help is very much appreciated.

Want access to Super Fast Broadband?

Essex County Council has launched a new website where private residents along with business users can register their interest in having the option of faster broadband. Essex County Council will use this website to demonstrate to BT that there is a strong demand for a faster broadband service in any particular area. An upgrade to super fast broadband in Rivenhall will support the now standard modern domestic and business requirements for efficient on-line information gathering, communication and entertainment throughout the parish. It is perfectly safe to use and your contact information will not be shared with any third party.

The website address is www.superfastessex.org.

Community Police Team

As you probably know, our local Community Police Team is based in Kelvedon. The Parish Council and members of the team regularly liaise to help ensure that general problems that occur within the parish are quickly and effectively dealt with. However, the police cannot help with problems if they do not know about them. If you see something that you think the police should know about then please call either the

non-emergency report number - 101

or

neighbourhood police mobile - 07974 467258

In an emergency always dial 999

COFFEE MORNING 'SURGERIES' – RIVENHALL VILLAGE HALL.

The Committee who are responsible for running and maintaining the Village Hall hold a Coffee Morning that all are welcome to attend every Friday from 09.00 to noon. A member and/or the Clerk of Rivenhall Parish Council is always in attendance from 10.30 to noon, should anyone from the parish have a concern or problem that they think the Parish Council may be able to assist them with.

Rather than make a formal appointment to speak to a Councillor or the Clerk, why not pop in for a chat over a cuppa if there's something that you think we may be able to help you with.

Also, most weeks there are representatives from the Village Agents, GreenfieldsCHA and, on occasion, members of the Neighbourhood Police team attend.

It's a nice, friendly coffee morning and everyone is welcome so do pop in and say hello.

***FOR FURTHER DETAILS OF PARISH COUNCIL ACTIVITIES, TOGETHER WITH THE PUBLISHED
MINUTES OF ALL PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS, PLEASE GO TO:
WWW.RIVENHALLPARISHCOUNCIL.NET***

