

Little Baddow Parish Council

Annual Assembly 2025

The Annual Assembly of the Parish Council was held in The Memorial Hall, North Hill, Little Baddow on Wednesday 14th May 2025 commencing at 7.00pm. The following members of the Council were present:

Chairman: Cllr P Irvine

Councillors: Ms. D. Ginn, Mr S. Scott, Mr K. Sheldrake, Mr A. Roche, Ms C. Galea, Ms V. Rose, Mrs B. Teal and Mrs. Stephanie Scott

Welcome

Chairman Councillor Irvine welcomed guest speaker Police Inspector Emily Holmes, Essex County Councillor John Spence, Chelmsford City Councillors and Danbury Parish Councillors.

The Chairman thanked all the exhibitors for their displays.

The total attendance was 56 people.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Parish Councillors approved the minutes of the last meeting held on 8th May 2024 as a true and fair record of the meeting.

Introduction to Parish Councillors

Chairman Cllr Peter Irvine introduced the Parish Councillors and the Parish Clerk, thanking them for their work and support.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman started his report by thanking Councillors for his re-election as Chair and noting that the Council now had a full complement of nine Councillors with the recent co-option of Cllr Verity Rose.

In particular, the Chairman spoke to the following points that are of village interest and reflect issues raised by residents:

- **Development of Hammonds Farm** – Chelmsford City Council has sent the proposed Local Plan to the independent Planning Inspector for their review. The Parish Council hope the inclusion of the proposed development of Hammonds Farm will be rejected, reflecting the 22,000 recorded objections. The Barrister and consultants Walsingham and Stomor have been retained to present objections at the public meeting to be held by the Planning Inspector.
- **Paper Mill Lock Bridge** –parking issues continue to be addressed by the South Essex Parking Partnership through the deployment of wardens to enforce parking restrictions. In April 2025 there were 30 visits by SEPP Wardens and 29 penalty notices issued. Residents are encouraged to report any signs of double parking or causing obstructions to Essex Police on the 101-telephone number.
- **Connexin – IoT Poles** – Council had only recently become aware of the proposed installation of telegraph poles by a contractor, Connexin, to facilitate improved internet connectivity. They are initially working for the Water Utility companies to support the roll out of smart water meters in the village. Council has contacted Connexin and requested them to stop any works, provide full details of their plans and to attend the next Council meeting on the 5th June.
- **Fir Tree Woods** – following the acquisition of the woodlands Essex Wildlife Trust will be holding a 'Celebration of the Woods' on Sunday 6th July 2025 and all are welcome. There will be parking at Pheasanthouse Farm and the Lord Lieutenant of Essex will be in attendance.
- **Memorial Hall & Sport Pavilion** – the upgrading of the hall and pavilion continues with many improvements completed and planned. The Hall has seen the installation of Solar Panels and

Batteries which have significantly reduced energy costs and new curtains have been ordered. The Pavilion has been refurbished and benefitted from many minor upgrades. The Hall now hosts the monthly Carer's Club managed by Cllr Steph Scott and a weekly Table Tennis Club. Residents have proposed setting up a Youth Club based at the Hall and Council will be working with them to develop this proposal.

- **Conservation Areas** – Parish Council is pleased that Chelmsford City Council have supported the registering of the North Hill area of the village as a Conservation Area. The consultation phase is underway and will conclude in early June. Council will continue to press Chelmsford City Council to include areas around Graces Lane and St. Mary's church as conservation areas.
- **Essex Wildlife Trust** – Council has an agreed 10-year Management Plan with EWT to manage all the woodlands in the village. There are regular meetings with the CEO to discuss the woodlands and about plans for Pheasanthouse Farm.
- **History Centre** – the Centre has been revitalised under the leadership of Councillors Teal and Galea with new exhibits and planned events.

The Chairman is keen for residents to participate in the work of the Council either through attending Council meetings or volunteering for one of the working Groups, for example the Speed Watch Group need new volunteers.

The Chairman closed by thanking the following people and teams for their hard work and support for the village:

- County Councillor John Spence
- Chelmsford City Ward Councillors Steph Scott, Julia Jeapes and Jacob Armstrong
- Mr Keith Hollingsworth for the production of the village Newsletter
- Little Baddow Cricket Club for their maintenance of the sports field

Reports (Inc Charities)

Written reports including the financial overview were in the Spring Newsletter with copies having been distributed to all households in the village at the beginning of the month. The reports from Charities are available on the Little Baddow website when published each year.

Guest Speaker

Essex Police Inspector Emily Holmes from the Neighbourhood Policing Team gave a presentation on the work of her team and an update on crime figures in Essex and specifically Little Baddow. Key points were:

- Year to date overall crime in Essex is down by 6.7% with Anti-Social Behaviour down by 7.1%
- There were 8 reported burglaries in Little Baddow over the last 12 months, which is considered a very low number compared to other areas in Essex. In the wider Chelmsford district burglaries were down by 31%.
- They are very aware of the parking issues at Paper Mill Lock and they are working with the Roads Policing Unit to increase the policing of the area and respond to incidents. The Clearway is understood to be made permanent maintaining the Police powers to tow away vehicles.
- Inspector Holmes was keen for residents to report all crimes and incidents directly to the Police on the 101 or 999 telephone numbers depending on the degree of emergency.
- There is a weekly newsletter 'Dispatch' that is available from the Essex Police website:
<https://www.essex.police.uk/police-forces/essex-police/areas/essex-police/au/about-us/dispatch/>

After the presentation by Inspector Holmes the following points were raised:

- Definition of Obstruction by vehicles to enable the Police to tow vehicles away – the answer was that if emergency vehicles were unable to pass then it was an obstruction. Residents should report to the Police on the 101 or if an emergency 999 telephone numbers.

- Anti-Social Behaviour along the Chelmer Navigation – the issue is not just parking at Paper Mill Lock but all along the towpath and at weirs where youngsters swim and play on infrastructure. Essex Waterways do patrol but do not have the powers of the Police and foot patrols by Police Officers would improve behaviours. A joint task force of EWL, Essex Police and LBPC to address the issues was suggested.
- Recent burglaries in the village have highlighted concerns about lack of Police patrols in the village. Inspector Holmes agreed to look into the latest incidents with CID officers to understand the scale and how to deploy resources to raise the Police profile.

Public Question Time

Cllr John Spence addressed the Assembly reflecting on his role as a County Councillor and his appreciation of working closely with City and Parish Councillors to deliver support and services to residents.

Cllr Spence continues to actively look at the need for parking areas at Paper Mill Lock and has previously pressed the ECC Cabinet member for Highways on potential sites.

Cllr Spence gave his insight into other significant issues and projects in the ward, mentioning:

- He was pleased to report that St. Peter's Hospital in Maldon will remain open.
- Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation will be with us for the next three years. County Council elections were cancelled this month as the timetable for devolution will see Mayoral elections in May 2026 and then Unitary Council elections in May 2027. Existing County Councillors will work alongside the new Unitary Councillors until May 2028 when it is anticipated ECC will be disbanded.

Residents raised the following points:

- Traffic Survey by the consultants to support objections to Hammonds Farm development should be completed outside of school holidays and take account of the opening of Beaulieu Rail Station.
- Requested Highways looked at clearing the road drains in Holybred Lane – Cllr Spence agreed to investigate the matter.

Presentation of Community Awards

The Chairman was very pleased to recognise the work of the following residents in making the village a better place to live:

- Mr Alan Towell
- Ms Caroline Ogden

The Chairman presented a bouquet of flowers to Mrs Yvonne Spence as consort to Cllr John Spence.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm

Chairman

May 2026