

EASTWICK AND GILSTON PARISH COUNCIL

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EASTWICK AND GILSTON PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING

Parish Council meeting of Monday 11th May 2026 at 8.00pm, Village Hall, Pye Corner

PRESENT: Cllrs Bryant, Harvey, Marx, Orson

In attendance: Christine Law (Parish Clerk), Eric Buckmaster (CC) John Dunlop (DC). 3 members of the public.

ANNUAL MEETING STARTED AT 8.00PM

AGENDA

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

a. Cllr Beazley.

2. OUTGOING CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025-2026

Cllr Orson presented his annual report to the meeting. (Appendix 1).

3. **Election of Chairman** – Cllr Mark Orson was proposed by Cllr Bryant and seconded by Cllr Marx. Cllr Orson accepted for this year and told the meeting he would not be standing for chair next year.

4. **To receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office from the Chairman** – This was signed by Cllr Orson and witness by Christine Law (Parish Clerk).

5. **Election of Vice Chairman** – Cllr Bryant was proposed by Cllr Orson and seconded by Cllr Marx. Cllr Bryant accepted the post.

6. 2025-2026 ACCOUNTS

A query was raised on the accounts so will need further investigation and will be presented to our July meeting

7. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GROUP ANNUAL REPORT.

Annual report is attached to these minutes and also can be found on the web site and Parish Council's Annual Report. (Appendix 2).

Meeting closed at 8.11pm.

Appendix 1

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2025/26

The purpose of this report is to give a summary of what the Parish Council has been doing during the last year and to comment on the major issues that we are facing as a parish. There is more information available on our community website at <https://eastwickandgilstonparish.gov.uk/> and our Neighbourhood Plan website at www.hegnp.org.uk.

During the year, the Parish Council has held six Parish Council meetings and an Annual Parish meeting. Individual Parish Councillors took the following responsibilities.

Mark Orson – Chairman - Neighbourhood Plan Group representative and Parish Paths

Janine Bryant – Vice Chair - Neighbourhood Plan Group representative

Linda Harvey – Highways and Village Hall Management Committee representative

Werner Marx

James Beazley

Christine Law – Parish Clerk

We have two parish councillor vacancies and if you are interested in joining the parish council or at this stage would just like to find out more, please contact Christine Law our Parish Clerk or come along to the Parish Council meetings to see and meet your councillors.

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Parish Website

Our Parish Council and Community website has been relaunched at a new location

<https://eastwickandgilstonparish.gov.uk/>

We have aimed to provide current local information and act as a hub with links to the services that residents will find useful together with, amongst others, our Parish Magazine, a link to the Village Hall online booking system where you can check availability and enter a provisional booking for yourself, Aerial Photos of our parishes to view and download, these include 360-degree images taken in the following locations across the parish:

- Terlings Park
- Pye Corner
- Eastwick
- Gilston Park Estate
- Gilston (St Mary's Church)

Links to services include:

- Planning Applications
- Recycling & Waste Collection – check your next collection day
- East Herts Report an Issue - submit issues to the relevant local authority, such as potholes, missed bin collections and more
- Roadworks and Road Maintenance - The Causeway one.network website informs you of all current and upcoming planned roadwork
- Gilston Area Information Hub - A hub for residents and businesses to see what construction works are due to be undertaken in the development of the Gilston Area as well as providing a means to report any estates management issues.
- Harlow and Gilston Garden Town
- The Gilston Estate – Places for People's website detailing the development planning stages
- Location of the 4 defibrillators supplied by your Parish Council

If you have an activity or event you would like to offer to Eastwick and Gilston residents you can email your text to clerk@eastwickandgilstonparish.gov.uk to have it published on the News page

Have a look at our new website and let Christine Law our Parish Clerk know if you have any suggestions for additional information links or other improvements at clerk@eastwickandgilstonparish.gov.uk

Estate Communications Website

Places for People [PfP] has established a website to provide updates to residents about work being undertaken across the estate. At the same time, it makes reporting an issue or asking a question much easier through the pin-drop system. This generates an accurate What3Words reference which will speed up the time taken to identify the location of the issue. The new estate and construction comms website can be found at www.gilston.info.

How to report an issue:

- You can drop a pin on the location of the issue and provide a description of what you would like to report. Villages 1-6 are transparent in colour, whilst Village 7 (Taylor Wimpey) has been shaded yellow to differentiate the two sites. This will be your opportunity to flag issues without worrying if the land belongs to PfP or Taylor Wimpey [TW].
- New pins will be marked as red and will be passed onto the corresponding team.
- Issues that are in progress and are being investigated by the team will be marked in orange.
- Once the team has resolved the issue, this will be marked as green.

The website functions will evolve over time. If you have any suggested improvements or features you would like to see added, please email gilston@meeting-place.uk.

PfP has established a liaison group that meet periodically to discuss progress on the project as well as estate management and enabling works. The invitation for attendees includes Places for People, East Herts District Council ward member, Hertfordshire County Council division member, Eastwick & Gilston Parish Council, Hunsdon Parish Council, Harlow Council, Member of Parliament for Hertford & Stortford, Member of Parliament for Harlow. In practice there have been 2 meetings during the last year

Community Forums

East Herts Council [EHC] organises quarterly Community Forums as a channel of communication for residents and the Parish Councils that represent them with EHC and the Gilston Area developers PfP / TW. These have become useful sessions for residents to be briefed on key aspects of the development progress and to ask questions. The Community Forums should be supported, not least as residents of Eastwick and Gilston will be living in the middle of construction work for the next 15-20 years plus with the associated risk of disruption to our daily lives and these meetings provide the opportunity for residents to directly raise any concerns and to better understand the developers plans and timing of changes. Anyone wishing to discuss an item of interest or concern with an individual member of EHC or the Developers has the opportunity in the 30 minutes before the forum start time.

For those who have unable to attend, the presentations and other useful information including the planned programme of highway and other works can be found here

<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-and-building/community-forums/gilston-area-community-forum>

Gilston Area Development

The Parish Council has channelled our engagement with EHC, PfP the primary landowner for Villages 1-6 and TW who are the landowners of Village 7, through the Hunsdon and Eastwick & Gilston Neighbourhood Plan Group [HEGNP] chaired by Anthony Bickmore. Anthony makes an annual report to the Parish Council that provides an update and comment on all the issues and is published in the Parish Magazine, the community website www.eastwickandgilston.org.uk and the HEGNP website www.hegnp.org.uk.

The role of the HEGNPG is to jointly represent Hunsdon and Eastwick & Gilston Parish Councils, and;

- Is a voice for residents, holding developers accountable for promises to deliver a sustainable, high-quality development.

- Aims to oversee and shape the Gilston Area development to ensure it aligns with community hopes, values and future needs.
- Seeks to coordinate engagement between the developers and local authorities, especially East Herts Council.
- Is involved in reviewing planning applications for the proposed villages.
- Advocates for high standards in urban design, proper and timely infrastructure, environmental responsibility and community-focused planning.
- Continues to press for better interface with the existing communities, sustainable transport solutions, and “village master planning” principles.
- Actively monitors the agreements related to infrastructure, affordable housing, and the long-term governance of community assets.

The Parish Council is very keen for residents to be involved in HEGNPG activities - if you are interested or just want to find out more, please contact Christine Law, Parish Clerk in the first instance - clerk@eastwickandgilstonparish.gov.uk.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Anthony and the HEGNP team for their hard work and diligence. They are all unpaid and contribute massive amounts of time. Please see Anthony’s annual report to the Parish Council which is published in the Parish Magazine, the community website www.eastwickandgilston.org.uk and the HEGNP website www.hegnp.org.uk.

Spring Bulbs

You may have noticed that the verges around our villages have new displays of spring bulbs? At the end of November, the PC funded the purchase of some 5,000 mixed daffodil bulbs and a big thanks to all those residents who volunteered their time to plant them – it makes a difference!

Planning

We have had several planning applications to comment on during the year; most have been reasonably straightforward and non-contentious changes to existing properties. The major planning issues affecting our area are addressed by our Neighbourhood Plan Group that is mandated and sponsored by this Parish Council. Please see the HEGNP website www.hegnp.org.uk and Anthony Bickmore’s Chairman’s Report for a full update on the status and issues.

The planning applications are all available on the East Herts District Planning pages. Those you may be particularly interested in are:

Villages 1 -6 Outline Planning Application Ref 3/19/1045/OUT
 Village 1 Master Plan Design Code Ref X/26/0135/CND
[The Eastern Crossing \(3/19/1051/FUL\)](#)
[Central Stort Crossing \(3/19/1046/FUL\)](#)
[The Outline Application – Village 7 \(3/19/2124/OUT\)](#)

Now that the Strategic Landscape Masterplan and the Outline Planning Application for Village 1 have been approved Places for People have recently submitted their Village 1 Master Plan Design Code for approval.

Works on the necessary supporting infrastructure, including roads, is scheduled to start early Summer 2026. Unfortunately, communication and dialogue regarding the likely and very significant impact this will cause to existing residents has been sadly lacking so far and we are pushing hard to achieve an improvement in this important area.

Highways

We continue to work closely with Highways to ensure that Highway’s maintenance activities are carried out effectively and meet our local needs. As with all local services Highways work is governed by budget and availability of resources and getting work carried out in a timely manner can sometimes be a struggle.

A status report on all current Highways issues is made at each parish council meeting and published in our parish magazine and community website.

It is important that potholes and other damage to our local roads are reported as soon as possible. There is an easy-to-use pro-forma at hertfordshire.gov.uk [Report a street light or pothole](#) | [Hertfordshire County Council](#). Please also inform Christine Law so that the Parish Council can include this information in the Highways issue status report that we use for overall monitoring and review with Highways.

Parish Paths

The parish footpath network is a real asset. Copies of the parish paths brochure/map are available from St Mary's Church porch or Christine Law, our Parish Clerk. You will also find several display maps of the footpath network located around the parishes including both the Eastwick and Gilston War Memorial sites.

If you are aware of any parts of our footpath network that need maintenance including overgrown vegetation or fallen trees, please inform Christine Law our parish clerk and we will follow up with HCC Countryside & Rights of Way. Issues should also be recorded on PFP's estate and construction comms website at www.gilston.info.

New Homes Bonus

In previous years, the parish has received what amounts to windfall payments from the New Homes Bonus scheme. The New Homes Bonus is a government scheme which is aimed at encouraging local authorities to grant planning permissions for the building of new homes in return for additional revenue. Under the scheme, the Government matches the council tax raised on each new home built for a period of 6 years. The parish council has received a proportion of this funding totalling around £240,000 which is invested through Churches, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) Investment Management Limited, see www.ccla.co.uk. EHC has since changed arrangements for distributing the New Homes Bonus monies which are now held by them in a central pot and Parish Councils can apply for funding for specific projects that are individually assessed before funding is granted.

The investment income from the received New Homes Bonus capital is being used to pay for additional items that are not included in our parish precept funding. For example, regular maintenance of the 4 defibrillators located strategically around the Parishes.

We welcome suggestions and ideas for how this money could be spent for the benefit of the community but are excluding any items that should be paid from District or County Council budgets. We will provide updates as matters progress via the parish magazine and website but if you have any ideas and suggestions for how this money should best be spent, please contact Christine Law, Parish Clerk, on 411646 or email clerk@eastwickandgilstonparish.gov.uk.

Parish Precept

You will have recently received the booklet from East Herts Council outlining your Council Tax payments for 2025/26. Part of the Council Tax is made up of the Parish Precept which is set by the Parish Council to cover small running costs and several initiatives we undertake. The amount attaching to your Council Tax for the parish is a function of what we spend and the number of properties and their valuation bands in the area.

If you have views on how we should spend our money and if we should spend more or less, then let one of the Parish Councillors know or attend a Parish Council meeting. We are always keen to hear views and enjoy the interaction with members of the public at the meetings – all are welcome.

Conclusion

Overall, planning matters and engagement with the Gilston Area developers, PFP the landowners for villages 1-6, TW, the landowner of village 7 and EHC our planning authority have been the parish council's majority activities this year, other parish council matters have been relatively quiet.

As noted, we now have two parish councillor vacancies and if you are interested in joining the parish council or at this stage would just like to find out more, please contact Christine Law our Parish Clerk

I would like to thank our District Councillor John Dunlop and Eric Buckmaster, our County Councillor, for their continued help and support.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated and hardworking team of Parish Councillors. They devote a lot of their time for the benefit of the community which is unpaid, and they claim no expenses. Thanks also to Christine Law, our Parish Clerk.

Mark Orson

Appendix 2



HEGNPG

Supporting our Community

Hunsdon Eastwick and Gilston Neighbourhood Plan Group

% Channoeks Farm

Gilston

Nr Harlow

CM202RL

<https://hegnp.org.uk/>

Annual report to Sponsor Parish Councils

1 Introduction

We are pleased to present our annual report and in doing so to thank you, as our sponsors, for your support for our work, especially your positive approach to ongoing collaborative working.

It's been a year of significant decisions on the development, the scheme's outline planning consent was formally issued in January 2025. In September the Courts refused permission for a Judicial Review into the granting of the outline Planning consent by East Herts Council. The developers have, subsequently, made many reserve matter applications, see section 3 below.

We have continued to work with all stakeholders, including local authorities and the media, to best represent and protect the interests of the local communities and Parish Councils. We commissioned professional support, where necessary, to help achieve this goal.

We continue to work to ensure that proper regard is given to our Neighbourhood Plan at all key phases of development, including the creation of a strategic landscape master plan and village masterplanning, and the creation of bodies and processes for the long term stewardship of the Gilston Area.

It's been a crucial year with regards to the future of our community, and I am grateful for the staggering amounts of time committed by the members of the NPG, including many who also hold Parish Council or other posts in our community, so are putting in lots of volunteer time to support local residents. There are, and will continue to be, many issues to be addressed as the scheme evolves so representing the interests of residents we believe is important.

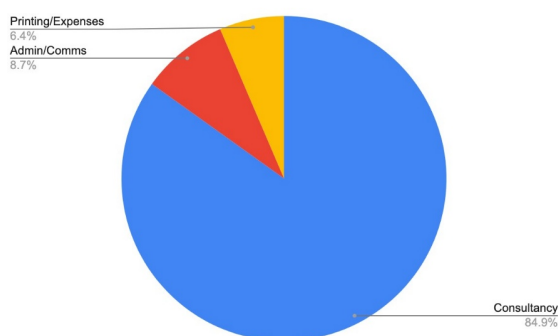
2 Financial

We opened the financial year with a cash balance of **£48,828.41** and closed the year with a balance of: **£41,801.87. With a significant closing balance we did not seek further income in the year from you, our principal sponsors., We received £740, being the residual funds of the former Stop Harlow North group, which was graciously received.**

Our expenditure for the year was £7,775 with £6,600 spent on consultancy, with the following key work done:

- Comprehensive review of Strategic Landscape Master Plan documents
- Reviewing the outstanding reserved matter planning applications, and responding where we believe there are matters of concern to residents and or conflicts between what's proposed and the Communities adopted Neighbourhood Plan.
- Attendance and assistance at both internal and external meetings and workshops • Assistance in our dealings with local authorities

£675 was spent on administration and communications costs. £500 was for printing, postage, webspace and other similar expenses.



3 Our Report - We summarise below our work last year and are happy to attend a Council meeting to elaborate on this report and answer questions.

3.0 Summary of Key issues, activities and progress over the last year include:

- + A request for a **Judicial Review** of EHC's planning decision by a resident, a review to which the NPG was not a party, was rejected, with leave to appeal also denied.
- + During the year, we have attended the **Community Forums** hosted by East Herts Council these forums represent opportunities to better understand some of the strategic issues, like the construction programme/where the water supply will come from etc, and will continue, possibly for the next 30 or so years. Clearly a construction project of this scale will have its challenges for residents. The forums also create opportunities to shape the development through making the views of residents known to East Herts and the Developers. We have found the opportunity to meet East Herts' Planning team and the developers before the Forums formally starts helpful.
- + The Strategic Landscape Master Plan for the whole development site, which includes land outside of the 'Village Development areas' in Pfp's ownership and is due to become an asset in community ownership.

We are grateful to our District and County Councillors for the time and energy they both have put into championing the Community's views and concerns on a regular basis with their respective Officers.

We have also maintained contact with The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Executive team where a new Chief Executive was appointed during the year. While Gilston planning matters are the responsibility of East Herts Council, keeping aware of other developments across the Garden Town is helpful. The highway works between the Harlow station roundabout and the town centre created significant traffic delays so is an example of an impact of the development on residents' day to day lives over extended periods.

4 Looking forward

There are many important issues for both parish councils that need review/resolution and making sure the Community's voice is heard as we try to ensure that a high quality of development is achieved and that the construction over a possibly 20/30 years is managed with sensitivity so as to minimise any adverse impacts on existing residents.

The following key activities/workstreams we anticipate will require our attention and will make an impact on existing residents and our communities:

- The **S106 agreement** is a complex and long legal agreement between the Developers and Councils and developed the conditions agreed to by EHC's Development Management Committee into legal commitments by the Developers. The NPG was not involved in the preparation of this agreement. Both parish councils have experience of developments being approved subject to such S106 agreements where the commitments were not delivered or significantly delayed. The Gilston S106 agreement provides funds for a monitoring Officer at EHC who will produce an annual report on how the Developer obligations are being met/delivered and so, we hope, are not diluted. These Developer obligations and commitments to new schools, health facilities, better public spaces, play areas etc. will deliver improvements for residents who will have to put up with decades of building works.
- **Reserved Matter Applications** (RMA's) are planning applications that develop the principles consented to within the Outline Planning Consent, as endorsed by EHC. The first of these to be endorsed is the Strategic Landscape Master Plan (SLMP), an important document, which sets out the principles of how the whole site, rather than the 7 Villages, will be developed. For this reason they have a very direct impact on existing residents, especially for delivering the commitment to the open areas which will eventually become community owned assets. They also identify community facilities (such as schools/health/sports facilities) which will be delivered and, while supporting the 7 villages, will also support current residents. The process for agreeing these applications is by delegation Officers rather than decisions by elected Councillors. At the turn of the year there were some 30 RMA's awaiting decision. Many of the applications contain 100's of pages of supporting text and technical information. As a community organisation we are simply not resourced to evaluate such applications and, without advisors, have to rely on EHC to review these details and make sure that decisions are made in line with the Outline Planning consent, the S106 and align with our adopted Neighbourhood Plan which is embodied within EHC's Local Plan.
- **Stewardship** the S106 agreement also sets a timetable for agreeing a draft business plan for the proposed Stewardship body. We have been involved with the early stages of work in preparing the business plan for this new body, it will cover the long term management of not only the 7 villages, but also the spaces between the villages and undeveloped land destined to be passed to the community. The interface between the two

Parish Councils and the Stewardship body will have a number of sensitivities as will the funding of community assets alongside the existing work of the Parish Councils.

- **Infrastructure works - Highways** – the major proposals for the two new Stort Crossings are detailed in the consents already granted and will cause significant disruption over the next two years between Eastwick, Pye Corner and Harlow's station roundabout. We are encouraging the Developers to improve the flow of information to residents. Many residents will have experience of the traffic delays arising from the recently completed initial road works on the sustainable transport corridor in Harlow. Substantial infrastructure needs to be delivered before the housing and other important things need to be delivered by 'trigger dates' set out in the S106 agreement (like taking through traffic out of Pye Corner).
- **Key interfaces** – the NPG aims to keep in contact with key influencers and interested parties to ensure that they are aware of the pressures and challenges that might arise from the development. We plan to continue to maintain these contacts.
- **Local Developer interfaces** – We are delighted that the Places for People have, after many requests, reinstated periodic meetings with us to discuss matters of common interest (for example flooding at Hunsdon and in Eastwick and Gilston). We also have championed and continue to champion early works where they might benefit both residents and the Developers to reduce the adverse impacts caused by the deterioration of the land about to be developed.,
- **Ways of working** – We hope to continue our work, as representing both Parish Councils. This has the advantage of pooling expertise and sharing the costs of responding to this development. While one of the Developers initially gave us some funding that has long since been spent. We continue to seek further members of the community to join us to help us with our work, there are many issues which will directly affect residents and the facilities you enjoy, or should have provided by this development.

**Anthony Bickmore, Chairman, HEGNPG 11th April
2026**