

**GOLDHANGER PARISH COUNCIL  
CHAIRS REPORT**

**10 April 2024**

**1. Council Composition**

Last year we had District & Parish Councils elections, Sarah did not re-apply and there were no contested seats on the Parish Council so the Parish Council currently has one vacant position.

Julia Bourn – Chair  
Hugh Reynolds – Vice Chair  
Michael Sargeant  
Clive Cheeseman – Allotments officer  
Stephen Ellis  
Michael Bishop  
Clerk - Julie Webster

Council meetings continue to be held on the second Wednesday of the month.

**2. Introduction**

We have had a quiet year, with no major projects, but continue to add to reserves to save for things like future play equipment.

Last year we reported our frustrations with areas of concern in the village that are managed by the larger authorities and organisations; Essex County Council, Highways Essex and Maldon District Council that have not been actioned, and in many cases even responded to despite many chase ups! Last Summer we sent a formal letter of complaint to Maldon, no reply has been received.

Last Autumn our local MP reached out to assist with questions raised associated with a planning application and we are still trying to resolve a number of issues, namely the flooding issues within the village, via our MP.

**3. Planning**

There have been various applications for the council to consider and report its view to Maldon District Council, who make the decisions.  
(applications upto March meeting included)

### **New housing applications –**

The most significant application to note last year was for 25 Houses on Head Street. With Goldhanger being a smaller village with little or no sustainable credentials and the objection of over 170 residents this application was refused.

- Land of Head street, 25 new dwellings. – Objected, Refused

### **Extensions and Minor Works** comprised:

- Inglenook, (further application) triple bay cartlodge & office to Front – Objected, Refused
- Old pump house, 6 Head street, windows & doors. – Support, Approved
- Bobbets Hole, Bakers Green, Demoloish garages and replace with workshop & garage – No comment, Approved
- 30 Fish Street, First floor rear extension, (first application was refused) a further application – no objection, but comment, Approved
- 3 Hall Estate, single and 2 storey rear & side extension – support, refused
- 36 Hall Estate, rear extension – (missed cut off date to comment), approved

### **Miscellaneous** consisted of:

- 4 tree work applications, - allowed to proceed.
- Pipeline works from Layer to Langford – support with comments, Approved
- Timber Barn, Gardeners Farm, Barn conversion to flexible commercial sui generis use – no objection but comment, Refused
- Vaulty Manor, erection of yurt – Support, Pending

A number of enforcement items have been pending for a number of years, with no response from Maldon DC. Our Ward member recently advised us that the time may have elapsed and further action might not be possible..

Licence holders of Hall Estate garages have been given notice to clear the garages ready for demolition, The Parish Council have commented that in the event the garages are not rebuilt, that the space should be allocated to much needed parking.

## **4. Highways SID**

The current SID (speed indicating device) has had a second wind after much effort from Councillor Bishop who nursed SID back to life.

### **Flooding, blocked surface drains**

Last Autumn when our MP assisted with our objections to a planning application, we also asked for help with communications with Highways to resolve the blocked drain on Maldon road which causes the overflow at the gully behind the bus stop and then it backs up to the manhole cover further up Maldon Road. To date our only reply from Highways, despite chase ups, is insistent that the problem is not theirs.

Other areas of flooding, including Fish Street and Church Street also remain unresolved, despite regular chase ups.

### **Parking within the village**

Parking around the village is becoming more problematic year on year as the numbers of residents vehicles increases and also the numbers of visitors and workers increases.

Parking patrols were booked for various locations in the village during busy periods and additional advice from the Essex Association for Local Councils (EALC) was to suggest residents write polite notes and leave on cars parked illegally, or inconsiderately.

Parking on the verge in front of the Moat development on Maldon road causes problems with sight lines pulling in and out of the development, Moat were asked to review what can be done to improve the situation over the last 3 years but have not replied to any Parish Council correspondence.

Parking at the bottom of Fish street is problematic when cars (typically visitors) block the access to the park gate (needed for grass cutting vehicles and emergency access to the seawall) and also park on double yellow lines, which can cause obstructions for larger traffic accessing the farm.

The Parish Council appeals to all residents and visitors to park legally and considerately.

### **Accidents**

Again this year we have seen a number of accidents in our Parish, on the road between Wash Bridge and our boundary on the D'arcy side

There were two nasty accidents on the corner of Church Street & Maldon Road where cars left the carriageway and crossed the 'island' with one crashing into a house in Benham close, these occurred last October & November.

Several accidents have occurred at the bends at Cobbs Farm over the last year and a speeding police car hit a muntjac deer on Maldon road in Oct and a firearms unit had to be called to despatch the deer.

Wash Bridge - The Parish Council last year followed up correspondence we had sent some years ago suggesting an alternative to brick or other measures to slow the approaching traffic, as yet no reply. However in March this year the white lines were repainted either side of Wash bridge, a slow sign erected and chevrons put on the edge of the brick bridge wall.

We remain keen to keep track of accidents, as this data is not held by any other parties. Collecting this data will give us an evidence base which we can call upon, should we request any safety improvement works in the future. So please email myself or other Councillors details of any accidents you may see, you do not need to have witnessed the initial incident.

## **5. Playing Field, Woodland and Leisure**

### **Park and playground**

#### **Marigold Wood.**

Some thinning out was done last summer and the Orchard is growing well. Many members of the public and the Nursery School enjoy the use of the wood and bench.

#### **Allotments**

Councillor Clive Cheeseman has continued to administer the allotments and if you are interested in having a plot, please contact him.

## **6. Neighbourhood Watch**

Malcolm Holmes is our neighbourhood watch co-ordinator and receives Police crimes reports for the Maldon District, any relevant reports are circulated via the 'Goldhanger Support Group' Facebook page and Malcolm can be contacted via Private messenger if further information is needed. On the whole we are very fortunate to have little crime to report.

## **7. Precept**

The Parish Precept is a tax on each property to fund the activities the Parish Council undertakes for the benefit of the community and forms a very minor part of your total Council Tax charges. The Council Members work hard to keep this as low as possible by undertaking many tasks themselves. Circa £9550 pa is required to meet our recurring expenditure for our legal obligations associated with Parish assets. To allow for other projects considered desirable for the Parish the 24/25 precept was set at £12,000 ,

In view of our low turnover it is considered prudent to maintain one year's expenditure in reserve for the unexpected, although with costs increasing as they have over recent years, our reserve is now a little short of our ideal.

**8. Defibrilators**

The village defibrillators continue to be monitored and maintained by volunteer councillors.

**9. Anglia Water/Foul Drains**

A meeting was held with Anglia water following a communication request via our MP. Various topics were discussed and assurance was given that the foul drain issues (blockages and overflow of sewerage) experienced at Thistley Close had been cleared. A major cause of blockages is the flushing of wet wipes.

**10. Website**

Thanks goes out to our host Christopher Smith for maintaining our website.

**11. Village Hall**

The Parish Council have continued to support the village hall. Recent kitchen refurbishment has been completed and the Village Hall is now fund raising for final fixtures.

I would like to thank Julie, our Clerk, for her service supporting and guiding us, and all Councillors for their dedicated work which enables us to continue to minimise the precept.

J Bourn  
Chair - Goldhanger Parish Council