

(DRAFT)MINUTES OF THE MUNDON ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27 MAY 2026 AT 8.30PM IN THE VICTORY HALL

Email: clerk@mundonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Website: Mundon.org – Tel: 07789 342747

Present: Cllr Gavin Rowsell, Cllr John Bennett, Cllr Kerry-Jane Wylie,
Cllr Diane Leggett and Cllr Marita Ponting

In Attendance: Mrs Jackie Lines – Parish Clerk/RFO

Members of Public: 2

Meeting Commenced: 8.30pm

1. Chair's welcome and introduction

Cllr Rowsell thanked everyone for attending the meeting and felt it may be hard for those not directly involved with Parish activities, to appreciate the significant workload carried by the Parish Councillors to ensure the Council meets all its mounting regulatory obligations, whilst remaining financially efficient and truly representative of residents. Parish Councillors handle a heavy behind-the-scenes workload for no pay and little thanks, driven purely by their commitment to the village.

2. Apologies

Received from Adrian Rayner (Community Protection Team Leader).

3. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting – 20 May 2025

Approved by all and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

4. Maldon District Councillor and County Councillor Reports

ECC Cllr Wendy Stamp had provided an ECC annual report for the Southminster Division dated 20 April 2026 (Appendix B on the website).

5. Mundon Parish Council Annual Chair's Report – Gavin Rowsell

The Council has seen a very stable few years with its members, which hints to the cohesive and effective workings of such a diverse group of Councillors.

So, a big thank you to all the Mundon Councillors, especially those who also undertake other volunteer roles, for all your public and unseen work... It makes my job as Chair much easier and far more rewarding.

Another very special thank you goes to the other dedicated volunteers who work even more in the background: Steve Wells, Les Potts, Mathew Cousins, Lynda Townend, Sandra Potts, Barbara Roe, Marge Orris, Christine McDonald and many others besides. Their efforts — maintaining the Furze, the village hall, litter-picking, flower displays, village sign maintenance, church upkeep and more, do not go unnoticed, and you are all greatly appreciated by the whole village as well as those

visiting or travelling through, even if not everyone actually knows who has done what.

The Parish Council see in excess of 300 official emails a month, attend numerous external meetings and respond to frequent, often technical and lengthy consultations and questionnaires, which help shape Parish, District, County and National directives.

However, it is vital for residents to keep in contact with Councillors, passing on the hidden pulse of the village, as we can be much more effective when we understand the whole local picture. Whilst I personally get quite a few calls and messages from locals, with everything from complaints to idle gossip, it is reinforced from information flows from Councillors and their contacts too.

We are also very fortunate to have Jackie Lines as our clerk, as she expertly manages the growing regulatory and bureaucratic demands... and with all of us knowing she only charges for a fraction of the time she really spends.

6. To notify those present who the various representatives are as per previous Annual Parish Council meeting:

- a) Finance – **(Cllr Wylie and Clerk with Cllr Rowsell covering in Cllr Wylie’s absence)**
- b) Risk Assessment – **(All Councillors and Clerk)**
- c) Health & Safety – **(All Councillors and Clerk)**
- d) Wood Wardens – **(Les Potts, Steve Wells and Matthew Cousins)**
- e) Neighbourhood Watch/Police/Village Information – **(Cllr Wylie)**
- f) Local Transport – **(Cllr Ponting)**
- g) Plume Educational Trust – **(Cllr Wylie)**
- h) Dengie Hundred Group of Parish Councils – **(Cllr Rowsell, Cllr Wylie and Clerk)**
- i) Village Hall – **(Marita Ponting)**
- j) Community Events – **(All Councillors with Cllr Leggett as lead)**
- k) Village/Parish Council Website – **(Cllr Rowsell)**
- l) Sea Defences/Airports – **(Cllr Rowsell)**
- m) Planning – **(All Councillors)**
- n) Highways & PROW (Public Rights of Way) – **(All Councillors)**

**7. Representatives Reports – All Councillors and Clerk
Finance – Clerk**

The parish council kept within the overall small budget for 2025/26.

A grant from the ECC Locality Fund was gratefully received in the value of £480 and used towards the costs of hedge and tree work associated with The Furze.

An annual reclaim of VAT for the year to 31 Aug 2025 in the value of £593.13 was received from HMRC in Sept 2025.

Capital items purchased as assets during the year were further dog fouling signs and an A Frame pavement chalkboard.

A thorough internal audit for the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026 took place on 13 May 2026.

Statutory reporting in relation to the audit will follow and information will shortly be displayed on the website.

The parish precept for the 2026/27 year is £9,600. Reserves at the end of the year were £750 for elections expenses and £18,092.44 relating to Capital Reserves. Bank interest received throughout the year amounted to £292.10.

The budget for 2026/27 has already been set, details provided within the minutes of the 18th November 2025 meeting and will be closely monitored throughout the year with monthly reviews and reporting to all Councillors.

Wood Wardens

The gate put up in the Furze has been discussed with the owner of the property and resolved.

Damage to the trees caused by an axe, police were involved but nobody identified and appears to have stopped.

Two unofficial footpaths were blocked and remain so.

Footpaths and fallen trees have been cleared as and when necessary.

Neighbourhood Watch

Cllr Wylie reported that over the last year Mundon has had incidents of fly tipping, suspicious vehicles, unusual activity within the Furze including a tree being cut down and anti-social behaviour.

The 'Mundon Village Neighbourhood Watch' Facebook page has 43 members – it is a closed group for only those who live in the village, it can be found by searching on the name (sometimes you need to search on 'groups' and also by searching facebook.com/groups/2381394125383537). Cllr Wylie monitors and maintains the page and contents.

The Chelmsford and Maldon Group of Neighbourhood Watch Meetings are held every other month and can be attended in person or via Zoom. Coordinators from both Chelmsford and Maldon areas discuss various topics both rural and urban to help with crime prevention and crime reporting. Also usually in attendance is a Community Safety Officer and a representative from Essex Police who update members of current initiatives and operations and give advice.

'Let's Talk Sessions' organised by the Local Policing Team are hoped to take place regularly to enable residents to ask any questions or discuss any policing issues.

Local Transport - bus routes 31/331/332

Cllr Ponting reported, no feedback had been received directly from passengers.

Hedgerow near the entrance to The Furze had been significantly cut back which has aided visibility for passengers waiting for the northbound bus.

New dropped kerb is being well used.

There have been a number of timetable changes throughout the year, the sign gets updated and information shared on the Mundon Village Facebook page.

MPC have chosen not to participate in the *Love Your Bus* funding as the village is already well served by the bus service.

Plume Educational Trust

Cllr Wylie reported, the Plume Education Trust is a charitable organisation which encompasses the Wills and Testaments of several benefactors – Ralph Breeder, Thomas Plume, Henrietta Sadd, Arnold Keeble and George Courtault. The Objectives of the Charity are to apply the income generated by the Trust Fund as scholarships to deserving students educated at the Plume School, Maldon in aid of their Further Education beyond compulsory school leaving age. The Charity derives all its income from invested assets, the greater part of which is invested between M & G Investments and the CCLA Investments and the remainder is invested in various COIF Charity Funds. The performance of the various funds is kept under regular review.

The scholarship fund pot for 2025/26 was £6,000, 5 students applied and awards made of £1,200 per student. Applications were made online as the form is now electronic and every student submitted a reason why they were applying for the funding, with most mainly stating it would help go towards living costs/equipment.

Dengie Hundred Group of Parish Councils

The group, which is fully supported by the Parish Council, has not held many meetings throughout the last year and it still continues to re-establish itself. An annual fee of £30 per parish is charged to help cover any Clerk costs. The Chair, Vice Chair or Clerk will continue to attend whenever feasible.

Community Events

Cllr Leggett reported, the Fundraising Committee held a meeting on the 13th February to discuss the 2026 Mundon Summer Fete. It was decided to hold it on Saturday 5th September from 2-4pm. The theme of the Fete will be a Circus.

There will be various competitions to enter for adults and children and a selection of activities.

We will also be offering refreshments and four Committee members have individual actions they are working on for the day.

Grass Cutting

Cllr Leggett reported the Village grass cutting had now commenced with Mow My Lawn on the main green and the grass in front of the woods, which is obviously reduced in size due to the planting of the shrubs. Very happy with the completed work and will monitor throughout the summer.

Village/Parish Council Website

Cllr Rowsell reported, the website is updated as legally required with agendas, minutes and key notices. Whilst the rest of the site holds a wealth of useful information for locals and guests alike, sadly, general browsing of the site is still very low, but it is my understanding that this is quite normal.

Our Facebook page has however grown to 369 followers (from 346 last year), which is quite impressive for a Parish of less than 400 residents.

We use it to try and share simple, relevant, local information which may affect residents or those travelling through, but due to regulations, we avoid social chat and advertising. Our posts on Facebook do however quite often have more detailed information available on the website, and in such cases, a link is usually included.

Sea Defences/Airports

Cllr Rowsell reported, the Environment Agency (EA) continues to struggle to maintain existing infrastructure, and in this region's rural setting, has all but stopped any actual improvement works.

The farmer led, Essex Coast Organisation (ECO) has recently signed a unique 5 year agreement with the EA, whereby ECO take on the smaller 'stitch in time' works that the EA cannot do at the substantially reduced costs of ECO. These works are both undertaken and subsidised by the local landowners, and over the course of 5 years will save the EA millions of pounds.

As an ECO director and local farmer, I have been keeping pressure on the EA and ECO to ensure the resilience of Mundon's critically important sea-defences and drainage systems.

So, the Mundon Creek seawall and drainage maintenance project (protecting South Mundon, Latchingdon, and the sewage works), which was scheduled by the EA to start about 5 years ago, is now destined to be in collaboration with ECO, to ensure the important project moves forward.

Meetings with the Lead Local Flood Authority - Essex County Council and other regulatory authorities such as Maldon District Council and Anglian Water, have lessened due to reduced rain induced incidents, but ECO continues pressing for better engagement with planned projects, as Essex County Council and Essex Highways now show very limited constructive input on water issues in planning applications.

Planning

Cllr Rowsell reported, whilst Mundon Parish Council only see about 12 planning applications per year within the parish itself, they are regularly consulted on many other large, complex or contentious applications in the surrounding areas. This last year has seen probably the most contentious set of applications ever presented to the Council, including plans for a large solar park in Mundon, another huge wind turbine project on the Dengie, a massive housing application in Stow Maries and many other large housing developments in the local area.

We strongly encourage applicants and those potentially affected, to engage with the Parish Council at the earliest opportunity on all applications, because for Councillors to review applications thoroughly, we need that timely feedback from local residents, to ensure we can present a balanced Parish response to Maldon Planning Department. When response deadlines fall between meetings, the Clerk seeks private email votes; with a unanimous agreement allowing a direct response. However, if any differing views are received, this triggers an interim public meeting.

Our consistent approach is to try and support long-term residents and businesses, remain open to new ones, but apply common sense to all.

Lack of infrastructure to cope with new development is a common issue, however both Parish and District Councils suffer the same problem of often not having enough influence on the most controversial applications, as the massively increased government housing numbers and questionable Net Zero directives, means contentious applications are regularly opposed locally, but subsequently win at expensive appeals.

Highways

Cllr Rowsell reported, Essex Highways' failure to maintain road signage is increasingly concerning, and their handling of road closures remains VERY poor, with little or no forward communication, and often misleading or simply untrue information on their One.Network portal.

It appears an increasing issue, that utility companies are given permits to completely shut roads, often for excessive periods of time, rather than set up traffic lights to alleviate long detours. Hopefully, new governance within Essex County Council will steer Essex Highways to more mindful practices that take into account issues for local drivers and businesses.

Mundon Parish Council continue exploring options to manage speeding and large vehicles through the village, but Essex Highways and general funding are the stopping point every time.

The Parish Council still fund the regular TruCAM speed enforcement at two locations in Mundon, with the positive result that offender rates have been steadily falling from highs of 126 in the year 2022-2023, down to our lowest figure of 37 offenders receiving speeding tickets this last year, bringing the total offenders since April 2020 to 452. With these heavily reducing figures in mind, the council is now actively exploring more sustainable enforcement options.

8. Victory Hall Management Committee Report

An annual report was provided (Appendix C on website).

9. St Marys Church – report from the Friends of Friendless Churches

An annual report was provided (Appendix D on the website).

10. Fundraising Committee Report

The balance of funds in had for the Fundraising Account as at 31 March 2026 amounted to £302.11 (Appendix A on the website).

11. Public Participation and any matters raised that require a decision or further investigation to be placed on the next Parish Council Agenda for action – no additional points raised.

Cllr Rowsell thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 8.57pm.

Appendix A

**Mundon Parish Council
Fundraising Account
1 July 2025 to 31 March 2026**

Income

B/Fwd 30 June 2025		337.82
Summer Village Fete (9 Aug 25)		
Tombola	72.36	
Refreshments	40.50	
Raffle	68.00	
Bric-a-Brac	32.50	
		<u>213.36</u>
Total Income		551.18

Less: Expenditure

Summer Village Fete (9 Aug 25)		
Cakes and Drinks	43.18	
Prizes	38.89	
Sweets Game	33.47	
Hook a Duck	23.39	
Tombola	41.74	
Other expenses	25.98	
		<u>206.65</u>
Parish Plants		42.42

Surplus Income		<u><u>302.11</u></u>
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Appendix B

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL INTERIM ANNUAL REPORT 2025/2026 Southminster Division by Councillor Wendy Stamp 20th April 2026.

It has been another busy challenging year for councils, councillors, community groups and residents within the Southminster Division.

A special thank all our residents in our wonderful diverse community- we should all be proud of the caring, helpful, inspiring living in Burnham on Crouch and our villages.

Thank you again for all your help and support I receive throughout the past year, this enables me to make a difference in all areas of responsibility and services under the remit of Essex County Council.

This annual report is interim and does not include everything that will be in my final report but due to the early date of the annual town meeting that has not been possible.

Essex County Council continues to deliver Everyone's Essex strategy.

This had a £2 billion budget aiming at economic growth, improved infrastructure and enhance social care. The improvements and delivery of important life changing services included a very good CQC inspection on adult social care. I was asked to be interviewed as the opposition member representative.

I was also invited to be part of the board for year two of the Essex Caring Communities Commission and the final annual report has been finished and will be launched in April. I have no doubt this new way of taking action forward to enhance wellbeing in our communities and address health and social care pressures, will continue to improve the care we all may need at some stage in our families and own lives.

The report has been led by a team of excellent officers and professionals, including the head of ICB, chair of Active Essex, Head of Youth Practice for Children's Society (SE) and others. This sits alongside the large number of monthly decisions approved at Cabinet and Full Council alongside new initiatives, transformation projects – consultations, strategic and spatial policies.

I reported this last year - The biggest change in local government for 50 years has commenced. Greater Essex (Essex County Council, Southend and Thurrock Unitary Council geographies) was selected to join the Devolution Priority Programme alongside 12 District Councils to deliver for the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

The governments reasoning for Devolution and LGR, is for a simpler, more sustainable (savings), delivery of services, and greater infrastructure delivery by devolving and transferring the powers and funding from national government to local government. Not everyone agrees with this as many feel the local voice will be lost.

On Wednesday 18th March 2026, the government minister made the decision to support the District Councils submission of 5 Unitary Authorities. This was not my preferred choice as I still have grave concerns joining with Chelmsford and Brentwood will be sufficient to deliver the complex services required without making financial cuts to non-statutory services – but time will tell.

Essex County Council has a legal responsibility to operate within a balanced budget. With the changes and reductions in Government grant funding over recent years, coupled with increasing and more complex demand for core services such as caring for the elderly, protecting vulnerable children and supporting families who need it - the financial situation continues to be very challenging.

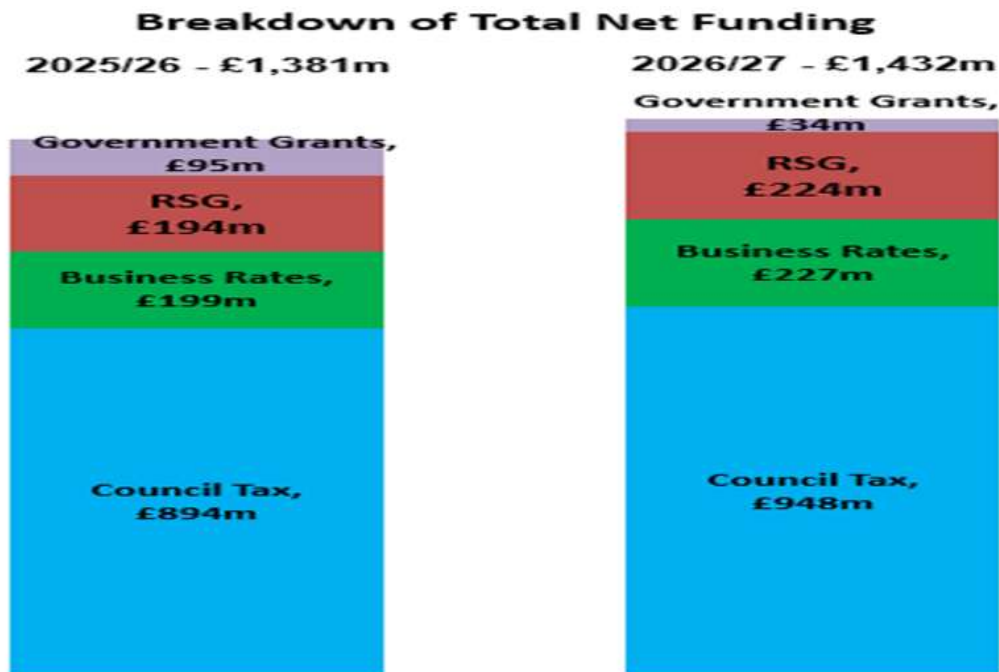
In February, Essex County Council agreed its new Budget for 2025/26. The Council again had a stark choice in balancing its budget increasing taxes or facing unacceptable cuts in services. The budget was balanced against a backdrop of some of the most challenging times that local government has ever faced.

The budget for this financial year was agreed at February's Full Council and although ECC has a well-established history of strong financial management unprecedented budget pressures are being

experienced particularly across children’s placements and a £10.3m over spend in 2025/26 is expected at the outturn.

The Budget for 2026/27 and Annual Plan, approved the following:

- Gross expenditure to be incurred in the delivery of Council services in 2026/27 is **£2,877m**
- That the net cost of services be set at **£1,432.5 million (m)** for 2026/27
- That the net revenue budget requirement be set at **£1,398.8m** (net cost of services less general government grants) for 2026/27
- That the total council tax funding requirement be set at **£936.8m** for 2026/27
- That Essex County Council’s element of the council tax be increased **by 3.95% comprising of a 1.95% increase in general council tax and 2.00% adult social care precept**. This spending supports the most vulnerable in our communities including older people, people with learning difficulties, mental health difficulties and physical and sensory impairments. The precept is being used to insulate Adult Social Care from having to make higher savings, and support growth in need caused by changes in the demographics of our population and inflation, including the national living wage rise.
- This resulted in the Essex County Council element of the council tax being **£1,641.96** for a Band D property in 2026/27 - this is an increase of **£1.20** per household per week.



Headlines on Council tax information 2025/26

Council tax increase 3.75% including adult social care – this is amongst the lowest in any county council.

Expenditure on services:

- £897 million Supporting Vulnerable Adults. 33%
- £853 million on Education Excellence, Lifelong learning and Employability. 31.4%
- £269 million on services supporting Children’s Services and Early Years. 9.9%
- £161 million on Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport. 5.9%
- £93 million on Climate Czar, Environment, Waste Reduction and Recycling. 3.4%
- £76 million on Public Health. 2.8%
- £371 million on others which include Libraries, Coroners, Registrars and Country Parks. 13.6%

(Draft) Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly (Open Meeting) 27 May 2026

Some progress has been made on addressing the lack of SEND provision in Burnham on Crouch and our division. I can't say any more now but at last ECC and the government has listened to us. Raising the lack of SEND provision in Burnham and The Dengie was my first question at Full Council five years ago. I will provide more detail in my full report.

Due to a great deal of hard work from Dengie Hundred Bus Users Group and Burnham on Crouch Town Council, they secured two rounds of love your bus grants – THANK YOU ALL. We still need to work on bringing a direct hospital service next.

As a positive, I must thank the clerks and officers, again, for their support and professionalism and those who have worked hard in applying for funding for important community projects from the Locality Fund allocation. I also wish to thank Essex County Council for the continued funding opportunities. Total fund allocated £5000. The awards this year are:-

	Amount	Proposed Purpose
Dengie 100 Running Club	£1000	Purchase of a defibrillator for Dengie 100 Running Club. Defibrillator will be stored with club committee and transported to different running events for use.
Althorne PC	£750	This application is to repair/refurbish the parish owned benches as they are scruffy. Repairs will include replacing wooden slats and painting the benches.
Asheldham & Dengie PC	£491.58	The parish council will purchase a Brushcutter from a local company for the grounds person of the parish who takes care of the churchyard, cemetery, verges, and green spaces
Asheldham & Dengie PC	£1547.46	Purchase and installation of new notice board to replace one which is beyond repair.
Steeple PC	£730.00	To remove type one shed base, level the area previously raised beds into the low way previously the shed and gazebo. To remove or distribute mound of dirt, this is unknown material and looks to contain hardcore/rubble if so, may need removing to land fill and will incur an extra cost. The cost for this is £580.00. To seed areas levelled at a suitable time, £150.00.
Mundon PC	£480.96	To trim the hedges application for help towards the cost of tree and hedge trimming work, the information has been slow in coming I am afraid, due to various reasons outside of our control and the work is still being assessed. However, this type of work, especially with The Furze (woodland).
	£5000	

Local Community Initiatives Fund

Burnham on Crouch Rugby Club	£5,000 (6,700 total from pooled funding with other members)	Purchase of equipment, specifically: Wall mounted baby changing table (x2) £360 Two-piece extending Scoop Stretcher & Head restraint £1,000 Defibrillator £1,200 Physio & Massage Table £1,500 Improved Audio and Visual System with hearing loop £3,000 Sanitary/Porcelain ware and general refurbishment of male facilities £3,500
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Tackling the lack of Infrastructure including the NHS

The current challenges regarding the National Health Service and funding crisis have recently been reported in the media and continues causing concerns to everyone. There is now one ICB headed by Tom Abell. Discussions are continuing regarding section 106 funding – lack of expenditure on improvements and delivery mitigating growth.

I have supported residents with a huge number of issues, problems and concerns, assisted parish and town councils, whilst attending a number of scrutiny meetings, member training and council meetings at Essex County Council.

If I can help in anyway on County Council matters, please contact me Cllr.Wendy.Stamp@essex.gov.uk

Appendix C

Mundon Victory Hall – Mundon Victory Hall Management Committee

The hall continues to be well used, with a wide variety of groups and classes regularly booking – quilters, bowls, flower arranging, crafts, tai chi, ballet, art. Unfortunately, Mundon WI no longer use the hall as a result of dwindling numbers.

The floor has been re-treated this year, along with other general maintenance. Emergency lighting and fire alarms are checked regularly in accordance with Health & Safety guidelines.

There continues to be some issues with parking obstructing the car park for hall users, occasionally requiring a note to be placed on the vehicles. An extra sign has been put in the rear car park warning against parking there as the gate will be locked when the hall is not in use – vehicles have ended up being locked in!

Hire charges increased in January 2026 - regular users and local residents £10, others £18

Appendix D



Annual Update St Mary's, Mundon

St Mary's, Mundon continues to be open daily for visitors to enjoy. Visitors this past year included both locals and those from further afield, including a small singing group who enjoyed performing some historic choral music in the church.

In July of 2025, a special service of Evensong was held to celebrate the 50th anniversary of St Mary's being vested with the Friends. This included the choir of St Mary's, Maldon with Fr Andrew Appiah officiating and Vice President and Honorary Chaplain of the Friends, Fr Philip Gray preaching. St Mary's also hosted their annual carol service in December which was very well attended. We are incredibly grateful to our local volunteer, Christine McDonald, and the rest of the team at St Mary's for making these services such a success.

St Mary's also acted as a venue for the Maldon Festival, this year hosting The Austen Trio who performed a recital of music loved and played by Jane Austen.

Some minor works have also been completed at St Mary's in the past year, such as repairs to the chancel door, as well as maintenance visits in both the spring and autumn. The Friends undertook a fire risk assessment for the church and are reviewing the churchyard trees with the landowner. We also infilled low spots in the parking area and on the access track to help improve access to the church. We have appointed a new architect, grass cutter and are in the process of arranging for a specialist report which will advise repairs to the historic plaster on the south wall which is severely distorted due to the structural movement, which we addressed as part a major repair campaign in 2021-22.

Friends of Friendless Churches
April 2026