

# CHRISTCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

## **Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Christchurch Parish Council held in the Community Centre on Monday 12 May 2025 at 7.30pm**

**Present:** Cllrs A Sparrow (in the Chair), J Bliss, B Burfield, R Feeney, J Hayes, S Potter, D Gibbs (Clerk), D Roy (FDC), one parishioner

### **001/25-26 Election of Chairman for the Municipal Year 2025-26**

Cllr Sparrow was proposed by Cllr Bliss, seconded by Cllr Potter and duly elected. He signed his declaration of acceptance, witnessed by the Clerk.

### **002/25-26 Election of Vice Chairman for the Municipal Year 2025-26**

Cllr Hughes was proposed by Cllr Feeney, seconded by Cllr Hayes and duly elected. Members resolved to allow him to sign his declaration of acceptance at the next meeting.

### **003/25-26 Apologies for Absence**

Cllrs J Hughes, M Summers (FDC)

### **004/25-26 Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Cllr Hughes for undertaking the role of Chairman of the Council for the last three years.

### **005/25-26 Public Time**

No matters were raised.

### **006/25-26 Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 April were correctly recorded and signed as being a true record.

### **007/25-26 Matters Outstanding**

- a) Household items outside property in Upwell Road - Cllr Roy will rearrange the meeting with Clarion Housing Group's Regional Operations Officer.
- b) Fenland District Council Infrastructure Delivery Plan - The Clerk is discussing the process by which a new mobile telephone mast was installed in Manea with the Clerk of Manea Parish Council.
- c) Public defibrillators - The Clerk has provided information about adding the defibrillators at the Dun Cow and Townley School to The Circuit, the national database used by the emergency services. The Farmer's Boy defibrillator will require a power supply. Further investigation is required. If no power supply is available, the defibrillator could be relocated.

### **008/25-26 Annual Meeting of the Council**

- a) Adoption of new Standing Orders and Financial Regulations - The Clerk explained that a number of minor amendments had been made to the model Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, mainly in relation to procurement thresholds. Members resolved to adopt the revised documents.

- b) Confirmation of insurance arrangements - The Clerk confirmed that the Council holds adequate insurance against all risks with Ansvar Insurance arranged through Community Action Suffolk with a renewal date of 1 October.
- c) Review of the Council's subscriptions to other bodies - The Council holds subscriptions to the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Association of Local Councils, Cambridgeshire ACRE, and the Campaign to Protect Rural England. Members resolved to continue all three subscriptions.
- d) Confirmation of the Council's register of assets as at 31 March 2025 - Members confirmed their acceptance of the register.
- e) Confirmation of meeting dates for the municipal year - Members resolved that the Council will meet on the second Monday of every month, namely 9 June, 14 July, 11 August, 8 September, 13 October, 10 November, 8 December, 12 January, 9 February, 9 March, 13 April, and 11 May. The Annual Parish Meeting will take place on Wednesday 27 May 2026.

#### **009/25-26 Police Report**

The Clerk reported that he hopes to meet Sergeant Lee Lombardo soon.

#### **010/25-26 County & District Councillors Reports**

Cllr Roy reported that he has communicated with the two new County Councillors by email. The Assistant Director of Planning expects the caravan to be removed from the plot adjacent to Syringa House by mid-June. The new Tiger 7 bus route will launch on 27 May. The District Council's Household Waste Service is unable to provide a smaller bin lorry for collections in Wayside Estate if it becomes a one-way street, but will find a way to empty the bins.

#### **011/25-26 Clerk's Report**

The Clerk reported on correspondence received, including nominations opening for the Pride in Fenland awards, a community safety drop-in at the former Barclays Bank in March, the Shape the Future of Age-Friendly Communities survey and guidance from CPRE on how to respond to planning applications.

#### **012/25-26 Members and Residents Issues**

- a) Visibility at Upwell Road and Sixteen Foot Bank - The Clerk reported that he had spoken to the owner of Ivy House Farm. They do not own the trees and support the proposal to trim them. The Clerk will ask Cambridgeshire Highways to carry out the work whilst the road is closed for the upgrade of the signs and line markings.
- b) Signs and banners on Euximoor Bridge - Members noted that a cluster of estate agent signs and other banners had appeared on the bridge. The Clerk will investigate and report them for removal if necessary.
- c) Kimberlea - It appears that the resident may be moving away from the village.
- d) Bedlam Bridge - Members reported that more fridges or freezers had been fly-tipped on the layby adjacent to the bridge. The Clerk will report these items.

#### **013/25-26 Recreation Ground**

Cllr Burfield reported that the Community Service Payback teams have completed the pollarding of the willows in the Recreation Ground and the branches have been moved into the Nature Park. The Payback team have also made twelve bird nesting boxes to be used on the site and hope to construct a picnic table too. They will work on the Community Centre car park on their next visit.

**014/25-26 Nature Park Project**

Cllr Burfield reported that he has mowed the dog run and it is now usable. The Clerk reported that the grant payment from the Whitemill Environment Fund has not been received. Members agreed that a formal plan is required for the project. Councillors will meet with the Steering Group to agree the next steps.

**015/25-26 Village Centre Regeneration Project**

Cllr Sparrow reported that a project plan will be developed over the coming months.

**016/25-26 Community Centre**

The Clerk reported that the Internal Auditor had raised the issue of the insurance valuation for the Community Centre. To ensure that the value is not understated, Members resolved to appoint a surveyor to undertake a full valuation of the building.

**017/25-26 Annual Parish Meeting**

Members discussed the meeting. They agreed that it had been informative and enjoyable. They discussed options for speakers at next year's meeting and agreed to invite the NFU to deliver a talk about farming. Cllr Sparrow will approach the NFU. They also asked the Clerk to invite the MAGPAS Air Ambulance charity to attend.

**018/25-26 Highways**

- a) The Clerk informed members that a traffic order has been issued for the closure of the Sixteen Foot Bank on 2 June for the installation of the new signs and lines included in the 2024/25 Local Highway Improvements application.
- b) The Clerk updated Members on the progress of the 2025/26 Local Highway improvement application for Wayside Estate. Members discussed a community consultation on the scheme, but agreed to wait until the outcome of the application has been determined.

**019/25-26 Play Equipment Inspection**

Members discussed the report on the inspection undertaken by Online Playgrounds on 16 April. They noted that no high risk issues had been identified, but there are a number of moderate risk issues relating to deterioration due to the age of the equipment and safety surfacing. The report also highlighted the need for many items to be cleaned. Members asked the Clerk to add this matter to the agenda for the next meeting to enable a detailed plan to be compiled to rectify all issues of concern.

**020/25-26 Planning**

Members considered the following application:

F/YR25/0300/VOC - Variation of conditions 2 (materials) and 11 (list of approved documents) of planning permission F/YR23/0273/F (Conversion of barn to a single storey 1-bed dwelling involving the temporary siting of a caravan and storage container during construction) - Barn at Willow Farm, Euximoor Drove, Christchurch

They resolved to offer no objection.

**021/25-26 Finance**

- a) Members reviewed and approved the statement of reserves as at 31 March.
- b) Members reviewed the final budget for 2025/26 and resolved to adopt it.
- c) Members reviewed the mandates for the Council's bank accounts and resolved to add Cllr Sparrow to the mandate for the Barclays Bank accounts.

- d) Members considered the use of electronic payments for the Council's expenditure. They resolved that the Clerk be authorised to set up payments and that any two of the remaining signatories be authorised to release the funds. They asked the Clerk to make the necessary arrangements.
- e) Members reviewed and approved the Governance and Management Risk Assessment.
- f) Members considered the Internal Audit Report and the recommendations therein. They resolved as follows:-
- The Clerk will evidence that invoices are verified and certified prior to payment.
  - Quarterly reconciliations will be recorded in the minutes.
  - The level of fidelity cover will be reviewed at the next insurance renewal
  - The budget and precept calculation will be published on the Council's website.
  - The Council will develop a reserves policy as part of future long-term planning.
  - An accessibility statement will be added to the website with evidence of compliance to the latest regulations.
- g) Members considered and confirmed each of the statements on the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25. The Statement was signed by the Chairman.
- h) Members reviewed and approved the Accounting Statements 2024/25, which were signed by the Chairman.
- i) Members confirmed the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights as Tuesday 3 June to Monday 14 July.
- j) The Clerk reported that the internal audit process had involved a thorough examination of the Council's records and policies in accordance with the regulations and the audit report provided a fair and balanced assessment, highlighting suggestions for improvement. Members resolved to reappoint Helen Symmons as Internal Auditor for 2025/26.
- k) Members considered the options for the publication of an annual report to residents. They resolved to publish a report in the July edition of The Heron.
- l) The management accounts as at 30.4.25 showed income of £11,111.21 and expenditure of £834.04, resulting in a surplus of £10,277.17 and total funds held of £48,302.71.
- m) Members noted the following sums received since the last meeting:
- |                                                    |            |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Fenland District Council (precept instalment)..... | £11,100.00 |
| NatWest Bank (interest) .....                      | £ 11.21    |
- n) Members approved the following accounts for payment:
- |                                             |          |
|---------------------------------------------|----------|
| Clerk salary and home office allowance..... | £ 386.71 |
| Helen Symmons (audit fee).....              | £ 265.00 |

#### **022/25-26 Public Time**

None.

#### **023/25-26 Matters for Next Meeting**

Play equipment inspection. Review of Clerk's contract.

#### **024/25-26 Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting of the Parish Council will be Monday 9 June.