

CHRISTCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Christchurch Parish Council held in the Community Centre on Monday 14 July 2025 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs A Sparrow (Chairman), J Bliss, R Feeney, J Hayes, J Hughes, S Potter, D Roy (FDC), D Gibbs (Clerk), four parishioners

046/25-26 Apologies for Absence

Cllr B Burfield, Cllrs S Fisher (CCC), C Galbraith (CCC), M Summers (FDC)

047/25-26 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

048/25-26 Public Time

A resident asked questions relating to the Coldham solar farm planning application discussed at the previous meeting and the Anglian Water antenna in Crown Avenue. The Chairman advised him that these matters did not fall within the remit of the Council.

It was noted that the litter bin outside the former village shop had been removed, but no replacement had been installed. The Clerk will consider potential locations for a replacement.

049/25-26 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 9 June were correctly recorded and signed as being a true record.

050/25-26 Matters Outstanding

- a) Clarion garden project, Upwell Road - The Chairman reported that he had received an email from Tracie Hollocks at Clarion inviting the Council's input into the proposed garden project. A meeting will be arranged shortly.
- b) Fenland District Council Infrastructure Delivery Plan - The Clerk has received no response from the Clerk of Manea Parish Council. Cllr Feeney reported that he had spoken to O2, who had advised him that a new mast is not currently technically feasible due to the absence of the necessary infrastructure. Norfolk County Council has recently installed monitoring devices on waste collection vehicles to map mobile signal strength and download speeds across the county. A similar scheme in Cambridgeshire would provide useful data to justify further work in Christchurch.
- c) Public defibrillators - Cllr Hayes will contact the custodian of the Farmer's Boy defibrillator and the current owner of the former pub to discuss options for the relocation of the defibrillator. The Clerk confirmed that the Dun Cow defibrillator has not been registered on The Circuit.
- d) Community Centre valuation - The Clerk reported that the quote for a valuation of the Community Centre is in the region of £170 plus VAT. Members asked the Clerk to obtain the valuation.

- e) Whitemill Environment Fund - The Clerk confirmed that Cllr Potter will represent Christchurch on the new community panel.
- f) Fens Reservoir - The Clerk confirmed that Cllr Feeney will represent the Council on the liaison group of local councils.

051/25-26 Police Report

The Clerk reported that he hopes to meet Sergeant Lee Lombardo soon. Individual officers have been reassigned specific neighbourhood responsibilities, with PC Lorraine Foster-Bentham as the designated office for Christchurch.

052/25-26 County & District Councillors Reports

Cllr Roy noted that the consultation on the reorganisation of local government ends on 20 July. Customer satisfaction surveys on street cleansing and bin collections are live. The new arrangements for food waste recycling start next year and information will be available in the autumn. From a recent meeting with Anglian Water he reported that customers may claim a rebate on their sewerage charge for use of an outside tap if a sub-meter is fitted to the tap.

053/25-26 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported on correspondence received, including traffic orders for the closure of Laddus Drove from 11 to 22 August and the Sixteen Foot Bank on 18 and 19 August, a County Council appeal for food waste volunteers, and the publication of a new edition of Local Councils Explained by the National Association of Local Councils.

054/25-26 Members and Residents Issues

- a) Parking outside Townley School - Concern has been expressed regarding parking in the vicinity of the school restricting visibility and concerns over pedestrian safety. Cllr Sparrow offered to speak to the Headteacher in September.
- b) MVAS speed sign battery replacement - The battery in the MVAS sign is no longer working. The Clerk will order a replacement.
- c) Crown Avenue grass verges - The verges are included in the grounds maintenance contract, but only in areas without parked cars. Members noted that Crown Drove had not been cut. This is the responsibility of the landowner.
- d) Cllr Hayes reported a pothole around a loose drain in Upwell Road. The Clerk will arrange for this to be repaired.

055/25-26 Recreation Ground

The Clerk reported that the Community Service Payback teams have completed their work in the Recreation Ground and are now working in the Community Centre Car Park. Cllr Sparrow will be meeting the Placement Coordinator shortly to conduct a risk assessment for working in Green Lane. It has also been suggested that Payback teams may be able to assist with stewarding of events such as the Car Show.

056/25-26 Nature Park Project

Cllr Sparrow reported that the majority of the field has been flailed and the remainder will be completed with a smaller machine shortly. The site will be sprayed as new weeds germinate. A further spray may be required before cultivation. The timing of the cultivation and reseedling will be agreed at the next meeting. There are up to 150 hedging plants left over from last year's Woodland Trust donation still available for planting.

The funding from the Whitemill Environment Fund has been agreed and will be released shortly. The timing of future funding rounds is unclear.

057/25-26 Village Centre Regeneration Project

Members considered the scoping document prepared by Cllr Sparrow. They adopted the document as the broad plan for the project. Members noted that the painted cobbles were not installed at Townley School and remain in storage. Further assistance from Highways is required for mapping. Cllr Roy offered to pursue this.

058/25-26 Highways

- a) The Clerk informed members that the closure of the Sixteen Foot Bank is now scheduled for 18 and 19 August 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. The project will be presented to the assessment panel on Friday 25 July. The panel's scoring will be presented to the County Council's Highways and Transport Committee on 14 October for confirmation of funding.

059/25-26 Play Equipment Inspection

The Clerk advised Members that he was obtaining quotes for the works agreed at the June meeting.

060/25-26 Finance

- a) The management accounts as at 30.6.25 showed income of £14,299.23 and expenditure of £2,130.39, resulting in a surplus of £12,168.84 and total funds held of £50,194.38.
- b) Members reviewed the quarterly financial reconciliation.
- c) Members noted the following sums received since the last meeting:

Fenland District Council (concurrent functions grant).....	£ 2,567.00
Fenland District Council (recycling credits)	£ 292.97
Barclays Bank (interest).....	£ 67.46
NatWest Bank (interest).....	£ 10.47
- d) Members approved the following accounts for payment:

Clerk salary and home office allowance	£ 386.91
Lawn Boy Farm Services (mower repair)	£ 126.67
Fenland District Council (street light recharge)	£ 5,553.18
CAPALC Ltd (subscription)	£ 445.03
Middle Level Commissioners (drainage rates)	£ 53.94
Upwell Internal Drainage Board (drainage rates)	£ 53.53
Recreation Ground (transfer of recycling credits).....	£ 292.97
- e) Members considered a grant application from the Christchurch Women's Circle. Cllr Sparrow declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item. Members resolved to award a grant of £350.
- f) Members considered a quote for the replacement of street light PC3 in Upwell Road. They noted the addition of temporary traffic management at a cost of £769.50, increasing the cost by 60%, which they felt was unnecessary at this location. However they also noted that the light had already been replaced without the Council's approval. Members asked the Clerk to raise their concerns with the District Council.

061/25-26 Consultations

Members noted the following consultations and resolved accordingly:

- a) Local government reorganisation - Members may respond individually.
- b) Public rights of way hierarchy - Unlikely to influence policy.
- c) Great collaboration - The Clerk will respond.

062/25-26 Public Time

A question was asked regarding the planning application for the barns at Tipps End that were included on the agenda for the June meeting. The Clerk explained that the Council is not a consultee on applications such as this that fall within the scope of the General Permitted Development Order 2015.

063/25-26 Matters for Next Meeting

Members agreed to invite the Reverend Canon Dr Mark Collinson to speak about the plans for the Church.

064/25-26 Date of Next Meeting

Members resolved not to meet in August. The date of the next meeting of the Parish Council will be Monday 8 September.