

CHRISTCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Christchurch Parish Council held in the Community Centre on Monday 12 January 2026 at 7.30pm

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

146/25-26 Apologies for Absence

Cllr J Hayes, Cllr S Fisher (CCC), Cllr C Galbraith (CCC), Cllr M Summers (FDC)

147/25-26 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He wished them a Happy New Year and looked forward to a year of exciting projects that will make a difference to the village.

148/25-26 Public Time

The Chair of the Friends of the Heron spoke about the recent challenges in publishing the community magazine and their plans to apply for charity status to assist in accessing external funding. An application for interim financial support from the Council has been submitted. Members acknowledged the importance of The Heron to the whole community, but particularly to those who do not have access to online information.

Residents reported two street lights not working, one of which has been out for some time. The Clerk will ask the District Council to speed up the repairs.

149/25-26 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December were correctly recorded and signed as being a true record.

150/25-26 Matters Outstanding

- a) Fenland District Council Infrastructure Delivery Plan - No progress.
- b) Public defibrillators - The Clerk reported that the defibrillator at the Dun Cow has still not been registered on The Circuit. Cllr Feeney will now register it. Further clarification is needed about the Bridge Farm defibrillator. Cllr Sparrow will contact the former resident to clarify whether he provided the defibrillator and collect the spare defibrillator formerly located at the Farmer's Boy from Cllr Hayes. The Clerk informed Members that the warranty on the Community Centre defibrillator had expired although it was still in working order.
- c) Parking outside Townley School - No progress.
- d) Village skip - The suggestion was published in The Heron to ascertain the level of support. There was no significant response, but anecdotal support from some residents. Members agreed to provide a skip on Saturday 11 April at the Community Centre, to be advertised in The Heron. Appropriate restrictions will need to be considered.
- e) Green Lane reinstatement - Cllr Hayes delivered letters to the residents of Green Lane. The response was generally supportive but one resident has asked for an opportunity to discuss this at the next meeting. This was agreed.

- f) Overhanging vegetation - Cllr Hughes delivered letters to several properties with overhanging vegetation. There has been no feedback, but Members will monitor the situation.

151/25-26 Police Report

Nothing to report.

152/25-26 County & District Councillors Reports

Cllr Roy reported that the District Council has withdrawn the emerging local plan in favour of a new plan entitled "Fenland 50" reflecting changes in national planning policy and the local government reorganisation. The public consultation on the District Council's draft business plan and budget is open until 1 February. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel will consider this at their forthcoming meeting. The contract with BioMarsh Environmental to remove sewage spillage from District Council premises has been extended to March 2028. The District Council's website includes customer satisfaction surveys on the green and blue bin service and the street cleansing service.

153/25-26 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported on correspondence received, including traffic orders for March Road, Tipps End until 3 April and Church Road from 2 to 6 February, the District Council's Civic Events diary, £1.5 million from the Government's Pride in Place Impact Fund to improve children's play areas, a Great Collaboration survey from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Association of Local Councils and the launch of their new website, a Community Energy webinar and the annual Community Buildings Conference from Cambridgeshire ACRE, and a letter from Manea Parish Council regarding development and infrastructure issues in Manea.

154/25-26 Members and Residents Issues

- a) Public rights of way - The Clerk updated Members on the recent discussions on Facebook regarding the condition of the Green Lane byway and the route of the public footpath from Scotts Road to the Sixteen Foot Bank. The County Council's Rights of Way Officer will visit to inspect both locations.
- b) Cllr Feeny mentioned that he had been asked about access routes to the proposed Fen Reservoir once it is in use and whether this might impact upon the village. The construction routes are shown on Anglian Water's website, but it is too early to consider future routes at this stage.
- c) Cllr Sparrow received a report from a resident of potholes in the vicinity of the former village shop. The Clerk will investigate and report.

155/25-26 Recreation Ground

Cllr Sparrow declared a pecuniary interest in this item. The Clerk presented a minor works quotation received for repairs, primarily in the under-5s play area, some of which were highlighted in the latest safety inspection. The quote includes repairs to the balance beam, but it was suggested that a replacement be considered, due to the age and condition of the current item. Members asked for a comparative quote to be brought to the next meeting.

156/25-26 Nature Park Project

Cllr Sparrow reported that there has been no progress on site as the contractor awaits more suitable weather. Cllr Sparrow will provide a social media update for residents regarding the forthcoming works.

157/25-26 Village Centre Regeneration Project

Cllr Sparrow reported that he is working on the creation of 3D visuals to be used for the public consultation.

158/25-26 Clarion Garden Project

There has been no further progress with the garden clearance. The Clerk will liaise with the Clarion gardening team. Members reported that the contents of the bungalow have been removed.

159/25-26 Highways

- a) Local Highway Improvements 2025/26 - Wayside Estate - No progress. The Clerk will ask the Project Officer to provide the plans for the public consultation. Letters to residents will be required.
- b) Capitally Funded Highway Maintenance - The Clerk confirmed that he had nominated the Sixteen Foot Bank to the County Council for major repairs under the Capitally Funded Highway Maintenance scheme.
- c) Local Highway Improvements 2026/27 - Members reconsidered options for the new round of funding and resolved to apply for a new street light in Crown Road between Townley School and Crown Avenue with a contribution of £1,000 towards the project. The exact location will be determined by officers during the evaluation process. The Clerk will submit the application before the forthcoming deadline.

160/25-26 Policies and Procedures

Members considered the following policies and procedures and resolve to readopt them:

- a) Data Protection Policy
- b) Publication Scheme
- c) Code of Conduct
- d) Biodiversity Policy

161/25-26 Consultations

Members noted the following consultation and resolved to respond individually:
Fenland District Council draft business plan and budget 2026/27

162/25-26 Santa Run

The Clerk reported that the Santa Run had been very successful, with strong community support. A large quantity of toys was donated to the toy appeal and cash donations of £280 were received, split equally between the Council and the Fenland Farmers charity appeal. Fenland Farmers have offered to repeat the Santa Run in 2026.

163/25-26 Finance

- a) The management accounts as at 31.12.25 showed income of £35,781.78 and expenditure of £19,466.39, resulting in a surplus of £16,315.39 and total funds held of £54,340.93.
- b) Members noted the quarterly financial reconciliation as at 31 December.
- c) Members noted the following sums received since the last meeting:

Barclays Bank (interest).....	£	72.63
Santa Run (collection).....	£	140.00
NatWest Bank (interest).....	£	22.59

- d) Members noted the following sum paid by debit card:
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| Defibstore Ltd (defib battery and pads)..... | £ | 376.80 |
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- e) Members approved the following accounts for payment:
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| Clerk salary and home office allowance | £ | 397.95 |
| Christchurch PCC (grass cutting)..... | £ | 245.00 |
- f) Cllr Sparrow declared a non-pecuniary interest. Members considered a grant application from Heron Publishing. They resolved to award a grant of £945 from the remainder of the Section 137 budget and unspent funds from street lights.
- g) Members considered potential projects for inclusion in the budget for 2026/27. They agreed the following sums:-
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| Nature Park project (grass cutting) | £ | 1,100.00 |
| Village Centre Regeneration project (match funding) | £ | 5,000.00 |
| Clarion Garden project (raised beds) | £ | 1,000.00 |
| Green Lane project (topsoil and marker posts) | £ | 500.00 |
| Replacement defibrillator (Community Centre) | £ | 900.00 |
| War Memorial (cleaning) | £ | 1,000.00 |
| Skatepark (repairs and maintenance) | <u>£</u> | <u>500.00</u> |
| | | £10,000.00 |
- h) Members resolved to increase the precept by £10,000 to £32,200 and approved the budget.

164/25-26 Annual Parish Meeting

Members discussed the date and format of this year's Annual Parish Meeting. The date was confirmed as Wednesday 6 May and the format will be as in previous years, with village organisations invited to talk about their work. Invitations will be issued nearer the time. Cllr Sparrow spoke to the National Farmers' Union last year and they were interested in attending to talk about farming in the Fens. Cllr Bliss suggested the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust to talk about the Welney Wetland Centre.

165/25-26 Public Time

No further issues.

166/25-26 Matters for Next Meeting

None.

167/25-26 Date of Next Meeting

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