



Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Christchurch Parish Council held in the Community Centre on Monday 11 May 2026 at 7.30pm

Present Cllrs A Sparrow (Chairman), J Bliss, B Burfield, R Feeney, J Hayes, J Hughes, S Potter, Cllr D Roy (FDC), D Gibbs (Clerk), Sarah Hall (Support Fenland), four parishioners

001/26-27 Election of Chairman for the Municipal Year 2026-27

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

002/26-27 Election of Vice Chairman for the Municipal Year 2026-27

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

003/26-27 Apologies for Absence

Cllr S Fisher (CCC), Cllr M Summers (FDC)

004/26-27 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked the Members of the Council for their support and looked forward to a busy year ahead. He noted that the Annual Parish Meeting had been well received but expressed his disappointment with the poor attendance.

005/26-27 Public Time

A resident advised the Council that the streetlight at the junction of Wayside Estate and Crown Road was still not working.

006/26-27 Sarah Hall, Support Fenland

The Chairman welcomed Sarah Hall to the meeting. She explained her role as Fenland Communities Officer at Support Cambridgeshire providing advice and support to charities and voluntary organisations across Fenland.

As part of a National Lottery funded project, they are surveying residents of one parish each year and Christchurch has been selected for 2026. The survey is entitled Love it, Hate it, Shape it and a short questionnaire will be delivered to every household. Sarah invited the Council to contribute questions for inclusion in the survey. The survey will be delivered at no cost to the Council and prize vouchers will be made available to encourage residents to respond. The Support Fenland team will endeavour to visit Townley School and local events and groups to promote the survey and their work.

Members agreed to consider questions and to respond to Sarah in due course. The Chairman thanked her for her presentation.

007/26-27 Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

- a) Confirmation of standing orders and financial regulations - Members resolved to re-adopt both documents.
- b) Confirmation of insurance - 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 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 2026 - 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 8 June, 13 July, 10 August, 14 September, 12 October, 9 November, 14 December, 11 January, 8 February, 8 March, 12 April, and 10 May.

008/26-27 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 April were correctly recorded and signed as being a true record.

009/26-27 Matters Outstanding

- a) Fenland District Council Infrastructure Delivery Plan - No further information.
- b) Public defibrillators - The new defibrillator will be placed outside the Community Centre shortly replacing the existing one which will be moved to Padgetts Road.
- c) Parking outside Townley School - No update.
- d) Overhanging vegetation - Resident to be consulted on trees on Crown Road adjacent to Townley School. Church Road and Padgetts Road to be checked.
- e) Townley School heat pump - Cllr Burfield confirmed that the acoustician had visited the site. It is likely that an acoustic box will be installed around the heat pump.
- f) Former Memorial Hall site - The identity of the new site owner is unknown.
- g) Sewage treatment plant at The Croft - Cllr Hughes suggested a possible contact for the Residents of The Croft Management Committee. The Clerk will pursue this.

010/26-27 Police Report

No report received.

011/26-27 County and District Councillors' Reports

Cllr Roy congratulated the Council on an excellent Annual Parish Meeting. He invited Members to propose items for the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting which takes place on 1 June. The deadline for the submission of applications to the Whitemill Environment Fund is 31 May with the panel meeting on 15 June to consider the applications. He offered his help with chasing the repair to the streetlight at the west end of Wayside Estate. Finally, he confirmed that he has been assisting Cllr Burfield in establishing a Neighbourhood Watch group for Christchurch.

012/26-27 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported on meetings attended and correspondence received, including a traffic order for the closure of March Riverside from 20 to 25 June, a fly-tipping prosecution and fine of £800 for a Wisbech resident, a consultation on the Wimblington & Stonea Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan and an update from Cambridgeshire ACRE on the affordable housing proposal.

013/26-27 Members and Residents Issues

- a) Silt Road motorbike incident - Cllr Feeney explained the circumstances of the untimely death of a friend in a motorbike accident on Silt Road in April. No other vehicles were involved and the condition of the road was a contributory factor acknowledged by the Police officers who attended the scene.

Highway authorities have a legal duty under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 to maintain the public highway and Section 56 of the Act gives members of the public a legal

right to compel a highway authority to repair a road. Cllr Feeney proposed a collective approach with neighbouring councils to lobby for prompt and effective repairs to prevent further loss of life. He offered to visit other councils to promote the collaboration.

Cllr Roy reported that he is working to change the system for highway repairs to provide larger patching in place of individual potholes.

Members resolved to support the proposal, to add this as a standing agenda item, to assist where appropriate and to work with Cllrs Roy and Fisher to involve the District and County Councils.

- b) Pride in Fenland nominations - Cllr Sparrow reported that nominations have opened for this year's awards, with a deadline of 1 June. The awards ceremony will be held on 1 July.
- c) Crown Drove signage - A resident asked at the Annual Parish Meeting whether it would be possible to erect signage to prevent vehicles from using Crown Drove. The Clerk advised Members that this is designated as a public byway, equivalent to an unsurfaced road. He noted that there used to be a no through road sign at the junction with the Sixteen Foot Bank, but there appears to have been no equivalent sign at the village end. The Clerk will discuss options with Highways.
- d) Community Centre signage - This was also raised at the Annual Parish Meeting. Members felt that there was little benefit in installing signs from Sixteen Foot and Padgetts Road, but discussed the possibility of attaching something to the village gateway markers outside the Community Centre.
- e) Tiger T7 to Manea Station - A resident reported at the Annual Parish Meeting that the T7 bus passes Manea Station, but there is no bus stop in the vicinity of the station, so no connection between bus and rail for passengers. The Clerk will investigate this.
- f) Location for painted paving blocks - Members discussed options for the installation of the blocks and resolved to incorporate them into the Clarion Garden design.

014/26-27 Recreation Ground

The Clerk reported that the District Council has allocated £66,000 from the Pride in Place funding for children's play equipment for the replacement of the ramps in the skatepark. A district-wide consultation is taking place until the end of the month. The sum allocated exceeds the anticipated cost of the skatepark renewal, so Members agreed to conduct a local consultation on other items to be included.

015/26-27 Nature Park Project

The contractor has sprayed the field in preparation for cultivation.

016/26-27 Village Centre Project

Cllr Sparrow reported that feedback on the project was generally positive. Cambridgeshire Highways have responded with questions about particular aspects of the project. The Council will respond in due course.

017/26-27 Clarion Garden Project

Cllr Hughes informed members that he has sprayed the site to reduce weed growth.

018/26-27 Green Lane Project

Cllr Sparrow confirmed that he is in contact with the residents.

019/26-27 Annual Parish Meeting

Members agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting had been a success, despite the poor turnout. The refreshments donated by Bates Bakes were excellent. The roller banners contributed to a professional display. It is hoped that the IT problems experienced each year can be resolved before next year's meeting.

020/26-27 Planning

Members considered the following application:

F/YR26/0294/F - Erect a single-storey extension to rear of existing dwelling - 11 Crown Avenue, Christchurch

They resolved to offer no objection.

021/26-27 Highways

Members discussed the proposal for the public consultation on the one-way system. They resolved to close Wayside Estate to westbound traffic and to extend the one-way flow as far as the junction of Crown Road and Crown Avenue. Concern was expressed regarding the speed of vehicles entering Crown Road near the bus shelter. Members asked the Clerk to explore the possibility of placing an MVAS speed monitoring sign in the vicinity of Townley School.

022/26-27 Finance

- a) Members reviewed and approved the statement of reserves as at 31 March.
- b) Members reviewed the mandates for the Council's bank accounts and resolved to make no changes.
- c) Members reviewed and approved the Governance and Management Risk Assessment, with the residual risk column recommended by the Internal Auditor.
- d) Members considered the Internal Audit Report and the recommendations therein. They resolved as follows:-
 - To review the level of fidelity cover at the next insurance renewal;
 - To publish the budget and precept calculation on the Council's website; and
 - To develop a reserves policy as part of future long-term planning.
- e) Members considered and confirmed each of the statements on the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26. The Statement was signed by the Chairman.
- f) Members reviewed and approved the Accounting Statements 2025/26, which were signed by the Chairman.
- g) Members confirmed the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights as Wednesday 3 June to Tuesday 14 July.
- h) 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 2026/27.
- i) Members considered the payment of a Chairman's Allowance and/or a Parish Basic Allowance. They resolved not to adopt either allowance.
- j) The management accounts as at 30.4.26 showed income of £16,120.60 and expenditure of £5,046.44, resulting in a surplus of £11,074.16 and total funds held of £63,044.90.
- k) Members noted the following sums received since the last meeting:

Fenland District Council (precept instalment)	£ 16,100.00
NatWest Bank (interest).....	£ 20.60
- l) Members noted the following direct debit payment since the last meeting:

HMRC (tax and national insurance)	£ 334.84
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- m) Members noted the following debit card payments since the last meeting:

Andrew Deptford (defibrillator and cabinet).....	£ 1,704.00
Andrew Deptford (defibrillator battery)	£ 318.00
- n) Members approved the following payments:

Clerk salary and home office allowance (precept instalment).....	£ 397.95
Helen Symmons (audit fee).....	£ 269.00

023/26-27 Three-Year Plan

Members discussed projects eligible for funding from the Whitemill Environment Fund. They resolved to submit an application for the hedge planting and other works in the Nature Park and elements of the Clarion Garden project. The Clerk will prepare and submit the application.

024/26-27 Public Time

No matters raised.

025/26-27 Matters for Next Meeting

None.

026/26-27 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting of the Parish Council will be Monday 8 June.

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