

CHRISTCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

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Clerk: Dave Gibbs

To Members of the Public and Press

9 February 2023

You are invited to attend a meeting of Christchurch Parish Council
to be held in Christchurch Community Centre
for the purpose of transacting the following business.

On Monday 13 February 2023 at 7.30pm

**Members of the public and press are invited to address the Council
at its Public Time from 7.35pm to 7.50pm**

Yours truly

Dave Gibbs

(Clerk/Proper Officer)

AGENDA

134/22-23 Apologies for Absence

135/22-23 Declarations of Interest

Councillors to declare any interests in respect of any item to be discussed at this meeting:-

- a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest
- b) Non-Pecuniary Interest
- c) Sensitive Pecuniary Interest

136/22-23 Chairman's Announcements

To receive such announcements as the Chairman may wish to make to the Council

137/22-23 Public Time

To receive representations from members of the public regarding issues pertinent to the Council

138/22-23 Confirmation of Minutes

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2023

139/22-23 Matters Outstanding

- a) Bus shelter improvement project - update
- b) Pavement outside Field Lodge, Upwell Road - update
- c) Affordable housing proposal - update
- d) Padgetts Road repairs - update
- e) Skate park repairs - update
- f) Household items outside property in Upwell Road - update

140/22-23 Police Report

To report on policing matters in the area over the last month

141/22-23 County & District Councillors Reports

To receive reports from Cllrs Count, French, Sutton and Tanfield

142/22-23 Clerk's Report

To receive a report on meetings attended and correspondence received

143/22-23 Members and Residents Issues

To consider any matters raised by Members of the Council and local residents

a) The Coronation of The King and The Queen Consort

144/22-23 Recreation Ground Extension

To receive an update on developments since the last meeting

145/22-23 Finance

a) To receive a financial report from the Clerk as at 31.1.23

b) To approve the following payment:-

Clerk salary and home office allowance £ 441.13

c) To receive a progress report on the transfer of the Council's bank accounts

146/22-23 Communications

a) To consider a report on the Council's communications compiled by Mr Brookes

b) Update on the implementation of Parish Council email accounts

c) To discuss arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting - 28 March

147/22-23 Matters for Next Meeting

To discuss future agenda items from Councillors

148/22-23 Date of Next Meeting

To confirm the date of the next meeting as Monday 13 March

CHRISTCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of Christchurch Parish Council held in the Community Centre on Monday 9 January 2023 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs J Hughes (Chairman), S Aldridge, J Bliss, R Gladwin, K Miller, P Owen, A Sparrow, D Gibbs (Clerk), S Potter, (Parishioner)

118/22-23 Apologies for Absence

Cllrs W Sutton and M Tanfield (FDC)

119/22-23 Declarations of Interest

None

120/22-23 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman wished everybody a happy new year and announced that he had stepped down as Chair of the Parish Lunch Committee. Craig Willcocks has been appointed to replace him.

121/22-23 Public Time

None

122/22-23 Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2022 were correctly recorded and signed as being a true record.

123/22-23 Matters Outstanding

- a) Bus shelter improvement project - No progress.
- b) Pavement outside Field Lodge, Upwell Road - Negotiations continue regarding the appointment of a contractor. The Parish Council is not a party to these discussions.
- c) Affordable housing proposal - Specific sites are required. Members suggested various possible sites and the Clerk will contact the landowners.
- d) Padgetts Road repairs - No further update available.
- e) Skate park repairs - A contractor will visit the site this week.
- f) Household items outside property in Upwell Road - The Clerk has reported this to Clarion Housing.
- g) Recreation Ground trees - The Clerk reported that the issue of overshadowing appears to relate to trees in the adjoining property. A resident has contacted the Council to express concern regarding the potential loss of healthy trees. Members decided to take no action at the present time. The Clerk will inspect all of the trees in the Recreation Ground.

124/22-23 Police Report

The Clerk reported that no meetings have taken place.

125/22-23 County & District Councillors Reports

Cllr Sutton wished everybody a happy new year and reported that the District Council's element of the Council Tax would be frozen again this year.

126/22-23 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported on meetings attended and correspondence received, including a Golden Age Fair, new County Council watercourse guidance, a closure of the Sixteen Foot Bank 16-27 January, District Council support for renters experiencing damp or mould in their homes, a District Council consultation on Council Tax proposals and business plan, a Police & Crime Commissioner precept survey and an ACRE Community Led Housing webinar.

127/22-23 Members and Residents Issues

- a) Local Highway Improvements Application 2023-24 - Cllr Hughes reported that he had submitted an application for a traffic island in Church Road at the junction with Padgetts Road to slow traffic using the junction. The application had received the support of Cllr Count as County Councillor for Christchurch.
- b) Santa Run - The Clerk reported that an email had been received from a local farmer offering the use of a sleigh for a village Santa Run in December. Members welcomed the offer and Cllrs Aldridge and Miller agreed to coordinate the event.

128/22-23 Recreation Ground Extension

A public consultation meeting will take place on 22 January including a walk around the field to develop specific plans for the layout.

129/22-23 Finance

- a) The management accounts as at 31.12.22 showed income of £18,585.97 and expenditure of £16,718.15, resulting in a surplus of £1,867.82 and total funds held of £42,424.09.
- b) Members noted the following sum received:

Barclays Bank (interest)	£	11.24
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- c) Members approved the following accounts for payment:

Clerk salary and home office allowance	£	441.13
Christchurch PCC (grass cutting)	£	122.50
- d) Members discussed the draft budget. The following provisions were added:

Recreation Ground extension	£	5,000.00
Outdoor exercise/play equipment	£	5,000.00
Tree works	£	1,000.00

Members resolved to adopt the amended budget and to increase the precept to £18,500.

130/22-23 Policies and Procedures

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

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

131/22-23 Communications

Members agreed to defer discussion of the report compiled by Mr Brookes and resolved to consider the matter further when he is able to attend a meeting.

132/22-23 Matters for Next Meeting

Parish Council email accounts, new banking arrangements, Coronation celebrations.

133/22-23 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next Meeting of the Parish Council will be Monday 13 February 2023.

Agenda Item No.	142/22-23	Christchurch Parish Council
Meeting Date	13 February 2023	
Report Title	Clerk's Report	

1. Purpose of Report

To report on meetings attended and correspondence received.

2. Report

Meetings attended:

ACRE Eastern Community Homes webinar - 17 January

New Field Project - 22 January

ACRE Community Buildings Energy Costs webinar - 24 January

FDC Cost of Living Support event - 6 February

Correspondence received:

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority - Draft bus strategy, Local Transport and Connectivity Plan update, Councillor update

Cambridgeshire County Council - Roadworks and events bulletin, Cambridgeshire Matters newsletter

Fenland District Council - Candidates and Agents Briefing, Transport Planning Guide for Local Communities, wellbeing walks, March Town Centre transformation, Armed Forces Covenant Parish Forum invitation, Community Safety survey, Shared Prosperity funding, Election staffing opportunities, March gas main upgrade

National Association of Local Councils - newsletter, bulletin and events

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Association of Local Councils - monthly bulletin, training schedule

NHS - Feel Brighter campaign

Cambridgeshire ACRE - Staying in Touch newsletter, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Parks Partnership launch event, Water Care newsletter

Queen Elizabeth Hospital - modernisation newsletter

3. Recommendations

Members note the report.

Report Author	Dave Gibbs
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Christchurch Parish Council - Receipts & Payments Summary as at 31.1.23

Income	Year to Date		Budget	%
FDC Precept	£	16,000.00	£ 16,000.00	100.00
FDC Concurrent Functions Grant	£	2,567.00	£ 2,567.00	100.00
Allotment Rents	£	-	£ -	0.00
Allotment Rates	£	-	£ -	0.00
Community Centre	£	-	£ -	0.00
Grants	£	-	£ -	0.00
Donations	£	-	£ -	0.00
Recycling Credits	£	-	£ -	0.00
Bank Interest	£	18.97	£ 20.00	94.85
VAT Refunds	£	-	£ 1,700.00	0.00
Miscellaneous	£	-	£ -	0.00
Total Income	£	18,585.97	£ 20,287.00	91.62

Expenditure

Clerk's Salary	£	5,364.13	£ 5,350.00	100.26
Fees	£	375.00	£ 400.00	93.75
Subscriptions	£	406.03	£ 500.00	81.20
Admin Expenses	£	371.14	£ 700.00	53.02
Insurance	£	1,247.40	£ 700.00	178.20
Drainage Rates	£	82.11	£ 85.00	96.59
Recreation Ground	£	2,418.00	£ 1,800.00	134.33
Churchyard	£	245.00	£ 245.00	100.00
Community Centre	£	-	£ -	0.00
Street Lights	£	3,495.09	£ 3,500.00	99.86
Section 137 Payments	£	290.00	£ 1,000.00	29.00
Highways	£	1,666.67	£ 2,000.00	83.33
Recoverable VAT	£	1,321.21	£ -	#####
Tree Works	£	-	£ -	0.00
Total Expenditure	£	17,281.78	£ 16,280.00	106.15

Summary

Total Income	£	18,585.97
LESS Total Expenditure	£	17,281.78
Net Surplus or Deficit	£	1,304.19

Balance Sheet

Balance B/fwd	£	40,556.27
Surplus or Deficit	£	1,304.19
Balance C/fwd	£	41,860.46

Represented by

Barclays Community Account	£	21,693.34
Barclays Business Premium Account	£	20,167.12
Cash / Cheques	£	-
	£	41,860.46

Christchurch Parish Council

Communications Review

Introduction

This review examines the physical and online communications of Christchurch Parish Council with the public (focusing on the local inhabitants). It will list perceived advantages and disadvantages of the current communication mechanisms and suggest improvements that can be made.

Improvements identified in this review are not intended to address all issues (as not all are known), but should provide a significant step forwards and so allowing further discussion and identifying further issues.

Please note that some issues described may not be factually accurate, but ones of perception, or lack of knowledge. It could be argued (and is the author's opinion) that representing local governance extra efforts should be used to allow as many residents as reasonably possible to be kept informed of plans, activities, and discussions. Assessments on the offline communications are less robust.

This document was compiled by Michael Brookes, as a private citizen, and no official connection with the Parish Council. It is not intended to be a commentary of council members, or council plans and decisions.

Offline Communications

There are four principal forms of offline communications, each of which are assessed individually below.

Council Meetings

Parish Council meetings occur in the Community Centre on a monthly basis. As well as established council business, it does provide a public forum for residents to raise issues.

As these are a fixed requirement, and most known issues relate to associated issues that would be resolved by addressing specific actions listed below, there are no specific items from me for meetings.

However, some issues can be mentioned:

- It is not always understood when a council meeting is occurring
- What the council is responsible for, or have direct control over?
- How can the Parish Council help?
- What can the Parish Council do to support local businesses?

Notice Boards

There are two noticeboards positioned throughout the village, each are placed near to key locations in the village. These are an essential component for communication with residents not using online information sources.

- **Pros**
 - They are well sited (for Christchurch residents)
 - Raw information presented, so no editorial influence
 - It provides some information about other activities in the village
- **Cons**
 - It isn't clear what information should be found there
 - More could be done to make key information stand out more
 - Does Tipps End have a noticeboard?
 - Limited space available
 - It's not clear how people can promote their activities on the board

The Heron

The Heron is the monthly village magazine that is delivered to all households in the village and immediate area. It is operated independently from the Parish Council, albeit with some financial support for the magazine.

- **Pros**
 - It is delivered to practically every household
 - It is not reliant on online access
 - There is a letters page that can provide a means of feedback from residents, although this is currently underutilised
- **Cons**
 - Space within the magazine is limited, so the full council meetings are not included (as an example)
 - While it does provide some coverage of the latest meeting (before its deadline – see below), there is little information about the Parish Council overall that would benefit new residents
 - Print deadlines conflicts with meeting schedules, so information isn't always timely
 - While there is an archive (available online, or personal collection), it isn't the best form for historical reference (either short, or longer term)
 - Editorial control is separate and so potentially could colour the presentation of council information – note this isn't referencing a specific issue or situation, but the possibility of such

Word of Mouth

While word of mouth is not an official channel of communication for the Parish Council, it can often be a source for many who are otherwise unaware of what is going on with the council. The core danger with this uncoordinated method is that it can be inaccurate, and sometimes with negative consequences.

This issue can never be removed entirely, but ensuring easy to access official channels can help mitigate it.

Recommendations

The Heron

The traditional offline communications are generally adequate, however the strongest vehicle of The Heron isn't being utilised as effectively as it could be. As mentioned earlier in this review the restricted page space significantly limits reporting on the council meetings. Basic introductory information on the Parish Council is also lacking.

There are two means of addressing this, the first is for the Parish Council to produce its own periodic newsletter that is delivered to residents. While this addresses the timeliness and space issues, it would introduce costs for implementation and distribution. There's also a potential risk of conflict with The Heron, and so negative feeling. So this solution should be discounted and is only included for completeness.

A more workable solution would be an insert to the Heron, created by the Parish Council, and delivered as part of the magazine. Permanently purchasing of a set number of pages within each edition was considered, but this puts the content under potential editorial adjustment to fit the requirements of the magazine.

The insert should contain the following information:

- A brief introduction to the Parish Council
- Any news items
- Meetings from the previous meeting
- Details for the next meeting
- Contact information

The insert should comprise of no more than a single double-sided A4 sheet with visual elements to be eye catching and attract interest. There is still a space limitation so the reader should be informed where they can find out more if needed.

This doesn't address the timeliness concern – perhaps consideration can be made to change the meeting dates to sync with the magazine publication. Although other improvements (especially online) could make this unnecessary, but this will result in disconnects between online and offline information. Although this cannot be avoided without hampering any online efforts.

This solution will add cost for inclusion in the magazine and the insert will need creating. Regarding the inclusion cost this could be factored into the financial support provided to The Heron.

Efforts should also be made to engage further with magazine to encourage feedback from the residents, and editorial from the magazine.

Informal Meetings

Opportunities for informal meetings with local groups such as the WI, or more open ones in the Dun Cow provides a friendlier setting for discussions and sounding out opinions.

Noticeboards

Additional layout elements would provide better 'at a glance' identification for information presented. Key information should be displayed with larger fonts to aid poorer sighted users.

Online Communications

There are two methods used by the Parish Council for online communications, either directly or indirectly.

Official Website

The official Parish Council website is the fullest, and most up to date information channel the Parish Council operates. This section provides high level feedback for the website, but a more detailed critique of issues is included in the appendix at the end of this document.

- **Pros**
 - The site is easy to find on search engines
 - Navigation of the site is easy
 - It provides a comprehensive record of agendas and meeting notes
- **Cons**
 - While functional the site is quite plain in appearance, and some visual enhancements would improve the user experience
 - Most of the important information is distributed across individual PDFs – these take the user out of the site, and make cross correlation cumbersome
 - The site is not currently up to date
 - There is no clear statement of the Parish Council's intentions or plans
 - How the council fulfils its core activities (representing the local community, delivering services to meet local needs, and improving quality of life and community wellbeing) isn't made clear
 - The site is lacking connections to other local organisations

The Heron

As well as its print editions, The Heron also operates a website with the latest issue, and an archive of previous issues dating back to December 2011. All issues are stored in PDF format. There is little additional functionality taking advantage of the online format.

Recommendations

As a repository for the Parish Council's obligated documentation the website provides what is required, but lacks appeal and any meaningful connection with the community. It needs to inform residents what the plans the council are considering, and most importantly encouraging engagement.

This is reinforced by the lack of social media presence. This is relatively easy to add, but does require some commitment to build the audience and become a useful tool to inform the council. Looking at the issue from a higher level there are two core areas:

1. **Informative** – the website is a solid start here, but keeping residents informed should be more than record keeping. There needs to be ambitions, plans and better coverage of the work

done by the council. It should also be a platform for keeping locals informed of ancillary matters as well, such as roadworks and public events.

It should also be a repository for key local information such as the mobile library schedule and other public services. A local business directory could be a useful, and popular service, although some care would be needed to not impact advert revenue for The Heron. There will, by necessity, be some duplication of information with The Heron, but as they don't currently provide that information outside of the archived PDFs then it can be considered a supplement to what they do.

The information on the website should be replicated across at least the main social media platforms: Facebook page (suitably restricted to present approved business), Instagram and Twitter. Public council meetings can also be live cast via YouTube and Facebook so people gain familiarity with the process, and so may be encouraged to take part in future meetings.

It is important that these channels are kept up to date.

2. **Engagement** – Establishing a social media presence will by its nature provide a level of engagement with the audience. Gathering data on what residents consider key issues can help inform decision making.

A dedicated Parish Council Facebook group provides direct interaction with members, and allows them to raise questions and issues. Council members will need to be active in the group for this to be effective. Careful moderation will be needed, and this shouldn't be done by council members.

Appendix

Detailed Website Feedback

This appendix provides a more detailed list of issues identified with the current Parish Council website, broken down into the functional areas of the site. This list focuses on issues that could be addressed relatively easily with the site, and it should be noted that the website is easy to navigate and use for its core purpose.

Note that there is some duplication of observed issues from the higher level review from the earlier section.

- **General**
 - While functional the site is quite plain in appearance, and some visual enhancements would improve the user experience
 - Most of the important information is distributed across individual PDFs – these take the user out of the site, and make cross correlation cumbersome
 - Cookie and Privacy Policy pages are blank – the contact form infers you're at least storing basic contact information, so should have a privacy notice for GDPR (although there are some exceptions for government)

- **Home**
 - There is no clear statement of the Parish Council's intentions or plans
 - The news rotator is a good feature, but should allow clicking to take the user directly to the appropriate page
 - The intent of the photo is fine, but takes up a lot of space. Perhaps add insets for key locations around the village
- **Our Role**
 - Some useful context here, but lost in a 'wall of text' – layout changes would make it more readable
 - How the council fulfils its core activities (representing the local community, delivering services to meet local needs, and improving quality of life and community wellbeing) isn't made clear
 - While the background is useful and interesting, it's lacking specifics that residents can relate to
- **Who's Who**
 - No photos for the council members
 - Not having consistent email domains stands out
- **News**
 - Seems thin on content
 - The poster should be a visible image, not a clickable link
- **Report It**
 - There is a lot of useful information here, improved formatting would make it easier to parse