

CHRISTCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Christchurch Parish Council held in the Community Centre on Monday 13 May 2024 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs J Hughes (Chairman), J Bliss, B Burfield, J Hayes, S Potter, A Sparrow, Cllr S Count (CCC), Cllr D Roy (FDC), D Gibbs (Clerk), two parishioners

001/24-25 Apologies for Absence

Cllr R Feeney, Cllr M Summers (FDC)

002/24-25 Election of Chairman for the Municipal Year 2024-25

Cllr Hughes was proposed by Cllr Sparrow, seconded by Cllr Burfield and duly elected.

003/24-25 Election of Vice Chairman for the Municipal Year 2024-25

Cllr Sparrow was proposed by Cllr Hughes, seconded by Cllr Bliss and duly elected.

004/24-25 Chairman's Announcements

None

005/24-25 Public Time

Mr Benjamin asked whether any progress had been made regarding an alternative location for the litter bin outside the former village shop. The Clerk explained that no alternative location had been identified but further consideration will be given to this matter.

Mr Sutton confirmed that the village sign was unveiled on 30 May 2011 and appears to have cost £2,750. The Clerk will endeavour to find records from this period.

006/24-25 Confirmation of Minutes

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

007/24-25 Matters Outstanding

- a) Pavement outside Field Lodge, Upwell Road - Work to install the pavement should have started. The Clerk will seek clarification.
- b) Affordable housing proposal - No further update.
- c) Household items outside property in Upwell Road - Members noted that the frontage is becoming increasingly overgrown.
- d) Wayside Estate pedestrian safety - The Clerk reported that Members met with the Local Highways Officer on 15 April to discuss options. As expected, no simple solution was identified, but the possibility of painted chicanes will be pursued. Other issues around the village were reported, with some repaired already. Bollards will be installed outside the fence of the property on the corner of Crown Road and Wayside Estate to protect the fence.

008/24-25 Annual Meeting of the Council

- a) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations - Members adopted the latest model standing orders. The Clerk advised members that the model financial regulations have been rewritten, but the delay in publishing the new document prevented him

from bringing it to the meeting. The financial regulations will be considered at a future meeting.

- 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) Appointment of an Armed Forces Champion - Cllr Hughes agreed to undertake the role.
- e) Confirmation of the Council's register of assets as at 31 March 2024 - Members confirmed their acceptance of the register.
- f) Confirmation of meeting dates for the municipal year - Members resolved that the Council will meet on the second Monday of every month, namely 10 June, 8 July, 12 August, 9 September, 14 October, 11 November, 9 December, 13 January, 10 February, 10 March, 14 April, and 12 May.

009/24-25 Police Report

The Clerk reported that no meetings have taken place. The Chairman expressed his thanks to Sgt Arnold who attended the Annual Parish Meeting, providing an insight into the work of the different teams within Cambridgeshire Police.

010/24-25 County & District Councillors Reports

Cllr Count reported a shortfall in secondary school places in the Wisbech area this September. Options include transporting pupils to Littleport by bus or erecting temporary classrooms to increase the capacity of Thomas Clarkson Academy. An additional £40m has been allocated to the highways budget this year, but only £5m is currently devoted to the peat-affected roads, with final details to be confirmed at July's Highways and Transport Committee meeting. Planned works include resurfacing both ends of Padgetts Road and surface dressing of Sixteen Foot Bank. Slurry sealing of pavements has already been completed. Upwell Road has provisionally been added to the peat-affected list for 2025/26.

Cllr Roy thanked the Clerk for taking him on a tour of the Parish and Cllr Sparrow for his hospitality during the tour. He reported that the removal of the caravan behind Syringa House is in the hands of the legal team, but he hoped to see a conclusion to this matter shortly.

011/24-25 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported on meetings attended and correspondence received, including the County Council's closure of Padgetts Road from 22 July to 26 August, and the District Council's successful prosecution of several fly-tippers.

He also advised members that the area immediately west of Bedlam Bridge lies within the parish boundary and has become a regular target for large-scale fly-tipping, including furniture and white goods. He will discuss this with the District Council's enforcement team.

012/24-25 Members and Residents Issues

- a) Bus shelter - The Local Highways Officer will provide a map and confirm the ownership of the area adjacent to the bus shelter. Members were invited to put forward ideas for improvements. Cllr Sparrow confirmed that the Bowls Club would prefer their donation to be used for this project.

- b) Electric vehicle charging points - The Clerk reported that he had joined a webinar on the County Council's proposal to seek Government funding for a network of public charging points in village car parks. The value of this in Christchurch is unclear, however Members agreed to submit an expression of interest in relation to the Community Centre car park.

013/24-25 Recreation Ground Extension

Cllr Hughes reported that work has started on the clearance of the field. Further work is required for the bridges, as the initial measurements may have understated the width of the dyke. This may impact upon the budget.

The Clerk requested a costed master plan to enable funds to be monitored.

014/24-25 Communications Working Group

Cllr Sparrow provided a brief update on the second meeting of the Group. The Facebook page will be updated more regularly. Short biographies of each Councillor will allow members of the public to familiarise themselves with the Members. A new noticeboard will be installed in the Community Centre for non-statutory information with a feedback option. Two roller banners will be prepared to display information about the role of the Council and other statutory authorities. Members of the Council will visit the village clubs and events to talk about the work of the Council. Identity badges will be issued to all Councillors.

Another meeting will take place shortly.

015/24-25 Annual Parish Meeting

Members agreed that the meeting was a success, but the attendance was well below expectation. The reasons for this were unclear, but more notice of speakers would be beneficial. Face-to-face promotion and wider use of Facebook were also suggested.

016/24-25 Play Equipment Inspection

Members considered the inspection report from Online Playgrounds. They noted that no major concerns were highlighted and agreed to carry out the recommended maintenance tasks, at a cost of £425.30+VAT.

017/24-25 Finance

- a) Members approved the management accounts for 2023/24.
- b) Members reviewed and approved the Governance and Management Risk Assessment.
- c) Members approved the Internal Audit Report. No issues were raised requiring their attention.
- d) Members approved the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24, which was signed by the Chairman.
- e) Members approved the Accounting Statements 2023/24, which were signed by the Chairman.
- f) Members confirmed the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights as Monday 3 June to Friday 12 July.
- g) The Clerk reported that Ivan Cooper has decided to retire, so a new Internal Auditor will be required for the 2024/25 financial year. In the absence of a suitable candidate, members agreed to defer the appointment to a subsequent meeting.
- h) Members considered the options for the publication of an annual report to residents. Cllr Hughes agreed to collate the document.

- i) The management accounts as at 30.4.24 showed income of £9,267.48 and expenditure of £3,404.32, resulting in a surplus of £5,863.16 and total funds held of £48,282.99.
- j) Members noted the following sums received since the last meeting:
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| Fenland District Council (precept instalment)..... | £ 9,250.00 |
| Barclays Bank (interest)..... | £ 17.48 |
- k) Members ratified the following payments issued since the last meeting:
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| Land Registry (title deeds)..... | £ 3.00 |
| Fenland Leisure Products Ltd (play equipment inspection)..... | £ 90.00 |
- l) Members approved the following accounts for payment:
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| Clerk salary and home office allowance..... | £ 467.13 |
| I Cooper (audit fee)..... | £ 150.00 |

018/24-25 Matters for Next Meeting

None

019/24-25 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council will be Monday 10 June.