

CHIGWELL PARISH COUNCIL CHAIR'S REPORT - OCTOBER 2026

Date: 22 October 2026

Staff Informal Meetings

Due to current operational pressures and increased workloads, it has not been possible to continue the programme of informal meetings with staff during this period. It is anticipated that these meetings will resume and be completed before the next meeting of Full Council.

Councillor Surgeries

Members are reminded that Councillor Surgeries have not taken place for the past three months. Whilst attendance levels have historically been low, feedback received from residents suggests that the availability of these sessions is valued as an important means of community engagement and accessibility.

To improve sustainability and ensure regular coverage, Members may wish to consider reducing the frequency of surgeries from monthly to bi-monthly. This matter is presented for discussion and, if considered appropriate, determination by the Council.

Remembrance Day

The Chair seeks expressions of interest from Members who may be available to represent the Council by laying a wreath at the Cemetery on Remembrance Day.

The short ceremony will include a period of silence, the Exhortation (or other appropriate wording), and the laying of a wreath. The Cemetery is non-denominational, and the occasion provides an opportunity to remember and honour all those who served and sacrificed during times of conflict, regardless of nationality, faith, or background.

Chair's Engagements

The Chair was pleased to attend the following community events:

- CROADS Performance, Victory Hall - 2 October 2026
- Seniors Club Meeting, St Winifred's Church - 5 October 2026
- Women's Evening, BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir - 16 October 2026

The Chair would like to thank all organisers and volunteers involved in these events for their contributions to the local community.

Member Reminders

Code of Conduct

Further to Minute FC056/26 (Full Council, 27 August 2026), the Clerk has circulated the Council's current Code of Conduct to all Members for review and signature.

Signed copies are required for governance and compliance purposes and will be retained on the Council's records. To date, only three signed copies have been returned.

Members who have not yet done so are kindly requested to sign and return the document to the Clerk at the earliest opportunity.

Code of Conduct Refresher Training

Members are reminded that Code of Conduct Refresher Training has been arranged for:

Thursday 12 November 2026
7.00pm to 9.00pm
Parish Offices

The Council has secured and funded training for up to nine Councillors and, at the time of writing, only one apology has been received. Members are therefore encouraged to attend wherever possible to maximise the value of this opportunity and ensure best value from the Council's investment.

The session will incorporate practical examples and scenarios relevant to local councils and will cover key areas including:

- Standards of conduct;
- Declarations of interest;
- Decision-making processes;
- Member responsibilities and behaviour; and
- Good governance principles.

The Council continues to place significant importance on maintaining the highest standards of conduct, accountability, transparency and governance, and the training forms part of this ongoing commitment.

Committee Chair Availability

Committee Chairs are kindly reminded to notify the Administration Team of any forthcoming periods of leave as soon as practicable. Early notification assists with meeting planning, allows Vice-Chairs to provide cover where necessary, and helps ensure that meetings remain quorate and can proceed as scheduled.

Matters Under Consideration

Public Perception and Community Engagement

Whilst progress has been made in several areas, there remains scope to further improve public perception of the Council and strengthen engagement with residents.

The forthcoming Festive Lighting Event presents an important opportunity for the Council to demonstrate visibility, community leadership and a positive public presence. Residents have previously commented that elected Members often attend community events only briefly, with limited opportunity for engagement.

Members are therefore encouraged, wherever possible, to remain for the duration of the event, engage with residents and demonstrate the Council's commitment to serving the community.

Future Community Events

At the Council meeting in August, Members were invited to consider ideas for future community events aimed at increasing resident engagement and encouraging wider use of the Community Hub and Victory Hall.

As completion of the refurbishment works approaches, Members may wish to begin developing proposals for events to coincide with the reopening of these facilities. Early planning will allow arrangements to be progressed in a timely manner and help maximise community participation.

One initial concept discussed with the Clerk is the provision of a community open afternoon for members of the Seniors Club, including an opportunity to view the facilities followed by light refreshments. Consideration should also be given to hosting evening or weekend events to ensure opportunities are accessible to a broader range of residents, including those who work during the day.

The Chair welcomes suggestions from Members on potential community initiatives and engagement opportunities that may support the successful reopening of the facilities and further strengthen the Council's relationship with residents.

Clerk TOIL

The Chair has approved a request from the Clerk to utilise accrued Time Off In Lieu (TOIL) on 26 October 2026 and 30 October 2026.

The Clerk advised that, due to evening meetings, training commitments, Cemetery service pressures, governance work and CiLCA qualification studies, he had worked several extended days during October. Based on a contractual working day of 7.5 hours, approximately 20 hours and 40 minutes of TOIL had been accrued.

Approval was therefore granted for two days' TOIL leave, equating to 15 hours, with the remaining balance to be retained for future use, subject to any additional hours worked.

The Chair noted the significant additional hours being undertaken by officers during a period of increased workload and reduced staffing capacity. The Chair also recognised the willingness of officers to undertake additional responsibilities to support colleagues and sustain services whilst staffing resources remain under pressure.

Prepared by:

Cllr Debby Rye

Chair of Chigwell Parish Council