

CHIGWELL PARISH COUNCIL CLERK'S REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

Date: 22 October 2026

Introduction

The Clerk's Report is divided into two sections:

- **Decisions Required** – matters requiring formal consideration and resolution by the Council.
- **Updates** – matters provided for information and noting only, unless otherwise stated.

When considering items within the Decisions Required section, Members are requested to have due regard to:

- The financial implications of the proposal and compliance with the Council's Financial Regulations;
- The Council's statutory powers, duties and obligations;
- Health and safety considerations;
- Environmental and biodiversity impacts;
- Operational and resource implications;
- Asset management responsibilities;
- Value for money and the effective use of public funds; and
- The extent to which the proposal supports the Council's strategic objectives and responsibilities to residents.

Members should satisfy themselves that any proposed action or expenditure represents a reasonable, proportionate, and prudent use of public resources and is in the best interests of the parish.

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an overview of current projects, operational matters, service developments, and issues requiring consideration, together with updates on actions undertaken under delegated authority since the previous meeting.

Community Use Application (Decision Required)

Applicant: Chabad Lubavitch Buckhurst Hill (Registered Charity No. 1123001)

Event: Chigwell Menorah Lighting Ceremony

Date and Time: Thursday 10 December 2026

Venue: Station Green, Chigwell

Expected Attendance: Approximately 200 persons

Purpose of Event

The application seeks permission to utilise Station Green for the annual Chigwell Menorah Lighting Ceremony. The event commemorates Chanukah, the Jewish Festival of Lights, and

has reportedly taken place within the local community for approximately sixteen consecutive years.

The applicant advises that the event promotes community cohesion, cultural understanding, tolerance and respect between different faiths and communities. Invitations are extended to residents, community groups, schools, civic representatives and the wider public, with approximately 85% of attendees expected to be residents.

Application Details

- Use of Station Green for the annual Menorah Lighting Ceremony.
- Public menorah lighting.
- Small public address system.
- Food and refreshments.
- Portable lighting.
- Temporary crowd-control barriers.
- Limited vehicle access for event setup and removal.
- Public liability insurance (£5 million cover).
- Risk assessment submitted.
- Safeguarding arrangements submitted.
- First aid arrangements submitted.

Officer Assessment

The application has been assessed in accordance with the Council's Community Use and Not-for-Profit Group Use Policy.

The proposed event is a long-established annual community event delivered by a registered charity and demonstrates a clear community benefit. The application supports community engagement, inclusion and cultural awareness and aligns with the Council's objectives of supporting activities that promote community cohesion and participation.

Supporting documentation, including public liability insurance, a risk assessment, safeguarding arrangements and first aid provision details, has been submitted and reviewed by officers. Officers are satisfied that the minimum requirements of the Council's policy have been met.

Given the nature of the event, current security considerations and the fact that the event relates to a faith community gathering, organisers have been advised to liaise with the appropriate Safety Advisory Group and relevant partner agencies where appropriate. Members are reminded that the Council's consideration relates solely to the use of Council land. Approval of the application does not constitute approval of event management, security arrangements, health and safety measures or any other statutory requirements, all of which remain the responsibility of the event organiser.

Recommendation

That Council approves the application for the use of Station Green for the annual Chigwell Menorah Lighting Ceremony on 10 December 2026 and notes that supporting documentation has been received and reviewed by officers.

Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day Arrangements (Update)

Members will recall that volunteers were sought at the last Full Council meeting and through subsequent correspondence regarding representation of the Council at local Remembrance services. Arrangements have now been finalised as follows:

- Cllr Debby Rye - St Mary's Church, Chigwell
- Cllr Lorraine Clarke - St Winifred's Church, Manor Road, Chigwell
- Cllr Osman Ali - All Saints Church, Chigwell Row

Wreaths for these services are available for collection from the Parish Office by those representing the Council.

Members should also note that, on occasion, a wreath has historically been laid at the Parish Cemetery on Remembrance Day itself. Prior to making any formal arrangements, officers are seeking a volunteer Member to undertake this role on behalf of the Council. Whilst there is no official church or military representation associated with this observance, it nevertheless provides an opportunity for the Council to mark the occasion and pay its respects.

As in previous years, remembrance silhouettes will be displayed at appropriate locations throughout the parish, and the memorial bench will be decorated in advance of the commemorations. Officers also intend to attend the Parish Cemetery on Armistice Day, 11 November 2026, where a wreath will be laid and a two-minute silence observed at 11.00am.

Any Councillor who wishes to join officers for this simple act of remembrance is warmly invited to do so and is asked to notify the Clerk in advance to assist with arrangements.

For information, two wreaths for the cemetery and respective events are available from the Parish Office for use during the respective commemorative events at the cemetery decision one volunteer councillor required for

Planning Reforms Effective 31 October 2026 (Update)

Members are advised that significant national planning reforms will come into effect on 31 October 2026. The reforms are intended to create greater consistency across England regarding which planning applications are determined by planning officers and which are referred to planning committees.

The practical effect of these changes is that a greater proportion of planning applications, particularly householder, minor and small-scale developments, are likely to be determined

under delegated officer powers, with fewer applications being considered by district planning committees.

Whilst Chigwell Parish Council will continue to be consulted on planning applications and its comments will continue to form part of the planning process, opportunities for applications to be considered at planning committee are expected to reduce. Consequently, the quality and robustness of written planning representations will become increasingly important.

The reforms, together with the adoption of the Epping Forest District Local Plan, represent a significant change in the local planning environment. Officers will continue to monitor the practical impact of these reforms and advise Members accordingly.

Clerk's Enrolment onto CiLCA (Update)

Members are advised that the Clerk has enrolled onto the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA), the nationally recognised professional qualification for local council officers. Successful completion of CiLCA forms part of the Clerk's professional development and supports the delivery of high standards of governance, administration and legal compliance across the Council.

The qualification is of particular significance as it contributes towards the Council meeting the eligibility requirements necessary to retain the General Power of Competence, providing Chigwell Parish Council with greater flexibility to deliver services, undertake projects and respond to local priorities without relying on specific statutory powers for every activity.

To support completion of the qualification and associated portfolio requirements, the Clerk will work from home for one day per week during the course. The Clerk will remain fully contactable and available for operational matters, meetings and member enquiries throughout this period.

Cemetery Building Insurance Claim Update (Update)

Members are advised that the insurance claim relating to the cemetery building at Froghall Lane remains ongoing. The building continues to be deemed unsafe for occupation and therefore remains out of use.

Officers were advised on 1 October 2026 that a loss adjuster would be appointed to undertake a site inspection. Following subsequent correspondence and requests for an update, the Council has now been informed that Crawford & Company Loss Adjusters have arranged to attend the cemetery office at 10.00 am on Wednesday 18 November 2026 to undertake an inspection of the site.

The continued closure of the building is causing operational disruption and additional costs to the Council, including the provision of temporary arrangements to support cemetery operations. Officers will attend the inspection and continue to pursue the matter with the insurer as necessary. A further update will be provided to Members once the inspection has taken place and the insurer's position and proposed next steps are known.

Volunteer Update (Update)

Members are advised that the Council has recently welcomed a new volunteer who has commenced volunteering with Chigwell Parish Council.

The volunteer has expressed a keen interest in learning more about local government and public service and will initially support the Council for one afternoon per week. Officers will provide appropriate induction, guidance, supervision, and health and safety training to ensure a positive volunteering experience. Support will be focused on assisting with suitable administrative tasks and developing an understanding of the varied functions and responsibilities of the Parish Council.

Members may also wish to note that the Council's proposed Volunteer Policy is presented as appendix 11 on the agenda for consideration and adoption. Establishing a clear policy framework for volunteers will support community involvement, skills development, knowledge sharing, and wider engagement with the work of the Council, whilst ensuring that appropriate governance, safeguarding, and management arrangements are in place.

Councillor Vacancy – Chigwell Row Ward

The Council has received written confirmation from the Electoral Services team at Epping Forest District Council that the casual vacancy for the Chigwell Row Ward may now be filled by co-option.

The vacancy has been advertised on the Council's noticeboards, website and social media channels. The closing date for applications is 5.00 pm on 16 November 2026. All councillors have been notified of the vacancy and co-option process via email circulation, in accordance with the Council's adopted Co-option Policy.

In accordance with the Council's Co-option Policy, prospective candidates will be invited to discuss the role, responsibilities and standards of conduct expected of a Parish Councillor with the Clerk before applying. Applicants will be required to complete an application form, confirm their eligibility for office, attend Council and Committee meetings where possible, and indicate areas of particular interest within the Council's committee structure and current Action Plan.

Following the closing date, an Extraordinary Meeting of the Full Council will be convened on the same evening as a scheduled Full Council meeting to consider applications. Application forms will be circulated to councillors with the meeting agenda and will be treated as strictly confidential.

The appointment process will be conducted in accordance with the Council's adopted Co-option Policy. A successful candidate must receive an absolute majority of those members present and voting. Voting will be undertaken by secret ballot, with Standing Orders suspended for this purpose only. Should votes be tied, the Chairman will exercise a casting

vote. Council Members are not obliged to appoint any candidate if they consider the applications unsuitable.

Prepared by:

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Clerk & Proper Officer

Chigwell Parish Council