

### **1 Hardcore Material at Station Green**

A local resident has expressed interest in taking it and has requested to collect it. This is due to be happening shortly otherwise officers will make other arrangements to dispose of it.

### **2. Cemetery Complaints**

We have received two complaints about the cemetery and have worked through the proper channels to resolve them. No further action due

### **3. Recruitment Updates**

- *Open Spaces and Cemetery Operative:* We have made an appointment subject to satisfactory references and have identified a backup candidate just in case.
- *Caretaker Position:* We have made an appointment subject to satisfactory references and have identified a backup candidate just in case
- *Clerk Recruitment:* The recruitment pack is being prepared for approval at FC on 24 July. We are finalising advertising and recruitment plans as the EALC may not be the best option due to potential impartiality concerns relating to Chigwell Parish Council. We have switched to an online application system to make things quicker and more transparent. CVs are not accepted. The role will be advertised in August and early September

### **4. Employment Matters**

- All job descriptions have been reviewed, redrafted and are being agreed with staff. Job titles have been updated and it is recommended that one employee's hours contracted hours are increased for 35 to 37 per week as they are working 37 hours
- New employment contracts are being finalised based on agreed JD's, titles and hours.
- All policies continue to be reviewed and amended and will be provided to council for information purposes
- Some staff appraisals took place 4 July with the balance scheduled for 7th August.

### **5. Fire Risk Assessment**

A fire risk assessment was completed on 17 April but had not been acted on until recently. The necessary tasks, though few, have now been assigned to the right staff members and are being addressed. A member of staff has questioned their role and responsibilities and this will be reviewed by me and Hayley.

### **6. Health and Safety with Third-Party Users – Liability Concerns**

Recently the Parish has been a bit too hands-on with health and safety when third parties use council land, especially by asking event organisers to provide detailed information about their suppliers.

While this comes from good intentions, it could actually expose the Council to liability risks. Generally, the Parish owns the land but it is the event organiser's responsibility to ensure everything is safe and compliant.

By getting too involved, like vetting suppliers or operational details, the Parish might unintentionally create a duty of care it is not legally responsible for. If something goes wrong this could lead to claims against the Council.

To reduce this risk, we are preparing a clear usage agreement and guidance for anyone using parish land and premises. It will:

- Define what the Parish is responsible for versus what the organisers must handle
- Stress that organisers need proper insurance and risk management

- Make clear that the Parish does not supervise or approve third-party operations  
This approach aims to protect Council property responsibly while keeping legal responsibilities clear and manageable.

## **7. Communication and Media Strategy**

A communications and media strategy is currently being drafted to support the Parish Council's position regarding planning proposals affecting Green Belt land in Chigwell. The strategy will focus on raising public awareness, mobilising community support and generating funding through local networks, social media and press engagement. It will be presented to Full Council for approval

## **8. Allotment, VH and Land Use Terms and Conditions**

These are currently being reviewed by officers and will be updated if appropriate and any amendments will be presented to Council for approval

## **9. UKSPF Grant**

Negotiations continue with EFDC regarding the terms of the grant offered which are currently unacceptable for fiduciary reasons. Once the final grant terms are established, an analysis of the options will be provided to Full Council to make an informed decision.

## **10. Parish Office Use**

The local Primary Care Network has been approached and are assisting in contacting relevant stakeholders and arranging a discussion.

## **11. Cemetery Gates**

Officers are putting the arrangement for opening and closing in place as agreed by Full Council

## **12. VAT**

The recent discussion regarding VAT among councillors was noted. It seems to have arisen as a result of the bench proposals. Please note that under VATGPB8645 - Other local authority activities: miscellaneous (A to E): cemeteries and crematoria state that the supply of an immovable memorial, with a right over land for a fixed period (with or without interred ashes) is exempt for VAT. This differs from the sale of a bench as a stand alone object which would be standard rated. Please note we are not selling a bench, we are selling rights over land for a fixed period with an immovable memorial bench included hence it is considered VAT exempt.

## **9. Review of Premises Usage**

As per the recommendations of the strategic asset and risk review as agreed by Full Council, the review process is underway. A cost-benefit review is ongoing, led by the Chair, the Vice Chair, Cllr Costa and the Acting Clerk and the findings will be reported back through the delegated channels. The objective of the recommendations is to enable Full Council to make a fully informed decision when agreeing future strategy for usage which could include a combination of options set out in the strategic asset and risk review. As required, a formal policy on community not for profit use of Parish assets is being developed by officers. This will include criteria for subsidised access, value-for-money assessment and approved processes for approval

## **10. Unauthorised use of Station Green**

See attached information report

## **Information Report to Council: Proposed Vigil at Station Green**

### **Purpose**

To inform Council of recent events and correspondence relating to a proposed vigil that was initially planned to take place at Station Green. This report outlines the timeline, key communication and the eventual resolution.

**For information only – no decision required.**

### **Background**

On 19 June 2025, the Acting Clerk contacted a district councillor after learning that a public vigil was being planned for Parish owned Station Green without any prior consultation or formal application. It subsequently emerged that invitations to the event had already been issued, including to the press, the local MP and the Chair of Epping Forest District Council. However, the Parish Council had not been informed or involved and no permission had been granted for use of the land.

### **Key Communications and Timeline**

19 June: The Clerk wrote to the District Councillor to:

- Clarify that Station Green is owned by Chigwell Parish Council and cannot be used for public events without Council authorisation.
- Emphasise that Epping Forest District Council has no authority over the site.
- Note that the Council had not received a request and had not approved any such event.
- Stress the importance of the bereaved family's awareness and consent, particularly given the previous distressing incident in Hainault where a vigil proceeded without family support.

The email did not refuse the vigil. Instead, it reaffirmed Council support for the intent of the event and advised that it could be formally considered at the next Full Council meeting on Thursday 26 June, provided a completed land use form was submitted by 12 noon, Friday 20 June

20 June: A follow-up email was sent by the Clerk to:

- Reiterate that public use of Parish land must not proceed without formal approval.
- Express concern that promotional activity, including distribution of invitations, was continuing despite no permissions having been granted.
- Remind district councillor of his responsibility as an elected member to uphold Council procedures and safeguard the Council from reputational and legal risk.

The district councillor was again encouraged to submit the appropriate form so that the Council could consider the request on 26 June.

**21 June:** The councillor responded to confirm that the vigil would not take place at Station Green, and that the gathering had been relocated:

- The Parish welcomed this outcome, noting that the BAPS Mandir Temple offers a more private and appropriate location for a respectful and sensitive event.
- The Clerk thanked the district councillor for confirming that the event would not proceed without permission and reiterated that Station Green remains available for future use subject to proper process.

### **Observations**

- The Parish Council did not object to the vigil itself and offered a clear route to enable consideration at the next available Council meeting.
- The issue arose because the event was promoted and invitations issued before the Parish had been consulted and no request for use of the land had been made. Councillors have previously highlighted this is unacceptable behaviour by district councillors in particular
- While the event has now been appropriately relocated, the situation serves as a reminder of the importance of elected members respecting and following governance procedures particularly in sensitive circumstances involving bereavement and public interest.
- The alternative venue at Chigwell BAPS Mandir was ultimately a more suitable location for a quiet, private act of remembrance.

### **Conclusion**

The vigil did not take place at Station Green and was relocated to a more appropriate venue with the necessary permissions in place. The Parish Council's procedures were upheld. This report is provided for transparency and to reaffirm that:

- All use of Parish land must be authorised through proper channels.
- Council remains supportive of respectful community events, provided that the correct process is followed and the community especially affected families are consulted.

### **For Information Only – No Action Required**