

## **CHIGWELL PARISH COUNCIL**

### **CLERK'S REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY SERVICES AND ASSETS COMMITTEE AND FULL COUNCIL**

**Meeting Date:** 24 September 2026

#### **Introduction**

As meetings of the Community Services and Assets Committee and Full Council are being held on the same day, a single Clerk's Report has been prepared for reasons of consistency and efficiency. Unless otherwise stated, all matters within the Decision Required section are submitted for determination by Full Council only.

The Clerk's Report is divided into two sections:

- Decision Required – matters requiring a formal resolution of the Council.
- Updates – matters provided for information only and not requiring a decision unless otherwise indicated.

When determining matters contained within the Decision Required section, Members should have regard to the financial implications, compliance with the Council's Financial Regulations and statutory obligations, health and safety requirements, environmental and biodiversity considerations, operational impacts, asset management implications, value for money, and the extent to which the proposal supports the Council's objectives and responsibilities to residents. Members should also satisfy themselves that any proposed expenditure represents an appropriate, proportionate and prudent use of public funds.

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 taken under delegated authority since the previous meeting.

#### **Decisions Required by Full Council**

##### **Tree Cutting Required at Station Road (Decision Required)**

At its meeting on 23 July 2026, under Minute FC043/26 – Station Road Tree Encroachment, Full Council approved expenditure of £650 in principle for tree works, subject to the Clerk obtaining details and costs relating to any traffic management, road closures and statutory requirements.

A quotation has now been received from TMO Highways for the necessary traffic management measures, including:

- Traffic management design and permit applications.
- Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO).
- Advance warning and diversion signage.
- Resident notification letters.

- Temporary parking restrictions.
- On-site traffic management operatives.
- Installation and removal of all traffic management equipment.

The cost of the traffic management arrangements is £3,708.06, resulting in a total project cost of £4,358.06, including the previously approved tree works.

The tree is located on Station Green, owned and managed by Chigwell Parish Council. A complaint has been received regarding significant encroachment over Station Road and proximity to a neighbouring property. Branches are understood to be within a few feet of an upstairs window, giving rise to concerns regarding safety, nuisance and potential property damage.

Officers consider the proposed works necessary to fulfil the Council's responsibilities as a landowner and to mitigate potential risks to residents and highway users.

Subject to approval, it is anticipated that the required permits and permissions may take approximately three months to obtain before works can commence.

Funding is available within Cost Code 116, which currently has a budget provision of £10,000.

### **Recommendation**

Council is requested to:

1. Note the traffic management requirements and associated costs.
2. Approve expenditure of £3,708.06 for traffic management services.
3. Confirm the previously approved expenditure of £650 for tree works.
4. Approve a total project budget of £4,358.06, funded from Cost Code 116.
5. Delegate authority to the Clerk to obtain the necessary permits and instruct contractors to proceed once all statutory approvals have been secured.

### **Play in the Park – October Half-Term Indoor Sessions (Decision Required)**

Following attendance at the Summer Play in the Park debrief meeting, feedback from organisers indicated that attendance at some sessions may have been adversely affected by the exceptionally hot weather experienced during the summer holiday period. Whilst efforts were made to relocate gazebos and activities to shaded areas, it was recognised that weather conditions may have discouraged participation by some families.

In response, the Clerk suggested closer liaison with the Play in the Park team to explore alternative delivery methods, including the use of indoor venues during periods of adverse weather. As a result, four indoor Play in the Park sessions have been provisionally reserved at Victory Hall during the October half-term holiday:

- Monday 26 October 2026, 1.30pm to 3.30pm
- Tuesday 27 October 2026, 1.30pm to 3.30pm

- Wednesday 28 October 2026, 1.30pm to 3.30pm
- Thursday 29 October 2026, 1.30pm to 3.30pm

The total value of providing Victory Hall free of charge for these sessions would be £344. The dates have been provisionally held pending a decision by Members to avoid potential double-booking.

Members are requested to consider the community benefits of supporting the sessions, including the provision of activities for children and young people during the school holiday period, increased accessibility through the use of an indoor venue, support for family wellbeing and the promotion of community participation through the use of a Council-owned facility.

### **Recommendation**

Council is requested to note the feedback received from the Summer Play in the Park programme, which indicated that attendance at some sessions may have been affected by the exceptionally hot weather despite efforts to relocate activities to shaded areas, and to consider the benefits of supporting additional activities for children and young people during the October half-term holiday through the provision of an accessible indoor venue. Members are therefore asked to approve the provision of Victory Hall free of charge for four indoor Play in the Park sessions during the October 2026 half-term holiday, representing a community support contribution with an estimated value of £344.

### **Conversion of Existing Toilet into Shower/Wet Room at the Parish Offices (Provisional Decision Required)**

Officers have reviewed staff welfare arrangements following the relocation of operational staff to the Parish Offices. The Open Spaces Team regularly undertakes physically demanding outdoor work, including grave digging, litter collection, grounds maintenance and grass cutting, often in adverse weather conditions and occasionally in environments presenting hygiene or biohazard risks.

The possibility of reinstating shower facilities at the Cemetery Building has been explored and is no longer considered viable. As a result, officers have investigated the potential conversion of an existing toilet within the Parish Offices into a shower/wet room to provide appropriate welfare facilities for staff.

An initial quotation has been obtained for the removal of existing fittings, installation of plumbing and drainage connections, provision of a shower, new flooring and wall tiling, together with all associated making good works. The estimated cost of the project is £3,890 inclusive of materials.

As the estimated value exceeds the threshold set out within the Council's Financial Regulations, a minimum of three quotations would be required before any works could proceed. At this stage, officers are seeking Members' views on the principle of the proposal before obtaining further quotations and presenting a detailed business case for consideration.

## **Recommendation**

Council is requested to consider the staff welfare, health and safety, and operational benefits associated with the provision of shower facilities at the Parish Offices for employees undertaking outdoor and potentially hazardous duties. Members are therefore asked to indicate whether they support the proposal in principle, enabling officers to obtain the quotations required under the Financial Regulations and prepare a further report for formal consideration.

## **Defibrillator Supplies (Decision Required)**

In June 2025, Chigwell Parish Council agreed to support the ongoing maintenance of the community defibrillator located at Oak Lodge Avenue, Chigwell, through the purchase of replacement consumables. Whilst the defibrillator itself was funded and installed by members of the local community, the availability of replacement consumables ensures the device remains operational and capable of providing potentially life-saving assistance to residents in the event of a medical emergency.

The defibrillator is managed and maintained by local volunteers who regularly monitor the equipment and arrange for consumables to be replaced when required. One of the volunteers has recently requested the purchase of replacement paediatric defibrillator pads. Members may wish to note that the Parish Council has previously purchased replacement paediatric pads for the device and the specification supplied was confirmed as correct. Current retail prices are understood to be approximately £117 per pack plus delivery, although a formal quotation has not yet been obtained.

The ongoing operation of the defibrillator is also supported by Spine Plus, located on Oak Lodge Avenue, who kindly provide the electricity required to heat the external defibrillator cabinet at no cost, helping to ensure the equipment remains operational throughout the year.

Members may further wish to note that the defibrillator was established to provide emergency life-saving support within the Grange Hill ward and has been deployed on multiple occasions by paramedics and the Essex Ambulance Service. The device therefore represents an important community asset and forms part of the wider network of publicly accessible defibrillators available to local residents.

Whilst the Council was unable to contribute towards the original purchase of the defibrillator, as it had already been acquired by members of the community, support for replacement consumables provides a practical means of assisting with the ongoing maintenance of the device and ensuring that responsibility does not fall solely upon individual volunteers.

## **Recommendation**

That Full Council notes the request and delegates authority to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, to purchase replacement paediatric defibrillator pads for the Oak Lodge

Avenue community defibrillator, subject to the cost being within the Clerk's delegated spending limits and the availability of budget provision.

### **Community Use Application (Decision Required)**

**Applicant:** Limes Farm and Grange Hill Community Group

**Event:** Evening of Mediumship

**Date and Time:** Saturday 24 October, 6.00pm to 11.00pm

**Venue:** Community Hub

**Expected Attendance:** 56 persons

#### **Purpose of Event:**

The event aims to bring residents together for an enjoyable community evening while raising funds for the Chigwell Community Pantry and the British Heart Foundation. The applicant advises that the event will support community inclusion, reduce social isolation, and generate funds for charitable causes benefiting local residents.

#### **Application Details:**

- Fee waiver requested for building hire and utilities.
- Use of stage and PA system.
- Refreshments and alcohol will be available for sale.
- Applicant has agreed to undertake rubbish removal following the event.
- Public liability insurance has been confirmed.
- A Temporary Event Notice application has been submitted to Epping Forest District Council in respect of alcohol sales.

#### **Officer Assessment:**

The application has been submitted by the Community Champion, who regularly delivers community activities at the Community Hub on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The proposed event represents an extension of this established community use to a Saturday evening fundraising event. The only material changes from existing usage are the date, operating hours, and sale of alcohol. Attendance is expected to remain modest at 56 persons and the applicant acknowledges the current accessibility limitations of the venue.

#### **Recommendation:**

That Council approves the application and grants the requested fee waiver in support of this community fundraising event.

### **Community Use Application (Decision Required)**

**Applicant:** Association of Hindu Organisations

**Event:** Diwali Sign and Lighting Display

**Date and Time:** 1 November to 30 November, illuminated daily from 5.30pm to midnight

**Venue:** Station Green

**Expected Attendance:** 30 to 50 persons (official lighting event)

**Purpose of Event:**

The application seeks permission to install and illuminate a Diwali sign at Station Green to celebrate Diwali and promote community cohesion. The official switch-on event is proposed for 3 November and will include the ceremonial lighting of the display by the Chair of Epping Forest District Council, together with brief speeches. The applicant advises that the event is intended to be inclusive, welcoming residents of all faiths and backgrounds to participate in a positive cultural celebration.

**Application Details:**

- Installation and illumination of a Diwali sign at Station Green.
- Lights to remain illuminated from 1 November to 30 November.
- Formal gathering and switch-on ceremony proposed for 3 November.
- Organisers have agreed to clear all litter and leave the site in a satisfactory condition.
- Public liability insurance documentation has been requested, although only partial documentation has been received to date.

**Officer Assessment:**

The application has been submitted by a local Hindu association to facilitate Diwali celebrations within the parish. Similar events have taken place previously without reported issues. Officers have advised that all external event organisers are expected to liaise with the relevant Safety Advisory Group to ensure that event plans, safety measures and contingency arrangements are 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, health and safety arrangements, or other statutory requirements, which remain the responsibility of the event organiser working with the relevant authorities.

**Recommendation:**

That Council conditionally approves the application, subject to:

- Receipt of a valid public liability insurance certificate in full; and
- The organiser liaising with the Safety Advisory Group and complying with any advice or requirements issued.

**Updates to Community Services and Assets Committee and Full Council****Funding and Community Development Opportunities**

The Clerk has recently held discussions with external stakeholders regarding potential funding opportunities and partnership working that could enhance community use of both the Community Hub and Victory Hall once refurbishment works are complete.

The discussions focused on how these facilities may be utilised more extensively when not required by existing user groups, with opportunities identified around youth provision, employment and skills support, digital inclusion initiatives, outreach services, health and wellbeing activities, warm and cool spaces programmes, and wider community engagement

projects. Consideration was also given to potential environmental and biodiversity projects, including opportunities associated with the adjoining green space, sensory garden initiatives, energy efficiency improvements, and projects aimed at increasing accessibility and participation.

Several potential funding streams were highlighted, including grants aimed at community infrastructure, places and spaces improvements, town and village partnership initiatives, digital inclusion programmes, youth engagement activity and community development projects. Initial discussions also considered opportunities for additional community events and activities within the Parish, including the potential use of Station Green and other public spaces for cultural and community-based events.

Whilst no proposals are currently being advanced, Members are advised that Officers will continue to explore funding and partnership opportunities that align with the Council's priorities and maximise the community benefit arising from the investment in the Community Hub and Victory Hall. Further updates and specific proposals will be brought to Members for consideration as opportunities emerge following commencement of the refurbishment works.

### **Cemetery Building (Update)**

Members are advised that the Cemetery Building remains closed pending a structural assessment and confirmation that it is safe for occupation. An accessible temporary toilet facility has been installed on site and cemetery staff have been temporarily relocated to the Parish Offices.

Following discussions with Zurich Insurance, officers have been advised that Crawfords were instructed to inspect the building during August 2026; however, owing to an administrative error, the previous insurance claim was settled instead of progressing the current matter. Zurich is now arranging an urgent inspection to assess the reported damage and support the ongoing claim.

On 4 September 2026, the Council received £3,444.45 from Zurich in settlement of the previous claim. The current structural concerns are being progressed under a new insurance claim (Ref: 20-50-894207), and officers await further updates from the insurer.

To support the temporary relocation of staff, the Parish Office basement has been cleared and adapted for use by the Open Spaces Team.

The temporary toilet facility remains in place at an approximate cost of £450 per month. Whilst there is no statutory requirement to provide public toilets at the cemetery, welfare facilities remain necessary for operational staff undertaking cemetery maintenance and grave digging duties. Officers therefore recommend that the facility remains in place pending resolution of the insurance claim and consideration of a longer-term solution.

### **Monday Work Allocation App (Update)**

The Council now utilises a job sheet and spreadsheet-based work management process, providing oversight of task allocation, priorities, costs, resources utilised, progress updates and management sign-off. This enables effective monitoring of workloads and operational performance whilst supporting the coordination of planned and reactive works.

Work allocation and progress are reviewed through the Daily Management Meeting, ensuring accountability and consistent service delivery.

As a result, the Monday Work Allocation System is no longer considered necessary. Discontinuing the subscription would generate a saving of approximately £160 per month whilst maintaining effective operational control through existing management arrangements.

### **Lime Avenue Brick Wall Repairs (Update)**

Members will recall that Full Council approved expenditure of £6,150 on 23 July 2026 to undertake repairs to the damaged brick wall at Lime Avenue following structural failure (Minute Ref: FC043/26). As previously agreed, the works will be funded through a transfer from General Reserves to Earmarked Reserve 210.

The associated tree works required to facilitate access and enable the repairs have been scheduled for 7 October 2026. Subject to the completion of those works, a contractor will attend the site on 15 October 2026 with a mini digger to undertake site clearance and prepare the working area.

Reconstruction of the wall is currently scheduled to commence on 17 October 2026, subject to favourable weather conditions and site accessibility.

A further update will be provided to Members once the programme of works has been completed.

### **Electric Vehicle (Update)**

The Council has received an update from the lease provider, which has confirmed it is willing to extend the vehicle lease and will not charge for the period during which the vehicle was out of service. As a result, the van was collected from the repairer this week. Whilst a larger rental vehicle was required to support Open Spaces operations, the rental arrangement will cease on 25 September 2026, and we will revert to using the Council's leased electric van.

Although some details remain to be finalised with the lease provider, extending the current lease represents a financially prudent option, with the monthly cost being approximately one-quarter of the equivalent vehicle rental cost. It also maintains the Council's visibility within the community through use of a clearly identifiable Parish Council vehicle.

I have suggested extending the lease until 31 March 2027, which would provide sufficient time to fully evaluate future vehicle requirements and plan for the return of the leased vehicle in the condition required by the lease company for disposal or auction.

To help inform future decisions, a daily vehicle log will be introduced. This will record the driver, date, time of use, return time, mileage and purpose of each journey. The information gathered will support the development of a robust business case for future vehicle provision.

Members should note that the vehicle's first MOT will be due in January 2027. In addition, any servicing, repairs and maintenance required between the expiry of the manufacturer's warranty and the proposed lease end date of 31 March 2027 will need to be met by the Council. However, based on the current information available, the proposed lease extension remains the most economical and operationally practical option.

### **Remembrance Sunday (Update)**

Members are reminded to notify officers if they intend to represent Chigwell Parish Council at any Remembrance Sunday events. Early notification will assist with the coordination of attendance arrangements and ensure that sufficient wreaths are ordered and available where required. Members are therefore requested to advise officers of their intended participation and wreath requirements at the earliest opportunity.

### **Christmas Lights Switch-On Event, Station Green (Update)**

Members are advised that planning will shortly commence for the Council's Christmas Lights Switch-On Event at Station Green, provisionally scheduled for Saturday 5 December 2026. As the event falls outside normal working hours, appropriate officer resources and support arrangements will need to be considered as part of the planning process.

As the festive season approaches, Members will also begin to see a range of Christmas and community events being organised across the parish. Given the scale and public nature of the Station Green event, it is important that planning and event management arrangements are undertaken in a structured and coordinated manner.

To support this, an Event Management Plan will be prepared and shared with the relevant authorities, including the Safety Advisory Group, to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for public safety, traffic management, event logistics and operational delivery.

The Clerk will shortly convene a series of planning meetings to develop the event programme, identify resource requirements and coordinate responsibilities. Any Members who wish to be involved in the planning and delivery of the event are invited to notify the Clerk accordingly. This will assist officers in assessing any support requirements, identifying associated costs and ensuring appropriate arrangements are put in place well in advance of the event.

## **Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS)**

Members are advised that the specialist mounting post for the Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) is currently due to be delivered on 5 October 2026, with installation on Parish Council-owned land at Courtland Drive scheduled to commence later that week.

Owing to ongoing delays in securing external permissions to affix equipment to highway infrastructure, officers have undertaken site assessments on Parish Council-owned land and identified Courtland Drive as the most suitable location. A decision was therefore taken to procure a dedicated post and proceed with installation by the Open Spaces Team, ensuring the sign can be deployed and begin supporting local road safety initiatives whilst wider permissions continue to be pursued.

In addition, officers have explored emerging technologies which may complement future road safety measures. Initial enquiries have been made regarding an ANPR-enabled traffic and speed data collection system, with an indicative installation cost of £4,315 plus VAT. Such technology can provide detailed vehicle movement and speed data, supporting evidence-based discussions with highway authorities and enforcement partners. Suppliers advise that similar systems have been deployed by a number of local authorities and have demonstrated reductions in average vehicle speeds.

Any future proposal would be subject to the necessary approvals, legal compliance requirements and budget considerations as part of the Council's future financial planning process.

## **Evri and Yeep Parcel Lockers (Update)**

Members are advised that, further to previous updates, the Yeep parcel locker has now been installed outside Victory Hall and the Evri parcel locker has been installed at the Parish Offices. Both facilities are now operational and available for public use.

The Evri installation requires an electrical supply, the costs of which are being funded by Evri as part of the arrangement. The Yeep locker is a standalone unit and does not require a dedicated power connection.

The Council has entered into an agreement for the provision of these lockers and anticipates generating income. This additional revenue will contribute towards the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of Council buildings and assets.

The installations support improved local access to parcel collection and delivery services, whilst generating an additional income stream for the Council from otherwise underutilised areas of its estate.

## **Minutes Format and Terminology (Update)**

To promote consistency, clarity and good governance, Council minutes are now being drafted using terminology aligned with recognised local government practice. The following terms will be used throughout future minutes:

- **NOTED** – Information received for the record.
- **CONSIDERED** – A matter discussed by Members.
- **APPROVED** – Formal acceptance of a document, report or recommendation.
- **RESOLVED** – A formal decision of the Council.

This approach provides a clear distinction between information received, matters debated by Members, and decisions formally taken by the Council, thereby improving the accuracy and transparency of the Council's records.

### **Prepared by:**

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Clerk & Proper Officer

Chigwell Parish Council