

**CHIGWELL PARISH COUNCIL
OFFICER REPORT- COMMUNITY SERVICES AND ASSETS COMMITTEE**

Meeting Date: 16 April 2026

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on:

- Progress on allotment tenancy renewals at Gravel Lane and Limes Farm
- An update on a recent tree-related issue at Limes Farm and the benefits of officer-led operational decision-making
- An update on Victory Hall bookings and activity
- An update on Community Hub activity

2. Background

Allotment tenancy renewals for the 2026 season are currently underway, with a rent payment deadline of 30 April 2026. Officers continue to manage routine allotment administration, compliance checks, and tenant engagement.

Victory Hall and the Community Hub remain key community assets, with varied usage by local organisations, public bodies, and private hirers.

3. Allotment Renewals – Current Position

Status as at 08 April 2026

Rent Payment Deadline: 30 April 2026

Gravel Lane Allotments

- Total plots: 30
- Tenants renewing: 27
- Tenants not renewing: 2
- Tenancies terminated: 1
 - Reason: No response to renewal questionnaire and plot overgrown / not worked for a prolonged period
- Rent paid: 15
- Outstanding rent: 12
- Vacant plots: 3

Vacant plots will be offered to applicants on the waiting list during the week commencing 13 April 2026. Officers will take photographs of the available plots and include these within waiting list correspondence.

Limes Farm Allotments

- Total plots: 24
- Tenants renewing: 20
- Tenants not renewing: 1
- Tenancies terminated: 3
 - Reason: No response to renewal questionnaire and plots overgrown / not worked for a prolonged period
- Rent paid: 9
- Outstanding rent: 11
- Vacant plots: 4

Vacant plots were offered by email to the applicant at the top of the waiting list on 07 April 2026, with plot photographs attached. No response has been received to date.

Officers continue to monitor responses and will re-offer plots where appropriate in line with Council procedures.

4. Limes Farm – Tree-Related Issue and Operational Decision-Making

A concern has been reported in relation to Limes Farm Allotments, Tree T007 (TPO 0414), Monterey Pine, adjacent to Plot LF7. Some digging has occurred around the base of the tree, and minor trunk damage has been observed, as reported by another tenant.

Officers have attended the site, taken photographs, and will forward these to Epping Forest District Council Tree Services for consideration and advice.

This matter demonstrates the benefit of officers holding operational ownership of routine allotment issues, allowing for quicker response times, improved tenant communication, and reduced delay. This approach has also helped streamline decision-making and reduce the need for escalation to Full Council for day-to-day operational matters.

5. Victory Hall – Bookings and Usage

April 2026

- Thursday 2 April: London Chigwell Jehovah's Witnesses hire – successful booking; caretaker reported the hall was left in excellent condition
- Wednesday 8 April: Essex Police Restorative and Mediation Service – first use of Victory Hall; positive feedback received and repeat use confirmed
- Sunday 12 April to Friday 17 April (inclusive): CROADS show, including stage set-up and performances on 15, 16 and 17 April
- Saturday 26 April: Upcoming private hire
- All Fridays:
 - CMA continues regular Friday Prayers bookings until 25 December 2026
 - Officers received positive feedback regarding service delivery, particularly on Good Friday (3 April)

- Ramadan 2027 bookings confirmed and paid (06 February 2027 – 08 March 2027, 7pm–10pm sessions)

May 2026

- Thursday 7 May: Epping Forest District Council Electoral Services – Local Elections
- Saturday 23 May: Upcoming private hire

Usage remains high, with positive feedback from hirers and effective operational management by officers.

6. Community Hub – Activity Update

- Existing activities: Continue as scheduled with no issues reported
- New activity:
 - Snooker Club, running on the first Tuesday of each month, 10:00am – 1:00pm

The Community Hub continues to support a range of community uses, with new activities demonstrating ongoing local interest and engagement.

7. Financial

Outstanding allotment rents remain within expected levels for this point in the renewal cycle. Officers continue to monitor payments and pursue outstanding balances in line with Council procedures.

Hall and Hub bookings continue to generate income in line with agreed hire arrangements.

8. Legal and Risk Implications

Allotment tenancy terminations have been undertaken in accordance with Council rules, following non-compliance and non-engagement.

Tree-related matters involving TPOs are being referred to the appropriate district authority.

No additional legal risks are identified at this stage.

9. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Community Services and Assets Committee:

1. Notes the progress on allotment renewals and vacancy management;
2. Notes the update regarding the Limes Farm tree issue and officer-led operational decision-making;
3. Notes the updates on Victory Hall and Community Hub usage and bookings.

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