

### **Acting Clerk**

I have been on jury service since 24 November and it is continuing for a third week. I should be available again during the week beginning 15 December

### **Fee Waiver - Victory Hall**

A private hirer of Victory Hall has asked for a full refund of the hire fee of £285.00 in respect of booking references V0606 (£227.50) and V0610 (£57.50 for an additional 1.5 hours) for Saturday 13 December 2025, 3.00 pm to 10.30 pm. The hirer has cancelled at short notice due to an unforeseen and serious family health issue and, in light of this, has requested that the Parish Council consider making an exception and refunding the full amount. Under the current Terms and Conditions of Hire, cancellations made less than two weeks before the booking date are subject to 100% of the booking fee being payable, so normally no refund would be given. The same family hired Victory Hall on 23 October 2025 for a wedding celebration at a time when the heating in the hall was not available, and that despite this they expressed satisfaction with the venue and went on to make the now-cancelled Christmas dinner booking on 7 November 2025. Having discussed the matter with the Admin Officer and RFO, the Clerk believes the request to be genuine and invites Council to decide whether to agree a full refund as a one-off exception to the Council's standard cancellation policy

### **Emergency Spend - contractor**

A request for a burial on 23 Dec has been made by a funeral director who cannot provide the service to the family on any other day before Christmas. They have advised the family would like the burial before Christmas. We have a pre-booked staff absence on this day and therefore the Registrar has advised that a contractor would need to be engaged to perform the dig. The invoice fee for the EROB (including the first interment) to the client will be £5,015 and of that the contractor will cost £1,050. Normally the burial would be arranged for another day when both FD and parish staff are available but given the family's wishes, the Clerk and RFO have used emergency powers to engage the contractor so the funeral goes ahead before Christmas

### **Celebrity Walk for Alzheimers Research UK**

A charity walk from Chigwell to Bourne End over 5 days was led by Charlie Quirke, son of the actress Pauline Quirke on behalf of Alzheimers Research UK. Sadly it was announced earlier this year that Pauline is living with dementia. Charlie started the walk at 8.00am on Monday 8th December from the car park at Victory Hall.

Threshold Events were given the key as is normal for the reservation from 6.30am on Monday. On Sunday at 4.30pm a van with Alzheimer's Society livery entered the car park and the driver unlocked the door to Victory Hall and entered. They left shortly afterwards and when staff checked the premises half an hour later, the door had been left unlocked. This is in breach of the policy and we would normally keep the damage deposit. It is proposed that the damage deposit is retained but that the Council vote to donate it to the Alzheimer's Society

### **Mayor visit**

The Mayor of Dunstable was invited to attend an event in Chigwell and has been granted permission to wear their chain of office at the event by officers on behalf of the Council

### **UKSPF**

A company has been engaged to produce working drawings of both Victory Hall and the Parish offices

### **Christmas Light Switch on**

This took place on Saturday 6th December. Thank you to the staff and councillors who worked so hard to make it a success

### **Additional Mast on Station Green**

Arrangement for the trial hole to be dug are being made to assess feasibility before any elevations can be provided. Officer discussions are ongoing to avoid disruption of events planned on the Green. Once elevations are available they will come before Full Council

### **Works at 13-22 Brook Parade**

The developer has been advised by enforcement that a new planning application is required

### **Parish Sign**

The Chigwell Row Parish sign on the Maypole needs extensive repairs/replacement at a cost of £4-5K. There is a substantial risk a new sign will be damaged by traffic as has everything else placed on the land previously. Officers continue to look at alternatives including relocating the Chigwell Row sign to a less dangerous area. District Councillors have been engaged to assist. A proposal will be brought to Full Council if a feasible alternative can be identified and costed

### **Employment Matters**

- Training records are being updated and uploaded centrally
- The new Clerk has accepted the role and references are being taken with a start date estimated to be 12 Jan 2025
- Performance and conduct matters are being addressed

### **Risk Assessment**

The Safety Nest portal is being updated with the Clerk resetting due dates and allocating the relevant staff to outstanding tasks, many of which have been found to be very overdue.

### **Request for a JR**

The Royal Courts of Justice has advised that the matter has been prepared to be considered and waiting for a Judge to determine. They advise the Court have limited Judges and that the matter will be allocated to a suitable Judge as soon as one becomes available.

### **Cemetery Staff Training and management**

Interim findings by the ICCM after their visit indicate that staff training is inadequate. Rob and Sam have now completed ICCM Memorial Management. Both Sam and Rob are required to do COTS training and this will be booked. This includes shoring training as part of the cemetery operators training.

### **Grave capping**

Digging of recent grave a coffin was found at a depth higher than that recorded in the Register of Graves. This meant the grave had to be capped with concrete to seal the existing coffin. The original burial and record keeping was done by EFDC and the officers are pursuing EFDC for costs