

**CHIGWELL PARISH COUNCIL  
FULL COUNCIL – OFFICER REPORT: COMMUNITY SERVICES AND ASSETS COMMITTEE:  
MEETING SCHEDULE AND QUORUM CHALLENGES**

**Meeting Date:** 25 June 2026

**1. Purpose of Report**

To seek a resolution from Full Council regarding the scheduling of Community Services and Assets Committee meetings, following Members being unable to agree on dates and times, and ongoing issues with achieving a quorum.

**2. Background**

At the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 21 May 2026, Full Council agreed the Terms of Reference for the Community Services and Assets Committee (Minute Reference: AM011/26). These require a minimum of four meetings per year.

Following clarification from the Essex Association of Local Councils, the quorum requirement was confirmed as four Members. The Terms of Reference were subsequently amended by the Clerk to reflect this.

**Quorum Requirements**

- The quorum for committees is one-third of the Council membership, rounded up.
- Based on current membership, this equates to 4 Members required for a quorum.

As the Committee currently comprises 5 Members, a minimum of 4 Members must be present for meetings to proceed. This makes agreement on suitable meeting dates and times critical.

At the Annual Meeting, the Clerk proposed a schedule of meeting dates. An action was given to review these against the availability of two Members who also serve as District Councillors.

Following this review, the Clerk proposed the following dates, which were circulated to Members and published:

- 13 August – 09:00
- 12 November – 09:00
- 1 February – 19:00
- 27 May – 19:00

A combination of morning and evening meetings was offered to accommodate Members' availability.

### **3. Current Position**

Despite efforts to accommodate Members' preferences:

- Two Members indicated difficulty attending evening meetings.
- Daytime meetings at 09:00 were proposed to enable attendance before the working day for other Members.
- Multiple options were circulated and discussed.

However, no agreement has been reached on a consistent schedule.

An additional attempt to convene a meeting on Thursday 2 July at 13:00 has also been unsuccessful:

- Two Members have confirmed attendance
- Two Members have declined
- One Member has not responded

This meeting will therefore also be inquorate, and the Committee is now at an impasse.

As Clerk, my role is to ensure meetings are lawfully convened and effectively administered, rather than to facilitate prolonged informal negotiation. Formal direction from Full Council is now required.

### **4. Operational Impact**

The inability to agree meeting arrangements is impacting governance and officer capacity:

- The last meeting of the Committee was held on 12 February 2026.
- A meeting scheduled for 16 April 2026 did not proceed due to being inquorate.

Officers had prepared reports for that meeting, including:

- Cemetery Report
- Open Spaces Update
- Allotments and Victory Hall Update
- Clerk's Update (including benches and bus stop projects)

This represents a significant use of officer time and resources.

As a result:

- Committee business has been redirected to Full Council
- Full Council agendas are becoming increasingly congested
- There is a risk of inefficient governance and delayed decision-making

## **5. Considerations**

From an officer perspective:

- Both daytime and evening meetings are operationally workable
- Once meetings are agreed and published, there is an obligation to adhere to those arrangements
- Repeated inquorate meetings result in wasted officer time and reduced efficiency

The Community Services and Assets Committee is a key operational committee through which a significant volume of Council work is delivered. Its effective functioning is essential.

## **6. Proposed Standing Agenda Items**

To improve consistency, governance, and alignment with operational delivery, it is recommended that standing agenda items are agreed.

These should reflect core service areas and officer responsibilities:

### Open Spaces

- Grounds maintenance (including grass cutting)

### Victory Hall

- Building condition
- Usage and bookings

### Community Hub

- Building condition
- Usage

### Parish Council Main Office

- Telephony
- IT equipment and infrastructure

### Cemetery (including building)

- Vehicles
- Plant and machinery
- Burials
- Maintenance

### Allotments

- Gravel Lane
- Limes Farm

#### Other Assets / Projects

- Vehicle Activated Signs
- Benches and bus shelters (as applicable)

Establishing standing items will ensure regular reporting, improved oversight, and efficient use of officer time.

### **7. Options for Full Council**

Full Council is requested to consider the following options:

#### **Option 1: Agree Meeting Schedule and Standing Agenda**

Formally determine a schedule of meeting dates and times, alongside standing agenda items, to provide structure and continuity.

#### **Option 2: Revise Committee Membership**

Amend Committee membership to better align with availability and improve the likelihood of achieving quorum (subject to EALC advice).

#### **Option 3: Ex Officio Arrangements**

Enable the Chair and/or Vice-Chair to attend in an ex officio capacity (this is already in place subject to availability) to assist with quorum.

#### **Option 4: Alternative Governance Approach**

Consider whether the current committee structure remains appropriate, or whether matters should be managed via:

- Full Council; or
- A revised or reduced committee structure

### **8. Officer Recommendation**

That Full Council:

1. Determines a set schedule of meeting dates and start times for the Community Services and Assets Committee; and
2. Approves standing agenda items to support structured and effective meetings; and
3. Reviews Committee membership if necessary to ensure meetings are quorate and operationally effective.

## **9. Conclusion**

It is essential that a clear and workable approach is agreed in order to:

- Ensure compliance with the Terms of Reference
- Make best use of officer resources
- Support effective decision-making
- Enable delivery of Community Services and Assets responsibilities

Officers remain neutral regarding preferred meeting times and are committed to supporting Members once a formal resolution is made.

**Prepared by:**

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Clerk & Proper Officer

Chigwell Parish Council