



MINUTES OF THE CHIGWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Date: Thursday 26 March 2026

Time: 7.00pm

Location: Chigwell Council Parish Offices, Hainault Road, Chigwell, IG7 6QZ

Members present:

Clr J Braha (Chair)

Clr O Ali

Clr L Clark

Clr R Hodds

Clr L Skingsley-Morgan

Clr T Amuludun

Clr E Costa

Clr E Skingsley

Clr F Rizvi

J Selvarajah - Clerk and Proper Officer, Chigwell Parish Council

Members of the Public and Councillors are asked to **NOTE** that in accordance with Standing Orders 3 (i) and the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, photographing, recording, broadcasting, transmitting or otherwise reporting the proceeding of a meeting may take place.

Councillors are asked to **NOTE** that in the exercise of their functions, they must take note of the following: equal opportunities; crime and disorder; human rights; health and safety and biodiversity

1. FC244/25- APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Members received and **AGREED** to accept apologies for absence from Clr Debby Rye

2. FC245/25- ANY OTHER ABSENCE

None

3. FC246/25- DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Clr L Skingsley-Morgan declared a personal interest in relation to a confidential item, noting that they knew the individual concerned and had seen them earlier that day on an unrelated matter. Clr Skingsley-Morgan confirmed that, should the interest be deemed prejudicial, they would withdraw from the discussion and abstain from any vote on the item. The Clerk provided

clarification on the distinction between personal and prejudicial interests and reminded members of the standards required under the Council's Code of Conduct.

4. FC247/25- MINUTES

Following a review of the minutes of 26 February 2026, it was identified that Minute FC243/25 summarised the discussion but did not set out the formal motions resolved by Council.

FC243/25 – Matters Relating to Parish-Owned Buildings

Members considered matters relating to the potential future use of parish-owned buildings for GP or primary care provision. The following motions were formally agreed:

1. Transparent and Impartial Process

Members **AGREED** in principle, improved GP or primary care services within Chigwell, and **AGREED** that any proposals must follow a transparent and impartial process, including due diligence, assessment of all options, and appropriate consultation. No commitment will be made to any particular provider until the process is complete and considered by Full Council.

2. Working Group

Members **APPROVED** the establishment of a Working Group to gather information, assess risks and implications, and prepare recommendations for Full Council. Draft Terms of Reference will be presented to members for approval.

3. Deferral Pending Further Information

Members **AGREED** to **DEFER** the matter to a future meeting pending additional information and clarifications requested during discussion.

4. Governance Requirements

Members **AGREED** that any binding agreement or commitment relating to parish-owned premises must return to Full Council for approval. Members further **AGREED** that no public statement will be issued on this matter until confirmed as appropriate by the Clerk.

Members raised queries regarding the minutes of the previous Full Council meeting. As several points related to confidential matters and commercially sensitive information, it was **AGREED** that clarification would be provided during the closed session (**Appendix 1**)

The minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly were **APPROVED** as presented (**Appendix 2**)

5. FC248/25- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chair invited comments from members of the public.

Representatives of the Chigwell Row Operatic and Dramatic Society (CROADS) addressed the Council, outlining the society's history and current challenges, and requesting a reduced

commercial hire rate for Victory Hall. A member of the public also voiced support for CROADS and raised concerns about the Council's approach to community use of the hall. The Speedwatch coordinator informed members that he wished to step down from the role and agreed to return the speed detection equipment. Members **NOTED** all comments for consideration under the relevant agenda items later in the meeting.

6. FC249/25- POLICIES FOR REVIEW AND ADOPTION

- The Clerk presented the proposed IT Policy, previously supported in principle by the Finance & Governance Committee. Members **NOTED** gaps in councillors' IT knowledge, particularly regarding data management and the secure use of council systems and raised concerns over the use of personal devices for council business. It was **AGREED** that officers would explore IT training options for councillors, and the IT Policy was **APPROVED** for adoption (**Appendix 3**)
- Members received the officer report on the proposed amendment to the Staff Handbook, previously supported in principle by the Finance & Governance Committee. The amendment adds "vape" to the existing prohibition on smoking and e-cigarettes on Council premises to reflect current health and safety guidance. Members **SUPPORTED** the clarification, noting it strengthened compliance and promoted a safe working environment. The amendment was **APPROVED** for adoption (**Appendix 4**)
- Members considered the officer report on the proposed amendment to the Allotments Agreement, previously supported in principle by the Finance & Governance Committee. The amendment delegates authority for approving allotment structures from "the Council" to "the Clerk", enabling timely, feasibility-based decisions. Tenants will be required to obtain prior written consent for any new structure, supported by dimensions and a location plan, while existing structures will be treated as legacy installations. Members **AGREED** the amendment, which formalises a proportionate and efficient approach, and **APPROVED** it for adoption. (**Appendix 5**)

7. FC250/25- TENDER FOR WORKS

Members **RECEIVED** an update from the Clerk and **NOTED** progress on the tender document for Community Hub and Victory Hall improvement works and were updated that the deadline to submit the application to Epping Forest District Council has been extended beyond the original 31st March deadline to September. It was **AGREED** that officers would continue to work on the tender document and look to obtain design drawings from existing budget allocation. (**Appendix 6**)

8. FC250/25- STANDING ORDERS AMENDMENT TO ALIGN WITH FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Members **NOTED** the Finance & Governance Committee's recommendation that Standing Order 18(a)(v) is inconsistent with Financial Regulation 5.6. Members **AGREED** to amend Standing Order 18(a)(v) to confirm that contracts under £30,000 (inc. VAT), or those exempt in special circumstances, do not require formal tendering, and to align

Standing Orders with Financial Regulation 5.6 so that contracts over £30,000 (inc. VAT) require formal tendering (three tenders or an open invitation).

9. FC251/25- COMMUNITY USE APPLICATION

Members supported the proposal for the Vaisakhi sign to be erected at Station Green at no cost, reflecting the local community benefit and **RESOLVED** to approve the application as recommended. (Appendix 7)

10. FC252/25- COMMUNITY USE APPLICATION

Members supported the proposal for CROADS to qualify for reduced rates for Victory Hall use reflecting local benefit and **RESOLVED** to approve the application as recommended (Appendix 8)

11. FC253/25- COMMUNITY USE APPLICATION

The Clerk recommended **DEFFERING** this matter until procedural concerns were reviewed **ACTION** for Officers to revisit and advise on the correct route (Appendix 9) (Appendix 10)

12. FC254/25- CLERK REPORT

Members received an update from the Clerk and **AGREED** to costs associated with CiLCA course attendance and associated costs later in the year (Appendix 11)

13. FC255/25- MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT FORWARD OR FOR DISCUSSION WITH NO DECISION

None.

14. FC256/25- DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Thursday 30 April at 7.00pm

15. FC257/25- EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

As the Agenda contains items where the public interest in maintaining confidentiality may outweigh the public interest in the item being made public, members **CONSIDERED** and **AGREED** the following motion proposed by the Chair: "That the public and the press be excluded from the meeting, the Council believing that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed."

16. FC258/25- PARISH OFFICES PROPOSAL

Council received an update regarding correspondence from a local GP practice relating to the possible future use of the Parish Offices. Due to ongoing information-rights processes and pending decisions by NHS commissioners, the Council **AGREED** that it would not be appropriate to hold a presentation at this stage. The correspondence was formally **NOTED**, and the Council confirmed that any future engagement with healthcare providers will follow a clear, transparent process once the wider position on local primary care provision is known. (**Confidential Appendix 1**)

17. FC259/25- EMPLOYMENT MATTERS

Members **NOTED** a confidential update from the Clerk on the conclusion of a recent disciplinary process involving a member of staff. The outcome identified organisational learning, including the need to strengthen delegation clarity, reinforce proper decision-making pathways, improve administrative standards, and ensure full compliance with employment and governance procedures. Members were supportive of the Clerk's programme of procedural improvements and staff support measures. **(Confidential Appendix 2)**

18. FC260/25- VEHICLE INSURANCE AND FUNDS

Members **AGREED** to accept the insurance company's and underwriters' final settlement position relating to the claim for parish assets. Members were satisfied to proceed on the basis that the circumstances surrounding the claim are fully disclosed to the Council's auditors, and that the auditors confirm they are content with the actions taken. On this basis, Members **APPROVED** acceptance of the insurance settlement and confirmed that the Clerk is not required to refer the matter to the Financial Ombudsman, subject to auditor assurance prior to the settlement being finalised. **(Confidential Appendix 3)**

19. FC261/25- LEGAL MATTERS

Members **NOTED** the update regarding the ongoing legal proceedings listed for 16 April, and that Cllr Jefcoate will attend on behalf of the Council.

20. FC262/25- CEMETERY MATTERS

Members **NOTED** the officer's report relating to cemetery matters and **AGREED** to waive the fee for a cremated remains burial, considering the circumstances explained by the Clerk, an error made by the family, and in accordance with ICCM best practice. Members further **AGREED** to refund a pre-purchased burial plot that is no longer required due to the family's relocation, subject to a £95 administration fee. **(Confidential Appendix 4 and 5)**

21. FC263/25- BUSINESS CASE

Members **NOTED** the officer's report on the business case for a new telephony system and **AGREED** that the matter did not require confidential discussion, considering it in open session for transparency. Members **APPROVED** the proposed modern, lower-cost telephony solution to replace the outdated system. Members **NOTED** the potential short lapse in service arising from one contract ending before renewal and **AGREED** the mitigation measures outlined **(Confidential Appendix 6)**

22. FC264/25- INSURANCE POLICY RENEWAL

Members **NOTED** the report and the recommendation from the Finance & Governance Committee and **AGREED** to renew the Council's insurance policy with the current insurer for a one-year term.

Members further agreed that this item did not require discussion in confidential session.

(Confidential Appendix 7)

23. FC265/25- PENSIONS

Members **NOTED** the updated pension documentation, including minor amendments to contribution percentages **(Confidential Appendix 8)**

24. FC266/25- FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

Members **NOTED** the associated costs for the mandatory fire risk assessment for the Cemetery as set out in the officer's report **(Confidential Appendix 9)**

25. FC267/25- SUBJECT ACCESS REQUEST/ FREEDOM FOR INFORMATION

Members **NOTED** the Clerk's update on ongoing SAR and FOI matters and the steps being taken to progress outstanding cases. Members also **NOTED** the recent ICT upgrade (£50) implemented to improve search functionality and compliance. One Member declared a personal interest in relation to a SAR **(Confidential Appendix 10)**

The meeting closed at 21.24