



MINUTES OF THE CHIGWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Date: Thursday 30 April 2026

Time: 7.00pm

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

Members present:

*Cllr J Braha (Chair)	Cllr D Rye (Vice Chair)
*Cllr L Clark	Cllr E Costa
Cllr E Skingsley	Cllr L Skingsley-Morgan
Cllr F Rizvi	Cllr T Amuludun
Cllr C Jefcoate	

Officers present:

J Selvarajah - Clerk and Proper Officer
O. Linkeviciene – Responsible Financial Officer

**Denotes part of meeting attended. Chair's late arrival notification was received in advance- Cllr D Rye chaired meeting.*

Members of the press and public were invited to attend this meeting. Members of the Public and Councillors were 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 were 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. FC268/25- APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Members received and **AGREED** to accept apologies for absence from Cllr R Hodds.

2. FC269/25- ANY OTHER ABSENCE

Cllr O Ali

3. FC270/25- DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C Jefcoate declared an interest in Item 13, having a personal acquaintance with the individual commissioned to undertake the tender drawings. Councillor L Skingsley-Morgan declared a personal interest in Item 18 due to volunteering at the relevant location.

4. FC271/25- MINUTES

Members **AGREED** the minutes of the meeting of 26 March as an accurate representation of what took place (**Appendix 1**)

5. FC272/25- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

6. FC273/25- FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS AND BANK RECONCILIATIONS

Members

REVIEWED and **APPROVED** proposed payments for April (**Appendix 2**)

REVIEWED and **APPROVED** card payments for March (**Appendix 3**)

REVIEWED and **APPROVED** bank reconciliation to 31 March (**Appendix 4**)

REVIEWED and **APPROVED** the report detailing salary, superannuation and tax payments for April 2026 paid 10 April and May 2026 due on 11 May 2026 (**Appendix 5**)

NOTED the reported cemetery activities to 30 March (**Appendix 6**)

7. FC274/25- FINANCIAL REGULATION 5.15 EXPENDITURE

As per Financial Regulation 5.15, Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by the Clerk or RFO, under delegated authority, for any items below £1,000 excluding VAT. Such authorisation must be supported by a minute (in the case of council or committee decisions) or other auditable evidence trail.

Members **NOTED** and **ENDORSED** the attached expenditure of individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure authorised by the Clerk or RFO for the period 04.03.26 to 24.04.26 (**Appendix 7**)

8. FC275/25- INTERNAL CONTROL FOR Q1 2025/26

Members were advised that the Council should appoint a member to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements as evidence of verification (Financial Regulations 2.2).

Members **APPOINTED** Cllr F Rizvi to verify bank reconciliations for the Q1 period 2026/27

9. FC276/25- REVIEW OF DIRECT DEBITS AND BACS PAYMENTS

The Financial Regulations at 6.7, 6.8 and 6.9 require the review every two years of variable and fixed direct debit instructions, standing orders and BACS payments due. The Council are thus

asked to review the current arrangements made to pay utility suppliers, non-domestic rates, contractual and agreed direct debits, Standing Orders and BACS payment instructions for the financial year 2026/27

Members **REVIEWED** and **APPROVED** the direct debit payments for 26/27 (**Appendix 8**) and the contractual payments made via BACS and/or Standing Order for 2026/27 (**Appendix 9**)

10. FC277/25- 2026/27 GENERAL AND EMRs BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL

Position as of 31 March 2026 and Allocation of Reserves

Members received and considered the RFO's report (**Appendix 10**) presenting the Council's financial position as of 31 March 2026, including the proposed carry forward of Earmarked Reserves (EMR), Capital Reserves and allocation of remaining available balances for the 2026/27 financial year.

Members **NOTED**:

- That the total bank and cash balance as of 31 March 2026 stood at **£455,448.63**.
- That Full Council had previously approved total allocations for 2026/27 of £145,000 (Minute Ref: FC208/25), including £65,000 to General Reserves and £135,000 to EMR.
- That following previously agreed commitments, a balance of **£175,448.63** remained available for further allocation.

Following consideration, members **APPROVED** the following:

That **£175,448.63** be carried forward into the 2026/27 financial year:

EFDC Community Hub/Victory Hall Project (CH/ VH)

That **£72,481.20** be carried forward into the 2026/27 financial year to support completion of the EFDC CH/VH Project, noting that the project delivery deadline has been extended to September 2026.

Capital Reserve

That **£19,000** be carried forward into the Capital Reserve for use in the 2026/27 financial year.

Victory Hall Premises Refurbishment

That £20,319.80 be carried forward for Victory Hall Premises Refurbishment works, with members noting that expenditure is permitted up to a maximum of **£28,435.13**, subject to operational requirements.

Cemetery Projects

That **£28,532.30** be carried forward into the 2026/27 financial year to fund ongoing cemetery projects, specifically:

- Columbarium works; and
- Composting works.

Allocation of Remaining Balance (£27,000)

That the remaining balance of £27,000 be allocated to the following EMR for identified priority works and statutory obligations:

- Corporate Branding – £2,000
- Victory Hall Fire Escape Pathway Remedial Works – £6,000
- Health & Safety Compliance Works – £2,000
- Cemetery Memorial Safety Programme (12-month action plan in accordance with Article 16 and Schedule 3 of LACO) – £7,000
- Cemetery Roadway Remedial Works (LACO Article 4 obligation) – £10,000

Members further **NOTED** that the **APPROVED** allocations support:

- The continuation of agreed and ongoing projects;
- Compliance with statutory, legal and health & safety requirements; and
- The prudent and transparent management of Council reserves in accordance with good financial governance.

11. FC278/25- PROGRESS REPORT TO THE COUNCIL REGARDING FUND FLOW ANALYSIS AND MANAGEMENT OF OPERATIONAL CASH BALANCES (FC179/25)

Members **CONSIDERED** the RFO report (**Appendix 11**) and recommendations on the FSCS Protection compliance during 2026/27 therein and **AGREED** on an appropriate course of action.

NOTED the financial position as of 31 March 2026.

Account Type Balance (£)

Unity Trust Current Account **19,367.67**

Investment Accounts **436,080.96**

Total Funds Held **455,448.63**

APPROVED the transfer of:

- **£29,000** to the Charity Savings Account (40-Day Notice 3.01%-3.04%)
- **£120,000** to the Virgin Money Savings Account (120-Day Notice 3.51%)

AGREED To AUTHORISE the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to implement the proposed arrangements for managing the Council's operational cash balances.

NOTED and **AGREED** the cash flow forecast for May to August 2026

NOTED AND AGREED the planned review of investment options by the Finance & Governance Committee in July–August 2026

NOTED AND AGREED the requirement to withdraw **£72,481.20** for the EFDC project in August -September 2026

AGREED that an updated progress report be presented to Council in September 2026

12. FC279/25- BUDGET 2026/27 – VIREMENTS

Members **CONSIDERED** the RFO report (**Appendix 12**) and recommendations therein and **APPROVED** the virement of **£1,894.00** from Cost Code L/67 (VH/CH) to:

- R/101 Cemetery – £50.59
- C/11 Head Office – £555.50
- G/36 Insurance – £1,287.91

13. FC280/25- PROGRESS REPORT TO THE COUNCIL REGARDING COMMUNITY HUB AND VICTORY HALL REFURBISHMENT

Members **CONSIDERED** and **NOTED** the officer report (**Appendix 13**) regarding the expenditure associated with tender compliant internal and external drawings, which include ramp access and associated costs of £1,200 plus VAT.

14. FC281/25- ANNUAL MEETING

Members were reminded that the Annual Meeting of the Council will take place on Thursday 21 May at 7.30pm, and that all Councillors are expected to attend. It is anticipated that the meeting will conclude by 9.30pm, and Councillors are expected to be present for the duration of the meeting, unless they are required to withdraw from consideration of a specific item due to a declared interest.

15. FC282/25- COUNCILLOR SURGERIES DURING PRE- ELECTION PERIOD

Members **NOTED** that during the pre-election period, councillor surgeries may continue only where they are genuinely business as usual and limited strictly to casework and local constituent matters. Surgeries must not involve any political or campaign-related discussion, must not be promoted using Parish Council resources, and Council premises must not be used for campaigning. Where there is any risk that a surgery could be perceived as political, the safest course of action is to pause such activity until after the election.

16. FC283/25- CLERK'S REPORT – SUMMARY OF APPROVALS, AGREEMENTS AND UPDATES

Members **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the Clerk's written report (**Appendix 14**). Items requiring Member approval or agreement are set out below. All other matters were **NOTED** for information.

DECISIONS AND AGREEMENTS ARISING

a) ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION CONDITION REPORT (EICR)

Members **NOTED** completion of the EICR and **AGREED** that the Clerk should seek recovery of associated costs from the previous contractor.

b) COMPLIANCE, SAFETY AND VICTORY HALL CAPACITY

Members **NOTED** ongoing work relating to Martyn's Law, the fire risk assessment, and the review of Victory Hall capacity. Members **AGREED** that proposals will be brought back to Full Council for consideration and approval once this work is complete.

c) CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION – INTERIM DELEGATED AUTHORITY

Members **NOTED** and **APPROVED** an interim, temporary delegation enabling the Clerk, in the absence of the Registrar, to authorise appropriately trained officers to undertake cemetery administration, including:

- issuance of Exclusive Rights of Burial; and
- updating cemetery registers.

This arrangement is temporary (3 months) while new Cemetery Regulations are drafted and will be reported back to Full Council for formal approval, including proposals for a longer-term scheme of delegation and quality assurance framework.

d) CEMETERY RECORDS – STANDARD PRACTICE

Members **NOTED** and **AGREED** to adopt a standard practice whereby all cemetery registers and associated internal records are completed within five working days of each event, with appropriate quality assurance incorporated into processes and software where possible.

e) EXTERNAL HR CONSULTANT

Members **NOTED** that the contract with the Council's existing HR Consultant had lapsed and **AGREED** to continue the arrangement on a rolling basis to support ongoing matters. Members further **AGREED** that a formal review of the arrangement would be undertaken once current matters have concluded.

f) UNIFORM AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Members **NOTED** and **AGREED** to the provision of appropriate uniform and PPE to professionalise the appearance of front-facing officers, particularly during burial services. This includes suitable PPE for the Caretaker to support litter-picking and similar operational activities, in order to enhance health and safety and the professional presentation of Council services.

g) CEMETERY GATE LOCKING CONTRACT

Members **NOTED** that the existing cemetery gate locking and unlocking contract, previously approved, required re-approval. Members **AGREED** to continue the service, having noted that it represents good value for money.

h) MARKETING MATERIALS AND GAZEBO

Members **NOTED** and **APPROVED** the procurement of modestly priced marketing materials, within existing budgets, to support Council events and cemetery operations.

MATTERS NOTED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

- Members **NOTED** that the installation of the new telephony system was operating well and that officers were trialling a lone-working application.
- Members **NOTED** that a volunteer is assisting the RFO one day per week for five hours.

17. FC284/25- BUSINESS CASE VICTORY HALL FIRE ESCAPE PATHWAY

Members **NOTED** and **APPROVED** the business case and the recommendations therein for the installation of an eco-permeable fire escape pathway, emergency lighting, and associated fencing at Victory Hall (**Appendix 15**)

18. FC285/25- DISPOSAL OF SNOOKER TABLES AT THE COMMUNITY HUB AND ALLOCATION OF PROCEEDS

Members **NOTED** and **AGREED** in principle to donate the proceeds towards the provision of suitable leisure equipment identified as being supported by Chigwell Parish Council. Members

further **AGREED** that the Clerk will report back to Council on the final sale proceeds and a recommended donation amount prior to any final transfer being made **(Appendix 16)**

19. FC286/25- MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT FORWARD OR FOR DISCUSSION WITH NO DECISION

An update was provided by the Clerk in respect of the proposed sale of the Parish Council's minibus, together with a general discussion regarding committee nominations and arrangements for the Council's Annual Meeting.

NOTED: No formal decisions were taken under this item.

20. FC287/25- DATE OF THE NEXT FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday 28 May at 7.00pm

21. FC288/25- EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

In the event that the agenda contains items where the public interest in maintaining confidentiality may outweigh the public interest in the item being made public, to **CONSIDER** the following motion to be 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."

22. FC288/25- LEGAL MATTERS

The Clerk provided an update on the progress of associated legal matters and confirmed that actions taken to date were in the best interests of the Council, enabling Members to make a formal decision on next steps following the pre-election period.

Members **AGREED** that the Clerk would keep them informed as and when further updates become available

(Confidential Appendix 1)

23. FC289/25- MATTER RELATING TO PARISH OWNED BUILDINGS

The Clerk confirmed that, as part of the associated works connected to the Community Hub, it was necessary in accordance with local government legislation to obtain independent valuations relating to the sale value and potential rental income of the Parish Council offices.

Members were appraised of the valuation received and reminded of the statutory requirements and legislative framework governing the disposal of Council-owned land and buildings.

(Confidential Appendix 2)

Notes on Declarations of Interest

Members with a disclosable pecuniary interest in an item should withdraw from the room while that item is being considered. Members should also leave the room if their continued presence is not compatible with the Council's Code of Conduct or the Seven Principles of Public Life.

The disclosure must include the nature of the interest. If you become aware during meeting of an interest that has not been disclosed under this item you must immediately disclose it. You may remain in the meeting and take part fully in discussion and voting unless the interest is prejudicial.

A personal interest is prejudicial if a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard it as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest and it relates to a financial or regulatory matter.

It is not practical to offer detailed advice during the meeting on whether or not a personal interest should be declared, or whether a personal interest should be regarded as a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest. Members are advised to seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer well before the meeting if needed.