

**Minutes of Chesterton Parish Council Meeting
at Chesterton Community Centre
Tuesday, 4th March 2025 at 7.00 pm.**

DRAFT

Councillors Present: Paul Andrews, Mel Cantwell, Johnathan Chavda, Chris Hawes, Jenny Hodges, Andrew Thomas (Chair) and Gary Warland (arrived at 7:35pm)

In Attendance: Brian Inglis (Clerk), Mike White (RFO) and Stephen Webster (arrived at 7:32)
Cherwell DC Cllr Grace Conway-Murray and Oxfordshire CC Cllr Nigel Simpson

Public Attendance: There were 2 members of the public present

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

2. Requests for Dispensations, Declarations of Interest, Gifts and Hospitality

To receive any requests for dispensations or declarations of interest from Councillors relating to items on the agenda, in accordance with the council's Code of Conduct and to note any gifts or hospitality. None recorded.

3. To Approve and Sign the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 4th February 2025

The minutes were unanimously accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chair.

4. Update on Progress from Previous Minutes (items requiring no further decision).

None

5. Public Participation –

No members of the public contributed at this point

6. To Receive a Report from the District / County Councillors

Our District and County Councillors gave a concise report to councillors on various issues, including the recent adoption of both CDC and OCC budgets and the progress of the 2042 Local Plan.

Both Councillors answered questions from councillors as they arose, with particular emphasis on the ongoing matter of s106 funds which are held by CDC and OCC but are proving difficult to access. It was noted that repeated requests for information from the parish council to the officers at OCC have been ignored.

7. Vacancy on the Parish Council

The Clerk reported that he had posted the notice to the public of the casual vacancy which has arisen as a result of the passing of Cllr Tony Thompson. The statutory notice period expires on 20th March 2025.

The Clerk reported that there had been no applications for Co-option to the Parish Council.

8. To Receive a Report from the Allotment Committee

Work has been completed on trees and hedging around the allotments, to the satisfaction of the committee. Existing tenants have been advised of the rental rates for season 2025-26, with three tenants deciding to give up their plots. Three new tenants have been identified.

Renewal notices will be sent to tenants by the middle of March.

District Cllr Conway-Murray left the meeting at 7:23pm with thanks for taking the time to attend.

9. To Receive a Report from the Highway Committee

Cllr Chavda gave an update on OCC Highways activity along the “Bumpy Road”, also noting the works which have been carried out at the pumping station and at the bridge over Gagle Brook.

10. To Receive a Report From Environmental & Burnehyll Woodland Committee

There was no report, but an informative update in the most recent ABC was noted.

11. To Receive a Report from the Community Committee

11.1 Cllr Thomas gave a report from information provided by the Keep Chesterton Tidy working group on their activities during February, paying tribute to the efforts of those volunteers involved.

11.2 Activity on the Community Speedwatch team is suspended for the time being, while a volunteer to take the project forward is sought.

11.3 Cllr Hodges has made contact with recent new arrivals in the village, welcoming them to Chesterton.

County Cllr Simpson left the meeting at 7:33pm with thanks for taking the time to attend.

12. To Receive A Report From The Pavilion, Playing Field and Play Equipment Working Group

Cllr Hawes noted that the AGM would take place on Wednesday 5th March. He would be attending and will report back to the next meeting.

13. To Receive The Finance Officer’s Monthly Report, Discuss Other Finance Matters And Approve Expenditure / Income

13.1 The RFO Monthly Report (circulated prior to meeting) was expanded upon by RFO Mike White, to the satisfaction of councillors.

13.2 The RFO Receipts & Payment Report (circulated prior to meeting) was scrutinised and accepted. The RFO reported on banking and investment activity, to the satisfaction of councillors and gave an update on the budget position as the council year-end approaches.

13.3 It was RESOLVED to adopt the Reserves Policy, due for review, unchanged and previously circulated.

13.4 It was RESOLVED to adopt the Internal Financial Controls Policy and Checklist, due for annual review, unchanged and previously circulated.

13.5 It was RESOLVED to accept the quotation from Green Scythe Ltd to carry out grass cutting in the village as per an agreed schedule, and it was RESOLVED to accept the quotation from Pryce Bros Ltd to carry out weed control treatments in the village on two separate visits

13.6 The Bank Balance to Receipts and Summary schedule was scrutinised, agreed and signed by the Chair.

13.7 After review, it was RESOLVED to approve the invoices for February 2025.

13.8 Cllr Chavda is considering options for replacement laptops for Clerk and RFO.

14. Training

14.1 The Clerk expanded on a previously circulated link to current and future training opportunities which are available to councillors via OALC, SLCC and Breakthrough Communications, encouraging councillor participation and offering to make bookings where needed.

Cllr Thomas has registered to attend an online session run by OALC on Local Panning, and The Clerk intends to attend the Oxfordshire County Council Day at County House, Oxford on 3rd April.

15. Governance

15.1 It was RESOLVED to adopt the Freedom of Information Policy, not due for review but containing updated contact details for The Clerk and circulated prior to the meeting.

The Clerk will publish to the parish website immediately (Action – Clerk)

- 15.2 Following discussions on the structure of the Annual Parish Meeting, due to be held on Tuesday 22nd April 2025, it was agreed that The Clerk would write to all village groups, requesting an annual report to residents on activities over the previous 12 months. The Clerk would post details of the date and time on Facebook and the parish website, and The Chair would add this to his report to the ABC.

16. To Receive An Update On The Progress Of A Chesterton Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Thomas will convene a preliminary meeting to discuss the initial steps involved in drawing up the Chesterton Neighbourhood Plan. It is hoped to involve residents with no connection to the Parish Council in this and subsequent meetings as the Neighbourhood Plan takes shape. A suitable date will be found, taking into account the availability of Community Centre board room.

17. To receive a Report from the Planning Committee

- 17.1 Stephen Webster was thanked for the significant amount of work he had put into formulating the parish council representation to the Cherwell DC Local Plan 2042 consultation, and he summarised for the benefit of councillors, answering questions as they arose.
- 17.2 The parish council would make no comment on Draft Order SE/5941. The Clerk has posted the statutory notice of these highway works to the community centre notice board.

Stephen Webster reported on a useful meeting with Bellway Homes, which he had attended with Cllrs Thomas, Chavda and Hodges. It was hoped that this line of communication will remain open and cordial as the start date of the development in the village approaches and gets under way.

18. To Receive A Report On Planning Applications Received

Cllr Hodges gave a report on new planning applications, as detailed on the agenda, outlining any comments to be submitted by the parish council. Comments can be viewed on the Cherwell DC planning portal.

19. Important Correspondence Received Since The Last Meeting

There had been none. The Clerk noted that he had been copied into an email string between a resident and officers of Cherwell DC and Oxfordshire CC regarding abandoned vehicles in the village.

20. Councillors to Consider Content for the Next Edition of ABC Magazine.

The Chair reminded Councillors of the deadline for content of 15th March.

The meeting Finished at: 8.21 pm. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 1st April 2025 at 7pm

Signed: Date:
(Chair)

Chesterton Parish Council Meeting Dates 2024 - 2025
All meetings commence at 7pm at Chesterton Community Centre

Tuesday 1st April 2025

Members of the Public are very welcome to attend.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Tuesday 22nd April 2025