

Minutes of a Meeting of East Challow Parish Council

Held on Wednesday 10th January 2024 at 19:30, East Challow Village Hall

Public Session:

No points were raised.

Members Present:

Chairman	Cllr V A Bosley (VB)
Vice-Chairman	Cllr F Webb (FW)
Members	Cllr T Hayes (TH)
	Cllr P Barrow (PB)
	Cllr A Gregson (AG)
	Cllr B Miller (BM)
	Cllr I Crump (IC)
Clerk	Mrs J Smith (JS)

Public and press:

One MoP arrived during the meeting.

Meeting started at 19.36

234/24 To receive apologies for absence. [LGA 1972 s85(1)]

None received.

235/24 Declarations of Interests [LA 2011 s31]

235.1/24 To receive declarations of interest for items on this agenda.

Cllr V Bosley on Village Hall Committee

Cllr I Crump on Village Hall Committee

Cllr P Barrow as District Councillor

235.2/24 To consider requests for Dispensations [LA 2011 s33]

None

236/24 To approve the minutes of previous council meetings [LA 1972 Sch 12. Para 41(1)]

236.1/24 Meeting held on 13th December 2023

It was agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr Miller seconded by Cllr Webb. The minutes were signed at the end of the meeting.

236.2/24 Matters arising from the minutes not elsewhere on the agenda.

None

237/24 Chairman's Announcements

The Chair reported that planning application P24/V0051/HH would need to be added to the agenda and discussed during the planning session. This had been received today 10/01/24 and the response date was 31/01/24.

The Chair reported that Bethia Thomas, County Councillor for the Faringdon Division, would be covering parts of Cllr Constance's position during her convalescence.

The Chair reported that it had been agreed unanimously that the Clerk would be paid at SCP point 22 of the NJC pay scales from 01/01/24.

238/24 Staffing Matters

238.1/24 To confirm Laura Pike RFO attending an OALC course called Preparing for Year End Audit at a cost of £36.

This was confirmed and agreed by all Councillors.

238.2/24 To note and confirm the purchase of an additional Microsoft 365 licence for the RFO at a cost of £12.36 per month.

After discussions regarding the RFO accessing the software needed to complete tasks required, the Admin Assistant and the Chair decided that the setting up of a new licence was the best way forward for the long term, as the computer consultant advised that the one-off yearly payment would be gradually phased out as an option. The first Microsoft License was approved in June minutes 114.10/23.

This was noted and confirmed by all Councillors.

238.3/24 To note and confirm there was additional technical support needed for the division of the Clerk/RFO positions (linked to minute 212/23 December 13th meeting).

The Clerks laptop took from Tuesday until Saturday to sync all the data, the laptop was continuously on for this period and had to be prompted into action many times, involving support from the computer consultant.

This was noted and confirmed.

238.4/24 To note and confirm the cost of advice and action that was required for the website.

This advice was needed urgently as the Admin Assistant and Chair needed to confirm that the phishing scam that had used contact information from East Challow Parish Council website had not compromised any of the Council's data.

This was noted and confirmed. Cllr Barrow enquired about virus protection on the laptops. The Clerk will talk to the computer consultant and check there is adequate protection in place. **[ACTION CLERK]**

238.5/24 To approve the cost of technical support needed to set up the RFO's new laptop.

Resolved: A maximum of 5 hours of technical support was approved unanimously.

239/24 To receive reports from the District and County Councillors.

239.1/24 Oxfordshire County Councillor

A report was not available.

Bethia Thomas, County Councillor for the Faringdon Division, would be covering parts of Cllr Constance's position during her convalescence. It was decided to ask Cllr Thomas for a monthly report covering any issues that affected East Challow. The Clerk will contact Cllr Thomas and pass on this request. **[ACTION CLERK]**. An email from Cllr Ian Snowden, District and County Councillor for Didcot West, had been received, introducing himself and offering support. The clerk was asked to reply and pass on our thanks. **[ACTION CLERK]**

239.2/24 Vale of White Horse District Councillor

The report was received.

Cllr Barrow provided more details about Wantage Hospital, the proposal is for maternity beds upstairs and clinics to operate downstairs. There will not be any community beds available, although there was a lot of evidence that recovery rates were better at home. There are public and town council meetings planned to consider these proposals before being referred to HOSC. Cllr Barrow reported that £6000 of CIL money had been allocated to refurbish the hospital.

Cllr Barrow had received a model Risk Assessment from Stefan Pilcher at Challow and Childrey Cricket Club, it was felt that this could be adapted to cover the Warm Spaces meetings. Cllr Barrow will be looking at the risk assessment and will report back at the next meeting.

Cllr Miller suggested the Parish Council should investigate if it was possible to co-opt more Cllrs. Cllr Barrow is part of the Governance and Electoral Issues Committee, Cllr Barrow will enquire if it is possible to increase the number of Councillors.

240/24 Planning

240.1/24 To note Planning authority decisions on application:

P23/V2497/S73 Site Location: Field View Canal Farm Lane East Challow Wantage OX12 9YQ
GRANTED

Application proposal, including any amendments:

Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) on application P23/V1145/HH to garage to be extended by 1.2m.

(Single storey extension).

Noted

P23/V2520/HH Site Location: 2 Willow Cottages Letcombe Hill East Challow Wantage OX12 9RW
REFUSED

Application proposal, including any amendments:

Construction of two storey side extension and single storey rear extension

Noted

240.2/24 To note planning applications received:

P23/V2818/DIS development work at the following location : Land At Grove Airfield Denchworth Road Grove Wantage *The application is for: Discharge of condition 7 (Local Centre Development Brief) on planning application P12/V0299/O Outline application for residential development of about 2,500 dwellings with associated services and facilities including secondary school, primary schools, local centre (including uses falling within use classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, C2, D1 and D2), open space including community park, and the realignment of Denchworth Road to the south.*

Please note there is no return date for comments.

Noted

P24/V0032/T28 for development work at the following location: OD036 East Challow *The application is for: Installation of twelve new telegraph poles for the provision of Fibre to the premises (FTTP*

Please note there is not a response request.

Noted. Councillor Barrow reported that this was a retrospective planning application, and he would follow up on the planning enforcement issue. **[ACTION PB]**

240.3/24 To approve response to request for consultation on application.

P24/V0051/HH Location: Fernbank Letcombe Hill East Challow Wantage OX12 9RP
The application is for: Proposed sunken garage.

Resolved: Approved unanimously to submit the response: NO OBJECTIONS

241/24 Update on the flood alleviation proposal adjacent to LJ & CA Cannings

A meeting had taken place with Mr Cannings, it was decided that more information needs to be obtained concerning the time frame for the works. Councillor Hayes requested that the Clerk email Will Pitrowski from OCCH to request the Construction Phase Plan from the contractors who will carry out the work. **[ACTION CLERK]**

242/24 Finance 2023-2024**242.1/24 To receive an update on the opening of the Unity Trust bank account.**

The clerk contacted the OALC for advice about the opening of an alternative bank to Unity Trust, this links back to minute 218.1/23 in the December minutes. OALC advised that if the RFO felt there was a better option for the council then this should be brought to the council and minuted. The RFO has been poorly, this will remain a priority for January and put on the agenda for the February meeting. The OALC advised that the cheque received from Barclays, when they unexpectedly closed East Challow Parish Council's account, should be deposited. The Cheque has been deposited in the Co-op bank, using Post Office services. Cllr Webb will go online to confirm receipt by the Co-op bank. This will take East Challow Parish Council temporarily over the £85,000 FSA limit. **[ACTION FW] [ACTION RFO]**

OALC ADVICE

I would suggest that the risk of loss or damage to the cheque outweighs the risk of the council being above the FSA limit on a temporary basis.

The Clerk was advised by OALC to contact the Internal Auditor and inform them that the FSA limit would be temporarily exceeded.

Internal Auditor Response

Do not worry about the £85000

[ACTION RFO]

242.2./24 To receive an update on the updating of the Co-op bank account.

The necessary signatures had been obtained and the RFO will send this to CO-OP bank. Councillor Webb pointed out that when the bank receives this, it could take some time for the bank mandate to be updated and internet banking to be available. **[ACTION RFO]**

242.3/24 To receive an update on the annual CIL declaration.

Resolved: The annual CIL declaration has been completed and was sent on the 31st December 2023

242.4/24 To agree the January 2024 payments.

Resolved: The January payments were unanimously agreed.

242.5/24 To note the December 2023 receipts.

The December receipts were noted.

Total staff costs for December 2023: 289.37

All other December payments:

Voucher No.	Date	Supplier	Description	Payment Ref	Net	VAT	Total
	05/01/2024	Ionos Cloud Limited	website		15.00	3.00	18.00
	06/01/2024	RJR Tree Surgery	Tree work		510.00	102.00	612.00
	04/01/2024	Open Spaces Society	subscription		45.00	-	45.00
	22/12/2023	Grove Geeks	various IT support		150.00	30.00	180.00
	19/12/2023	Jeremy Hanham	cemetery work		245.00	-	245.00
	31/12/2023	Jane Smith	administration support		511.00	-	511.00
	03/01/2024	Laura Pike	Dec expense		12.00	-	12.00
	31/12/2023	Jane Smith	Dec expense		65.62	9.92	75.54
Total							1,698.54

November receipts

Voucher No.	Date	Payer	Description	Payment Method	Total
31	07/12/2023	Various	Allotment fee	Online	10.00
Total					10.00

242.6/24 To note the reconciled bank account for 22/12/23 (latest bank statement)

The balances for 22/12/23 were noted.

The bank reconciliation was signed at the end of the meeting by Councillor Miller.

Bank Reconciliation at 22/12/2023

	Cash in Hand 01/04/2023		77,462.85
	ADD		
	Receipts 01/04/2023 - 22/12/2023		78,334.47
			155,797.32
	SUBTRACT		
	Payments 01/04/2023 - 22/12/2023		38,952.29
A	Cash in Hand 22/12/2023		116,845.03
	(per Cash Book)		
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash	22/12/2023	0.00
	Unity Trust	22/12/2023	0.00
	Cooperative	22/12/2023	91,450.99
	Barclays	22/12/2023	0.00
			91,450.99
	Less unrepresented payments		409.65
			91,041.34
	Plus unrepresented receipts		25,803.69
B	Adjusted Bank Balance		116,845.03
	A = B Checks out OK		

243/24 Finance 2024-25

243.1/24 To approve budget 2024-2025 and confirm the precept that was agreed at the December meeting.

Resolved: The 2024/2025 budget was unanimously approved with the figure of £47,500 as the proposed income figure , the precept part of that is £45,538.47.

243.2/24 To receive an update on the progress of completing the precept paperwork.

We have the necessary paperwork; this will be processed by the deadline of 22nd January 2024.
[ACTION RFO]

244/24 Noticeboards

244.1/24 To receive an update on the already purchased noticeboard and ascertain if it can be adapted to free standing.

Councillor Gregson will investigate this and report back at the next meeting. [ACTION AG]

244.2/24 To receive an update on the new noticeboard to be located local to the Crest Nicholson Estate.

Prior to the meeting Councillor Bosley had circulated noticeboard examples, it was felt that the notice board should be made of recycled plastic. Cllr Hayes suggested contacting a company called No Butts. 3 quotes for the noticeboard will need to be obtained as per the financial regulations. It was decided to discuss this at the next meeting, once it is known if the already purchased noticeboard could be adapted in any way.

244.3/24 To discuss the Vicarage Hill Cemetery noticeboard.

It was suggested that an A3 noticeboard will be sufficient. A discussion took place as to the fixing position for this board, it was felt that a post would be better than the gate. Cllr Bosley will investigate this. A budget of £50 was unanimously approved for the purchase of the noticeboard.
[ACTION VB]

245/24 Warm spaces Project/Community Celebrations

245.1/24 To receive an update on the actions proposed for the warm Spaces project; Risk assessment and DBS checks and approve expenditure for the DBS checks.

Partially resolved: A maximum budget of £100 was unanimously approved for the DBS checks. The risk assessment is being progressed by Cllr Barrow [ACTION PB]

246/24 To receive an update on the agreed inspection of the trees belonging to ECPC in the Parish Council car park adjacent to the school.

246.1/24 To receive a report on the Health and Safety works carried out on the trees in the Parish Council car park adjacent to the school.

As confirmed at the meeting on 13th December the Clerk received the 2nd quote and as per East Challow Parish Council's Financial Regulations, obtained a 3rd quote. The details were emailed to all Councillors on 18/12/23. The quotes recommended differing actions regarding the diseased tree. After seeking OALC advice and the opinions of the Councillors, it was decided to take up the quote from RJR Tree surgeons. This included the felling of the diseased tree as this could pose a Health and Safety risk in the future as any crown lift to this tree would necessitate the removal of large boughs which would weaken the tree. It was decided to not replace the tree and discuss this in the future.
Resolved: The work was carried out on the 5th of January 2024 before the children's return to school. Cllr Hayes, who is a Governor at St Nicholas School, said he would inform the school of the actions taken. [ACTION TH]

246.2/24 To discuss a full tree inspection as recommended by OALC and decide which Councillors will progress this with the Chair and the Clerk.

A discussion took place, and it was agreed unanimously that a tree inspection needed to be carried out. The following points were raised:

A tree map needs to be drawn up; Google maps could be useful, Cllr Gregson will support on this.

[ACTION AG]

Parish Online may be able to provide some maps.

The Clerk will contact Andy Ledurer Tree Manager from the County Council and ask for tree mapping advice. [ACTION CLERK]

Cornhill Lane will need to be considered carefully when tree mapping as some trees are owned by different parties.

Cllr Hayes offered to work alongside the Clerk and the Chair to progress the work needed to carry out a full tree inspection.

The OALC advised to check with the Council's insurance policy on the frequency that is expected for a tree inspection. This will be done by the Clerk once we have had a tree inspection, to ensure regularity of inspection. **[ACTION CLERK]**

247/24 To receive an update on the flooding on the A417 (East Challow to Stanford in the Vale)

Please see the District Councillor's report.

248/24 To receive an update on the Emergency Plan

Councillor Miller reported that a lot of information needed updating and he would progress this and report back at the next meeting. **[ACTION BM]**

249/24 To receive an update on the parking situation at the top of Sarajac Avenue and Windmill Place also the residents request for increased parking.

Cllr Barrow had raised this with Mark Francis, he had been informed that the budget for this sort of works had been reduced so nothing would be considered at this time.

250/24 To receive an update from Cllr Barrow on the installation of the Fibre network being carried out in East Challow by Airband.

Please see the District Councillor's report.

251/24 To discuss the comments for the Joint Local Plan which are invited from the 10th January -21st February.

Cllr Barrow and Cllr Bosley will progress this, this will be discussed at the next meeting. **[ACTION PB ACTION VB]**

252/24 To discuss the Village Hall's insurance renewal regarding the parish Council's requirement for Hall indemnity.

Prior to the meeting the Clerk circulated these documents and sent a reminder that a response was needed by the Village Hall Committee the day after the meeting. Cllr Miller responded, prior to the meeting, pointing out that the following point needed clarifying with the insurance company.

"You have informed us that you own the hall, and we are insuring the building, however we note that information showing on the charity commission website states that 'This charity does not own and/or lease land or property'. We recommend that you correct the information held about your charity on the charity commission register. If the information we have is incorrect, and you don't own the hall please let us know immediately as your buildings cover may not be valid".

The Councillors felt that the Village Hall Committee should go ahead with the insurance renewal if they were happy with all other aspects of the insurance. Cllr Miller will have a more in depth look at the policy as regards to Hall indemnity and feedback to the Village Hall Committee if necessary.

[ACTION BM]

The Clerk will email the above to the Village Hall Committee on 11/01/24.

253/24 To discuss the deep Cleanse planned by Biffa for the 3 days 27/02/24- 29/02/24.

A discussion took place about areas in the village that would benefit from the service being offered. All councillors will send their responses to the Clerk, they will be collated, and the Clerk will respond.

[ACTION CLERK]

254/24 Standing Agenda items, to receive and agree actions.**254.1/24 Parish Cemeteries**

Cllr Bosley reported that the reclaimed land at the Vicarage Hill cemetery still needed some work. Jeremy Hanham Grounds Maintenance contractor has offered to quote for this work. Cllr Bosley mentioned the possibility of new gates for the Vicarage Hill Cemetery. This will be looked into at a later date.

254.2/24 Traffic/Highways including**HGV's using Vicarage Hill – update from DCllr**

Cllr Barrow has asked Highways to provide us with a much larger “Unsuitable for HGVs” sign for the entrance to Vicarage Hill from the B4507.

Speed Indicator Displays (SIDs) update on installation.

Crest Nicolson are awaiting road space approval once this has been received SIDs will be installed by 23/02/24.

Speed of vehicles on B4507 Wantage to Childrey

Please see District Councillor report.

254.3/24 Allotments

Cllr Webb reported that 1 allotment may become available and there is no one on the waiting list.

254.4/24 Grounds Maintenance

To discuss the grounds maintenance contracts for 2024/25 and approve offering the contracts to Wise Garden Maintenance and Jeremy Hanham for a further year.

The OALC were contacted for advice on the 2024/2025 grounds maintenance contract, they advised that if East Challow Parish Council had contractors that had completed the works successfully in previous years, then these contractors could be retained for a further a year. Tendering will not be required at this stage. The advice was to obtain additional quotes from other contractors later in the year to ensure that the council were receiving value for money.

The Grass cutting schedules when updated (slight changes to wording, ensuring what is required is clear) will be sent to Wise Garden Maintenance and Jeremy Hanham. After discussion throughout the year the contractors are both aware that the schedules will contain small changes

Resolved: It was unanimously agreed to offer these contracts to Wise Garden maintenance and Jeremy Hanham for a further year. **[ACTION CLERK, ACTION VB, ACTION TH]**

254.5/24 Public Art

To receive an update on the public Art

The clerical issues regarding the S106 application have now been resolved. Cllr Hayes has prepared and submitted the planning application including paying the relevant fee. Cllr Hayes will claim reimbursement under the second application for S106 funds. If any queries from the planning department cannot be addressed by Cllr Hayes then help will be sought from Challow Design (Ed Clare) as approved at the East Challow Parish Council meeting in October 2023 minute reference 181.4/23. A second application for funds from S106 project funds will be made after the planning has been approved.

254.6/24 Recreation Areas

Pavilion project update from the meeting with Challow and Childrey Cricket Club.

Cllr Miller reported that a site meeting had taken place concerning installing a sink in the pavilion toilet. The labour will be provided free of charge and Cllr Miller is awaiting a list of required materials. A discussion took place about whether in addition to the sink, if there is a requirement to provide hot water for hand washing. A suggestion would be to purchase a small wall mounted heater to heat the hot water. The Clerk will investigate if there is a requirement for hot water and report back at the next meeting. **[ACTION CLERK]**

Cllr Bosley reported that she is still waiting to hear from Mark Gregory about meeting to discuss the lighting on the recreation ground and the general condition of the pitch.

To receive an update on the progress of the actions required from the ROSPA report.

There was no update available, for Cllr Hayes to discuss. Cllr Bosley will ask LB for an update. **[ACTION VB]**

To receive an update on the quotes for the carousel and the slide.

The RFO is working on this and is trying to obtain 2 quotes from play equipment installers, that Grove Parish Council have used. Cllr Hayes reported that Wicksteed would renew their quote every 30 days. After taking advice from the OALC and being concerned about timescales for replacement of the slide, the slide has been taken out of action. It has been wrapped with red and white tape and a notice attached, asking people not to use. The Clerk and Cllr Bosley are checking this regularly ensuring that the tape and sign stays in place. **[ACTION RFO]**

Cllr Hayes enquired who is responsible for the new play area on the Crest Nicolson Estate, Cllr Barrow will confirm who is responsible with the Vale Planning department. **[ACTION PB]**

255/24 To receive correspondence and agree actions or approve responses.

Draft Oxfordshire Council Charter – consultation period -closes 11th February at Midnight. Cllr Barrow will answer the survey on behalf of East Challow Parish Council. **[ACTION PB]**

A417, flooding at the junction of Silver Lane, report has been received from a member of the public, Cllr Barrow will respond to this report.

256/24 Matters for Future discussion

Purchase of a Christmas Tree for the Village Green.

Recycling talk on 26th February at East Challow Village Hall, organised by Cllr Barrow.

Updating the Website. Cllr Crump reported that he had started looking at the website and other

websites, with a view to updating East Challow Parish Council’s website.

A motion without notice to extend the meeting for a further 10 minutes was unanimously approved.

257/24 To agree a list of items to be included in the next edition of Challow News.

East Challow Parish Council welcomes Ian Crump as a newly co-opted Councillor

Next Parish Council meeting February 14th 2024 7.30pm

Many thanks to the Villagers who put up Christmas lights and displays; it was much appreciated.

Thank you to all the villagers who gathered on the Village Green to sing Christmas Carols, it was great to see so many people.

258/24 To agree date of the next meeting: 14th February 2024

There was no further business transacted, the Chairman closed the meeting at 21.40

Signed Chair..... Date.....