

Minutes of a Meeting of East Challow Parish Council

Held on Wednesday 11th March 2026 at 19:00, East Challow Village Hall

Public Session: No Comment

Members Present:

Chair Cllr V A Bosley (VB)

Vice Chair Cllr F Webb (FW)

Members Cllr T Hayes (TH)

Clerk Jane Smith

Public and press DCllr Hannah Griffin (left meeting 19:20)

Cllr Jenny Hannaby (left meeting 19:45)

Meeting started at 19:09

179/25-26 To receive apologies for absence.

Cllr P Barrow

Cllr A Gregson

Cllr I Crump

180/25-26 Declarations of Interests

180.1/25-26 To receive declarations of interest for items on this agenda.

Cllr V Bosley Village Hall Committee

181/25-26 To approve the minutes of a previous council meeting.

181.1/25-26 Meeting held on 11th February 2026

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

181.2/25-26 Matters arising from the minutes not elsewhere on the agenda.

169.10/25-26 To review and approve the letter of engagement from the 2026 Internal Auditor.

Resolved: The Councillors unanimously agreed to accept the terms of engagement, the Chair signed the letter as requested by the Internal Auditor. The Clerk was asked to return the signed letter to the Internal Auditor. **[ACTION CLERK]** *The Clerk has returned the letter of engagement.*

170.2/25-26 To approve Council Meeting dates for 2026/2027.

Resolved: The meeting dates for 2026/2027 were unanimously approved, the Clerk was asked to send these to the Village Hall Bookings Secretary. **[ACTION CLERK]** *The Clerk has*

sent the dates to the bookings Secretary and received confirmation that they have all been booked.

Correspondence has been received from Challow and Childrey Cricket Club requesting support for their claim for S106 money to install an artificial wicket. This project is in collaboration with King Alfred's School. The Councillors unanimously agreed to add their support to the request for S106 money. The Clerk was asked to send an email to the infrastructure implementation officer to register this support. **[ACTION CLERK]** *The Clerk sent an email in support and received an acknowledgment of receipt. An email from Challow and Childrey Cricket Club has been received thanking the Parish Council for their support.*

182/25-26 Chairman's Announcements

The Chair reported that the quarterly Village inspection had been carried out, there were no issues that needed immediate attention. The Inspection will be received and discussed at the April meeting. The Chair did mention her surprise at finding used dog waste bags in some of the salt bins.

183/25-26 Councillor Vacancy

183.1/25-26 To receive an update on the Parish Councillor vacancy.

The Clerk reported that VWHDC has confirmed that no election has been called so the Council can proceed to co-option. The Clerk and the Chair reported that there had not been any enquiries regarding the vacancy. It was agreed to readvertise this in Challow News and the notices would remain on the Village notice boards. **[ACTION CLERK]**

184/25-26 Staffing Matters

184.1/25-26 To approve the risk assessment for the Environmental Warden and the purchase of a sharps bin.

Resolved: The Councillors approved the section added to the risk assessment regarding the procedure on sharp disposal when found on Parish Council Land. The purchase of a small sharps bin was approved. It was agreed that this risk assessment would be reviewed in 2027 at the same time as the main risk assessment.

184.2/25- 26 To approve overtime hours for the end of year work for the RFO.

The Clerk reported that the AGAR would be received in the last week of March. Extra work would need to be carried out to process the end of year figures and supply to the Internal Auditor, to allow the audit to take place and be able to meet the External Auditor deadlines.

Resolved: The Councillors unanimously approved up to 6 hours overtime to be paid for April and an additional up to 6 hours to be paid for May only if required.

185/25-26 Finance 2025-26

185.1/25-26 To agree the February payments paid in March 2026.

Resolved: The February payments paid in March were unanimously agreed. In addition, it was agreed to pay ALH Landscaping £2,736 including VAT, once the invoice has been received. This is for the installation of the pathway; this will be paid before the meeting on the 22nd of April and appear on the April payments list as paid.

It was also agreed to approve the payment of £312 including VAT for the annual membership of the OALC, the invoice has been received. It was requested that the RFO add this payment onto the bank for payment before the 28/03/26. This will appear on the April payments list as paid. The Chair signed the payments list as per East Challow Parish Council's Financial Regulations. **[ACTION RFO]**

Total staff costs for March 2026

1116.04

Internal Reference	Date	Bank	Payee and reason	Payment Method	Net	Total Incl VAT
199	21.02.26	Co Op	Microsoft software licences	Direct Debit	£30.24	£36.29
202	03.02.26	Co Op	Castle Water allotment water	Direct Debit	£1.10	£1.33
200	07.02.26	Co Op	Ionos Website	Direct Debit	£20.50	£24.60
201	18.02.26	Co Op	Cartridge People ink cartridges	Card paid	£33.80	£40.56
207	11.03.26	Unity	OPFA annual fee	Online	£50.00	£50.00
208	31.01.26	Unity	East Challow Village H Hall meeting costs	Online	£20.00	£20.00
209	26.02.26	Unity	OALC AGAR Checking service	Online	£25.00	£30.00

213	26/03/26	Unity	RFO expenses	Online	£5.00	£5.00
214	28/02/26	Unity	Jeremy Hanham bins	Online	£60.00	£60.00
					Total	£267.78

185.2/25-26 To note the February 2026 receipts.

These were noted.

Bank	Payer + reason	Total
Co Op	Cemetery interment	£110.00
		£110.00

185.3/25-26 To note the reconciled bank account as of 28th February 2026.

This was noted and the reconciliation was signed by Cllr Webb.

The balances were noted:

Cooperative:	£67,847.94
Unity Trust:	£37,748.17
Balance:	£105,596.11

	Bank Reconciliation at 28/02/2026		
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2025		117,395.83
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2025 - 28/02/2026		66,943.53
			184,339.36
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2025 - 28/02/2026		78,743.25
A	Cash in Hand 28/02/2026 (per Cash Book)		105,596.11
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Cooperative 28/02/2026	67,847.94	
	Unity Trust 28/02/2026	37,748.17	
			105,596.11
	Less unrepresented payments		
			105,596.11
	Plus unrepresented receipts		
B	Adjusted Bank Balance		105,596.11
	A = B Checks out OK		

185.4/25-26 To agree the arrangements for the April payments.

All staff costs

Direct debit commitments: - Ionos, Microsoft, Castle Water

SSE if the account is no longer in credit

Jeremy Hanham

Adam Wise

Any Staff expenses

East Challow Village Hall

Resolved: It was agreed that the payments for April as listed above will be arranged by the RFO and paid after the original meeting date of the 8th April. These payments will appear on the payments list as paid at the April meeting on the 22nd of April 2026.

185.5/25-26 To receive a budget to actual/EMR report.

It was noted from the January Budget to Actual report that the December payroll figure included PAYE and NI and January's budget to actual figure reflected this split.

The electricity budget was clarified by the RFO as requested, the figures have been checked. The payments for electricity of £460.15 May and £224.25 November have been reconciled to scribe and agree.

Both reports were received and noted by the Councillors.

The Council requested that any remaining money from the 25/26 precept should be paid into the Village general maintenance fund. This will be confirmed on the April agenda.

185.6/25-26 To receive information regarding changing electricity supplier and receive an update on the November bill of £224.25

The RFO has sent several emails to Octopus Energy to try and obtain a quotation, an email was sent showing an aerial view of the location of the pavilion. This is proving difficult as Octopus do not recognise the pavilion as a building.

Resolved: It was acknowledged that the changing of electricity supplier had been attempted by 2 previous Clerks without success. The Council agreed to stay with SSE and requested that monthly meter readings were obtained and sent to SSE to try and maintain more accurate invoicing. A smart meter was suggested, the RFO was requested to investigate this. **[ACTION RFO]**

185.7/25-26 To receive information and discuss the opening of a Unity savings account for the transfer of EMR's.

The information was received, it was noted that this was an instant access savings account with an interest rate of 1.95% as at the 13/01/26. It was also noted that £120,000 is protected by the FSCS.

Resolved: It was unanimously agreed to open a unity savings account for the transfer of EMR's, as long as there were no charges involved for withdrawal. It was noted that funds could only be withdrawn to 1 nominated account. The RFO was asked to confirm that no additional charges would be incurred. Progress on the opening of the account would be reported at the April meeting. **[ACTION RFO]**

185.8/25-26 To receive more information regarding the Castle Water account.

The RFO reported that the last documentation received from Castle Water showed a credit balance of £1.33 this is also reflected in scribe. The RFO was unclear if the balance is an actual water meter reading or an estimated reading. The March bill received from Castle Water is for £9.33, the RFO cannot confirm if billing has resumed. The Chair agreed to obtain monthly meter readings for the RFO to send to Castle Water. **[ACTION CHAIR/RFO]**

185.9/25-26 To approve the cost of £25 plus VAT for the OALC to check the AGAR before sending to the External Auditor.

The OALC are offering an AGAR checking service for Councils before the AGAR is sent to Moore. This is to reduce the need for Moore to contact Councils and potentially charge

additional fees. The RFO and Clerk in consultation with the Chair decided this was a good addition to the AGAR procedure. The RFO has confirmed with the OALC that East Challow wish to have the extra AGAR check. It was noted that the OALC will not be able to help every Council.

Resolved: The £25 excluding VAT for checking the AGAR was unanimously approved.

185.10/25-26 To agree the setting up of a Stationery account.

Resolved: The Council unanimously agreed to the setting up of stationery account, the invoices will be paid by the debit card on order or via an invoice and appear on a payments list. Staff were asked to ensure that they would seek value for money on any purchases. It was also requested that the RFO ensure that the billing address includes the name East Challow Parish Council. **[ACTION RFO]**

185.11/25-26 To consider and approve membership of the OALC for 2026/27.

Resolved: OALC membership for 2026/27 was unanimously approved.

185.12/25-26 RFO report

The RFO requested any changes to the asset register. As per the February minutes the Chair has been reviewing the asset register and will pass on amendments to the RFO. It was requested that the RFO contact the Chair if any clarification is required. The Chair will need time to check this document in readiness for it to be approved at the April meeting. **[ACTION CHAIR/RFO]**

186/25-26 Governance

186.1/25-26 To receive information from the computer consultant regarding the Council's website.

The Clerk had spoken with the computer consultant who had assisted a local Parish Council during the transfer to Parish Online. It was noted by the Council once the Ionos website stops existing there is no access to emails on the old Ionos email addresses.

It was agreed that it would be really important to have access or copies of the old emails. The computer consultant reported that he could migrate emails over from the old email addresses to the Parish Online email addresses, both domains will need to run concurrently for a period of time for this transfer to take place.

It was agreed that it would be important to investigate if the 2 domains/ websites could be run at the same time. This will be revisited in July.

187/25-26 To receive reports from District and County Councillors

187.1/25-26 Oxfordshire County Councillor

Cllr Hannaby attended the meeting and reported;

A balanced budget had been achieved for 26/27; more money had been requested for Oxfordshire.

Oxfordshire County Council had submitted their response to the Government reorganisation; the Parish Council should receive a copy of this soon. Concerns have been raised over the 2 unitary proposals due to the pressure of SEND education and transport in Oxfordshire.

Wantage hospital continues to be refurbished, on completion there will be more services available at Wantage hospital. The lack of parking was discussed, Cllr Hannaby confirmed that staff were not permitted to park in the car park of the hospital to allow more patient parking.

Roads are proving a problem, currently there are 25 road repair gangs this is being increased with 2 more mini dragon patcher vehicles being added.

The congestion charge money raised from the implementation for the Oxford congestion charge will be put back into the transport budget.

Wantage Town Council will be running 2 community buses; it is hoped to timetable these buses to pass Wantage Hospital and the Doctors surgeries every 2 hours.

Cllr Hannaby confirmed that the Parish Council could email her office for clarification or answers to questions, the Parish Council thanked Cllr Hannaby for the flow of communication that she had passed on to the Council.

187.2/25-26 Vale of the White Horse District Councillor

The report was received. Additionally, DCllr Griffin encouraged responses to the Local Government reorganisation and confirmed that it would be the Government that would make the final decision on the proposal to be implemented. It was reported that if any residents were interested in broadband services they could contact DCllr Griffin directly. Conversations are still taking place regarding the 68-bus service, DCllr Griffin confirmed that East Challow's concerns regarding any changes to the bus route had been passed on. The flooding at Mellors remains an ongoing issue.

188/25-26 Planning

188.1/25-26 To note planning application

P26/V0321/DIS Location: Grove Technology Park, Grove Business Centre Downsview Road Wantage OX12 9FF

Description: Discharge of condition 21(external lighting) on application ref. P23/V1784/O Hybrid planning application comprising; An outline planning application for demolition of an existing building and development of five buildings (Gateway Building, Blocks A, B,C, and H) and a small food outlet (Block D) to provide up to 28,507 square metres (gross external area) of Use Class E and Use Class B8, together with an a multi-storey car park (14,755 square metres) - gross external area) with all matters reserved with the exception of means of access. A full planning application of the erection of three buildings Blocks E (3,080 square metres), F (2,432 square metres) and G (3,170 square metres) to provide total of 8,682 square metres (gross external area) of Use Class E and Use Class B8 with associated car parking, open space and landscaping. **No response required.**

P26/V0351/NM Location: 3 Windmill Place East Challow Wantage OX12 9RT

Description: Non-material amendment to P24/V1248/HH to change timber cladding to fascias, soffits and external wall as detailed on original plans to composite fire-resistant cladding. Annex as ancillary accommodation to main house. **No response required.**

188.2/25-26 To approve responses to requests for consultations on applications.

P26/V0359/FUL Location: Grove Technology Park, Grove Business Centre Downsview Road Wantage OX12 9FF **Description:** Full planning application for the erection of a perimeter fence and electricity substations and enclosures. **Response required by 13th March 2026**

Resolved: It was agreed to submit a response of no objection with a note highlighting the public right of way accessing the northern boundary fence.

189/25-26 Village and surrounding area

189.1/25-26 To receive an update on the installation of a pathway on CL98.

The pathway was started on the 9th March and is now installed. It was agreed the level of the bank to the wall side should be reduced, remove the Christmas tree and grass seed this area. The Council unanimously approved for the Council's grounds maintenance contractor to carry this out and invoice the council within the Grounds Maintenance contracts.

189.2/25-26 To receive an update on the replacement of fruit trees in the Community Orchard.

Cllr Barrow emailed the Tree Services Manager at OCC on 28th January to enquire who would deal with this matter, a response has not been received so far.

Resolved: The Council agreed to not replace the additional trees. It was noted that some of the 6 remaining trees were in bud.

189.3/25-26 To receive information and further discuss the request for railings on the steps on Letcombe Hill.

A discussion took place with CCllr Hannaby regarding the ownership of the steps onto Letcombe Hill. She advised the Parish Council to contact enquiries at OCCH. It was agreed to send a Land Registry map that the Parish Council has showing the location of the steps.

[ACTION CLERK]

189.4/ 25-26 To confirm attendance at the West Challow Defib training on the 24th April.

As there were only 3 Parish Cllrs at the meeting, the Chair agreed to confirm attendance with West Challow Parish Council. **[ACTION CHAIR]**

189.5/25-26 To receive further information on the street lighting issue in Childrey Way

A response has been received from the Parks department on the 18/02/26, they reported that having consulted a GIS map, it shows the Parks Dept only own part of the Childrey Way Path, they will inspect the area with their tree officer and update the Council with an action plan. The clerk sent an email on 02/03/26 chasing a response.

190/25-26 To discuss and approve a Parish Council response to the options to reorganise Local Councils across Oxfordshire and West Berkshire.

Resolved: Following a discussion, it was agreed that East Challow Parish Council submit a response in support of the 2 unitary proposal. It was noted that the Government reorganisation survey required more than this response. The Clerk and the Chair will prepare a response and send to all Councillor for approval before submission which is required by 26th March 2026. **[ACTION CLERK/CHAIR]**

191/25-26 Standing Agenda Items, to receive update and agree actions

191.1/25-26 Parish Cemeteries.

To receive an update on the project to landscape areas and replace the hedge in the Vicarage Hill Cemetery to create more burial plots.

3 contractors have visited the site; 2 quotations have been received. At the April meeting the 3 quotations will be considered.

To receive information regarding land registration of the Vicarage Hill Cemetery.

This is ongoing.

To discuss the beech hedge in the Vicarage Hill Cemetery and approve £500 to reduce the height.

Resolved: The Council unanimously approved the cost of £500 from the grounds maintenance contractor who maintains the hedge for a one off cut to reduce the hedge to 10ft. The Clerk was asked to arrange the works with the grounds maintenance contractor. This money would come from the grounds maintenance budget **[ACTION CLERK]**

191.2/25-26 Allotments

3 starter plots are available, 1 has been re let. Cllr Webb is waiting for a response for 1 of the remaining plots.

191.3/25-26 Traffic/Highways including:

Parking within the village

A resident has raised the issue of grass verge parking at the top of Sarajac Ave. OCCH will be contacted regarding this.

Speeding within the Village/ an update on the setting up of a Community Speedwatch Team.

Cllr Gregson is assisting a Parishioner regarding a clanging drain cover on the A417, responsibility for ownership of the drain cover is being investigated.

It was confirmed that 3 residents had volunteered to become part of the CSW team. It was agreed to re advertise in Challow News thanking the volunteers and requesting more residents join the team. It was agreed that training should be investigated for the 3 volunteers. **[ACTION AG]**

Speed Indicator Displays (SID's).

It was noted that both the SIDs were working.

To receive an update on the speed reduction measures on Letcombe Hill.

Cllr barrow has contacted the resident and requested that vegetation from his property is cut back as it is partially obscuring the school children crossing sign. The refurbishment of the road markings are still to be carried out by OCCH.

Cllr Gregson has contacted OCCH to request that the recreation ground/ school sign is re-erected on the grassed area in Windmill Place.

191.4/25-26 Grounds Maintenance**To receive an update on the 2026/2027 Grounds Maintenance contracts.**

All paperwork is in place and contracts have been signed.

191.5/25-26 Public Art**To receive an update on the preparation of the time capsule.**

Nothing new to report.

191.6/25-26 Recreation Areas**To receive a report from the Pavilion Working Group.**

The next meeting will take place before the Council meeting in April.

To receive an update on the full electrical safety inspection check at the Pavilion.

The Clerk emailed Challow Sports for an update on the 12th of February and again on the 19th February. A response was received on the 3rd March confirming that the pavilion is ready for the electrical inspection. A local electrician has been contacted by Cllr Gregson, a response is being waited for.

Resolved: The Council unanimously agreed a budget of £500 for the electrical inspection and any remedial works. This will be paid from the village general maintenance Budget funded by the VAT refund. **[ACTION AG]**

To receive a report following the visual play inspection checks.

The checks continue to be carried out. The EW reported that he had cleared the MUGA of leaves and the surface was in a good condition.

Wicksteed have attended and filled the gaps around all the items of equipment with topsoil and grass seed; this was carried out free of charge. The Council noted thanks to Wicksteed had been conveyed by the Clerk.

To approve the agreement for the use of the MUGA by Challow Sports Netball.

A risk assessment, Emergency Action Plan, and an example of individual player insurance was received by the Councillors, this was noted.

Resolved: The agreement for a 6-month trial was unanimously agreed. The Clerk was asked to arrange for the agreement to be signed. **[ACTION CLERK]**

To further discuss the request for the use of the recreation ground on the 12th July.

The Clerk emailed Challow Sports on the 12th February expressing the Council’s concerns regarding the lack of facilities for 90 people on the recreation ground and to request more information. An email has been received from Challow Sports confirming that the use of the recreation ground is no longer required.

To agree a quotation for the base for the picnic bench on the recreation ground.

Resolved: 2 quotations have been received; another quotation has been requested and should be received soon. The 3 quotations will be considered at the April meeting.

To approve a quotation for the replacement of the basketball boards and nets.

Resolved: The Clerk confirmed that the Council had met the Financial Regulations criteria, the Clerk had endeavoured to obtain 3 quotations. 1 company declined to quote, 2 other companies did not respond. 2 quotations were received and considered. It was unanimously agreed to approve the quotation from Sports Courts for £795 excluding VAT, this expenditure will be spent from CIL. The Clerk was asked to arrange the work. **[ACTION CLERK]**

192/25-26 To receive Correspondence and agree actions or approve responses.

No correspondence had been received.

193/25-26 Matters for future discussion.

To confirm the date of the Annual Parish Meeting in May 2026.

194/25-26 To agree a list of items to be included in the April edition of Challow News

- Community Speed Watch Volunteer
- Residents urged to respond to Government Consultation.
- Green waste permits
- Dog Poo waste found in salt bins
- NHS checks
- Respect the new hedgerow on the recreation ground.

195/25-26 To agree the date of the next meeting: 22nd April 2026

There was no further business transacted, the Chairman closed the meeting at 21:55

Signed Chair.....

Date.....