

Minutes of a Meeting of East Challow Parish Council

Held on Wednesday 22nd April 2026 at 19:00, East Challow Village Hall

Public Session: A noisy drain cover on the A417 was discussed, it has been confirmed that this drain cover has failed, the noise is causing distress to residents. Councillor Hannaby and DCllr Griffin will follow this up.

Members Present:

Chair Cllr V A Bosley (VB)

Members Cllr A Gregson (AG)

Cllr I Crump (IC)

Clerk Jane Smith

Public and press 3 including

DCllr Hannah Griffin (left meeting 20:00)

Cllr Jenny Hannaby (left meeting 20:00)

Meeting started at 7:10

196/25-26 To receive apologies for absence.

Cllr P Barrow

Cllr F Webb

Cllr T Hayes

197/25-26 Declarations of Interests

197.1/25-26 To receive declarations of interest for items on this agenda.

Cllr V Bosley Village Hall Committee/ Community Day Committee

Cllr Crump Village Hall Committee

198/25-26 To approve the minutes of a previous council meeting.

198.1/25-26 Meeting held on 11th March 2026

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

198.2/25-26 Matters arising from the minutes not elsewhere on the agenda.

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] *The Chair has confirmed the invitation with West Challow Parish Council and has passed this onto all Councillors. The Chair will be attending the training.***

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 Councillors for approval before submission which is required by 26th March 2026. **[ACTION CLERK/CHAIR] A response was submitted on the 25/03/26.**

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] This has been signed and returned.**

199/25-26 Chairman's Announcements

The Chair enquired if a Councillor would take on the role of transport representative on behalf of the Council, Cllr Gregson agreed to become the transport representative.

An additional inscription for a headstone in the Vicarage Hill Cemetery was unanimously approved.

200/25-26 Councillor Vacancy

200.1/25-26 To receive an update on the Parish Councillor vacancy.

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]**

201/25-26 Staffing Matters

201.1/25-26 To approve the expenditure of £49 for the purchase of a phone for the RFO position.

The Clerk explained the need for a phone to be attached to the RFO role.

Resolved: The expenditure of £49 was unanimously approved for the purchase of a pay as you go mobile for the RFO position. The RFO was asked to purchase the phone. It was agreed that the expenditure will come from the office expenses budget heading. **[ACTION RFO]**

201.2/25- 26 To approve the Clerk’s attendance and the cost of £160 plus VAT for a Cemetery Operations and Regulatory Compliance online course.

This course has been recommended by the OALC, and would need to be booked now for attendance in October or December 2026

Resolved: The expenditure of £160 plus VAT was unanimously approved for the Clerk to attend the Cemetery Operations and Regulatory Compliance online course. It was agreed the expenditure would come from the training budget.

201.3/25-26 To approve the cost of £45 for the Clerk to attend training called Avoid the Audit Trap: Website Compliance for Councils.

Resolved: The expenditure of £45 was unanimously agreed. It was agreed the expenditure would come from the training budget.

201.4/25-26 To discuss advertising for a Maintenance Warden.

Resolved: It was agreed to readvertise for a Maintenance Warden; this will go in the June edition of Challow News and be displayed on the Village Noticeboards with a closing date of the 30th June 2026.

202/25-26 Finance 2025-26

202.1/25-26 To ratify the March payments paid in April 2026.

Resolved: The March payments paid in April were unanimously agreed. The Chair signed the payments list as per East Challow Parish Council’s Financial Regulations.

Total staff costs for April 2026

1,156.90

Internal Reference	Date	Bank	Payee and reason	Payment method	Net	Including VAT
215	26/02/2026	Unity	OALC Annual membership	Online	£260.00	£312.00 paid
217	28/03/2026	Unity	ALH Landscape new path	Online	£2,280.00	£2,736.00 paid
221	03/03/2026	Co-Op	Castle Water allotment water	Direct debit	£7.77	£9.33

218	07/03/2026	Co-Op	Ionos website	Direct debit	£20.50	£24.60
222	24/03/2026	Co-Op	Sophos security	Direct Debit	£41.62	£49.95
219	21/03/2026	Co-op	Microsoft licences	Direct Debit	£30.24	£36.29
225	31/03/2026	Unity	Jeremy Hanham grounds maintenance	Online	£930.00	£930.00
1	01/04/2026	Unity	Viking Direct stationery	Online	£46.71	£56.06
220	31/03/2026	Unity	Wise Garden & Hedge grounds maintenance	Online	£260.00	£260.00
224	28/02/2026	Unity	East Challow Village Hall meetings	Online	£20.00	£20.00
					Total	£4,434.23

202.2/25-26 To note the March 2026 receipts.

There were no receipts.

202.3/25-26 To note the reconciled bank account as of 31st March 2026.

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

The balances were noted:

Cooperative: £64,194.77
 Unity Trust: £39,681.13
 Unpresented payments: £3,742.26
 Balance: £100,133.64

	Bank Reconciliation at 31/03/2026		
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2025		117,395.83
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2025 - 31/03/2026		66,943.53
			184,339.36
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2025 - 31/03/2026		84,205.72
A	Cash in Hand 31/03/2026 (per Cash Book)		100,133.64
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Cooperative 31/03/2026	64,194.77	
	Unity Trust 31/03/2026	39,681.13	
			103,875.90
	Less unrepresented payments		3,742.26
			100,133.64
	Plus unrepresented receipts		
B	Adjusted Bank Balance		100,133.64
	A = B Checks out OK		

202.4/25-26 To receive a budget to actual/EMR report.

Both reports were received and noted, there were no additional comments.

202.5/25-26 To confirm the remainder from the 25/26 precept and which budget area this will be paid into.

The RFO confirmed that she was still reconciling the 25/26 accounts. It was agreed to discuss this at the May Council meeting. The RFO will be attending the May meeting and will confirm the remainder of the 25/26 precept. **[ACTION RFO]**

202.6/25-26 To receive information regarding a smart meter and the electricity bills.

The RFO reported that information has been requested from SSE regarding the installation of a Smart Meter, it was confirmed that WIFI is not needed as it works in the same way as a mobile phone. The Clerk has received a letter from SSE to arrange installation. **[ACTION CLERK]**

202.7/25-26 To confirm the opening of a unity savings account for the transfer of EMR's.

The RFO confirmed that funds transferred between Unity bank accounts incur no charge. The RFO has circulated paperwork for signature and is awaiting the return of this. **[ACTION RFO]**

202.8/25-26 To receive and approve the updated Asset Register as at 31/03/26.

Amendments are being made the asset register this will be approved at the May Council meeting.

202.9/25-26 RFO report

There was nothing further to report.

203/25-26 Finance 2026-2027**203.1/25-26 To note the first half of the precept was received on the 08/04/26.**

It was noted that £30,867.50 was received on the 8th April 2026 as the first part of the Precept.

204/25-26 Governance**204.1/25-26 To confirm the date of the Annual Parish Meeting in May 2026.**

It was confirmed that the Annual Parish meeting would take place on the 27th May 2026 at 8pm in the Village Hall. The Clerk was asked to prepare the invitations. It was agreed not to have a speaker and to provide tea, coffee and biscuits. Cllr Gregson gave his apologies as he would be unable to attend but would provide a report on speeding and the CSW work in the Village. **[ACTION CLERK]**

204.2/25-26 To approve the Standing Orders for 2026/2027

Resolved: The Standing Orders were approved without amendment for use in 2026/2027.

204.3/25-26 To approve the Financial Regulations for 2026/2027.

Resolved: The Financial Regulations were approved without amendment for use in 2026/2027

204.4/25-26 To approve the Code of Conduct for 2026/2027.

Resolved: The Code of Conduct was approved without amendment for use in 2026/2027.

204.5/25-26 To approve the Risk assessment for 2026/2027.

Resolved: The Risk Assessment was approved for use in 2026/2027.

205/25-26 To receive reports from District and County Councillors**205.1/25-26 Oxfordshire County Councillor**

Cllr Hannaby reported back on the results of the Fire and Rescue Service consultation, all areas wanted to keep fire stations open, but there could be a reduction in fire engines, the working day maybe altered, there are negotiations still taking place.

The Oxfordshire Local Government Reorganisation results are expected after the elections.

New Policy has been introduced to reduce parking, encouraging use of alternative travel to cars. Cllr Hannaby added that there is still not enough transport services in rural areas. New developments will need to adhere to this new parking policy framework.

Botley Road will be re-opening on 31/08/26. 4.5 million pounds has been raised from the implementation of the congestion charge; this will be put back into public transport.

Wantage town Council have purchased x2 16-seater mini buses and will be publishing routes soon.

205.2/25-26 Vale of the White Horse District Councillor

The report was received, additionally DCllr Griffin highlighted the Electric Vehicle and Renewable Energy event that is taking place on the 25th April in Abingdon. DCllr Griffin also asked the Council to consider projects for a Climate Action Fund application, applications will be open from the 5th May.

206/25-26 Planning

There was nothing to report.

207/25-26 Village and surrounding area

207.1/25-26 To receive information and further discuss the request for railings on the steps on Letcombe Hill.

In response to the email sent by the Clerk, it has been confirmed by OCC that Childrey Way is a tarmac alleyway and is maintained by OCC Highways. Highways Engagement have confirmed that they have forwarded the email to the Vale road safety and traffic team and we are now awaiting a response.

207.2/25-26 To receive further information on the street lighting issue in Childrey Way

The Parks department have confirmed that the trees have been cut back around the lamppost. The Clerk has emailed the Parishioner confirming this.

207.3/25-26 To receive the Village inspection report and discuss and agree actions.

The following was noted by all Councillors.

New Cemetery

Victorian drain cover is rusty but secure- monitor this.

The pathway needs moss clearing.

Overflow Car Park

Pothole at access is larger.

Car park posts – 1 needs replacement, 1 needs re siting.

Village Green

Some posts are missing, some need replacement.

Salt Bins

Outside 1 Reynolds way – needs top up, consider replacing split in 1 side.

Childrey Bridlepath – needs top up.

Windmill Place (near upper Childrey Way)- needs top up.

Willow Cottage Letcombe Hill- needs top up, consider replacing split at the front.

Junction High View and Windmill Place- needs OCCH refill.

Recreation Ground

Wildflower bench needs legs cleaning off.

Pavilion doors -front door damaged and swollen.

Footpath sign Childrey belonging to OCC needs graffiti removing.

Vicarage Hill Cemetery

Tap on wall is loose.

Both benches need attention.

Silver Jubilee bench (near Goodlake house) – small amount of damage to seat panel.

A417 bin Challow road – wobbling needs to be secured.

Drains around the Village need emptying.

Resolved: The condition of the pavilion doors was discussed the Council agreed that quotations should be obtained for replacement of all the doors on the pavilion for hardwood doors. The Councillors unanimously agreed that CIL money could be used. **[ACTION CLERK]** It was also agreed that the tap in the Vicarage Hill Cemetery needed replacing. Many jobs were identified for the Maintenance Warden once in post.

207.4/25-26 To consider a request for £400 towards the Village Community Day 7th June 2026.

The Chair reported the day would follow previous Community Days at the Challows Cricket Club. Community Cricket, refreshments, raffle, stalls and entertainment. The money requested would cover Insurance, a children's entertainer and village entertainment.

Resolved: The Council unanimously approved the request of £400 towards the Community Day costs. This will come from the Grants (including S137) budget.

207.5/25-26 To report on a recent Village Hall Booking

A recent booking of the Village Hall was discussed, the Parish Council had received complaints regarding unsociable behaviour. The Clerk was asked to contact ECVH committee

and enquire if the bookings procedure would be reviewed following this event and offering the Parish Council's support on this. **[ACTION CLERK]**

208/25-26 Standing Agenda Items, to receive update and agree actions

208.1/25-26 Parish Cemeteries.

To consider quotations for the project to landscape areas of the Vicarage Hill Cemetery to create more burial plots and to replace the hedge.

3 contractors have visited the site; 2 quotations have been received a 3rd contractor has declined to quote. The quotations received were discussed, it was agreed that a 3rd quotation should be obtained. One of the contractors who has quoted will be contacted to provide additional information. **[ACTION CHAIR]**

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

This is ongoing.

To receive an update on the reduction of the beech hedge in the Vicarage Hill Cemetery

The Grounds maintenance contractor has confirmed that the reduction to the beech hedge could not take place until July/August due to the nesting bird's season.

208.2/25-26 Allotments

The available starter plots will be advertised in the May Challow News.

208.3/25-26 Traffic/Highways including:

Parking within the village.

The parking was discussed on the corner of Highview and Windmill Place, this is reducing access for larger vehicles. Inconsiderate parking was also reported in Windmill Place restricting residents leaving their property safely. It was noted that in all these areas there were not any parking restrictions, it was agreed to include an item regarding parking in the June Challow News.

Speeding within the Village/including road issues.

The speed of vehicles on the A417 through the village has increase. It is evident there is no consideration for the current speed limits. Cllr Gregson has obtained advice on downloading data from the SIDs so the Council can see vehicle speeds.

The noisy drain cover on the A417 has still not been resolved, Cllr Hannaby and DCllr Griffin will be progressing this issue on behalf of the Parish Council and the resident.

To receive an update on the setting up of a Community Speed watch Team.

Cllr Gregson will be contacting Lee Turnham Community Speed watch Co Ordinator to arrange training for the volunteers. It was noted that a risk assessment would be required

for the CSW team, Cllr Gregson will ask for advice from Lee Turnham regarding a risk assessment. **[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.

It was noted the vegetation which is partially obscuring the school children crossing sign at the foot of Letcombe Hill has not been cut back. The Chair will enquire if the resident/owner of the vegetation has been contacted. It was agreed the Clerk will write to the resident if required.

208.4/25-26 Grounds Maintenance

The soil reduction work that is required alongside the new village green pathway has not taken place yet. It is hoped that this will be completed before the May Parish Council Meeting.

208.5/25-26 Time Capsule

To receive an update on the preparation of the time capsule.

An update will be received at the May meeting.

208.6/25-26 Recreation Areas

To receive a report from the Pavilion Working Group.

A meeting took place on the 13th April, the condition of the doors was discussed and Challow Sports conveyed their appreciation of the use of the MUGA for Netball training.

To review Challow Sports agreement for the use of the recreation ground.

The current agreement states at no cost until April 2026. The Council agreed to extend this until September 2026 and then review again. The Clerk was asked to arrange the signing of the amended agreement. **[ACTION CLERK]**

A request had been received from Challow Sports Netball for the removal of the tennis net during each Thursday training session. The Council requested that the Clerk contact Sports Courts, the installer of the net to gain their view on net removal and the easiest way to do this. If the removal of the net is easy to do and will not cause damage, the Environmental Warden will be asked to instruct Challow Sports Netball on the removal of the net. The Council agreed that a clause should be inserted into the MUGA use agreement stating that if the net was damaged that Challow Sports Netball would replace this. **[ACTION CLERK]**

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

The local electrician has been contacted by Cllr Gregson; it has been confirmed the inspection will be carried out during this week.

To receive a report following the visual play inspection checks.

The checks continue to be carried out, the MUGA is now open and is being used.

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

Resolved: The Council has 2 quotations; the 3rd quotation has not been received as the contractor declined to quote. Cllr Gregson will pursue a 3rd quotation; all quotations will be considered at the May meeting.

To receive an update on the replacement of the basketball boards and nets.

The Clerk is waiting for a date from Sports Courts confirming when the work will be carried out.

209/25-26 To receive Correspondence and agree actions or approve responses.

An email was received from a resident regarding the percentage rise for East Challow Parish Council part of 26/27 Council tax. The Clerk replied informing the resident that the £5,100 increase in the precept from last year was due to tree works that need to be completed, following the tree survey and the need to cut back trees over the MUGA.

This was noted.

A question was received regarding parking in Childrey Way and any local plans regarding public EV charging in near residential areas. The Clerk responded to the enquirer.

This was noted.

An invitation has been received from Soha Housing, which has homes in East Challow to a short evening event is on Wednesday 13 May at Petypher House, Kingston Bagpuize, OX13 5FR, 7 – 8.30pm. It was noted that Councillors would not be able attend as this was the same night as the May Parish Council meeting.

Comments are invited regarding Off-Street Parking Orders for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils' consultation which runs from Thursday 9 April until 11.59pm Friday 8 May 2026. The Clerk was asked to respond with neither agree or disagree to all questions. **[ACTION CLERK]**

A request from a contractor has been received regarding access that is required across the recreation ground during works being carried out in Cornhill Lane for OCC. The Parish Council unanimously agreed this access.

Correspondence has been received regarding applying for financial support from the Vale's Nature and Climate Action Fund. The next round of the Fund will open to applications on Tuesday 5 May 2026. Councillor Crump will progress this.

210/25-26 Matters for future discussion.

211/25-26 To report on the list of items included in the May edition of Challow News

Annual Parish meeting date

CSW volunteer advert

Protect new hedgerow

Starter allotment plots available

Parish Councillor vacancy

MUGA now open and being used by Challow Sports Netball on a Thursday evening.

212/25-26 To agree the date of the next meeting: 13th May 2026

There was no further business transacted, the Chairman closed the meeting at 21:34

Signed Chair.....

Date.....