

A Meeting of GREAT AND LITTLE CHISHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Venue:	Village Hall
Date:	14 th 2024 March
Time:	7:30 pm
Chair:	Clr Dring
Parish Councillors:	Hatt, Leitch, Ridge, Pine
Clerk / Proper Officer:	Sarah Scott
County Councillor:	Not present
District Councillor:	Clr Hobro
Members of the Public:	1 Member of the public
Start Time:	7:30pm

1. Apologies for Absence (and reasons)

Clr Clements – previous commitment

2. To receive any declaration of Pecuniary and non-Pecuniary Interest of Councillors

There were none received from any of the councillors.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the 8th February 2024

There were approved as an accurate account of proceedings and the Chair duly signed and dated them.

4. Public Participation.

Martin Prescott spoke about a proposed event that The Pheasant is planning in August. A conversation took place as about previous events which have taken place. The Clerk to forward some information to Natalie. The Parish Council is fully supportive of this idea.

5. Correspondence Received (already circulated)

There were no comments relating to the correspondence.

6. District and County Councillors Report (already circulated)

Clr Hobro mentioned the pink bin scheme (which is on the agenda). His report (below) contains information about the budget. Clr Hobro also recommended that the Councillors read the State of the District report.

Clr Hobro is also arranging a meeting with Chris Braybrooke (possibly the next meeting) and also Tony Wallace to talk about compliance and outstanding planning issues.

7. Highways / Transport

- Outstanding highways issues in Great and Little Chishill (drains, floods, potholes, New Road. The Chair has updated the spreadsheet and will be send this to Clr McDonald. The Council is still frustrated about the length of time issues are taking to sort out. It was reported that some of the potholes are already failing.
- A505 – Clr McDonald was not present to provide an update.

8. Planning

- Land in Village. There had been no further update. Mr Prescott had also made an approach to the landowner to purchase part of Wrights Meadow.
- North Hall Farm. There is no update.
- Bridgefoot Farm. There is no update.
- Rabbit Residence. The Clerk had sent an update to the Parish Councillors. The person living in the caravan has said that there is an investigate into their finances which will take 6 months. Enforcement are preparing some legal documentation but the Council is unclear what will happen next.
- Wallers Close. The Clerk to follow this up as the time limit for action (planning permission or remove the structure) has now lapsed.

9. Finance

Finance Sheets. There were no comments and the Vice Chair signed and date the sheets.

10. Speed and safety

- Speed Watch. An update will follow.
- Speed Camera. An update will follow.
- Mirror. It was suggested that the Parish Council purchase a new mirror (the Chair to advise) and gift the existing mirror to the Windmill Committee to replace the one which was damaged. The Windmill Committee to be contacted.

11. Giga Clear

Clr Clements was not at the meeting but he has chased this item.

12. Pink Bin

The Clerk had been in touch relating to this. The bin would be in the village for a month and the Parish Council are to publicise it. It was agreed to organise obtaining it and it will be placed in the Village Hall car park next to the trade waste bin.

13. Barley Surgery

Clr Hall had seen a poster for a Patients Group for Granta Medical. He thought it might be something those Parishioners who use Granta might be interested in. Clr Pine to contact Granta.

14. Safety Alarms

Clr Hatt had heard about a safety alarm scheme in Fowlmere. The Clerk had contacted Fowlmere Parish Council and received some details about the scheme. The scheme is called Careium and it costs the Parish Council £25 per household per month. There was a discussion about this and some deemed it expensive. The Clerk reminded the Council that funds spent should be proportionate and that the Fowlmere Parish Council will have a much higher precept than this Council. Some questioned if it was part of the Parish Council's remit to run this type of service. A question arose as to who might benefit from the scheme. It was reported that quite a few people are well looked after by neighbours relatives and carers.

15. Promotion of Parish

Village poster. The Clerk had been in touch with the artist with a 'wish list' of potential sites and scenes in the village to be included. She has not heard back yet. Clr Hall spoke about signage he had seen in another village whereby various buildings / landmarks had signage saying 'Supported by the Parish Council'. Ideas for our village could be the Village Hall, Pavilion, Windmill. Clr Hall to obtain costings.

16. To Accept Notices & Matters for the next Agenda

Village Hall Committee
Emergency planning

There being no further notifiable business the Chair closed the meeting at 20:26

County Council Report
Secondary School Places

A greater percentage of Cambridgeshire students will be going to their first choice secondary school this September. A total of 87.9 per cent have been offered a place at their first choice school – up from 87.1 per cent last year.

The proportion offered a place at their first, second or third preference school has also risen – from 95.4 per cent in 2023 to 95.8 per cent this year.

The total number of places offered this year was fewer than last – 7,220 compared with 7,413. Year 6 students hear this week (1 March) which secondary school has offered them a place for September 2024.

Half Term Vouchers

More than 23,000 supermarket vouchers were distributed during the February half term to eligible families in Cambridgeshire.

Cambridgeshire County Council has continued to run the existing scheme using the Household Support Fund from the Department for Work and Pensions.

Eligible families were automatically sent a £15 voucher for the week via email or text at the beginning of the half term holiday, with the voucher being valid at a choice of 11 supermarkets. A total of 23,288 were distributed.

The current round of Government funding will end on 31 March, but the county council agreed at its meeting on 13 February to invest £3m of its own money to continue the holiday supermarket vouchers for those children most in need.

The recent quality of life survey of over 5,000 residents in Cambridgeshire showed that 86 per cent of residents were concerned about cost of living increases.

Free data SIM cards for low income households

A reminder that Cambridgeshire Libraries are part of Good Things Foundation's National Databank, O2 and Vodaphone scheme, which makes free data SIM cards or vouchers available to anyone aged 18+ from a low-income household.

Recipients can self-declare as eligible, and the support is available for a maximum period of twelve months. The data can be used with any SIM-enabled device. This offer is available at a range of libraries.

The Busway

Safety works are under way on the Guided Busway to allow the busway to return to full, two-way operation. Since February 2022, a section of the Guided Busway in one direction has been closed between Cambridge Railway Station and the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. A temporary fence was installed whilst an independent safety review was in progress, and following ongoing communications with the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) and as part of continuous safety reviews on the busway.

Since then, the county council has been working with the bus operators and emergency services to risk-assess and design a fence to be installed next to the upstand along sections of the southern busway. It has been specifically designed with removable sections to allow for safe evacuation. This work is being carried out in sections to minimise disruption to passengers. Contractors are working seven days a week and the busway and maintenance track are currently programmed to re-open on Saturday 30 March.

District Councillors Report.

Budget and Business Plan for 2024/25

The Council's Budget and Business Plan for 2024/25 has been agreed against a challenging background of rising population, increasing costs due to inflation and a national homelessness crisis. The Business Plan is based on the Council's vision of supporting our local economy, providing truly affordable housing, protecting our local environment and improving the quality of life in our communities.

The extensive business support programme, focused on small businesses, is designed to help local communities thrive, bringing jobs and opportunities into our villages. Access to high quality jobs is essential as the foundation of our community life. Helping local businesses transition to net zero means they will be more resilient to the impact of climate change and this helps the district in its efforts to be more sustainable.

Housing is being improved with 75 new Council Houses planned for the coming year, a goal to bring all Council Houses to at least an energy performance rating of 'C' by 2025, and schemes to boost energy efficiency in private housing.

Grants will be available to increase biodiversity and plant trees, and the Council will be working with other local councils to secure our short- and long-term water supply and protect our chalk streams by avoiding the need for aquifer over-abstraction.

Greater Cambridge Shared Waste continues its path to decarbonise the fleet of bin lorries. With three electric lorries already collecting recycling and waste from residents, a fourth is expected to enter service within the next few months. The decarbonisation plans also include the continued use of hydro-treated vegetable oils for some of the fleet.

Over the next year, the Council also plans to use its private sector housing stock condition survey, due for completion in the summer, to ensure all privately rented properties are brought up to standard.

The Council remains one of the lowest taxing authorities in the country, with a £5 per year increase (3%) for the average Band D home, which is a below-inflation rise and therefore a cut in real terms. We remain focused on continuous improvement of services and ensuring value for money for our residents and taxpayers.

Support for Ukraine update

Grants totalling more than £13,000 have been awarded for activities to help Ukraine guests settle into South Cambridgeshire and forge friendships. In addition, more than £102,000 has been given to support English tuition to help Ukrainian guests develop communication skills.

The funding is part of a wider £500,000 package of support provided by South Cambridgeshire District Council since the Homes for Ukraine scheme began, including helping guests achieve independent accommodation, a furniture package scheme and a recently-launched landlord incentive scheme. Funding comes from the Government tariff received for every guest who arrives in the area.

State of the District report

As the Council prepares to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of its formation on 20 March 1974, it has just published a 'State of the District' report, providing a high-level overview of the social, demographic and economic make-up of South Cambridgeshire. The report contains a wealth of information on issues such as demographic change,

health, crime, the changing local economy, and travel habits. Hopefully this will prove to be a useful reference resource on these issues for Parish Councils.

Four-day working week update

A new report has been published on the four-day working week trial that began in January 2023, detailing the current arrangements, the cost savings achieved so far, and recommendations for the end of the current trial period in March 2024. The Council has been shortlisted as a finalist in the iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards and for a Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Innovation award, both for the four-day week trial. So far, the trial has shown significant success, with most of the Council's performance indicators demonstrating sustained high standards or gradual improvement. In the planning service there have been significant improvements during the trial in the average time to determine planning applications. The main purpose of the trial was to improve recruitment and retention, reducing the high cost of employing temporary staff for positions that should have been filled permanently, with the additional benefit of bringing in more dedicated permanent staff. Annual cost savings of hundreds of thousands of pounds have been achieved, helping to avoid cuts in the face of below-inflation Council Tax rises and reduced funding from central government. The new four-day bin collection schedule will mean there is no disruption to our bin collections over Easter. Meanwhile, in the private sector, most of the UK companies involved in the world's biggest four-day working week trial have made the policy permanent. Of the 61 organisations that took part in a six-month UK pilot in 2022, 89% were still operating the policy a year later. My position on the trial has consistently been to support an objective assessment of its ability to improve value for money, and to support the change if it proves to be successful.