Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting 20th November 2025

Present: Cllrs Dring, Hall, Hatt, Leitch, Ridge (Chair); District Cllr J. Hobro (until 8.15pm)
Members of the public: A Hamblin on behalf of the Great Chishill Village Hall Committee (until 8pm)
Minutes: A Lorenz, Parish Clerk

1 Apologies for Absence

None received.

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

Cllrs Ridge and Hall declare a non-pecuniary interest on behalf of family members in the informal use of Therfield Heath by local rugby players (item 14).

3 Approval of the Minutes of 16th October

The minutes were approved by the meeting and subsequently signed by the PC Chair.

4 Public Participation

A. Hamblin , treasurer of the Great Chishill Village Hall Committee presented the case for a grant from the PC budget during the financial year 2026/27:

- Great Chishill VH is a local asset managed to maximise benefit to local groups and associations.
- The VH cttee is proud of its record of frugal financial management; due to external factors (energy bills more than doubled), this year the cttee will incur a small operational loss.
- The VH cttee seeks a grant of 1.5k to offset operational costs and to protect VH reserves for use in improvement projects.
- A guaranteed income of 1.5k would also enable the VH cttee to offer use of the hall to local groups without having to charge hire fees, which can be a barrier to even better uptake of the facility by small local clubs and associations.
- In the medium to long term, the VH cttee intends to explore sustainable energy solutions. Cllr Hobro offered to share information on solar available grants with the VH cttee; the clerk will reach out to other clerks in the County regarding prior successful applications for solar grants.

5 District and County Councillor Reports

Reports had been made available ahead of the meeting.

District Cllr J. Hobro summarised his monthly report. The main item that may affect the parishes of Great & Little Chishill is the upcoming government decision on local re-organisation. The County favours a future 3-3 geographic split scenario, with a new unified administrative structure comprising Cambridge City, South Cambs and East Cambs. An alternative scenario (based on economic analysis) would see Cambridge City and South Cambs forming a new entity, with the other 4 districts forming another. A decision on which scenario is favoured by UK Gov is expected at the end of the year.

P. MacDonald was not present. The Cllrs present expressed their frustration with the attendance record on the County Cllr, which makes it exceedingly difficult to put questions to the Cllr and obtain vital information. Example: the latest report by the County Cllr mentions a ‘volunteer gritting scheme.’ County gritting services only cover a small portion of roads in Great & Little Chishill; is the County attempting to offload winter services (surely funded by council taxes) onto parishioners? Considering that those parishioners may be asked to venture out in treacherous conditions and put themselves

into danger (slipping on icy ground, being in the way of oncoming traffic), is there insurance coverage for volunteers? Would volunteers be covered in case anybody brought a law suit against them for 'insufficient gritting?'

Cllr Hobro offered to try and arrange a joint County & District surgery for local residents at The Pheasant, most likely on a Saturday morning.

6 Finance

The finance forms for October 2025 were approved and signed.
Banking mandate; the clerk will make sure that the list of signatories on the PC current account is up-to-date.

7 Grant to Village Hall 2026/2027

The PC expressed their appreciation of the high level of transparency and accountability maintained by the VH cttee. The PC views the grant application favourably; a formal motion to approve the grant application will be tabled during the AMC meeting in May 2026.

8 Planning

1. Planning application by The Pheasant
2. Tree on the Plaistow, potential new tree work application
3. Ongoing planning applications in Great Chishill: 2 The Pudgell

1. The Pheasant is seeking retrospective planning permission for converting 1st floor accommodation for a pub manager into a function room. The PC believes a function room expressly suited to local group use will be a welcome addition to local amenities and is therefore supportive of the application.
2. The occupants of 12 Heydon Road have reported a problem with overhanging branches of a tree rooted on the Plaistow. Cllr Ridge has inspected the site and is in contact with the tree surgeons who recently carried out major arboriculture works on The Plaistow. The Clerk will await communication form Cllr Ridge before formally instigating a planning application for further tree work on the Plaistow.
3. The meeting discussed recent documents added to the multi-element planning application by the owners of the property. While the September 2025 submissions add some detail on aesthetic and environmental matters (building materials, hedge planting), major questions pertaining to adjacent properties' loss of amenity (e.g. due to noise pollution) and vehicular access rights remain unanswered. The meeting concluded that while those contentious issues remain unresolved, the PC cannot ignore the strength of local feeling and thus is unable to support the planning application.

9 Communication:

The meeting approved establishment of a PC WhatsApp group to enable the Clerk to send out urgent 'read your email' alerts in case there are urgent deadlines for PC input.

10 Highways: outstanding highways issues

Cllr Ridge reported on the 5th marking-up of potholes in Little Chishill. Issues of blocked storm drains (due to lack of clearing debris: Little Chishill; tarmacking over storm drains, Great Chishill) remain unresolved to lack of action at County/Highways level.

11 Co-option of a Parish Councillor

Cllr Dring reported a fruitful conversation with a fellow parishioner. All conversations are on halt far the time being, awaiting news on the future shape of the new unified administrative County units.

12 Speed and Safety (including replacement safety mirror)

1. Cllr Hall reported on interaction with a parishioner advocating for speed reduction measures. According to County Cllr MacDonald, speed compliance in Great Chishill is pretty good, overall (no information available on where the nominal 1 year's worth if observational data

originated). The suggested remedy for the remaining hotspots (Hall Lane into The Pudgell; Barley Road) – suggested by P. MacDonald – may well commit the PC to expenditure equivalent to or even above the annual PC precept. Measures such as speed cushions need to be applied for through the Highways Improvement programme. Permission does not full funding; the PC could find itself committed to large 5-figure sums; there are follow-on costs to something like speed cushions, for example, such as having to implement/pay for additional street lighting. The meeting concluded that other grant opportunities would need to be explored first before the PC was comfortable fielding any projects for the County Highways Improvement programme.

2. Cllr Dring has now located the replacement safety mirror for the central Great Chishill village junction. The meeting favours an informal mirror erection solution replicating the current mirror-affixed-to-post arrangement, one that does not require formal application for a Deanery permit by the Anglican Church to attach anything to the boundary wall of St Swithun's. Should the latter become necessary, the vicar of St Swithun's has offered to help navigate formalities.

13 War memorial, repairs

One quote for renovation of the metal work around the war memorial gate has been obtained. The quote of £1000+ was felt to be out of proportion to the very small area of real estate affected by it. Cllr Dring is going to obtain an additional quote from a business whom he recently interacted with over a private repair/renovation job.

14 Support for legacy users of Therfield Heath

The meeting expressed its support for the draft prepared by Cllr Hall and authorised him to send the letter to the Conservators of Therfield Heath in the name of the PC.

15 PC and APM meeting dates in 2026

The PC agreed to replicate the 2025pattern of PC meetings, i.e. aim to meet on the 3rd Thursday of every month where possible. There will be no PC meetings in August and December 2026.
The Annual Village Meeting is to be held on Friday, 15th May (TBC). The date of the Annual PC Meeting is to be determined once more is known regarding local reorganisation and impact on local elections.

16 To Accept Notices & Matters for the next Agenda

Illicit occupation of the Rabbit Residence: the PC is awaiting action by the County Enforcement Officer in this matter; this is the only reason the issue was not entered into the November 2025 agenda already.

These minutes have been accepted as a true account of the proceedings of the Parish Council meeting on 20th November 2025.

Date: _____

Signature:_____

Cllr John Ridge, Chair