Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting 16th April 2026
Great and Little Chishill

Present: Cllrs Clements, Dring, Hall, Hatt, Leitch, Ridge (Chair)
District Cllr J. Hobro (until 20.15)
Guests: Conservators Ben Harrop and David May
Six members of the public
Minutes: A Lorenz, Parish Clerk
Time: 19.00 BST to 20.40 BST

1 Apologies for Absence
None received; Cllrs Clements and Dring had notified the Clerk that could only join from 19.45 onwards.

2 To receive any declaration of Pecuniary and non-Pecuniary Interest of Councillors
None received.

3 Information Item: Stakeholder Perspectives on Therfield Heath
An introduction by the Chairman and he thanked The Conservators for making the time to give their presentation to the Parish Council with a Q & A to follow.

Conservator B Harrop gave a short presentation on the history, remit and governance of Therfield Heath:

- A gift of land to Therfield and its neighbourhood in the 1893, it consists of 420 acres. The gift of land was intended to enable "cricket and other games and reasonable recreation" as well as serve as a Common with associated grazing rights. Therfield Heath is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which imposes certain legal obligations on land management.
- The Heath is managed by 7 conservators, drawing on a mixed income of tenancy fees, section 106 monies, donations and rents (such as from the Café, Golf Club, Racehorse Training yard, Rugby Club etc.)
- Expenditure for maintaining the Heath is currently exceeding income by ca £30k.

The subsequent exchange between the Conservators and parishioners whose children and/or grandchildren are playing rugby on the Heath focussed on the alleged conflict between use of the Heath as an informal training ground (in addition to the existing 2 rugby pitches) and environmental/conservation restrictions on the SSSI. Both stakeholder parties clarified their positions with the objective of clearing up any perceived misunderstandings.

- The Conservators welcome rugby (particularly junior rugby) under the terms of the 1893 land bequest 'to enable games.' They would welcome internal investment by Royston Rugby Club for upgrade of club facilities to enhance it as a recreational destination; provided funding was in place and the necessary planning permissions obtained. (In response to a direct question by Cllr Hall whether the Conservators would like to see the Rugby Club prosper.)
- It is the Conservators' view that Royston Rugby Club has been gradually spreading its activities over a wider area of the Heath and should therefore make an "equitable contribution" towards the upkeep of the 'informal training area.'
- Currently the Rugby Club pay £800 p.a. for the 2 pitches and the Conservators are asking for an additional £1,500 p.a. This additional rent enables the Rugby Club to use all the space and area that they used previously in addition to the two pitches'.

- Parishioners who are parents or grandparents present expressed their willingness to take the conversation back to Royston Rugby Club to request that the views of club members should be solicited on the situation (which they understood had so far not been attempted by the Club), including the prospect of a potential increase in fees.
- Parishioners who are parents or grandparents present expressed their willingness to take the conversation back to Royston Rugby Club and ask for the views of club members to be solicited on the situation (which had so far not been attempted by the Club), including the prospect of a potential increase in fees.
- All present agreed the meeting was both positive and a good foundation for the future relationship between the Conservators and users of the Heath represented at this meeting.

4 Approval of the Minutes of 19th and 26th March 2026

The two sets of minutes were approved by the meeting and signed by the Parish Council Chair.

5 Public Participation

R Diblee spoke about a previously minuted matter, the replacement of the safety mirror near the war memorial. The vicar of St Swithun's is aware of the issue and is championing it as a safety issue with the Diocese. The Diocese has requested a sketch and/ or photograph of the intended replacement mirror (with dimensions) to inform the discussion of how it could be affixed to the church wall.

Cllr Dring will supply these visual aids to Revd J Webster.

6 Local Elections 7th May/ 2026-27 PC: status update

As per notice issued by the Returning Officer for South Cambridgeshire District Council on 9th April 2026, the following persons were duly elected Parish Councillors without a contest:

- Simon Jermey Dring and Charles Hall (Great Chishill).
- John Richards Manners Ridge (Little Chishill).

The election notices have been published on the PC website and the Great Chishill noticeboard.

The 2026-27 Parish Council for Great and Little Chishill is quorate; the meeting expressed the intention to co-opt once constituted (such as the treasurer of the Playground Committee).

7 Update Parish Council IT arrangements: update

The Clerk reported on the difficulties with re-establishing access to the Google Workspace and associated PC emails addresses. For reasons unknown the provider suspended the (still active) subscription halfway during the transfer of admin access from the previous clerk's personal email account to the current incumbent's admin console (9th April 2026).

For the time being, all emails to @greatchishillpc.com addresses are bouncing.

The previously researched domain and email management provider (Parish Online) have confirmed they cannot migrate data from a suspended Google account into their own email management system.

Cllr Ding suggested specific phrasing for the Clerk to use for a request to Weebly support to release the suspended (plus lapsed on 15th April 2026) directly to Google.

8 Finance

The Clerk presented the finance sheet for March 2026. This was accepted by the meeting and signed.

The Clerk also reported on the end-of-year balance for the financial year 2025-25:
Current account: £289.41; deposit account: £16,352.51. £2000 from the financial year 2025-26 budget were ringfenced in the deposit account for use towards the playground refurbishment.

9 Planning Applications [26/01192/LBC, replacement timber windows and doors]
The Parish Council made no comment on the planning application.

10 Preparation for AGM 14th May 2026
Cllr Hall requested that the AGM be moved to an earlier date during that week. The provisional date is Tuesday, 12th May (Clerk to check VH availability).
Cllr Ridge inquired about historic records of Chair's reports to the AGM. Minutes of the meetings are published on the http://www.greatchishillpc.com.

11 Preparation for Annual Parish Meeting Friday 15th May
The Clerk is to design an invitation leaflet for distribution in the parish (by cllrs).

12 Questions re District and County Cllrs' reports
District Cllr J. Hobro enquired about uptake of food collection caddies since January. Several cllrs reported from personal observation and anecdotal evidence that food waste caddies were being put out on a regular basis. Since the scheme is so new, it is hard to forecast how well it will be received in warmer weather when there is a greater likelihood of nuisance caused by insects.

He also drew the meeting's attention to the upcoming Zero Carbon Communities Grant round and encouraged the VH committee to consider applying for solar development.

The parish is due to be visited by street sweeping vehicles between 18-29 May; if there are any areas of particular concerns, parishioners are encouraged to report these via an online form.

The meeting asked Cllr Hobro to facilitate a return of the Pink Bin for electrical waste to the VH car pak this summer. Cllr Ridge took the opportunity to thank Cllr Hobro for his support to the Parish Council during his tenure as District Councillor.

13 Contracts: verge cutting, general maintenance
The Clerk enquired about the history of the informal legacy arrangement with Five Lamps for work on the playing field. (An invoice for retainer fee plus work carried out over 12 months was received just after the end of the financial year 2025-26).

The contractor used for verge cutting last year has not made phone contact with the Clerk yet as requested. Cllr Hall suggested the Clerk contact Heydon Parish Council to enquire about their verge cutting arrangements as a backup.

The Clerk suggested regularising all arrangements with contractors going forward, implementing contracts clarifying scope and remuneration (to be kept as simple as possible).

14 To accept notices and matters for the next agenda
The AGM will discuss grant applications from community groups.
A Truett recently requested a contribution of £160 for repairs to New Age Kurling equipment.

These minutes have been approved as a true account of the Parish Council meeting held on 16h April 2026.

Signature: Date:

John Ridge, Chair of the Parish Council