

Chignal Parish Council

C/O 45 Cherry Garden Road, Great Waltham, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 1DH

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Clerk: Will Adshead-Grant

Chair: Lynn Ballard

Website: e-voice.org.uk/Chignal-Parish

Vice Chair: Linda Nelson

Minutes of the Bi-Monthly Meeting of the Chignal Parish Council held on Monday 13th November 2023 at 7.30pm.

Governance

2023/631 Chairman's Welcome

Chair: Ballard.

Cllr: Elwick, Lewis, Nelson, Stainton and Towns.

2023/632 Apologies for Absence

None required.

2023/633 Register of Declarations of Interests and any requests for dispensation

Resolution: There were no declarations of interest.

2023/634 Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 11th September 2023.

Resolution: The monthly minutes were confirmed.

2023/635 Note the Orchard sub-Committee minutes of 1st November 2023.

Resolution The committee minutes were noted.

2023/636 Public Open Session for any matters that need to be drawn to the Parish Council's attention.

The item does not need to be on the current agenda.

5 members of the public were in attendance.

26th Jan – Race Night run by the community group in the village hall. 8 races to be run. 80 tickets available at £13.50.

Noted that the pothole work near the entrance to Gardening Express is very poor quality.

Boyton Hall license hearing. Concerns over potential noise issues. Potential start of bigger things?

2023/637 County and City Councillors' Reports

i. Essex County Councillor Report – Cllr Mike Steel.

Highways:

Update on the Member Led pothole scheme - I have submitted 38 of my 36 allowance – 24 have been completed, in terms of Chignal, all 3 have been completed including the batch opposite Gardening Express entrance.

LCHE223012 - Community Orchard, Mashbury Road, Chignal Smealy

This has been submitted to the Essex Highways Solutions (EHS) team directly and they have responded that the Road Safety and Engineering Teams are looking to see if the request is viable.

I have now received the following response from the design team:

“The Parish Council should be aware of the following issues that may prohibit the installation of steps at this location before considering funding the design/feasibility.

- Speed limit is derestricted (60 mph)
- The steps would lead straight onto the carriageway, as there are no footways along this road and no street lighting.
- Visibility is restricted on the approach to the Orchard entrance, due to double bends.
- Installing steps, prohibits access to other people e.g., people with pushchairs, or limited mobility unable to negotiate steps.
- Stats if present, may impact the proposal.

Taking all the above into account we are of the opinion that it would be unlikely to pass the Road Safety Audit, therefore we would suggest that this request is not progressed.

However, should the Parish Council wish to proceed to fund a detailed design/feasibility to assess the possibility to implement steps at this location, the cost would be £5,122.24 + VAT.

LHP Scheme LCHE212007 Village gateway Improvements – planned for 23/24 – redesign and implementation.

Due to a shortfall in resource, a number of LHP schemes were not completed in 22/23. Assurances were given that unspent 22/23 budget would be carried over to 23/24 to complete these schemes, so it was decided by the LHP members to carry on with these schemes. However, subsequently, the budget was not carried over, and the carried over schemes have to be funded from this year's 23/24 budget.

This means that the new schemes that were provisionally allocated to the 23/24 funding, will need to be relooked at again. With the 22/23 carry over schemes using most of the 23/24 budget, it leaves only £32K to allocate in 23/24, instead of the expected £250K. The LHP sub-committee will need to reconsider the list of schemes to see which of the schemes will be done this year, and which will now need to be done in 24/25. (I am a member of this sub-committee)

So, the plan was for the new Chignal Gateway to get designed and implemented in 23/24.

With the above, there is only £32K left unallocated after funding last year's shortfall.

We had previously allocated this year's (23/24) to several schemes, including the gateway.

I am attending a funding sub-meeting this week at which we will very likely move all of the 23/24 plan to 24/25 – but see what short term good we can do with the remaining £32K for this year.

I have voiced my disappointment with the change of plan and not carrying over the budget!

There is still the option that Chignal PC could use CIL funds to progress this scheme. The "Direct Works" process still requires that schemes are validated by the LHP but then passed over to the separate EHS team. LCHE212007 has already been through validation, so this is not an issue.

I have also floated the idea that dropping to a 30mph limit would be cheaper and more acceptable to Chignal PC and residents but have continued to meet resistance from the Highway Engineers in terms of policy for such limits. I will still take the opportunity to promote this, but it doesn't look good!

Bus Services – Digigo

The service is being considered for extension beyond the pilot period which ends March 2024. It currently runs with a large subsidy which is slowly declining but is still expected to need a subsidy of £726K in 23/24, which is expected to drop to under half £M by 27/28.

Recycling centre vehicle bookings – Public Consultation

Since January 2023, a pilot booking system has been in place at Essex County Council recycling centres. Following an evaluation of the trial, Essex County Council is proposing to retain a booking process permanently for all vehicles at their 21 recycling centres.

You can have your say on the proposal by completing the consultation survey before 19 November 2023. To read the evaluation, supporting documents and to complete the survey, visit

www.essex.gov.uk/recyclingcentrebookings

The primary way to respond to the consultation is online via the ECC consultation portal, but you can request alternative options (such as a paper copy to fill in at home) by calling 0345 603 7625.

ECC Draft waste Strategy

The draft Waste Strategy for Essex sets out the vision, targets and priorities of the Essex Waste Partnership (EWP). The strategy covers how we will manage waste from homes and businesses in the county for the next 30 years. Let us know what you think by completing our consultation. The consultation is open until Wednesday 22 November 2023.

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/wastestrategy>

General's Bridge

With the bridge now in place, it will be interesting to get feedback on the traffic around the area.

Theoretically, there should be a reduction in quarry traffic using ERW/White Hart Lane route as well as lighter vehicles accessing the A12 from ERW, with an expected increase in cars along the RDR.

Previous complaints to me have been mainly around the noise of HGVs along RDR, this should get better, although the total amount of traffic along RDR will increase.

Proposed Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package also includes walking, cycling, bus and Park and Ride improvements to encourage safer, greener and healthier travel.

Plans to transform a vital gateway in Chelmsford have taken a step forward after Essex County Council was conditionally awarded £69 million of Government funding. This includes a hamburger roundabout (a new roundabout with a road through the centre of it), bus priority measures and walking and cycling improvements at the junction itself and on the approaches to and from the roundabout. The package will also see a 350-space expansion of Sandon Park and Ride and a 500-space expansion of Chelmer Valley Park and Ride. The £81 million project will also be part funded by Essex County Council and Chelmsford City Council. It can now move forward after the Department for Transport approved the outline business case and agreed to contribute £68.75million of Major Road Network (MRN) funding, subject to certain conditions. The funding is dependent on planning consent and other processes, as well as a full business case.

Work continued in developing the proposals further while the funding bid was being considered and planning applications are due to be submitted before the end of the year.

Based on the current programme, construction is scheduled to start in Spring 2025 and be completed in 2028. This will be subject to planning approval and acquiring the required land.

Construction will be carefully sequenced to minimise disruption, with early expansion of Sandon Park and Ride to meet the anticipated increase in demand during works at the Army and Navy junction and provide an alternative means of travel into the city centre.

For more information about the Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package and to sign up for the project e-newsletter, please visit www.essex.gov.uk/armyandnavy.

National Grid – Pylons

Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk [County Councils remain united against Norwich to Tilbury onshore option | Essex County Council](#)

The 3 councils jointly commissioned an [independent report](#) and the leaders of all 3 are asking National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) and the electricity system planner, National Grid Electricity System Operator (NGESO) to consider the findings of the report.

The independent report questions the timings of the projects, and this uncertainty brings into question the need case for NGET’s preferred option, of a land-based pylon line. All 3 county councils have said that this option will harm the local economy, environment and the health and wellbeing of their communities. The Independent report also challenges the delivery date of 2030 and suggests that the need for additional transmission capacity would be closer to 2035. Such a delay is likely to reduce the cost of NGET developing an integrated offshore alternative, but it does accept that the most economical option probably still remains onshore overhead lines, and pylons. However, it makes a clear statement “*To ensure the UK’s energy security, our clear preference is for a coordinated, offshore centred approach, delivered at pace to minimise onshore works*”.

So, the preferred choice of all three host county councils (Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk) remains an integrated offshore option, but only if it can be delivered within an appropriate timescale and without significant adverse impacts on sensitive coastal communities.

In addition, our MP Kemi Badenoch, is writing to the Minister for Nuclear and Networks at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to share this report and make it clear that the three councils: [County Councils remain united against Norwich to Tilbury onshore option](#).

I recently hosted Kemi at the Great Waltham/Little Waltham “pinch point” to emphasise just how close the pylon route is to the residential area and know heritage sites.

- ii. Chelmsford City Councillor Report - Cllr Nicolette Chambers.
There was no report.

Planning

2023/638 Planning Decisions:

Type	Status	
23/01092/FUL	The Three Elms Mashbury Road Chignal St James Chelmsford Essex CM1 4TZ	Application Refused

2023/639 Planning Updates:

No updates other than above in 2023/638.

1. **Planning Application Reference: 23/01421/FUL: comments submitted**
Address: Barn South Hillcroft, Chignal Road, Chignal Smealy

Description of works: Removal of identified buildings on site and re-use and conversion of existing buildings on site to a residential dwelling.

Chignal Parish Council has argued consistently against allowing the erection of a house on this area of open countryside. The need for any additional housing in this part of Chignal is being met more than adequately by the extensive new residential areas in the parish, (Little Hollows and Copperfield Place) and the Kilnfield Barns development on Chignal Road.

In as much as the "chicken sheds/barn" had any historic or architectural merit, the conversion does not retain any of its original barn character as advocated in the Chignal Villages Design Statement (VDS), page 20.

From the drawings and plans both proposed buildings look like brand new prefabricated units which could be found on an urban industrial site, not a refurbished barn and garage in keeping with its rural setting.

The proposed works go a very long way beyond what might sensibly or reasonably be described as a conversion. The development is in all practical terms starting afresh, with only a modest amount of help from the original agricultural building.

The Design and Access Statement includes a sustainability checklist that states that paving will be kept to a minimum to prevent run-off. However, the plans show an extensive area of unsightly concrete block paving from the road leading up to, and in front of, the proposed dwelling and garage. This hard urban treatment of the driveway is contrary to the VDS, page 21: "the use of large areas of concrete, tarmac and block paving are not well suited to rural settings, where traditional materials such as shingle are more appropriate, and assist with rainwater drainage".

The Parish Council also continues to have concerns regarding access to this site as it has limited sightlines on a blind bend, on to the Chignal Road. The Parish Council made similar comments in relation to a previous planning application for a house on this site (14/01320/OUT).

Recommended for Refusal:

The proposal to convert the existing timber structure on the site would result in substantial reconstruction amounting to a new build which would not retain the original barn character.

2. **New premises licence under the Licensing Act 2003: Boyton Hall Farm.**

The alcohol licence application is for the annual 'Clockstock' two-day event to be held on 28th & 29th June 2024 and thereafter, on a weekend in June or July in subsequent years.

Concerns over fencing, routing in and out, signage, police presence, noise concerns, onsite management plan, security of the attendees.

10,000-15,000 spectators expected at this ticketed public event.

Deadline for raising issues regarding this licence application is the 20th of November.

Resolution: The Parish Council has concerns over the impact on the parish.

Resolution: Cllr Ballard will discuss with Roxwell parish council, Cllr Chambers and Cllr Steel.

Resolution: A draft objection to be shared with the members.

Finance

2023/641 Discuss and agree the proposed budget for 2024-2025 of £7,800 (decrease of £780 on the previous year).

2022/642 Review and confirm the precept demand on Chelmsford City Council for 2024-2025 of £7,000. The impact is approximately £2.04 per annum decrease on a Band D

2023/643 Finance:

Account Balances:

Cheque Account £ **10,221.68**

Orchard Account £ **1,575.34** (Included in cheque account)

Saving Account £ **41,577.66**

- General Reserve £21,280.
- Cil £20,297

Total **£** **51,799.34**

2023/644 To approve the following payments:

Date	Item	Payment Value	Budget Heading
13.11.23	Essex Pension Fund - Oct payment	£159.77	salary
13.11.23	Taylor Agricultural - Grass cutting	£192.00	Play field Maintenance
13.11.23	Cllr lewis - marine plywood	£36.07	Orchard
13.11.23	HMRC -Paye November	£43.80	salary
13.11.23	clerk salary &expenses - October	£184.42	salary
13.11.23	HMRC - Paye - October	£43.80	salary
13.11.23	clerk salary &expenses - November	£194.37	salary
13.11.23	Essex Pension Fund - Nov payment	£159.77	salary
13.11.23	Cllr Lewis- Padlock-	£23.50	Reserve
13.11.23	Chignals & Mashbury Village Hall	£120.00	Meetings

Totals **£ 1157.50**

Resolution: **The payments were approved.**

2023/645 Review of the Bi-monthly bank reconciliation

Resolution: **The reconciliation was approved with zero tolerance.**

REPORTS AND UPDATES

2023/646 Bus Network Consultation 2023 - Essex County Council - Citizen Space

Bus Network Consultation 2023: comments submitted.

The Parish Council has been made aware of this Bus Network Consultation by our County Councillor Mike Steel. Paper copies of the survey booklet have been distributed at our monthly parish Coffee Mornings and the proposed change to services 17/18 operated by Lodge Coaches was also raised by residents during the Public Open Session of our Parish Council meeting on 11th September.

As far as we are aware at least 20 people who live in the villages of Chignal St James and Chignal Smealey use the local buses. These residents have voiced concerns to the Parish Council about the proposal to withdraw the 17/18 bus service which provides a vital scheduled and direct transport link with Chelmsford city centre and the railway/bus station interchange.

This bus service is used largely by older residents who may not have access to a car or who find it difficult to use the digital car park payment systems in Chelmsford. Others use it to reduce their carbon footprint and to access other bus services and Chelmsford railway station.

There is another very important mental health aspect to this rural bus service as many regular passengers have got to know each other and enjoy the social interaction during the journey. The Lodge Coaches drivers have also got to know their passengers and are particularly welcoming and helpful, providing assistance to people who may need some assistance mounting and dismounting the vehicle.

The proposal to replace this timetabled bus service with Digigo is unsatisfactory for several reasons:

1. Digigo is still being trialled and therefore it is not guaranteed that it will continue following evaluation of its effectiveness as a rural public transport alternative.
2. Residents have reported problems downloading the Digigo App and have been redirected to the website with no-one answering the phone number to provide assistance.
3. The Digigo minibus does not connect directly with Chelmsford city centre and the bus/railway station which are the most popular destinations for the retail market, other shopping, leisure, social and health appointments and onward travel.
4. Digigo is not a substitute for a scheduled rural bus service such as 17/18 which picks up and drops passengers anywhere along its route through the villages between Great Dunmow and Chelmsford.

An on-demand minibus service such as Digigo should be regarded as a supplement to, not a substitute, for a rural bus network which links isolated rural communities with each other and with urban service centres such as Chelmsford.

The Parish Council would wish to be consulted, along with neighbouring parishes on the future of public transport services in the rural areas of Essex.

2023/647 Chignal Community Meeting: Saturday 11th November, outcome reports:

26 people, (11 Chignal St James; 9 Chignal Smealey; 4 Little Hollows; 1 former Chignal resident from Writtle; 1 County Councillor Broomfield & Writtle) participated in working groups to comment on project ideas presented at the meeting and to generate additional suggestions. Comments were also invited on the new Chignal website and parish Newsletter and on the emergency warning arrangements proposed in the Community Resilience Plan.

New Community Projects for Chignal: suggestions that would have a good fit with Parish Plan Priorities and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) eligibility requirements.

Priority 2: Community Life. We need to support efforts by residents to make the community more inclusive and welcoming to newcomers and visitors.

Village Hall

1. Install solar panels on the south facing roof area with batteries to store energy. Further research required on potential energy savings set against installation costs. Investigate availability of grants from other funders for this work.
2. Air and heat circulation in the main hall not as efficient as it could be. Advice required on appropriate methods to move hot air to ground level. Consult the village hall advisor at the Rural Community Council Essex re: technical solutions and possible grants.
3. Car park access improvements: new "Village Hall" signs visible from the road on either side of the entrance; install a light (Solar) by the road entrance; provide a pass card/code for a barrier or chain lock.
4. Sound system: improve to prevent microphone distortion.
5. Storage building: improve the unfinished appearance of the area surrounding this new building with paving to the base and clearing weeds.
6. Table Tennis table for use in the hall: support for purchasing another table tennis table for the club, giving a total of four tables. Quotes required.
7. Landscaping scheme for the Village Hall Garden area with benches.

Community Events

Village Fete: a number of "easy to erect" pop-up gazebos would assist with the village fete.

Community Communications

1. Chignal Welcome/Information pack: update printed booklet.
2. Community print distribution points: unlocked Perspex boxes to be installed around the parish for notices.
3. IT training and printing: purchase a secure container for the community laptop and printer. Siting in the village hall to be agreed with the hall's Management Committee.

Priority 4: Environment and Countryside Management. We need to support efforts to manage the countryside to retain important landscape features, keep it litter free and accessible.

Community Orchard: support for purchasing items to help with harvesting, storage and distribution of the increasing amount of fruit produced in the orchard, (display stand, storage boxes and tripod ladder) and tools to facilitate weeding by volunteers around the 73 trees, (hoes, forks and kneelers).

Tree planting: recommendation for an annual tree planting scheme with an agreed target to plant each year plus a plant a tree scheme, for each "new baby" born in Chignal Parish. Locations, land ownership, underground services, highway visibility, planting, protection, establishment and long-term management would need to be researched. Other grants may be available, such as the Greener Chelmsford Grant scheme.

Priority 5: Community Safety. We need to provide information to the community about what to do in an emergency.

Defibrillators: request for two more defibrillator boxes in other easy to access locations. Research needed on potential sites.

Flooded road warning: suggestion for simple flood level posts located at all "flood risk areas" to show depth of water. As the depth of the flood water on Mashbury Road around Gardening Express varies over a significant distance a series of marker posts may be more appropriate. Flood warning signs could be erected when stretches of road become impassable. Use should be made of the Chignal Resilience Plan's telephone tree, WhatsApp group and parish council email list to warn residents of flooded roads. The installation of cameras at flood hot spots was not considered to be an effective warning solution.

Priority 6: Leisure Time. We need to provide opportunities for residents to enjoy their leisure time.

Playing Field

1. Car park: reconsider the playing field car park barrier, as the padlock is small and, on the ground, so difficult to use.
2. Sports facilities: suggestion for a "Community use" Pétanque court and balls and new / spare football goal net, as original net is worn.
3. Landscaping scheme with additional benches. Further details required on purpose of landscaping scheme and siting of additional benches as there are already two benches and seating in the gazebo.

Other suggestions which would not be eligible for CIL funding

1. To improve the hall outlook, remove the unsightly electric pole from the rear V/Hall Garden area.
2. Establish a "cash reserve" for future use at community events and royal celebrations.

Chignal website and parish newsletter

1. **Website:** some clubs and groups have had difficulty accessing their pages and would like to have help inputting their information onto the new website and keeping it up to date.
2. **Parish Newsletter:** there should be one last printed newsletter to coincide with the launch of the website, delivered to everyone in the parish. An A4 list of upcoming events may be sufficient. A form should be delivered at the same time to find out who would like to have a paper copy in the future. These could be collected at Coffee Mornings or if necessary, delivered to the door.
3. There should be agreed newsletter publication dates, ideally every month to coincide with the parish Coffee Mornings.
4. Request for an electronic newsletter on the website rather than users having to search through separate pages looking for new information and forthcoming events.

Chignal Resilience Plan

1. Residents not able to access the website or emails should be given a printed copy of the Resilience Plan and the emergency contacts.
2. Guidance needed on what to include in an emergency bag, such as a wind-up torch, bar of soap to repair a plastic oil tank leak etc.
3. Residents should be asked to check the emergency contacts information on the new Chignal website and let the parish council know of any omissions.

Resolution: invite residents/clubs/groups to develop these ideas for community projects and if appropriate, submit applications for CIL funding for consideration by the Parish Council

2023/648 Ride London, Sunday 26th May 2024: invite organisers to address 8th January meeting.

Resolution: The race is on Sunday 26th May 2024. No requirement for a face-to-face meeting.

2023/649 Representatives' Reports: to discuss and debate any items.

- Little Hollows / Copperfield Place Liaison - Cllr Elwick
- Completion of Copperfield Place landscaping work
 - Landscaping works have not been undertaken to replace the dead and burnt items. Complaint raised via planning enforcement to force remedial work.
 - A recent car accident in the early hours due to visibility.
 - Playing Field - Cllr Elwick and Cllr Towns. Nothing to report.
- Village Hall Liaison - Cllr Towns.
 - Coffee and mince pie event – 2nd December.
- Community Engagement - Cllr Nelson.
 - Community laptop – setup but need to purchase appropriate software.
 - £79 a year for up to 5 years.
 - Clerk to investigate with CCC & ECC for another option.
 - Community printer not yet installed – consultation with Village Hall Committee on storage options. Secure cabinet required.
 - Laptop configured.
 - Printer to be configured.
 - Update on parish website launch and publication of the next edition of Chignal News.
 - Some training to be arranged.
 - Some details still to be updated on the website.
- Community Safety – Cllr Lewis.
 - Update on options for siting and managing a Defibrillator in Chignal Smealey.
 - Discussion on the 'adopt a box' scheme. Minimum standard is 4 broadband providers in an area. Chignal has only 2.
 - British Heart Foundation will support the conversion of the BT box to a defibrillator unit.
 - British Heart Foundation will install in churches free of charge.
- Highways (include Hedges) - Cllr Towns, (see 2023/637 ECC report for updates).
 - Update on LHP funding for village entry gates and validation for steps to the community orchard.
 - Update on ECC Member-led pothole repair scheme.
 - Clearing and jetting blocked road drains.
 - Directional sign to Chignal Smealey: Hollow Lane/Chignal Road junction. Request made to Essex Highways and Persimmon Homes to reinstall the sign.
- Footpaths/Bridleways – Cllr Nelson and Cllr Towns
 - Report of the footpath at St James Church being blocked.
- Tree Warden - Cllr Ballard. Nothing to report
- Countryside Conservation. Nothing to report

2023/650 Items for the next Agenda

- Community projects - feedback from residents/clubs/groups
- CIL bids

- Welcome Pack

Next meetings:

Monday 8 th	January 2024	Monthly Meeting
Monday 11 th	March 2024	Monthly Meeting & Annual Parish Meeting
Monday 13 th	May 2024	Monthly Meeting and AGM
Monday 8 th	July 2024	Monthly Meeting
Monday 9 th	September 2024	Monthly Meeting
Monday 11 th	November 2024	Monthly Meeting

Meeting Closed 21:24
Will Adshead-Grant
Clerk to the Council.