

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL CHIGNAL PARISH MEETING
HELD MONDAY 11TH MARCH 2024 AT 20:00
At the Chignal & Mashbury Village Hall

1) Welcome.

The Chair of the Parish Council opened the meeting on behalf of the parish.

As Paul Walker, Joint Jamboree Chief was absent, there was no briefing on the Essex International Scout and Guide Jamboree, Boyton Hall Farm 27th July – 3rd August

2) Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Assembly held on 13th March 2023.

The minutes were confirmed.

3) Parish Chair's report.

Another busy year for our Parish Clerk and the six councillors. Consistently high attendance by residents at PC meetings and at monthly parish Coffee Mornings.

Main areas of work during 2023/24:

National Grid: Norwich to Tilbury – Parish Council responded in detail to the public consultation in conjunction with parishes to the northwest and southwest of Chelmsford.

Copperfield Place and Little Hollows – development monitored, and landscaping and highways issues raised with Persimmon Homes, Essex Highways and City Council Planning Enforcement.

Clockstock Music Festival, Saturday 29th June 2024, Boyton Hall Farm: comments made on the licencing application and attended the City Council Licencing Committee to raise issues of concern to residents.

Community Meeting organised in November 2023 to generate ideas for new community facilities, attended by 26 residents. Several projects are being developed and funded by the Parish Council, such as purchasing pop-up gazebos and providing equipment and tools for volunteers to help maintain the community orchard.

Essex Minerals Local Plan Review consultation: slide presentation prepared on the potential impact of the proposed gravel extraction site in Chignal St James for a public meeting on 24 February attended by 56 residents. Detailed consultation response drafted for submission by 19th March 2024.

Community Engagement: the Chignal website is close to being finalised and a lap-top and laser printer have been purchased for community use.

Flytipping incidents were reported and cleared promptly by the City Council throughout the year and a parish wide litter pick was organised on 9th March 2024.

Community Orchard: bountiful fruit harvest which was distributed to residents and local charities. The Community Group is now represented on the Orchard Committee and is helping to organise events and activities in the orchard to increase interest and engagement by local residents.

4) Chignal & Mashbury Gardening Club.

Secretary's Annual Report March 2024

Our summer programme was due to kick off in April with a visit to Warley Place near Brentwood. Sadly, this was cancelled due to bad weather. In May we visited a beautiful garden called Blunts Hall in Witham. With three acres to explore along with enthusiastic owners, the gardens were a delight. In June we went to Feeringbury Manor near Feering, a peaceful 10-acre garden with two large ponds. Well stocked with perennials, shrubs, and mature trees, again we were blessed with a gorgeous summers evening. In July we visited a small walled garden in East Street, Coggeshall. Again, crammed full of plants, all members enjoyed refreshments after a walk around the garden on a pleasant summers evening. Unfortunately, our September visit to Walnut Tree Cottage near Dunmow was also cancelled due to bad weather, however we hope to visit this garden later this year in September.

The Club held a plant stall at the Village Fete in June, which raised just over £200. We also held our annual club supper evening in late July at the Village Hall and enjoyed a pleasant evening. This winter's programme in the Village Hall kicked off in October with our annual AGM. In November, sadly our speaker cancelled at short notice due to a family illness. Unfortunately, we

cancelled our January meeting due to inclement weather once again. In February we were visited by a local photographer Ray Lawrence, who delivered an entertaining talk called 'Dig or no dig.' This informal, engaging talk took a light-hearted look at the trials and tribulations of his involvement with the allotment site just up the road in Melbourne, including growing on his own plot for donating produce to a local charity, plus history of the site. Later this month, we will be revisiting Blunts Hall in Witham, the garden that we visited in May last year. It will be interesting to see the garden in a different season and to admire the spring colour.

The club has a new Chair this year. Sue Davis took over from Jean Watson late last year. Jean remains on the committee. We also sadly lost Steve Middleditch as a committee member in January. The rest of the committee remains unchanged.

Elaine Hinchliffe, Club Secretary, 5 March 2024

5) The Chignals Croquet Club.

2023 saw another very enjoyable year of croquet. This season we had six new members join the group – Elaine and Allan Hinchliffe, John and Kim Groom who had moved into St. James Church earlier in the year and Bridget and Andrew Wright who moved in to the Saracens. 26 members in total now, fielding around 16 people for each meeting, we managed to meet on 1st Sunday in the month, from April until October without having any meetings called off due to bad weather.

We played a di. rent format this year – playing as random pairs rather than couples. Everyone agree. hat this formula worked really well.

We continue to play on two courts and the mowing rota, organised by Andy Scheidegger has worked well this year. We were fortunate enough to have the use of a new ride on mower, which is owned by the parish council which has the added benefit of collecting the grass. This makes it easier for some less physically able members to share in the grass cutting. David Lomas took on board the instructions of how to use the mower which was extremely helpful. We experienced a few teething problems with the mower, but it is running properly now.

Many of the members of the Croquet club helped with the village fete again this year and the croquet group were therefore able to share in the profits from the fete which helped the croquet group pay towards the maintenance of the new mower.

At the end of the season, we had an end of season bash at the village hall, catered by Mandy Bellman who supplied fish pies and desserts. It was an enjoyable evening with Lee Bailey taking the winning trophy for 2023.

It continues to be a fun and friendly morning/afternoon but with a competitive edge – the scoreboard is keenly watched over by many!

It is with great sadness that we lost one of our founder members – Steve Middleditch – who passed away suddenly in February this year. We will all really miss his company, enthusiasm, and hope that Kate will still come along to our meetings.

Our 2024 season starts on 7th April at 10.30 – weather permitting - and continues to run on the first Sunday in the month until October. New members are always welcome.

Many thanks to the parish council for their continued support of our club.

Lee Bailey - organiser

6) The Table Tennis Club.

Our membership remains steady, and we have occasional additional players from Bat and Chat to swell the numbers. A proposal to increase the number of tables to four was considered recently but the members decided that they are happy with the number that we currently have although we could sometimes make good use of a fourth.

Although play is competitive, members very much enjoy socialising during our sessions and newcomers of all abilities are made most welcome. Our sessions are from 4.00pm to 6.00pm on Wednesdays and new players are free to just turn up on the day.

7) Chignals & Mashbury Community Group.

Report from January 2023 to date.

We are a great group of 12 ladies who meet every other month to assist events that go on in the village and also to put on events for the whole village to take part in. Two others do not attend the meetings but are there to help when needed.

Unfortunately, our quiz night that we were due to hold in January 2022 was cancelled due to community members not being available.

Nonetheless, it was going to be a busy year as King Charles was having his coronation in May. We held a very successful screened event of the proceedings with over 50 villagers bringing their own lunch and sharing in a wonderful cake made by Barbara Miller.

It was proposed that the Community group would join forces with the village hall committee in getting the once annual fete back off the ground. It took place on 10th June – a very hot day! For a first run for our group, it went well, and we have joined with the Fete committee in running another fete on the 1st of June this year.

The village would be affected by the proposed pylons if they were to go ahead, so with Vicky Botham steering the local campaign we all delivered leaflets to both villages to raise awareness amongst the parishioners.

The group is also part of the Emergency plan, being co-ordinated by Jon Lewis. A few of us are on the telephone tree list, should an emergency arise that everyone needs to be aware of.

It was agreed this year that we would assist the Orchard committee in helping with their events and also join forces with the monthly coffee morning organisers. All the ladies that run the coffee morning are on this committee, so it made sense to come under one umbrella.

The committee helped out at the parish council village event, providing refreshments to attendees. The biggest event in our calendar was the Race night held on 26th January this year. Over eighty people attended, and it was a very enjoyable event, raising over £1400 to be donated between the firefighter's charity and the Salvation Army – two groups that saved the village from an enormous fire back in the summer of 2022.

We welcome new members and also any ideas for future events we may want to run. The idea of the group is to keep our community alive and bring together the various other social groups that many of us are part of.

8) Chignals & Mashbury Orchard & Orchard Friends.

10 years on from planting, the 73 heritage trees in the orchard are starting to mature and produce more fruit. All of the trees are sponsored for 3 years and this financial support covers the cost of managing the orchard and making the annual lease payment to the City Council.

Funding was made available from the Parish Council's CIL money to buy a new picnic bench, storage boxes, ladder and hand tools to help with weeding around the trees. The Village Fete Committee also gave us a grant to buy two traditional wooden rakes to collect the hay following the main cut of the wildflower meadow. Our band of hay rakers enjoyed each other's company and had fun together in the September sunshine.

The bee hotel attracted several species of solitary bee to nest in different sized holes drilled into blocks of wood and two new hedgehog boxes were placed in the hay mound. Wildlife cameras have recorded foxes and rabbits and there is evidence of badgers feeding on windfall fruit.

The Autumn Fruit Festival held in the village hall was very well attended and attracted visitors from neighbouring parishes. Fruit was distributed from August to November to residents and to local homeless charities and Chelmsford Foodbank.

Some new events and activities are planned for 2024 in conjunction with the Community Group, such as an Easter Trail, informal coffee mornings in the orchard, and a wildflower picnic with entertainment from local musicians.

9) Chignals & Mashbury Village Hall.

This report covers the significant activities in 2023 which was a year in which we had quite a busy time. The big events of the year were the Coronation of a new King but more importantly, the return of the Chignals and Mashbury Village Fete. There were the regular meetings of the Bowls Club, Table Tennis Club, Women's Institute, Wine Discovery Group, Gardening Club and the Community Group as well as the regular Parish Council meetings and Coffee Mornings. In terms of non-regular hirings, the Hall was the venue for no less than 11 Children's Parties as well as 10 private parties, 3 Weddings, an Election and 5 external lunchtime events. My thanks go to the

Committee members who gave up their time to open and close the hall as needed. Coronation of King Charles III The community group organised a fine celebration of the Coronation of the new King and Queen. Live pictures of the event were screened in a superbly decorated Hall and the many people who attended seemed to have a really enjoyable time. Village Fete Having not had a fete since 2019, 2023 saw the return of the Village Fete. The Community Group and Village Hall Committee combined to organise a traditional fete on June 10th. It was a great success with over 20 stalls and a Dog Show in lovely hot weather. It had been decided that the profit would be split with 50% retained by the Village Hall and the other 50% divided amongst the contributing groups that request it. The profit was in excess of £2,000 and details of the distribution is available on request. Community Meeting At the Community Meeting held on 11th November 2023, there were a number of suggestions about the Village Hall. These are being considered by the Committee. Christmas Coffee and Mince Pies Once more at the beginning of December, the Village Hall held a Coffee and Mince Pies morning. It was extremely successful raising over £600 towards Village Hall funds. My thanks go out to all the people who contributed and helped. Maintenance The Hall always requires some maintenance activities. Members of the Committee try to address issues as and when they can and the weather is suitable. In 2023, we were able to address many problems with the Hall such as a problem with the doors on the Storage Building, unblocking the rainwater down pipes; mending the accessible toilet and many more similar issues. My thanks go out to the Committee members for their efforts in completing these and the many other activities that are constantly required. I would also like to thank Mr Dave Thomas and Mr Ralph Broom who have provided invaluable assistance throughout the year. Finance Not all the necessary information is available to complete the accounts at present. Future Looking forward to the future, the big events we are looking forward to are the 2024 Village Fete which will be on 1st June 2024, and is already being planned. As always, we are looking for help, if you are willing to help on the day, help set up or pack away, contribute a prize, bake a cake or help in any way, please contact chignalsandmashburyfete@gmail.com or anyone on the Village Fete Committee. If you go to the Hall's web site on <https://www.chignalparish.org.uk/village-hall/>, you can see a poster with more information. Village Hall Committee As Chairman, I would like to thank all the Committee Members for their commitment, time and efforts during the year in keeping this hall running. This superb Hall is a wonderful asset for the Chignals and Mashbury and keeping it going would be so much easier if there were a few more people to share the load. The work is not onerous, we have six meetings a year and enlist the members' help from time to time to carry out tasks such as routine maintenance. The main input is ideas and some new members would give us a fresh perspective on how we do things. The more members we get, the more we can share the work. If you are interested in joining the Committee or know someone who might be, please contact anyone on the Committee.

Andy Emberton

10) Chignals & Mashbury Carpet Bowls Club.

As a club we have enjoyed another good year of Carpet Bowls.

Our membership has increased to 26 as we have been pleased to welcome two new members during the year. We once again entered the Essex League competitions playing against five other clubs in our area. We were pleased to finish a very close 2nd in this competition. This year our aim is to come top of the League! A number of friendly matches have been played against local clubs and these include Gt. Waltham, Broomfield, Boreham, Black Notley and Leaden Roding. Throughout the year we play various internal competitions. These include singles, pairs, the Bill Hawkes Trophy and the Forget me not trophy.

The Mike Bell Trophy is a whole day competition. This was held in September and followed by a Fish and Chip Supper. As usual a number of social events have been held throughout the year. A strawberry tea, Crazy Golf at West Park, followed by a picnic at the hall and then a normal afternoon of bowls and a visit to Chelmsford Museum followed by lunch at the Hive Café. An extra special event was held to celebrate King Charles III Coronation. We held an afternoon of fun bowls followed by an afternoon tea. Everyone was given a commemorative bookmark. Christmas

saw us celebrating with our usual Christmas social. Games of bowls are played for the Christmas Trophy followed by a supper of jacket potatoes and desserts. A raffle provides a prize for everyone. In February we celebrated Valentine's Day and Pancake Day by playing bowls during the afternoon and having a supper of Fish and Chips and pancakes. Some members attended the Essex Pairs Competitions at Potters Hopton on Sea and Potters Five Lakes. One pair progressed to the quarter finals but were unfortunately then knocked out. However, good weekends of bowls, food and entertainment were enjoyed. During the year members are able to enjoy a full programme of bowls and social events.

We would love more people to join our friendly and welcoming club.

Playing times are:-	Mondays	2.00pm to 4.30pm
	Thursdays	7.30pm to 10.00pm

- 11) Chignals & Mashbury Women's Institute.
- 12) Chignal Cricket Club.
- 13) Chignals Wine Discovery Group.

The Chignal St. James Wine Discovery Group continues to do well. Although membership dipped during the pandemic, we have seen membership rise this year with both new members joining in conjunction with previous members returning, there is a healthy interest from within the village. Membership currently stands at 39. The group meet on the second Friday of each month. Throughout the year we have a mixture of presentations from independent wine experts, enthusiasts, wine merchants and from individuals within the group. Each meeting concludes with cheese and biscuits. We have 2 regular events, the Christmas meal and a summer event held in July. In the past the group have organised wine tours abroad and we hope to do this again as travel returns to some normality. The group also run a stall at the village fete. We do not meet in August due to holidays. Our year runs from September – July. The current cost for membership is an annual fee of £15 and £15 for each normal tasting evening attended. We occasionally hold a premium evening which is charged at £20. New members are always very welcome. This year saw Norman step down as chair of the wine group. Norman did a tremendous job holding the post for over 15 years. He held the group together through difficult times including the rebuilding of the village hall and of course the recent pandemic. A special thank you should also go to Joan who has organised and assisted Norman throughout his tenure.

Malcolm Cummings and David Thomas have taken over as joint Chairpersons, Paul Spires remains as Treasurer.

- 14) St Nicholas Church, Chignal Smealey

The Church continues to provide monthly services to the communities of the Chignals and Mashbury. Generally, approximately, 10 parishioners attend each monthly service, although special services such as Armistice Day, the Crib service, the Joint services, and the harvest service have more attendees.

Funds are always tight but were boosted by the donation from the Village Hall and a fund raising event at The Ride for London. Many parishioners baked cakes and over £5000 was raised selling teas, coffees, and cakes. We have now been able to connect the church to a water supply for the first time using some of these funds.

We would like to thank the ladies who do the flowers, to keep the church looking beautiful, and Gill & Dave Thomas for volunteering their time and efforts in applying for grants and upcycling an old church altar to a serving cupboard, respectively.

All are welcome to our services on the 3rd Sunday in the month.

- 15) Chignal Chapel.
- 16) Essex County Council.

Annual Assembly 2024 ECC report from County Cllr for Broomfield and Writtle – Mike Steel

ECC Budget:

The 24/25 budget has been presented and accepted. Adult Social Care spend continues to grow and is the highest spend of all the areas. The area where I get most complaints is Highways but it represents the lowest of the spend areas! The 6% has to cover ongoing maintenance of Carriageways, Pavements, PROWs, verges, hedges, drains, flooding, signs. Local Authority funding continues to be stretched with inflation and reduced Central govt funding. The Council tax bill contributes only 40% of the gross spend and has to be supplemented by Central Govt grants and income for services.



A perspective from me as County Cllr:

Since I started as a County Cllr in May 2021, I have handled over 300 individual cases where residents and Parish Councils contact me directly. By far the majority of these pertain to highways – pot-holes, pavements, flooding, signs, verges, speeding, traffic volume, rat-running. I do all I can to try and resolve these but the main issue is that there isn't enough funds to fix everything given the mandatory services Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education come first. Local Highways Panel budgets have been cut and there is a large queue of schemes, so this process is proving to not deliver solutions. Cllrs do get an annual "no quibble pot-hole" allowance, and I have been enthusiastic in using all of mine every year, and more. There will be a new scheme starting April 2024, but this will be expanded and include pavements and other defects. It is being funded by an £8M grant from Central Govt which has to be spread over 75 ECC divisions. I have already received numerous requests for defects to be addressed. I won't be able to do all the pavements and carriageway pot-

holes, so will need to make priority decisions. I have feedback to both ECC and Central Govt, that the £8M is not enough. Chelmsford does continue to benefit from capital project improvements with the new station, the NE bypass and Army and navy improvements progressing. Along with “15 minute neighbourhood” schemes, active travel initiatives, and rural bus services, there is a real attempt to reduce traffic volumes. However, traffic levels continue to increase. It seems that post-Covid WFH has actually increased traffic volumes whilst at the same time reducing central Chelmsford car park use!

I am pleased to report that DigiGo is extending the service beyond the pilot for an extra 2 years! DigiGo is a fully electric shared public transport service which offers on-demand or pre-bookable travel in many of my rural parishes. There is no fixed route or timetable, which puts you in control of your journey. DigiGo is booked through the [TravelEssex](#) journey planning app. DigiGo operates 7 days a week, from 7am until 10pm. Fares are capped at £2 per journey, or concessionary passes apply. www.digigo.uk. RideLondon promotes active travel and will return to my Broomfield and Writtle division on Sunday 26 May 2024. The event is organised by London Marathon Events, and sees around 25,000 cyclists, of all abilities, taking on the personal challenge of riding either 100, 60 or 30 miles. The planned route is the same as the past two editions of the event, starting and finishing in London and passing Epping, North Weald, Ongar, Fyfield, Leaden Roding, Great Dunmow, Felsted, Great Waltham, the Melbourne Park area of Chelmsford and Writtle. In terms of my County division, it enters just north of Howe Street and exits on the A414 around Roxwell and Highwood, having gone through Great Waltham, Chignal Smealey, and Writtle. I think I have expressed in the past, my concerns about the disruption, and I do all I can to minimise the disruptions to local businesses. I have insisted that all the businesses directly on the route are contacted and mitigation plans are worked out.

While some road closures are necessary to ensure everyone is safe, healthcare, emergency services, businesses and communities can operate as required.

The event first came to Essex in 2022 and in the first two years in the county has raised more than £5m for charities. Hosting the event has also meant Essex has received £1.75 million in grants for projects across the county which inspire and provide opportunities for people to be active. One of the other main issues that people complain to me about is GP Surgery provisions I have met with LW PPG and Partners 29th Nov 23. Whilst this is outside my County Council responsibility, I have taken an active role in trying to address this. I have met with the ICB 30th Nov 23, who are responsible for the provision of GP surgeries. The objective of the ICB meeting was to understand if there was a strategic plan for the provision of surgeries in the area, in line with the housing development expansion, and why there was so much unclaimed S106 and CIL sitting with City Council. It was an interesting meeting and I learnt about the causes of delays in providing such services, and they are primarily with the NHS – with S106 and CIL funds sitting unclaimed, albeit such funds only form a minor percentage of the overall needs. Some of the CIL and S106 funds have been unclaimed for over 9 years (there is a 10 year payback clause!). Whilst the ICB do not seem to have a well developed strategy to providing surgeries, they do recognise a priority in North Chelmsford.

- New Beulieu surgery – building work just started – delayed by 2 years by negotiation of requirement with Beacon Health, who then pulled out at the last minute. It has gone out to bid again
- Gt Leighs – new surgery
- Garden Community – 6,200 dwellings – will be a new surgery
- Bloor Homes Broomfield – 512 dwellings proposal for a Health Centre on site
- Warren Farm Writtle – 800 homes will require determination.

I have provided a full report to my Parish Councils.

Finally, a mention about Pylons: - which affects 9 of my 11 Parishes!

I have opposed the pylons via my ECC and CCC Cllr role, including presenting motions at Council Meetings. I have formed a group of my parish councils to formulate a joint opposition (and a further 2 Parish Councils to the south have joined us). I have lobbied our MP to oppose them. The next step is the NG mandatory consultation, but before that, the publication of the Electricity System Operator's

(ESO) study on alternative routes. I attended the 4th March presentation on the outcomes of their study. The study considered 9 options in total including offshore, buried, onshore pylons and hybrids. The options were compared in terms of

1. Environmental Impact
2. Community Impact
3. Deliverability (e.g., planning considerations, operations)
4. Economics – Capex cost, lifetime costs compared with cheapest option

All options were assessed for 2034 delivery for comparison purposes. No option achieved a clean slate – i.e., no silver bullet. Assessment was done at high level. The study will be published w/c 11th March 2024.

17) Chelmsford City Council.