

Chignal Parish Council

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Clerk: Will Adshead-Grant

Chair: Lynn Ballard

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

Vice Chair: Linda Nelson

The Minutes of the Bi-Monthly Meeting of Chignal Parish Council held on Monday 8th July 2024 at 7.30pm.

2024/734 Chair's Welcome.

Chair: Ballard.

Cllrs: Lewis, Nelson, Stainton, and Towns.

2024/735 Apologies for Absence.

Cllr Elwick

2024/736 Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 13th May 2024.

Resolution: The Minutes were confirmed.

2024/737 Note the minutes of the Orchard subcommittee held on 2nd July 2024.

Several well attended events were held in May and June. Fruit Celebration on 26th October 2.30pm in the village hall.

Resolution: The Minutes were noted.

2024/738 Declarations of Interests and any requests for dispensation.

Cllr Towns – Village Hall – Cil request for Gazebos.

2024/739 Public Open Session for any matters that need to be drawn to the Parish Council's attention. (The items do not need to be on the current agenda).

8 Members of the public.

- Roads - Thanks for working to resolve the issues at Hardoak. The issue seems to have been resolved with the water no longer flooding the road.
- Roads - Bend of the road at Gardening Express. Deep pothole on the road edge. To report an issue a photo is required along with an Essex Highways reference number (job number). Consider double yellow lines through South Essex Parking Partnership (Chelmsford City Council).
- Roads - Just past Saracen's on the bend – the road has a camber on it with an edge created. If its dangerous please phone the issue into Essex Highways.
- The Clockstock music festival held at Boyton Hall Farm. Vehicles trying to access the site via the Pengy Mill bridleway created an issue, with sat navs seeming to create a through route. A report will be prepared for the City Council licensing board as several concerns raised over the license permitted. Noted that several of the vehicles were taxis. Suggested that road signs should have been more extensive. A sign stating "no festival traffic" at key road points would have been ideal.

2024/740 County and City Councillors' Reports.

I. Essex County Councillor Report – Cllr Mike Steel.

Member Led Highway Defects

Of the thirteen carriageway defects submitted in my April batch, all but one have been completed. My May submission was pavements but did include the sunken drains on the RDR. These are waiting to be scheduled.

In June, I submitted two carriageway defects, two pavement defects. In total I have submitted forty-five defects, and eighteen have been completed.

Pylons

County Council:

I proposed a Motion on the 14th of May County Council meeting, to oppose the current NGET proposal – Motion copied below.

The motion was passed. (all groups except Labour supported it, but Labour abstained on the vote).

County Council will now produce their comments based on this motion.

ECC Motion - National Grid's Proposed Norwich to Tilbury Project

Moved by Cllr Mike Steel and seconded by Cllr Lesley Wagland

'National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) have launched their third and statutory consultation, running until 18th June, following two non-statutory consultations in 2022 and 2023. ECC commented on the previous two consultations with a view that their strong preference was for an offshore grid thus avoiding the harm to the local economy, environment and the health and wellbeing of their communities caused by 180km of 50m steel latticed pylons.

Following the previous consultations, little has changed in the latest proposal in terms of the route of pylons through Essex (except some minor shifting) and the addition of a new 400 kV East Anglia Connection Node ("EACN") substation, on the Tendring Peninsula.

This Council expresses its deep concern that the proposal by NGET remains unchanged given the opposition and that the latest proposals by NGET:

- Dismisses the Electricity System Operator (ESO) 2024 East Anglia Network Study that considers nine alternative options and timescales, including offshore and HVDC underground alternatives. All of these options are Norwich to Tilbury and did not include an offshore grid.
- Dismisses the Hiorns Smart Energy Networks review published Nov 23, commissioned jointly by Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk County Council, and challenged the delivery date of 2030, and suggested that the need for additional transmission capacity would be closer to 2035. Therefore, it would allow consideration of more acceptable options. All three county councils expressed their concerns that the currently proposed option will harm the local economy, environment and the health and wellbeing of their communities.
- Dismisses the Offshore Coordination Support Scheme (OCSS) and reduces the consideration to just Norwich to Tilbury power transport, assuming that the power from the wind farms is already transported to Norwich, when the reality is that it is not, but such contracts may be in place.

This Council therefore calls upon:

- NGET to reconsider their proposal of an exclusive Overhead Line (OHL) solution for Essex as presented in the statutory consultation, on the basis of the devastating effect of 50m of steel lattice pylons on residents, businesses, communities and the local environment, and that they further consider the alternative options from the ESO study and the case for delay from the Hiorns report.
- ESO and Govt widen the ESO Options report and not restrict the starting point for all options as Norwich, which has the pre-emptive effect of making the OHL solution the most economical and restricts consideration of a strategic offshore grid.
- ESO and Govt ensure that the OCSS is brought into consideration along with the extended timetable of the Hiorns report, which would then enable lower impact solutions for the residents, businesses, communities, and local environment of Essex.'

II. Chelmsford City Councillor Report - Cllr Mike Steel .

City Council:

Because of purdah, the City Council response to the NGET consultation which should have been discussed on 1st of June Policy Board, was delegated to CEO. However, I requested that this should be reviewed at a meeting which included public, and it will now be on the agenda of the 9th of July cabinet Meeting.

I have contributed to the City Council response and can say that it fully represents all the concerns raised by me from my ECC division where ten of my 11 Parishes are affected and is robust in its opposition.

However, it would be helpful if residents attend the meeting to make their feelings known:

In summary – it is proposed that the City Council maintains an objection in principle to the use of onshore pylon power lines.

- This objection is because insufficient evidence has been provided to show that the powerlines are needed by 2025 and that the accelerated programme of consultation has taken the project outside of the scope for Holistic Network Plan (HND) as part of the Offshore Transmission Network Review (OTNR).
- The preferred strategic option for Norwich to Tilbury remains an integrated offshore technology that minimises cost of transmission infrastructure and does not include overhead lines and pylons.
- Notwithstanding the overall objection in principle, the City Council provides comments on the proposed alignment which raises concerns over the harmful landscape impacts, potential for harm to residential amenity and in particular to harm to designated heritage assets along the route.
- There is significant concern regarding the impacts on designated and non - designated heritage assets at Little Waltham and Great Waltham, where the route passes between the two historic villages.
- There is also significant concern that the archaeological remains of an Iron Age and later settlement at Ash Tree Corner at Little Waltham extends beyond the designated scheduled monument area. This area, extending into 100m order limits, may be of national significance and therefore further work is needed to determine the extent of the archaeology.
- Insufficient effort has been provided to mitigate the impact of the Project (particularly on heritage assets) and insufficient information has been provided to be able to accurately assess the impacts of the Project and mitigate them as proposed.

City Council issue

I have met with the NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB) several times to raise concerns about primary care roll out not keeping up with the build of new houses. It has become apparent that this is a problem caused by the ICB not following their strategic plan for provision of primary care services, and even where they have requested S106 planning contributions these have not been sufficient and have not been claimed. There are contributions going back 10 years that have not been claimed and will be returned to the developers at the 10th anniversary.

Therefore, I have proposed a motion to the 17th of July Chelmsford City Council for our planning dept to do more to encourage the ICBs to step up.

I recognise that this is not a Chelmsford City Council caused problem, but we cannot just continue building more houses whilst Primary Care lags behind.

Education and Highways have this under control and make all the right demands and negotiate appropriate timing for delivery with City Council. But the ICB, do not have this under control.

I realise that this is a bit of a punt, as I am pushing City Council, who are not the cause of the issue. But we cannot continue to ignore the lag between the accelerated housing provision in Chelmsford, and the provision of primary care services.

The motion is copied below:

MOTION TO COUNCIL

Proposed by Cllr Mike Steel, seconded by Cllr Roy Whitehead:

There is continuing concern that there are insufficient medical facilities in Chelmsford to cope with the increase in the City's population and all Political Parties highlighted this in their recent election literature.

Whilst it is the duty of the Integrated Care Boards to deal with the provision of medical services, and in particular GP surgeries, the City Council is currently consulting on the Local Plan to further increase the housing supply which will in turn increase the pressure on these facilities.

Officers from the City Council do consult with the ICB on planning matters and in particular on the major new housing sites, but they are only able to advise the ICB of developments.

Whilst our Planning Officers are able to negotiate S106 and CIL for provision and timing of physical buildings, the real outcome of a surgery being ready to operate, is being delayed because of the complex requirements of setting them up as businesses. It is clear that there is an ever-increasing shortfall between new builds and primary care services.

City Council Planning dept can only place obligations on the applicants, hence they are limited such things as the buildings from which a surgery would operate.

It is noted that City Council planning dept do include healthcare infrastructure requirements in the Local Plan and engage with the ICB on the Infrastructure Delivery Plans that support the Local Plan and that officers are invited to the Healthcare Providers Strategic Estates Group organised by the ICB.

However, these are not resulting in satisfactory outcomes with surgery provision not keeping pace with new occupations.

It is therefore proposed that:

The City Council works much more closely with the ICB to create better outcome plans and commitments by:

1. Expand Local Plan Information delivery plans to include primary care delivery outcomes.
2. Encourage ICBs to use such plans to increase their funding requirements on S106 and CIL to ensure that sufficient monies are obtained from developers to cover all of the costs of new healthcare facilities.

2024/741 Planning.
Consultations.

- **National Grid Electricity Transmission (NG-ET), Norwich to Tilbury:** third (statutory) consultation, Deadline extended to 26th July 2024. Approve Parish Council response:

www.nationalgrid.com/norwich-to-tilbury

This report sets out Chignal Parish Council's response to NG-ET's proposals for overhead pylons from Norwich to Tilbury. The Council is also co-operating with other parishes to the northwest and southwest of Chelmsford to produce a common statement that could be submitted as a consultation response on behalf of the whole group.

Chignal Parish Council accepts the need for an increase in renewable energy transmission to areas of demand but continues to object to NG-ET's choice of overhead 50m high pylons. This objection is based on the significant long-term harm that would be done to communities and landscapes in East Anglia and, specifically, to the unspoiled and productive countryside west of Chelmsford which includes Chignal parish.

There is lack of convincing evidence to justify why this project is being rushed through to meet a 2030 deadline in advance of a national review of an integrated offshore transmission network and emerging new technologies that could soon overtake and replace overhead lines and pylons. HVDC underground/undersea transmission costs have declined and become competitive with traditional overhead AC transmission and the technology has matured as the industry has gained experience designing and building projects across the world.

Alternative transmission solutions, such as HVDC undersea and underground cabling should be investigated thoroughly and costed over the project lifetime. Pylons and overhead power lines are no longer acceptable and the N2T consultation is both premature and flawed.

Question 12. Do you have any comments on the proposed locations for the following within Section F, Chelmsford?

Proposed overhead line alignment.

The National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5), March 2023, para. 2.9.25 states that development consent for underground or subsea sections of a proposed line over an overhead alternative will now be considered if the Secretary of State is satisfied that the benefits accruing from the proposal clearly outweigh any extra economic, social, or environmental impacts that it presents, and that any technical obstacles associated with it are surmountable.

Overhead transmission continues to be the only option presented by NG-ET for N2T, ignoring opportunities for a subsea or underground solution using new technologies and best practice developed by neighbouring North Sea countries. Substantial and long-term damage to communities, landscape, wildlife habitats, farming, and other economic activities by the imposition of a swathe of 400kv pylons across East Anglia could be avoided by adopting a smarter, more open-minded approach to investigating the potential of an undersea or underground route.

We welcome the statement in EN-5 2.12.3 that it is important that the network planning for offshore transmission is much more closely co-ordinated with the planning of connections to reinforcements of the onshore transmission network. There should be full electrical integration of the transmission infrastructure used by different offshore wind projects.

Chignal Parish Council continues to object to NG-ET's proposal for an overhead high voltage corridor to the west of Chelmsford. Land to the west of Chelmsford is high value agricultural land and unspoilt countryside and therefore the impact would be greater under the Holford rules than paralleling the

400kv line east of Chelmsford. Undergrounding of existing 132Kv lines east of Chelmsford would lessen the environmental and community impact of paralleling the existing 400Kv line. NG-ET acknowledges that *'the main impact of overhead lines is generally considered to be visual, with effects on landscape and views.'* The proposed overhead transmission lines that would pass through Chignal parish comprise 400kV lines supported by steel lattice pylons which are c. 45-50m in height. The parish sits within the Pleshey Farmland Plateau Chelmsford Character Landscape which has a *'strong sense of tranquillity'* as a key characteristic. *'The views within the area vary from open views over the arable farmland on the highest land to the enclosed views in the valleys in the south of the area.'* It is noted that *'the erection of new farm buildings on the higher areas, could be conspicuous on the skyline.'*

Any new development in this character landscape area should be small-scale, responding to the historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles. The erection of 50m high steel lattice pylons and cables would have a damaging impact on this sensitive rural landscape and would breach these development guidelines.

Proposed pylon locations

Impact on homes and the wider community

The eight pylons in Chignal parish will dominate and affect the setting of a large number of homes in Chignal parish, particularly those located remarkably close to where the lines cross Mashbury Road, notably Brittons Hall, Springwood, Braddocks and Brettons. On Chignal Road, pylons will be visible from properties stretching from Woodside to Beaumont Otes, Kilnfield Barns, Broomwood Manor, Chopyns Barn and Chobbings Farmhouse. Householders are concerned about the noise and health effects of living close to transmission lines and a reduction in the value of their properties as a direct result of the presence of pylons.

Impact on agriculture

The new National Policy Statement published in January 2024 makes clear that *"applicants should, where possible, use suitable previously developed land, brownfield land, contaminated land and industrial land. Where the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary, poorer quality land should be preferred to higher quality land avoiding the use of "Best and Most Versatile" agricultural land where possible.*

The National Policy Statement can also be a material consideration in determining applications under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and is broadly consistent with the approach to agricultural land in the National Planning Policy Framework which states that *"Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality. The availability of agricultural land used for food production should be considered, alongside the other policies in this Framework, when deciding what sites are most appropriate for development."*

In relation to solar farms, the Energy Security Secretary Claire Coutinho told Parliament on 15 May 2024 that the best agricultural land should be prioritised for food production, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/solar-projects-must-fit-in-with-food-security>

In the face of heightened global instability, the government is taking steps to strengthen food security as part of the UK's national resilience. That includes protecting 'Best and Most Versatile' (BMV) land, ensuring large solar projects avoid this higher quality land where possible. Instead, they should be developed on brownfield land, contaminated land, industrial land, and lower quality agricultural land so as not to compromise the UK's food security.

The high quality of the agricultural land, (BMV Grade 2) has not been given sufficient weight in selecting the pylons route around Chelmsford. Not only is there the permanent loss of farmland to accommodate the pylons but also the ongoing impact of pylons for field management, the disturbance during construction, and the extent to which farmland may need to be planted with trees to provide mitigation for overhead lines.

Impact on the local landscape

Chignal parish has an extensive network of public rights of way, including a section of the Chelmsford Centenary Circle route, (Footpath 26) from which the proposed pylons TB152 and TB151 would be highly visible. These paths are used regularly for walking and horse riding by local people and increasingly by residents of Chelmsford seeking an escape from urban life in the unspoilt rural landscape of Chignal. The impact of overhead power lines would introduce an unwelcome urban element to the landscape and would negate the mental health and well-being benefits of taking a walk or riding in our easily accessible countryside.

Eight footpaths, (FP) and one bridleway (BW) in Chignal parish would be adversely affected by the N2T pylons, such as FP 28 and the ancient woodland of Bushy Wood which would be dominated by the presence of TB147, TB148, TB149 and TB150. Pylons TB151, TB152, TB 153 and TB154 would be highly visible and an unwelcome distraction for walkers using FPs 21, 27 and 36.

During construction of the haul road and pylons, several rights of way would be closed off for an extended period and there is also concern that they would not be reinstated.

TB150 is situated very close to Chignal Road where the lines would cross the road to pylon TB151. This country lane is popular with cyclists and is on the Ford London Ride route which attracts thousands of cyclists every May. The looming presence of these pylons will damage the countryside experience and feeling of escape which cyclists and walkers come to enjoy in Chignal.

Impact on large birds

Bird mortality can occur through collision with power lines and through electrocution from power lines or supporting structures. Siting power lines near or crossing important areas or flyways used by birds may increase collision risk. There are also barrier effects as birds are deterred from using their normal routes to feeding or roosting grounds. Swans and other large waterfowl are of particular concern for power line collisions in the UK. All year-round large populations of Greylag and Canada Geese and several Mute Swans graze on the banks of farm reservoirs and flooded gravel pits close to the proposed pylon route in Chignal St James and fly in formation between these areas several times a day. Significant numbers of Cormorants, Herons and Egrets also feed on lakes, rivers, and ponds in Chignal in the vicinity of the pylons.

Chignal is an important hunting and breeding ground for a wide range of raptors. Red Kites; Honey Buzzards; Marsh Harriers; Kestrels; Peregrine Falcons; Barn Owls; Tawny Owls and Little Owls are sighted regularly along the route of the proposed pylons, particularly in the area of the restored landfill site which is now a Nature Park. Pylons TB156 and TB155 would cross over the Nature Park's circular footpath route, damaging the views over the surrounding countryside from this artificial hill. Construction works would cause serious disturbance to the hares and ground nesting birds, such as lapwings and skylarks which live and breed there.

Impact on historic buildings

The overhead route would cause unacceptable damage and harm to the setting of at least four listed buildings in Chignal St James and Chignal Smealey:

Pylons TB152 and TB151 would damage the setting of three listed buildings, Chobbings Farmhouse Grade II*; Granary Chobbings Grade II; and Chopyns Barn Grade II. The setting of the neighbouring eight converted historic barns, comprising Kilnfield Barns would also be adversely affected by these pylons.

Pylons TB155 and TB 154 would be highly visible from the Grade II* St James Church and The Green, public open space and from bridleway thirty-three, damaging their unspoiled countryside setting.

In addition, many buildings in Chignal do not meet the national criteria for listing but are of local importance by virtue of their positive contribution to the architectural or historic character of the parish. The settings of at least 5 buildings that are included in the Chelmsford City Council's Register of Buildings of Local Value in Chignal would be harmed directly by the pylons: TB154 and TB153 would be very close to, and dominate Brittons Hall Farmhouse and The Three Elms on Mashbury Road; on Chignal Road, TB150 and TB149 would be highly visible from Broomwood Manor; and views from Pengy Mill on the banks of the river Can would be damaged by pylons TB158 and TB157.

Construction proposals: permanent and temporary access roads and tracks; storage areas; and safeguarding areas and works needed to protect utilities.

Impact of haul roads

The construction phase is expected to last at least 3 years, working from the north to south. Initially the work will involve the installation of haul roads up to 8m in width, parallel to the transmission line. The concrete and stone for the haul roads will need to be transported by HGVs which will have to cross both Chignal Road and Mashbury Road. Bellmouths will have to be created at these crossing points to improve visibility. This will entail the removal of hedgerows and trees and damage to grass verges. These hedgerows are important wildlife corridors, and the verges are subject to a half-cut to encourage wildflowers in line with Plantlife recommendations.

Impact on safeguarding areas

The project order limits, (red line boundary) includes additional areas that need to be safeguarded due to the presence of utilities. The line of the high-pressure gas main (National Grid Gas) in Chignal St James is included in the red line boundary and will require protection with Faraday cages, causing disruption to the affected landowners.

It has not been making clear in the consultation documents what action will be required to safeguard utilities and how this work could affect communities and individual landowners.

It is noted with concern that pylon TB159 is close to the gas compressor station and bridleway forty-two, just north of the A1060.

Question 18. Is there anything you would like us to consider as we finalise our proposals?

It is accepted that green energy is a vital necessity to meet net zero targets, but it must be made possible without ruining precious countryside. Although offshore wind capacity in the UK has grown to 15GW, there is an ambitious target of 50GW by 2030. Much of this will be off the coast of East Anglia. The intrinsic values of the countryside: beauty, wildness, history, tranquillity have been undervalued consistently in the N2T proposals. Extensive swathes of new pylons and overhead lines are no longer acceptable. They have a profound impact on landscape quality and communities and result in negative effects on wildlife, amenity, farming, tourism, and local economic development. To avoid this long-lasting damage, there needs to be a substantial change to the way they are planned, designed, and delivered.

The May 2024 report, *Policy, and Legislative Barriers to Consenting Offshore Wind*, a written by Aeos and Deloitte and published by the Offshore Wind Industry Council (OWIC), highlights that the four keystones for offshore wind consenting are not aligned. These are marine spatial planning, seabed leasing, planning and delivery of the electricity grid and financial support mechanisms for offshore wind.

Four recommendations are set out in the report to address this misalignment:

Developing and setting out an optimal long-term future energy mix for the UK.

Developing a spatial plan for National Grid to deliver the long-term energy mix which aligns with estimates of future electricity generation.

Delivering well-resourced marine spatial planning to underpin and support seabed leasing.

Aligning the financial support mechanisms with the pipeline of future projects, to provide greater certainty to all parties in the process.

The absence of a strategic approach was also highlighted in respect of the planning and delivery of the electricity grid and the process by which projects are connected to the grid. The report found a lack of alignment between marine spatial planning, seabed leasing and the planning of grid infrastructure. Increasingly, there is often a significant disjoint between the strategic planning of offshore wind projects and their associated grid connections.

New policy and guidance are needed to create an offshore grid with a presumption in favour of offshore/subsea connections, where feasible, so that the ESO 2020 OTNR prediction of an integrated grid approach reducing cabling and onshore landings by 50% can be realised.

Two recent studies have investigated other transmission solutions, including undersea and underground HDVC cabling.

A study undertaken by the National Grid Electricity Systems Operator, (NG-ESO)

<https://www.nationalgrideso.com/document/304496/download> considered 9 options for transferring power from Norwich to Tilbury (N2T), including the current NG-ET proposal. Only one option (Bradwell) was rejected. The option of underground HVDC cabling compared well with N2T in terms of lifetime cost, (although initial cost was greater), becoming more cost effective than N2T if implementation was delayed until 2034.

The Hiorns Review of N2T, (commissioned by Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk County Councils) found that provided that the Sealink and Bramford/Twinstead reinforcement was implemented, the extra capacity offered by N2T would be unlikely to be needed before 2035. The Review also highlighted the potential for underground HVDC cabling <https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-11/Final%20Hiorns%20report%20-%20East%20Anglia%20Transmission%20Network%20Reinforcements.pdf>

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-11/Final%20Hiorns%20report%20-%20East%20Anglia%20Transmission%20Network%20Reinforcements.pdf>

Given evidence that delaying the start date by only 4 years could produce a viable option that could have greater public support, it is disappointing that NG-ET has rejected all alternative approaches on the grounds that they must connect by 2030 to meet government requirements and respect contracted dates for the connection of North Sea windfarms.

Elsewhere in the UK there are examples of undersea cable routes being proposed. NG-ET are consulting currently on two undersea HVDC routes, (Eastern Green Line 3 and 4) between Scotland and Lincolnshire, (landing at Anderby Creek) which would then run underground for 100 Km to a convertor station in Walpole, King's Lynn and the West Norfolk Area. According to NG-ET, this project will bring green energy from Scotland to power four million homes in the Midlands and the Southeast. <https://www.nationalgrid.com/the-great-grid-upgrade/eastern-green-link-3-and-4>

The N2T consultation is flawed. It has been too narrow in scope, not allowing the public to choose from a wider set of transmission options. It does not factor in recent reports that recommend a more joined-up strategic approach to the planning of grid infrastructure nor does it explore the opportunities from emerging new technologies and from the learning available from best practice elsewhere in the North Sea, such as the Netherlands Grid. Examples include: the rapid adoption of new conducting materials, such as superconductors, that allow existing lines to carry up to double the power, (obviating need for new lines in some cases); increasing the use of HVDC cabling to facilitate greater use of undergrounding; and, new, lower impact designs for pylons.

Question 23. Do you have further comments about our materials, consultation process or any suggestions for how we can improve our consultation?

The consultation process has not followed the Gunning Principles as communities have not been presented with researched alternatives to overhead lines. NG-ET are sticking to tried and tested pylons which are unpopular and damaging to the environment and ignoring opportunities highlighted by the other studies referred to elsewhere in this response to explore other solutions such as undersea cabling and undergrounding and to be open to adopting emerging technologies. The public exhibition at the Chelmsford Racecourse was neither signed from the main road nor from within the site. At this exhibition, the chair of the parish council requested a large-scale map of Chignal showing the pylons to show residents at a public meeting, but despite making a further phone call to NG-ET to follow up this request, annoyingly no maps were sent. This has made it difficult for residents who do not have access to the internet to see the proposed position of the pylons.

Recommendation:

Resolution: That the Parish Council approves the submission of this consultation response to meet the deadline of 26th July.

Resolution: That the Parish Council also continues to work with neighbouring parishes to produce a common response to the N2T consultation.

Resolution: The Parish Council approves a sum of £150.00 as a contribution to the commissioning by the NW/SW Chelmsford parishes group of a landscape scoping report by Alison Farmer Associates.

Resolution: That the Parish Council approves the allocation of a further sum, up to £1,000, if further work is deemed necessary by the group to provide factual evidence to challenge the proposed N2T pylons route.

- **Chelmsford Local Plan Review: Preferred Options and Integrated Impact Assessment.**
Summary of the responses submitted by Chignal Parish Council and by the Northwest Parishes Group

Strategic Priorities

We welcome the prominence given to policies that address the challenges of climate change across the urban and rural parts of Chelmsford, particularly in relation to sustainable transport and the restoration of degraded landscape and establishment of new tree belts and hedgerow corridors for wildlife.

Strategic Priority 3 - Protecting and enhancing the Natural and Historic Environment and support an increase in biodiversity and ecological networks.

We support the statement in 3.14 highlighting the importance of the river valleys as an important local asset which not only offer natural flood protection but contribute significantly to the local landscape and character of the area. The River Can forms the southern and western boundary of Chignal Parish. Views from public rights

of way and from community assets such as the village hall and playing field across the Can valley to the south and west are an important element of the local landscape character.

Vision for Chelmsford

The emphasis on creating a greener, fairer, more connected community across both the urban and rural areas of Chelmsford is supported. This should encompass providing better bus services to serve villages and improving the safety of rural roads to encourage cycling and walking.

Measures designed to stimulate the rural economy should focus on employment uses that can be accessed by sustainable means of transport to provide local job opportunities. Rural employment sites should not be developed simply because they are considered to be a cheaper greenfield alternative to locating industrial uses on urban land where the majority of Chelmsford's labour force live.

STRATEGIC POLICY S1 – SPATIAL PRINCIPLES

We support the aim to "Locate development at well-connected and sustainable locations" and welcome the inclusion of the new garden community at Hammonds Farm and the proposals to locate housing and employment growth in the A12 corridor, close to the new Northeast by-pass and accessible to the new railway station at Beaulieu.

We welcome the decision not to extend existing Local Plan growth allocations, such as Strategic Growth Site 2 - West Chelmsford, (Warren Farm). It is noted that the reasons for excluding Alternative sites in the Integrated Impact Assessment report, Table 5.11 in relation to West Chelmsford, included the impact on and the capacity of the local road network and relative remoteness from the strategic road network.

The diversity of Chelmsford's landscapes and wildlife habitats is one of its strengths. We support the need to "Respect the character and appearance of landscapes and the built environment and preserve or enhance the historic and natural environment and biodiversity."

The Integrated Impact Assessment: Appendix G, (Appraisal of proposed site allocations and reasonable alternatives) for Strategic Growth site 2 – West Chelmsford states that "Whilst the policy requires an appropriate landscaped edge to mitigate the visual impact of the development, in view of the scale of development and loss of greenfield land, effects on landscape and townscape (IIA Objective 14) are still considered to be significant". We welcome the recognition that the existing housing allocation area needs extensive landscaping, especially on the northern and western edges and that it should not be extended because of the landscape impact and further loss of Grade 2 agricultural land.

STRATEGIC POLICY S4 – CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

It is noted that the City Council will seek to minimise the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a) to major new development. The new National Policy Statement published in January 2024 makes clear that "applicants should, where possible, use suitable previously developed land, brownfield land, contaminated land and industrial land. Where the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary, poorer quality land should be preferred to higher quality land avoiding the use of "Best and Most Versatile" agricultural land where possible.

The new housing growth areas in the Preferred Options are now largely located to the east of Chelmsford on the lower quality agricultural land. Most of the farmland to the west of the city is Grade 2.

We would wish to see a reference in S4 to the Local Character Landscapes identified in the Chris Blandford Essex Landscape Appraisal. These distinctive local rural landscapes are important from an historic and ecological perspective and provide tranquil green space for nearby urban dwellers to enjoy whilst walking and cycling in the countryside. They should be valued and protected.

STRATEGIC POLICY S6 – HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

It is noted in 6.45 that new employment development (6,000sqm B2/B8) will also be provided through extensions to the existing Little Boyton Hall Farm Rural Employment Area (Location 15) and that this expansion will provide further rural inward investment opportunities and reflect the aspirations of national policy to support the sustainable growth and expansion of business in rural areas.

Furthermore, in STRATEGIC POLICY S8 – DELIVERING ECONOMIC GROWTH, support will be given to the sustainable growth and expansion of rural businesses.

The Transport Impact Appraisal of Alternative Spatial Approaches states that trips to Little Boyton Hall route via the A1060 Roxwell Road, with the majority originating or routing through Chelmsford city centre. Table 7.2 shows this proposed employment site extension scored the lowest in average sustainable accessibility. It is inaccessible by bus, walking or cycling from the surrounding villages and would primarily attract workers from Chelmsford who, given the low frequency of bus services and long distance to bus stops, would have to commute by car thereby increasing congestion of the A1060 and Lordship Lane and Chignal Road junctions.

	Average Sustainable Accessibility Score	% of Total Allocated Housing	% of Total Allocated Employment
Growth Area 1			
Chelmsford Urban Area (Residential)	3.00	20%	-
Chelmsford Urban Area (Employment)	3.00	-	30%
Growth Area 2			
Ford End	1.57	1%	-
Boreham	2.14	-	2%
Little Boyton Hall Farm	1.43	-	4%
North-East Chelmsford	2.57	-	8%
Growth Area 3			
East Chelmsford (inc. Hammonds Farm)	2.21	77%	56%
Bicknacre	1.64	1%	-
East Hanningfield	1.50	1%	-

Table 7-2: Average RAG scores for each development site

STRATEGIC POLICY S11 – THE ROLE OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

We support reference in 6.120 to the Council using its Landscape Character Assessments, Historic Landscape Characterisation Study, Sensitivity and Capacity Assessments to assess the character of the area and its sensitivity to change.

STRATEGIC GROWTH SITE POLICY 15 – LITTLE BOYTON HALL FARM EMPLOYMENT AREA

It is acknowledged that National policy requires Local Plans to drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver jobs that the country needs however, the Council has reservations about the extension of the Little Boyton Hall Farm Employment Area and does not agree that this site allocation represents a sustainable development allocation nor that there are no overriding constraints that would hinder the delivery of the site.

In the Integrated Impact Assessment, APPENDIX F, Little Boyton Hall Farm has negative effects on all of the guide questions, and it scored the lowest in average sustainable accessibility. This site will contribute to the City's employment capacity, extending an existing employment area into adjacent greenfield land, resulting in significant positive effects on Objective 3 but it will have significant negative effects on Objective 7 (Land use, Grade 2 agricultural land) and on 13 and 14 (Cultural heritage and landscape).

Although Little Boyton Hall Farm is in Roxwell parish, it more visible across the Can valley from Chignal St James, especially from the Chignals and Mashbury Village Hall, adjacent playing field and from homes on Chignal Hall Lane and from Howletts Hall. The proposed northward extension of this employment area, making it three times larger, would make it clearly visible on the skyline, even with extensive new tree belts to screen it.

Chignal parish sits within the Pleshey Farmland Plateau Chelmsford Character Landscape which has a 'strong sense of tranquillity' as a key characteristic. 'The views within the area vary from open views over the arable farmland on the highest land to the enclosed views in the valleys in the south of the area.' It is noted that 'the erection of new farm buildings on the higher areas, could be conspicuous on the skyline.' Any new development in this character landscape area should be small-scale, responding to the historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles.

We do not agree with the assessment of this employment site extension in the LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND CAPACITY STUDY, FEBRUARY 2024 as it focuses on views from the south and east and largely

ignores the impact on views from Chignal parish of such a large extension of the site to the north.

Figure 10.1 Boyton Cross Landscape and Visual Context



We disagree with the statement in 10.15 that the development could effectively be mitigated without altering the intrinsic character of the landscape in this location and in that there is little interaction with external visual receptors. The extensive construction of agricultural buildings on the skyline of the Can Valley which have been subsequently converted to industrial uses at Boyton Hall, Chignal Hall Farm and Little Boyton Hall Farm are already clearly visible from the Village Hall.

Planning Applications.

1. Reference: 24/00849/LBC

Address: Office Stevens Farm Mashbury Road Chignal St James
 Description of works: Installation of PV panels on roof of barn

2. Reference: 24/00848/FUL

Address: Office Stevens Farm Mashbury Road Chignal St James
 Description of works: Installation of PV panels on roof of barn.

These two applications refer to the installation of PV panels on the roof of a Grade II listed barn at Stevens Farm. The panels on the barn roof would not be visible from Mashbury Road and would not appear obtrusive being the same colour as the slate roof covering.

The **Chignal Parish Plan**, 2016, includes a Key Task to “support residents to improve their homes and stay in the village” and this is amplified in Objective 20, “to support opportunities for local residents to improve their homes or move to other properties in the Parish as a result of down-sizing, setting up new households or requiring additional care in line with the **Chignal Villages Design Statement (VDS)**”.

The VDS gives guidance on house extensions, (which could also be applied to the installation of PV panels on roofs), Page 20, “these should be sympathetic to the property and in harmony with the surroundings”. In addition, “they should not unduly affect adjoining residents.”

Chelmsford Local Plan Policy DM11 Extensions to existing buildings within the green belt, green wedge, and rural area. Within the Rural Area the extensions must not adversely impact on the identified intrinsic character and beauty of the Rural Area. In all designations, the extension or alteration must not be out of keeping with its context and surroundings or result in any other harm.

As the proposed PV panels would improve Stevens Farm by providing a source of renewable energy for use by the property and the development would not have an adverse effect on the listed building and its setting and or on surrounding properties, this application is recommended for APPROVAL.

Resolution: *The Parish Council approves the recommendation.*

Decisions by Chelmsford City Council Planning:

24/00399/FUL	Kilnfield Barns Chignal Road Chignal Smealy Chelmsford Essex	Application Permitted
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2024/742 Implementation of Community projects:

At the Community Meeting held on 11th November 2023, there were a number of suggestions about the Village Hall. These were collated by the Parish Council and passed on to the VH Management Committee for consideration. The Committee's responses are listed below.

- Fitting Solar Panels - this was already under consideration by the Committee and is ongoing.
- Problems with the heating - this too was already under consideration by the Committee. Expert advice has been sought and a number of options being investigated further.
- Two signs for the Hall such that one would be visible whichever way people are travelling on Mashbury Road. The Committee noted that that the existing sign is double-sided and so is visible from either direction but it was also noted that the sign does need painting.
 - Solar Lights to light up the entrance to the car park - this was rejected on the grounds that it would cause unwanted light pollution and be unwelcome when the Hall was not in use.
- Garden and bench in the Hall's grassed area - this was rejected by the Committee on security grounds and because the Hall is not a public area. It was noted that the Committee does not have the necessary resources to maintain such facilities but they are available close by in the Playing Field and Community Orchard. Since the Community Meeting, the Committee has employed a Garden Maintenance firm to make the area around the Hall considerably tidier.
- Pass code access to the car park - this was rejected by the Committee on security grounds and because the Hall is not a public area.
- Using the overflow car park as a trial area for a Petanque court - it was suggested that a trial could be conducted at the Fete when that car park is not used. The people who would like to use the car park for Petanque should contact the Fete Committee on: chignalsandmashburyfete@gmail.com.
- Housing a Parish Council printer in the Hall - the printer has been procured and discussions are ongoing about where to put it. Finding a solution whereby the printer can be accessible to Parishioners who would like to use it but be secure in the environment of the many different Hall users (including external hirers) is proving more difficult than expected

2024/743 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

consider applications for funding community projects.

- Approval of purchase of four 3mx3m pop-up Gazebos for the Village Fete and other community uses to replace old and damaged items.

Resolution: *Agreed to purchase the gazebos. Using the same company as last time.*

2024/744 Chignal Welcome/Information booklet:

Update from meeting with designer.

Meeting On Monday 15th July 2024 to discuss some ideas for working together.
Some costs can then be discussed for the Council to agree.

Finance

2024/745 Review the Accounts for 2024/2025 and the current position of the budget.

Budget Heading	Staff Costs			All Other Payments											Reserves			
	salary	Pension	Paye	Expenses	training	Community link a	Emergency Plan	IT & Web	Insurance	EALC RCCE	Auditors Internal	Play field Maintenance	Bank charges	Hall hire	Total Expenses	Cils	Reserve	Orchard
	£3,500.00	£1,000.00	£500.00	£100.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£250.00	£600.00	£300.00	£300.00	£700.00	£30.00	£500.00	£7,780	£15,059.34	£20,993.23	£1,380.80
Spent	£913	£698	£185	£0	£0	£0	£0	£519	£220	£0	£288	£0	£90	£2,913	£1,892	£0	£200	
Forecast spend	£761	£582	£154	£100	£0	£0	£0	£50	£0	£80	£250	£200	£20	£75	£2,272	4000	£0	0
Balance	£1,827	£-280	£161	£0	£0	£0	£0	£200	£81	£-0	£50	£212	£10	£335	£2,595	£9,167	£20,993	£1,181

Resolution: *The accounts were noted.*

2024/746 Finance:

Account Balances:

Cheque Account £ 5,461.70

Included in figures above:

Interest 3rd June @ 1.5% £ 164.90

Orchard Account £ 1,180.80

Saving Account £ 44,257.46

- General Reserve £20,993
- Cil £13,167
- Earmarked Reserves £10,097

Total £ 51,750.55

Resolution: *The accounts were noted.*

2024/747 To consider investment opportunities to take advantage of higher interest rates. Discuss opening a CCLA – Public Sector deposit fund at 5.22% with a risk factor of 1 – Very low risk. Minimum account opening sum is £25,000 with interest paid monthly. (see Fund Fact Sheet).

Resolution: *Defer any decision to the Budget meeting in October.*

2024/748 Payments for approval.

To approve the following payments:

Payment to	Description	Budget Column	Cost
Cllr Lewis	Defib parts	Reserves	£92.94
Taylor Agricultural	Cutting playing field	Play field maintenance	£288.00
Essex Pension Fund	Pension (July)	pension	£174.48
Clerks Salary	Salary (July)	Salary	£185.00
HMRC	Paye (July)	Paye	£46.20
Clerks Salary	Salary (June)	Salary	£191.30
Essex Pension Fund	Pension (June)	Pension	£174.48
HMRC	PAYE (June)	Paye	£46.20
Auditor	Audits	Internal Audit	£125.00
		Total	£1,363.60

Resolution: *The payments were approved.*

2024/749 Review of the Bi-monthly bank reconciliation.

Resolution: The accounts were reviewed and approved.

2024/750 Discuss the Internal Auditors report and note the recommendations.

1. The reserves are very high at £26303.00, for a Council precepting £8100.00. The Council should consider earmarking monies for projects and agreeing an investment policy. Regarding the CIL monies received, the Council needs to be particularly careful that amounts paid do not expire and have to be handed back.

Resolution: The high reserves were noted. The budget meeting to consider this.

2. An Internal Financial Control document should be investigated.

Resolution: The proposed document was approved.

3. Even though the value of VAT to be re-claimed is not large, providing the HMRC guidelines are followed, it would be a good idea to try and make a claim every year.

Resolution: Clerk to make timely VAT claims.

REPORTS AND UPDATES.

2024/751 Representatives' Reports: to discuss and debate any items.

- A) Little Hollows / Copperfield Place Liaison - Cllr Elwick
- Despite our large number of emails and chasing for action by Chelmsford Planning Enforcement, for close to two years now, nothing positive has been forthcoming and no additional planting or any maintenance of existing trees and hedges has been carried out by Persimmon the developers.
 - A large number of trees and most of the field boundary hedging has now died or dying and has never been maintained or replanted and the gardening company employed by Persimmon do nothing but occasionally cut the grass.
 - In addition, a number of the final batch of trees planted last season, now have broken stakes and tree ties, have died, or just been left since planting with no care or maintenance at all.
 - Approximately 50% of the landscaping area of the Persimmon development, which includes most of the open field and road boundaries lies in our Chignal Parish, but due to the number of trees and hedges that have been left to die, it currently bears no resemblance to the approved landscaping drawings and needs a large amount of replanting and maintenance.
 - The last email we received from Planning Enforcement was on 10th May, however Enforcement have now confirmed on 08 July that the case is closed.
4. MISSING CHIGNAL FINGER SIGNPOST.
- Unfortunately, there is 'no sign' of our 'new sign' and despite a promising email from Persimmon on 9th May advising it will be installed shortly, there is still no sign.
 - The main concern with this is that a number of lorries and deliveries all miss the tight left turn into Woodhall Hill and The Waltham and drive straight on to the small dead-end road on the Persimmon development.
 - They then have to reverse back or try to turn around damaging yet more grass verges and hedging.
 - We have also received a number of complaints from a local farmer that his large delivery vehicles miss the turning and then get confused, lost, or are delayed whilst trying to turn around.
- B) Village Hall Liaison - Cllr Towns
Recent Wedding went well.
- C) Community Engagement - Cllr Nelson and Cllr Stainton
- Update on access to the Community Laptop and printer.
 - i. Cabinet to be ordered.

- Storage options for the equipment in the Village Hall.
 - i. Filing cabinet to move to the storage shed.
- Consider the options to purchase an A3 Laminator.

Resolution: Purchase £39.99 on Amazon.

Resolution: Additional Laminating sheets to be ordered.
- Parish Website- feedback on training.
 - i. No requests for training yet. Clubs and groups to be emailed to ask whether they require help to input information on the website.
- Chignal News – agree timetable for the electronic newsletter.
 - i. There will be no parish newsletter produced. The website includes events, activities and parish news plus there are flyers and posters in noticeboards, distributed at Coffee Mornings and delivered door to door.
- The setting up of.gov.uk e-mails.

Resolution: Clerk to process the request and Cllr Nelson will support any queries.
- Digital changeover of phonelines.
 - i. All telephone lines are going digital via broadband.

D) Community Safety – Cllr Lewis

- Defibrillator in Chignal Smealey – update on options and managing.
- Clockstock Festival – Review of the event and feedback report to the City Council.
- Essex International Scout and Guide Jamboree – 27th July to 3rd August.

E) Highways (include Hedges) - Cllr Towns

- Village entry signs on Chignal Road: no update on funding from LHP
- No update on white finger post sign reinstatement at Hollow Lane junction.

F) Countryside conservation. – Cllr Lewis.

- Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy – investigate support from the ELNR Partnership to update the Chignal Wildlife Survey.

2024/752 Items for the next Agenda

Next meetings:

Monday 09 th September 2024	Bi-Monthly Meeting.
Monday 11 th November 2024	Bi-Monthly Meeting.
Monday 13 th January 2025	Bi-Monthly Meeting.
Monday 10 th March 2025	Annual Parish Meeting and Bi-Monthly Meeting.
Monday 12 th May 2025	Annual General Meeting and Bi-Monthly Meeting.

Meeting Closed 21:34

Will adshead-Grant.

Clerk to the Council.