

Chignal Parish Council

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

Tel: 01245 360811 Email: Clerk@Chignal-pc.gov.uk

Clerk: Will Adshead-Grant.

Chair: Lynn Ballard.

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

Vice Chair: Linda Nelson.

Website: Chignalparish.org.uk

Website: Chignal-pc.Gov.uk

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting and the Bi-Monthly Meeting of the Chignal Parish Council held on Monday 12th May 2025 at 7.30pm.

Annual General Meeting.

Governance

2025/834 Election of the Parish Council Chair.

Cllr Ballard was elected.

2025/835 Signing of the Declaration of office by the Chair.

Cllr Ballard signed the declaration of office.

2025/836 Election of the Vice-Chair.

Cllr Nelson was elected.

2025/837 Chair's Welcome.

Chair: Ballard.

Cllrs: Elwick, Polley, Lewis, Stainton, Towns, Nelson.

2025/838 Apologies for Absence.

None required.

2025/839 Review and Adopt the Standing Orders – March 2025 template.

Resolution: Reviewed and adopted.

2025/840 Review and Adopt the Financial regulations – March 2025 template.

Resolution: Reviewed and adopted.

2025/841 Reappoint the internal auditor.

Resolution: Miss A Woods was reappointed.

2025/842 Review of the Council's complaints procedure.

Resolution: Reviewed and approved.

2025/843 Review of the Council's policies, procedures, and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation.

Resolution: Reviewed and approved.

2025/844 Review of the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media.

Resolution: Reviewed and approved.

2025/845 Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures.

Resolution: Reviewed and approved.

2025/846 Review and approve the asset register.

Resolution: Reviewed and approved.

2025/847 Review and approve the risk assessments.

Resolution: Reviewed and approved.

2025/848 To Review and approve the Terms of Reference for the committee:

- i. Orchard Committee.
 - 1. The terms of reference were updated.
 - 2. £200 delegated authority to spend.

Resolution: The updated Terms of Reference were approved.

- ii. Staffing Committee.
- iii. Planning Committee.

2025/849 To review the membership of the parish Council Committees:

- i. Orchard Committee. *Members: Cllrs Lewis and Ballard.*
- ii. Staffing Committee. *Members: Cllr Nelson, Towns and Ballard.*
- iii. Planning Committee. *Members: All members.*

2025/850 Review and confirm representative areas of responsibility and any changes – Clerk.

- Little Hollows / Copperfield Liaison. **Cllr Elwick.**
- Playing Field. **Cllrs Elwick, Towns, Nelson, and Polley.**
- Village Hall Liaison. **Cllr Towns.**
- Community Engagement. **Cllrs Nelson and Stainton.**
- Community Safety. **Cllr Lewis.**
- Highways (include Hedges). **Cllrs Ballard, Towns and Elwick.**
- Footpaths/Bridleways. **Cllrs Nelson, Towns and Polley.**
- Countryside Conservation / Climate Change / Nature recovery
Cllr Ballard and Lewis.

2025/851 Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks.

- Insurance with Ansvar through CAS– cost of £576.36 per annum.
 - Cover:
 - Public liability insurance coverage to £10mil.
 - Employers Liability Insurance coverage to £5mil.
 - Personal Accident Insurance.
 - Fidelity guarantee.
 - Reputational risk.
 - Legal Expenses.
 - All risks.
 - Property Damage.

2025/852 The Parish Council confirms it meets the eligibility to meet the criteria for the General Power of Competence (“the power to do anything that individuals generally may do” as long as they do not break other laws. It is a ‘power of first resort;’ this means that when searching for a power to act, the first question you ask is whether you can use GPC”).

Resolution: Confirmed.

2025/853 Review of the Council’s and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies.

- N.A.L.C / E.A.L.C
- R.C.C.E.

Resolution: The subscriptions were reviewed and approved.

2025/854 Review of the Council’s expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972

or the general power of competence.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities advised that the appropriate sum for the purpose of section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 for parish and town councils in England for 2025-26 is £11.10

Section 137 of the Act allows parish and town councils to incur expenditures for purposes that benefit their communities when no specific statutory power is available.

There was no expenditure under S137.

2025/855 Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

Monday 07 th July 2025	Bi-Monthly Meeting
Monday 08 th September 2025	Bi-Monthly Meeting
Monday 10 th November 2025	Bi-Monthly Meeting
Monday 12 th January 2026	Bi-Monthly Meeting
Monday 9 th March 2026	Annual Parish Meeting and Bi-Monthly Meeting
Monday 11 ^h May 2026	Annual General Meeting and Bi-Monthly Meeting

2025/856 Note standing orders and direct debits on the Parish Council Accounts.

- ICO - £35 p/a
- Staff Salary, Pensions and HMRC.

Ordinary Meeting.

2025/857 Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 10th March 2025.

Resolution: The minutes were confirmed.

2025/858 Declarations of Interests and any requests for dispensation.

Cllr Elwick – Planning Woodhall – Neighbour.

Cllr Polley – Planning Kilnfield barns – Neighbour.

2025/859 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.

Four members of the public.

- Woodhall farm planning application. Small plot three thousand feet. The Structure is too large and not representative of the surrounding scene, not in line with Chelmsford Plan. Excessive size of the house as currently two thousand feet.
- Woodhall farm planning. Concerns over the size of the development. This site was originally agricultural land. The loss of five beech trees was noted. The dwelling will be overbearing.

2025/860 County and City Councillors' Reports.

1. Essex County Councillor Report – Cllr Mike Steel

Highways.

The Members Highways Initiative (MHI) of 24/25 has fixed more than 8,000 additional carriageway defects and 6,000 footway defects, on top of the standard work schedules. I get an extra allowance for defects raised by residents or Parish Councils. I have made extensive use of this over the last year, and I am pleased to say it will continue into this year.

I managed to get the road outside Gardening Express repaired (again). As I got forewarning, I visited the team whilst they were doing the repairs. There were some extra challenges for them as someone

had filled in some of the holes with rubble, which had to be removed. I also asked if they could put some tarmac in a hole just down the road, but they had run out of tarmac, such was the extent of the job!

A new allowance starts – so if there is a serious concern with a defect, email me with photo (if safe to take) and Track-It defect ref number – mike.steel@essex.gov.uk

Devolution and LGR.

The Government are keen to extend the number of unitary authorities and mayors and have asked for expressions of interest. Conservative run Essex County Council have responded positively and submitted their expression of interest. They launched a consultation on the principles of Unitaries and Mayors and this closed on April 14th. The proposals are that the current fifteen councils in Essex, which include the County Council, two unitaries (Thurrock and Southend) and twelve other District, City and Borough councils, should be rationalised to between three and five unitaries. The unitary would take on the responsibilities currently held by both District and County. In addition, there would be a directly elected mayor with a combined authority to make key decisions on issues including Transport and Housing. The timetable is:

- Elections for a Greater Essex Mayor on May 7th, 2026
- Elections for the new-look Essex councils in May 2027
- The new councils would replace the existing ones in 2028.

Essex will need to submit their detailed proposal by September this year, with how many unitaries and their composition. Also, consideration will be given to those areas without a town or parish council and what additions need to be put in place. The latest news is that the Local Government Minister, Jim McMahon, has proposed that the make-up of the Combined Authority would include three voting members from Essex and two each from Thurrock and Southend. The County Council argues that it represents 80% of the population and therefore should have at least 50% of the votes; they propose 2:1:1 with the mayor having the casting vote. We await the outcome.

Love Your Bus.

Congratulations on success with this initiative – I gave it my support!

Local Highways Panel.

LCHE212007 – Chignal Smealey – implementation of gateways and 40mph marking, has completed. LHPs are currently paused – I do not know why! But good that I managed to get many of my schemes implemented!

2. Chelmsford City Councillor Report - Cllr Nicolette Chambers
 - No report.

2025/861 Planning.

National Grid Electricity Transmission (NG-ET), Norwich to Tilbury: response to changes to proposed pylons in Essex by the group of parishes to the west of Chelmsford. www.nationalgrid.com/norwich-to-tilbury

No additional information at this time.

2025/862 Planning Applications.

1. 25/00399/FUL

Erection of a new residential dwelling and garage, associated landscaping, parking, and new access. Land Southeast of Woodhall House Chignal Road Chignal Smealy.

Some of the statements made in this application could be misleading if the reader is not familiar with the area.

The Design & Access Statement

In Section 2.0 Site Description, it states "close proximity of the surrounding villages and towns of Great Waltham, Little Waltham and Broomfieldthere are many services to sustain family life such as shops,

restaurants and schools in the nearby towns and villages....and to the south lies the nearby City of Chelmsford..."

Great Waltham village is approximately 2.5 miles away with a small village store which has a post office counter. Little Waltham village is approximately 2.75 miles away but does not have any shops. Broomfield is a more substantial village approximately 3.25 miles by road with several small stores but to get there you will pass a supermarket in Chelmsford.

All these three villages do have primary schools and pubs / restaurants but there is no bus service to these facilities from Chignal Smealey.

It is stated that, "The hamlet has a village pub, The Pig & Whistle " but this establishment trades as an up-market restaurant, not as a public house.

In section 6.3 the new house is described as a 4-bedroom house, but drawing 24/20/10 clearly shows five bedrooms.

9.0 Sustainability. It is noted that the dwelling is designed to take solar panels but solar panels together with battery are not incorporated in the application. Furthermore, it is stated that the building has been designed to achieve low water use but surprisingly, rainwater harvesting is not incorporated in the design as the proposed property has 4 WCs.

11 Conclusion. "The properties in the area are typically large family homes". There are some large family homes in this hamlet, but the majority of the properties were built for agriculture workers and as social housing.

Fit with Local Plan Development Management policies.

The applicant argues in the Design and Access Statement that the proposed development would be in line with Chelmsford Local Plan policies: DM8, DM9, DM16, DM25, DM26, DM27. Alignment with policies DM10, change of use of land and buildings and DM29, protecting living and working environments should also be considered.

Policy DM8 New buildings and structures in the rural area

Planning permission will be granted for new buildings and structures in the Rural Area where the development will not adversely impact on the identified intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

The proposed dwelling is set well back from the main road. The depth of the plot allows parking/turning within the property boundaries. The style/materials proposed in the construction do not appear unreasonable, noting the mix of existing properties in the area. However, the new dwelling could not be regarded as *a design of exceptional quality or innovative nature*.

The proposed dwelling site formed part of the garden for Woodhall House and is included in the Chignal Villages Design Statement, (VDS), Area 8: Woodhall, Chignal Smealey p.18 where, "the trees and hedges in and around the good-sized housing plots help to maintain the rural feel and the gaps between the properties emphasise the rural location by showing that there are no buildings behind". Furthermore, on page 20, the VDS states that "it is important in a rural community to provide views of the countryside beyond and thus avoid the urbanisation of the street scene".

Policy DM10, change of use of land and buildings. C) Rural Area Planning permission will be granted for the change of use of land or buildings in the Rural Area where: iii. it does not adversely impact on the identified intrinsic character, appearance, and beauty of the Rural Area. In the Rural Area, the critical aspect will be identifying the intrinsic character and making a judgement as to whether an adverse impact would result.

It is considered that development of the open land between Woodhall House and Stumps Cross would impact on the intrinsic character of the Chignal landscape, contrary to DM8 and DM10 and the VDS.

Policy DM9 – Infilling in the green belt, green wedge, and rural area. B) Green Wedge or Rural Area.

Planning permission will be granted for infilling in the Green Wedge or Rural Area provided that: i. the site is a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage; and ii. the development does not detract from the existing

character or appearance of the area and would not unacceptably impact on the function and objectives of the designation.

It is debatable whether the development is infilling as defined in DM9. The site, lying between the properties of Woodhall House and Stumps Cross, could not be considered as a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage. In addition, this part of Chignal Smealey is an area which has a dispersed settlement pattern where infilling may not be acceptable. It could not be defined as a "village" as this would be expected to have community facilities such as a pub, shop, church, village hall etc. On the contrary, there are no such community facilities anywhere near the site. The applicant refers to The Pig & Whistle as a public house but as mentioned above, this business has operated as a high-end restaurant for over 10 years and does not serve as a community facility.

In addition, Chignal Smealey has extremely limited public transport provision, with one morning bus service to Chelmsford only on Fridays and Saturdays.

It is considered that the proposed development is contrary to policy DM9 because it is not infilling a small gap and would detract from the intrinsic rural character of the area as described in the VDS.

Policy DM29 Protecting Living & Working Environments. Development proposals must safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of any nearby residential property by ensuring that development is not overbearing and does not result in unacceptable overlooking or overshadowing.

The proposed large dwelling and garage would be overbearing in relation to the neighbouring properties and would overlook and overshadow the garden of Woodhall House. The Parish Council also has concerns regarding the creation of a new access to application site as it has limited sightlines on a blind bend, on to the Chignal Road.

It is considered that the amenities of the occupiers of the residential property Woodhall House will be adversely affected by overshadowing and overlooking, contrary to policy DM29.

Recommendation

As the construction of a new 5-bedroom dwelling, garage, and new access on former garden land southeast of Woodhall House is considered to be contrary to DM8, DM9, DM10, DM29 and the Chignal VDS, it is recommended that permission is **REFUSED**.

Resolution: The Parish Council approved the recommendation.

2. 25/00670/FUL

Address: 8 Kilnfield Barns Chignal Road Chignal Smealy Chelmsford

Description of works: Proposed single storey outbuilding designed to accommodate a private home gym and dedicated cinema room.

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, Page 20, "extensions should be sympathetic to the property and in harmony with the surroundings". In addition, "extensions should not unduly affect adjoining residents and should not completely fill the available space, as it is important in a rural community to provide views of the countryside beyond and thus avoid the urbanisation of the street scene."

Chelmsford Local Plan

"POLICY DM8 – NEW BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES IN THE RURAL AREA

D) Residential outbuildings

Planning permission will be granted for outbuildings to be used for purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling where the new building:

i. is located within the curtilage of the dwelling; and ii. is proportionate in size and scale, and ancillary in appearance to the host dwelling; and iii. is in keeping with its context and surroundings and does not result in any other harm.

1. The original site planning application, 22/000121, removed PD rights for this development, hence the need for this application.
2. A previous application for garages/bin store buildings was supported by the Parish Council and it could be argued that the size/style of the proposal is similar to one of the garage/store buildings.

3. Roof noted as natural slate, consideration could also be given to a plain tile roof to match the existing garage buildings.
4. Windows and doors noted as uPVC to match the existing barn. This is not correct, slimline black aluminium was used.
5. The drawings do not provide plan dimensions, although the building is comparable in size to a small double garage.
6. The location of foul and surface water outfalls is not indicated on the plans, although FW & SW systems do exist.
7. The proposed use of the outbuilding, as ancillary to No 8, is noted. Can a condition be added to avoid the outbuilding being used as a separate residence?
8. Note that the original landscaping scheme by the developer has not been finished adjoining the proposed outbuilding location. This would assist screening from the main road (Chignal Road).
9. Note that the Site Location Plan and Block Plan correctly show the location of the site boundary to No 8. This is not the case on site where the developer has yet to correctly re-position the South boundary fence.

The proposed 40sq m outbuilding has a substantial footprint in relation to the main property but is ancillary in appearance to the host building. It is in keeping with its surroundings and its context within a collection of converted farm buildings.

The proposed outbuilding appears to fit with policy DM8 and the Chignal VDS, but the comments above should be considered if the application is approved.

Resolution: *The Parish Council approved the recommendation.*

2025/863 Essex Love Your Bus.

Funding secured to promote the Lodge bus services 17/18:
project update.

The project was successful in gaining a grant to support and promote the service.

2025/864 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

Completed projects.

- Gazebos for the Village fete and other community uses.
- Octagonal picnic table for the community orchard.

Projects were noted.

2025/865 Chignal Parish branding:

Update on design and printing of the community orchard booklet and roller banner; using the branding on parish council media, website, emails, agendas etc; playing field information board; parish notice boards; Chignal Welcome/Information booklet.

Approval of quotes.

Resolution: *New pop-up banner was approved. With the Green background (A).*

Resolution: *Agreed in principle to spend up to £300 on a new information board.*

Resolution: *Cllr Stainton and the Clerk will update the noticeboards.*

Finance

2025/866 Review the final Accounts for 2024/2025.

	Budget	Actual
Staff Costs	£5,000.00	£5,418.00
Admin	£2,780.00	£2,979.00
Total	£7,780.00	£8,397.00

£617.00 Overspend

Reserves	
Parish	£19,616.00
Cil	£9,497.00

Noted that the overspend was caused by the spend on IT.

2025/867 Finance:

Accounts 03.05.2025 21:34

Account Balances:

Cheque Account £ 4,530.59 @ 0% Interest

Included in figures above:

Precept £ 3,500

Saving Account £ 44,163.55 @ 1.375% Interest

- Orchard Account £ 2,903.08
- General Reserve. £19,616
- Infrastructure & Sustainability £ 3,178
- Legal Challenges V Pylons. £10,000
- Cil. £ 9,497

Total £48,694.14

2025/868 Payments for approval.

To approve the following payments:

Payment to	Description	Budget Column	Cost
slings and straps	orange straps for storage of gazebos	Reserves	£14.70
sp forest park	service kits for both sit on mowers	Mower Servicing	£144.04
salon twenty-seven	painting of one red phone box	Reserves	£600.00
Amazon	2 x Accordion 12 pocket files	Expenses	£33.31
Amazon	5 x reams A4 printer paper	Community Ink and Paper	£21.44
HMRC	PAYE - May	Paye	£49.00
Chelmsford City Council	Lease of Orchard	Orchard	£200.00
EALC	Subscriptions	EALC	£237.68
Staff Salary	Salary - May	Salary	£202.29
Recoded Solutions	Theme, Plug in, Events Website update	IT & Web	£360.00
Recoded Solutions	Website migration. RS Council	IT & Web	£420.00
Cllr Lewis	Wickes - Sealant - Phone box repairs	Reserves	£10.00
Cllr Lewis	Wood for wildlife Boxes	Reserves	£78.47
Cllr Lewis	Screwfix - Sandpaper. Graffiti removal	Reserves	£18.77
CAS - Insurance	Annual insurance	Insurance	£576.36
Essex Pension Fund	Pension - May	Pension	£178.96
Essex Pension Fund	Pension - April	Pension	£178.96

HMRC	PAYE - May	Paye	£48.80
Staff Salary	Salary - April	Salary	£202.49
Chignals & Mashbury VH	Hire of hall for meetings and coffee mornings	Hall Hire	£100.50

Total for approval **£3,675.77**

Resolution: ***The payments were approved.***

2025/869 Review of the Bi-monthly bank reconciliation

Resolution: ***The reconciliation was approved with zero difference to the cash book.***

2025/870 The Parish Council certifies itself as exempt from a limited assurance review:

- The Authority was in existence before the 1st of April 2018
- There were no issues raised by the external auditor in the previous fiscal year.
- The Gross income was **£11,551** which is < than the £25,000 threshold.
- The Gross Expenditure was **£15,871** which is < than the £25,000 threshold.

Resolution: ***The Parish Council confirmed it exemption.***

REPORTS AND UPDATES

2025/871 Representatives' Reports: to discuss and debate any items.

- A) Little Hollows / Copperfield Place Liaison - Cllr Elwick
 - Update on Copperfield Place landscaping work and road visibility issues.
 - 1. Overhanging hedges reported after the January meeting – 16th January 2025.
 - 2. Report from Inspector did not record any defects. – 16th April 2025.
 - 3. Landscaping works are still incomplete.
- B) Playing Field - Cllr Elwick and Cllr Towns
 - Anti-social behaviour: damage by trail bikes, graffiti on the gazebo, litter, and BBQs.
 - Approval to commission design and installation of an information board in the playing field car park, (quote to be supplied).
- C) Village Hall Liaison - Cllr Towns
 - Fete on the 7th of June.
- D) Community Engagement - Cllr Nelson and Cllr Stainton
 - Update on migrating the Parish website to gov.uk domain and support for clubs and groups to update information.
 - Request to approve expenditure with RCoded.
 - Resolution expenditure of £780 approved.**
 - Citizens Advice, Chelmsford: attending the Parish Coffee Morning on 1st October.
- E) Community Safety – Cllr Lewis
 - Update on installation of two Defibrillators: in the refurbished telephone box by The Green and on the Parish Council notice board by St Nicholas Church.
 - Report on Village Litter Pick on 16th March.
 - Request to approve the purchase of a board to fix the Chignal Smealey defib at a cost up to £200 (ex-Vat).
 - Resolution: The expenditure was approved.**
 - Request to approve the purchase of an electrician's services to install the defib in the telephone box at £275.
 - Resolution: The expenditure was approved.**
- F) Highways (include Hedges) - Cllr Towns

- Update on reinstalling the directional sign to Chignal Smealey at Hollow Lane/Chignal Road junction.
- Potholes repaired on Mashbury Road by the entrance to Gardening Express.

G) Footpaths/Bridleways – Cllr Nelson and Cllr Towns

- Nothing to report.

H) Countryside conservation. – Cllr Lewis.

- Nature Recovery: changes to the mowing regime on The Green and Chignal Wildlife Survey.
Meeting held with the Head of Parks and Green Spaces at CCC. Cuts of the Village Green have been reduced to allow for the wildflowers to thrive.
Otters have been seen on the River Cam late at night.
Increased levels of fallow deer and Muntjac.

2025/872 Items for the next Agenda:

Items to be e-mailed to the Clerk.

Next meetings:

Monday 07 th July 2025	Bi-Monthly Meeting
Monday 08 th September 2025	Bi-Monthly Meeting
Monday 10 th November 2025	Bi-Monthly Meeting
Monday 12 th January 2026	Bi-Monthly Meeting
Monday 9 th March 2026	Annual Parish Meeting and Bi-Monthly Meeting
Monday 11 ^h May 2026	Annual General Meeting and Bi-Monthly Meeting

Meeting Closed 21:18
Will Adshead-Grant
Clerk to the Council.