Charvil
Parish Council
Chairman: Matt Walker

Clerk to the Council
Miranda Parker
Charvil Village Hall
The Hawthorns
Charvil, Reading
Berks RG10 9TT

www.charvilparishcouncil.gov.uk

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 21st July 2025 in Charvil Village Hall at 8pm

Present Matt Walker, Pat Sutlieff, Katrin Harding, Lee Cripps, Mark A'Bear, and Jane Hartley.

Apologies for Absence Narinder Ryatt

Absent Stephen Lucas

25/8628 Open Forum

Three residents attended. One resident from Waingels Road had several questions around the approved Permission in Principle for nine dwellings in Waingels Road. The site's owner felled a large, mature tree which happened to make the access road to the site very narrow, and she is concerned about other trees on the site. The clerk reported that the Borough's tree department had agreed to take a look. She also asked where Borough owned land ended, and the site-owner's land began as she is concerned about the shore of the lake. Councillor Harding agreed to investigate this as if falls under her Borough remit. The resident thanked the Council for their help.

A second resident was the current Chair of the Fete Committee, who attended to let the Parish Council know how preparations for the fete were going, and that all the necessary paperwork was in hand. The Chair told her that the Council would like to agree with the fete in principle that the event would always be held on the first Sunday in September, which the Fete Chair welcomed, although she said the fete committee reserve the right to move it if a new committee would rather the event were earlier in the year. She thanked the Chair, and both residents left at 8.17pm.

A third resident attended to listen and stayed for the whole of the open part of the meeting.

25/8629 Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

25/8630 To approve the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of 16th June 2025

These were approved and signed.

25/8631 To note the Clerk's report

This was noted.

Finance

25/8632 To receive and approve the financial reports

It was resolved to approve these which was passed unanimously.

25/8633 Authorisation of Payments

It was resolved to recommend approval of the payments of invoices, which was carried unanimously.

£38.49 to the Assistant Clerk
£1736.23 to Berkshire Pension Fund
£161.05 to British Gas
£68.82 to Bowak
£1993.20 to Chiltern Sports Ltd
£60 to Cloud Next
£157.50 to Connecting Communities in Berkshire
£142.51 to Everflow
£47.16 to Grundon
£3966.80 to HMRC
£116.87 to the clerk
£36 to the Media Assistant
£105.94 to Networld Sports
£289 to Omega Security Ltd
£45 to Open Spaces Society
£182.40 to Parish Online
£75 to Paul Corby
£685.57 to Prime Water Solutions
£141.26 to Smartest Energy
£2506.42 to Sunshine Commercial Services Ltd
£15.66 to SSE Contracting
£1465.15 to Tactical Facilities Management Ltd
£36 to Taurus Elite Security
£32 to the Village Warden
£17.85 to Unity Bank
£17.67 to Yu Energy
£4976.41 in Payroll

25/8634 To review the five-year plan in the light of the Amenity Committee's recommendations, and to consider expanding it into a wider action plan

The amenity committee had updated some of the timelines on items on the five-year plan, and this was approved by the Council.

There was then a discussion around the five-year plan, and all agreed it was more of a list than a plan, and they considered the idea of developing a more detailed strategic action plan, using the one produced by Twyford Parish Council as an example.

There followed a long discussion on the purpose of such a plan – was it a blueprint for the Council, or more of a plan for residents to know what the Council is doing.

It was noted that the Council "vision" should be based on the Neighbourhood Plan, with the five-year plan being somewhat more concrete, but a more detailed action plan (not necessarily financial) would be something in between.

Another view was that it should be a communication tool and a measure of success, but also it should not be static, and if circumstances change, then things could be added and taken away as circumstances change. It was seen as something to ensure the Council remains pro-active.

It was also noted that the Twyford plan included who was responsible for each action point, and that it is good to have some individual responsibility, as well as transparency.

A further point raised was around the current plan being largely around maintenance, and it was questioned whether the Council was on top of maintenance because there seemed to be a great deal of reactive maintenance. It was also questioned whether the maintenance schedule is too rigid, and perhaps certain expensive tasks could be pushed out.

It was also agreed that the plan needed to be proportionate with staff time and capacity., but it was a good way of clarifying our key projects.

There then followed a further discussion on one item included in the Twyford plan that Charvil could build on, and that is engagement with the Piggott school and how to encourage youth interest in the work of the Council.

Councillor A'Bear suggested that there should be a general target to get youth to engage with the Council. He suggested that as an experiment, the Council should get involved with the Piggott sixth form at the beginning of the academic year and explain to them how they could get involved with the Parish Council, to learn more about Parish Councils, and to promote the interests of the youth. Some Councillors would need to be prepared to go to talk with the Piggott students, to invite a couple to become involved, and perhaps to take an active role in the committee meetings.

There was a discussion as to whether Piggott made more sense than Waingels, and it was agreed that Piggott was the obvious starting point. The other question raised was whether the Council should stipulate that the youngsters should be from Charvil, and it was agreed to see what the interest was before confirming that.

Councillor A'Bear would firm up the plan, so the proposal could be approved at the meeting in August, and then he could go back to the school with a plan at the beginning of term in September.

It was asked how this would fit into the strategic plan, and it was agreed that this fits in with the aims of the Neighbourhood Plan in terms of building community.

It was agreed that the aim should be to have the Strategic Plan in place by the May meeting next year, and that there would be a working group of Councillors Walker, A'Bear, Hartley and Sutlieff.

25/8635 To consider and approve the Draft Procurement Policy

The draft policy provoked discussion around the Council's use of regular suppliers, and whether their use should be benchmarked. The Council has an unofficial preferred suppliers list, and this should be formalised and reviewed every three years. The policy was approved subject to this, and to ensuring all figures are either exclusive or inclusive of VAT.

25/8636 To Consider and approve the draft tender document and timetable, and to approve the publication of the consultation results

There was a discussion about the evaluation criteria, and it was agreed to reduce the proposal to three criteria, with quality being 60%, Cost 30% and social value 10%. The period from 19th Sept to 3rd October should be referred to as the "standstill" period. Apart form these changes, the documents were approved.

25/8637 To consider the following grant applications: Me2Club, Keep Mobile and The Link Visiting Scheme

It was resolved to award the following amounts: £300 each to Me2Club, Keep Mobile and The Link Visiting Scheme

25/8638 To Consider an invitation to have our say on the WBC budget priorities to help them draw up their 2026-7 Budget

Councillor Hartley is to draft a reply for other Councillors to add to if desired and the clerk will send once agreed.

Planning, Environment and Highways Committee (PEH)

25/8639 To note the Minutes of the meeting on 7th July 2025

These were noted.

To consider the Transport Network Review

The clerk was asked to reply that the Council appreciates the much-improved bus service, and hope that this can be retained. The main issues are that the routes don't serve the newer estates as the routes have remained unchanged for a long time, and that no buses go to Twyford Station. The Council does not have the funds to contribute to the running of the buses but would happily work with the Borough to try to publicise them better to boost usage.

25/8640 Amenities Committee

To note the Minutes from 14th July

These were noted.

To consider commissioning street art for the container

The clerk has reservations about drawing attention to the container in this way. Notwithstanding that, the Council agreed in principle that they would support this idea. It was suggested that they would not pay for this work but would see whether any local group would be willing to do a mural free of charge. Councillor Harding agreed to take this forward.

To consider the lessons learned from the possible missed opportunity to engage a long-term hirer for the pavilion

It was agreed that there needs to be a clearer approach to long-term users, and that too many barriers were put in the way at a very early stage. It was agreed that the Amenities Committee would work on a set of generic frequently asked questions as a starting point. In the meantime, the Amenities need to decide what to do in the pavilion in the light of no daytime users of the building.

To consider running a competition for No Littering signs at the MUGA, with the winner being selected at the fete

It was agreed to run a competition that can run through the summer, or people can take part in at the fete. Councillor Walker will write an article for the magazine on the topic, and the social media assistant would be asked to put something out on social media.

To approve the changes to the Service level Agreement with the school for using the MUGA

It was agreed to let the school use the MUGA for the whole school day, from 1st October to 31st March each winter. It was also agreed to amend the dates to reflect the current year.

25/8641 Borough Councillor's Report

Borough Councillor Akhtar sent his apologies, but reported he is continuing to work with the residents of Milestone Cresent and Avenue to sort out the parking issues. He is also trying to get some of the vegetation cut back on the A4 to ensure signs and traffic lights are visible, and to alter timings to reduce drivers going through red lights.

Borough Councillor Harding reported that discussions on glass recycling are continuing and the Speedy Fuels application won't be determined before September.

Chairman's Initials............ Date……….

Items for Consideration

25/8642 To note that there is no update on the Neighbourhood Plan progress

Since the agenda was issued, the Wokingham Borough Executive had announced that the Charvil Neighbourhood Plan was to be discussed at its next meeting, with approval recommended for going to the Regulation 16 consultation at the end of August.

25/8643 To review the website as it approaches its first anniversary, and to consider proposed changes

Generally, the Council agreed that the website was much better than it was before, but reviewing it is a good idea.

The social media assistant has changed the search engine to Google, and the Councillors agreed that this was a great improvement. It was suggested that the publication scheme be looked at as not all documents on the Publication Scheme are on the website.

It was suggested Councillors update their biographies on the website, and that there should also be an over-arching view of what the Council's vision is, based on the Neighbourhood Plan and the Council strategic plan. This was agreed.

There was a request that there should be a list of areas that WBC are responsible for, and what the parish council is responsible for.

There was also a request for a blog on progress on the playground once the project starts, like that of the pavilion project.

There was approval for the "get involved" page on the website.

25/8644 To decide how to progress on the Community Resilience event, and to decide on a name, who is responsible for its progress etc

It was agreed that the name of the event would be "personal security in winter".

It was agreed that there needed to be someone to drive this forward, and the clerk was to ask the social media assistant to help, with Councillor Walker being the lead councillor.

25/8645 To note that there is no volunteer to deliver the Village News to East Park Farm, so that unless a volunteer comes forward over the summer, then Councillors may have to fill in, and to consider whether to offer regular community user groups free advertising in the magazine

It was requested that the social media assistant continue to see if anyone is willing to help, but if no-one comes forward, several councillors will split the deliveries between them. As regards the advertising, as it will help boost our user groups, it was agreed that this can happen if it does not impact of those paying for advertisements.

25/8646 To consider and approve running a "Pulse" survey

Councillor Cripps explained that this is what corporate businesses do to check-in with their employees on a regular basis, as a measure of general mood music within an organisation. He suggests that the Council could run something similar with the residents every six months, so that the Council can gather feedback on its actions. The idea was approved, and there will be an article in the Village News with a link to the survey, Facebook posts, and hard copies of the survey available at the fete. The survey will be time-limited, with the deadline on this first survey being 7th September.

25/8647 To note that this year's footpath walk took place on 9th July.

This was noted.

Chairman's Initials............ Date……….

25/8648 To decide what the Parish Council intends to do at the fete, and to see who is planning to attend

It was agreed that the Council would run a competition to design posters for no littering at the MUGA, there would be hard copies of the PULSE survey available, an update and timeline for the Neighbourhood Plan, and a "How many sweeties in the Jar" competition. They would have a flip chart, post-it notes, crayons, paper for the picture entries, Councillor Hartley would provide the sweets. It was noted that both the parish gazebo and the parish Council sign are in the Pavilion store. Councillors Harding and Hartley will be attending but will also be involved with wider fete activities as they are part of the Fete Committee. Councillor Sutlieff can attend until mid-afternoon, and Councillors Walker and Cripps will also attend. Other councillors to be confirmed.

25/8649 To hear an update on the bus shelter and what might happen next

The clerk explained that the Bus stop had been hit by an unidentified vehicle on either 22nd or 23rd June, leaving one side of it bent back. It is safe but will need to either be repaired or replaced. It has been reported to the police, who have noted it but have closed the case as there was little chance of the offender being identified, and to the insurance company. To progress the claim, the clerk needs to know the cost of repair or replacement and is currently waiting for information form the Borough Council's Highways team and a bus shelter company.

25/8650 To hear an update on the graffiti on the container and the police case opened

The caretaker has painted over it, and a police case has been opened in the hope that they might be able to gain some CCTV footage rom the school, and also that a resident believes he knows who it was. The clerk is waiting to hear of any progress.

25/8651 To consider how Councillors should respond to requests from the media

It is only acceptable for Councillors to report on decisions of the Council, and best practice is to refer people back to the officers of the Council. In other cases, they need to make clear that they are speaking as residents and not in their capacity of Parish Councillor.

25/8652 To note any agenda items for the next meeting

Topics include update on the PULSE survey, decision on the Tender for the playground, decision on the MUGA sign competition, update from the school, and reflections on the fete.

By virtue of the confidential nature of the business to be contracted the press and public were excluded from the remainder of the meeting under Section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

25/8653 To consider the issue of the staffing committee

It was agreed that there would no longer be a formal staffing committee, with formal issues now falling under the auspices of the Finance Committee. The Chair of Finance will take responsibility for Staffing matters, holding quarterly well-being meetings. If Councillors have issues with staff, they should bring issues to the attention of the Chair of Council, and if staff have issues, they should bring them to the attention of the clerk, and if they cannot be resolved by her, then she will take them to the Chair of the Council. If it is the clerk who has issues with Councillors, then she should bring them to the attention of the Chairman.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.12pm

Chairman's Signature ....