

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Assembly of Chalgrave held on Thursday April 10th, 2025 at the Memorial Hall, Tebworth at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr Ken Green; Cllr Harvey Greenwood; Cllr. Phil Parry (Chairman); Cllr Kevin Ludgate; Cllr Jane Spiers; Cllr Vicky Hydes; Lesley Smith-Clerk.

Also present:

PCC John Tizard
Ward Cllr. Mark Versallion Heath & Reach Ward.

Representatives from:

All Saints Church
Chalgrave Memorial Hall
Chalgrave Sports Club
Chalgrave Senior Citizens' Committee
Chalgrave WI
Chalgrave News
Book Club

Public present: 13

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Peter Warburton; Alex Mayer MP Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard; PC Jack Hollands.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PARISH ASSEMBLY-APRIL 11th, 2024

Approved by the council and signed as correct by the Chair.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman welcomed residents, introduced the council members and explained their roles within the council. He also introduced our guests. He explained that the Parish Council is the lowest tier of local government, and cllrs work on a voluntary basis representing the parishioners of Chalgrave Parish. Cllr Parry then gave a summary of the work of the Parish Council and its activities over the past year, summarised below:

- i. Our precept this year is £10,000. About a quarter of the precept goes straight back into our community in the form of grants and awards – we are limited to the amount we are allowed to allocate for grants. We keep a third for contingencies and the rest is used in the running of the Council activities. The accounts can be viewed on our website or via the Clerk.
- ii. The gulleys in the Parish have recently been cleared apart from down The Lane. We will press CBC to do those gulleys. With the gulleys being cleared along Wingfield Road we will have to wait for the next heavy downfall to see if it makes a difference to the flooding opposite the Queens Head. We have also reported the collapsed gullies in Wingfield.
- iii. We report potholes as soon as they appear: it does take some time for Highways to repair them. The one outside the Chapel in Tebworth has finally been repaired but not before it caused serious damage to several vehicles. We continue to press CBC to repair The Lane but it seems it is low priority.
- iv. We have lost our bus service. We are conducting a bus survey – it is on Facebook or if you look in the Chalgrave News you will see the five questions we are asking. Please contact any of the Parish Councillors by phone, text or email with your views. Broadly we want to know if you would like a regular bus service and if you would use it.

- v. Tebworth Solar Farm is nearing completion. We are in the process of arranging a meeting with the developers to discuss the Community Benefit. Once we know what form it takes or how much our community will receive, we will be consulting you to find out what projects you would like to see funded.
- vi. Work has started on Chalgrave Manor Solar Farm. Again, there will be Community Benefit – this will be shared between Chalgrave, Chalton and Toddington. The developers will also be installing solar panels for schools in Chalton and Toddington as part of the Community Benefit.
- vii. We report fly tipping as soon as we are aware. CBC is usually pretty quick at clearing the rubbish particularly if it has been dumped on the highway.
- viii. The Speed Watch Team are out once a month in Tebworth and Wingfield to remind drivers of the speed limit.
- ix. We are fortunate to live in a low crime area. However, there are break-ins and burglaries so please make sure that doors and windows are locked and outbuildings are secure. It is important to report anything that you think is suspicious and report any crimes.
- x. We need nominations for the Millennium Youth and the Community Awards for the past year. Both awards are to recognise a significant achievement or community service. The Millennium Youth Award is for 18 years and under and is a 'well done' for academic or sporting achievement, contribution to the community, overcoming difficulties, or other significant achievement. The Community Award is for over eighteens and is a 'thank you' for service to the community. If you have a nomination please contact the Clerk, Lesley Smith, or any of the councillors.
- xi. West's Educational Trust gives grants towards the cost of any educational activity for young people 24 years and under – this could be music lessons, dance, sporting activity, educational school trips, Cubs, Brownies, Scouts, grants to students in full-time higher education, anything educational. Grants are given twice a year. Applications need to be handed into the Clerk at the end of June and end of December. Full details and the application form are on the Chalgrave Parish Council website under Organisations.

Finally, we live in a small community. Contact details of all the parish councillors are in the Chalgrave News and on our website. If you have a concern please contact us.

You are invited to any of our meetings. They are usually on the third Tuesday of the month in the Memorial Hall at 7:30. Minutes of our meetings are posted on the Chalgrave Parish Council website and on the notice boards.

4. UPDATE from ALEX MAYER MP

- a) NHS. The Government has provided £750,000 in extra health funding for Central Bedfordshire. Over 6,000 extra emergency dental appointments have been announced for the Beds, Luton and MK area.
- b) Policing. Bedfordshire's Police budget will be increased to £167 million. An additional £7.3million was secured.
- c) Potholes. Pothole funding from the Government for Central Beds has increased by nearly 40% to £9.6 million. Unfortunately, CBC has reduced its contribution.
- d) A5; Thorn Turn to Little Brickhill. Average speed cameras, along with a 50mph, have been introduced. Improvement works on the A5/B5120 roundabout begin in June 2025.
- e) Animal Welfare. In the Commons Ms Mayer continues to push for better welfare standards for caged hens. She has also worked on a case where two local pet cats were shot.
- f) Transport. Ms Mayer has a commitment from the DVSA to address long driving test waiting times. She is also pushing for tighter rules around roadworks to minimise disruption and delays.

5. WARD COUNCILLOR MARK VERSALLION

- a) Cllr Versallion introduced himself. He represents seven villages and represents residents' concerns.
- b) Finances. Central Beds Council (CBC) has had financially difficult times recently due to receiving less funding from central government. More money has had to be spent repairing potholes.
- c) Ward Councillor Grants have been cut.

- d) London-Luton Airport. The expansion has been approved. Views are divided. Benefits include jobs whilst noise is a concern.
- e) Universal Theme Park will be good for the area. Jobs will be a benefit. However, traffic will increase.
- f) Andrew Selous. Cllr Versallion paid tribute to Mr Selous who was our MP for 23 years. Cllr Versallion said he was exceptionally good and it was a shame that we lost him.
- g) Bedfordshire Police. Cllr Versallion congratulated the police, especially on their neighbourhood policing, their commitment to rural crime and engaging with the public. Cllr Versallion advised always getting a reference number when reporting a crime.

Cllr Versallion remained for the rest of the Assembly and took residents' questions and comments during the informal part of the evening.

6. PCC JOHN TIZARD

- a) Andrew Selous. Mr Tizard joined Cllr Versallion in paying tribute to Andrew Selous.
- b) The PCC's Role. Mr Tizard described his role as Police and Crime Commissioner, and that he represents the whole county. He has no responsibility for operational policing including where money is spent. His role is to be the voice of the public to the police.
- c) Criminal Justice System (CJS) This includes the Crown Prosecution Service and the Prison Service. The Criminal Justice System is failing at the moment and numbers awaiting trial are growing; currently 800 in Bedfordshire. The CJS and the courts must be more efficient.
- d) New Officers. The government has provided £1.8 million for additional new officers. This will enable a 20% increase from the current 109 officers.
- e) Crime in Bedfordshire. Some of the most serious crime occurs in Bedfordshire. This includes gun and, particularly, knife crime. The causes must be tackled and victims should be at the heart of dealing with crime. Mr Tizard praised the Bedfordshire Police.
- f) Reporting Crime. Always report crime and suspected crime; the police are data driven. Reports can be made by ringing 999, 101 or online.

7. CHURCH REPORT - Sandy Ryan

- a) Repairs to Chalgrave Church. The early part of 2024 focused on adapting worship arrangements to fit in with the internal structural repairs, restoration work and scaffolding which filled the church. The church was closed during March and we shared benefice services with Toddington Church. Sadly, Chalgrave was not open for Easter Services. On April 28th Bishop Richard visited and took part in the 9:30am worship service in the Lady Chapel. The Chancel remained sealed off and the main church was still out of action. On May 28th the scaffolding came down, the church cleaning team resumed their duties and we held a service of Thanksgiving for the repairs and for Mick Bunning's skilled woodwork.
- b) Ceremonies. No weddings, baptisms or confirmations took place in church in 2024. Derek Stone's funeral was held in church on June 10th, and was a special occasion with the church and community coming together to pay tribute to Derek. In October, the village gathered again for Norman Costin's funeral.
- c) Festival services held in 2024 were:
 - Harvest Festival-October 6th
 - In Loving Memory Service-November 3rd
 - Remembrance Service-November 10th 2pm at the churchyard memorial and 3pm at Tebworth Memorial Hall.

Christmas services 2024

 - Carols by Candlelight-December 21st with the Quintet Choir.
 - Christingle service-December 22nd
 - Crib service-December 24th
 - Midnight Mass.
- d) In July 2024 the church boards were updated to include King Charles and Rev. Linda Washington. We also met with David Green from DNG Stained Glass to get an estimate on cleaning the windows of the church inside and out and repairing the screen mesh covering the large stained glass window in the Chancel. We plan for this work to be undertaken in 2025.
- e) In September 2024 a few of us attended a First Aid Course and we purchased a new First Aid kit.

- f) In October 2024 we trialled the Hymnal Plus machine. This can play a multitude of hymns and can have other music added to it. It is portable so could be used at the Memorial Hall and services held outside.
- g) Our fundraising team continues with the Pop-Up Tea Rooms monthly at the Memorial Hall. These are well attended and we appreciate the help of the Village Hall Committee with setting up the tables for us. Special thanks to Frances & Roger and John & Jan.
- h) Other fundraising activities
 - Scones and Songs. An afternoon of music from Richard Poyner and our first activity held in the church.
 - Easter Eggtravaganza and Chalgrave Games. We provided refreshments at both events at the Memorial Hall.
 - Our Christmas Craft Fair in November was very well attended.
- i) Rev Linda Washington gave notice of her retirement in March 2025 to the PCC in October and to the church in early November. We will greatly miss her. Linda has organised coverage for the regular Sunday services after her retirement. Rev Anne Barker and Rev Roger Wood will be providing that cover until a new priest is appointed.
- j) Thanks. We would like to thank Bob, Brian, Sally & Roger for their work in maintaining the church grounds. Thanks also to Gill Goodyear & Ann Costin for assisting the flower ladies. Our Pop-Ups wouldn't be the same without Jane Spiers' delicious sausage rolls and cakes.
- k) There will be a time of interregnum containing vacancy meetings, parish profiles to write, advertising and interviews to take place to find our new priest.

8. SENIOR CITIZENS COMMITTEE REPORT - Roger Fenwick

- a) Senior Citizens' Committee. Birthday cards and Morrisons vouchers are distributed to members. There are 36 households on the list at the moment.
- b) Membership. Members are 65 or over. They receive a £20 supermarket voucher as a Christmas present and are invited to the Senior Citizens' Christmas Dinner at Parkfields Middle School. They also receive a card on their birthday.
- c) Finances. The organisation has been self-funded for the past two years and we will not be asking the PC for a grant this year. Money is raised from the Rotary's Christmas Float. The float goes round Hockliffe, Chalgrave and Milton Bryan parishes.

9. WI REPORT - Debbie Parry

- a) Membership. The WI is in its 14th year and there are 40 members including those from Dunstable and Houghton Regis.
- b) Meetings and Activities.
 - Include:
 - Hedgehog Rescue
 - Auctioneer
 - Former policeman
 - Bletchley Park
 - Codes in quilts in the USA
 - Indoor Kurling
 - Walks
 - Christmas party
 - Ghost hunt
 - Menopause expert
 - Escape Room
- c) Clubs
 - Book Group meets on the fourth Thursday of the month.
 - Supper Club. This takes place on the third Friday of the month.
 - Craft Club runs on the third Monday of the month at Chalgrave Memorial Hall from 7-9pm.
- d) 2025/26: Upcoming events
Animal Trainer; Ghost hunter; Bomb disposal etc.

Guests are welcome to the meetings on second Tuesday of the month at 8pm.

10. CHALGRAVE NEWS REPORT - Jane Spiers

- a) Acknowledgements. The editorial team would like to thank readers for their support and for their contributions to the magazine. Thanks also to the advertisers. Jane also asked that anyone using an advertiser's services mentions that their details were found in the magazine.
- b) Fund Raising.
 - i. The editorial team ran a wreath-making session and festive afternoon tea in November 2024. It was very successful and the event will be repeated in December 2025 at the Memorial Hall.
 - ii. The team also run an online Teddy Bear Orphanage.
 - iii. Prize Bingo Evening and Fish and Chip Supper to be held on 3rd May 2025.
 - iv. Christmas Light Festival. Discussions are ongoing with the residents of St Mary's Close to reinstate lighting up the tree.

11. BOOK CLUB REPORT

The Book Club is still going strong with eight members now. We read a wide variety of books, some of which have been fantastic, others have drawn mixed reactions.

We take it in turns to host a meeting, which usually happens every four to six weeks. We chat and discuss the book over a coffee and cake. We also have an annual lunch and in January we went to The Birch restaurant in Woburn and had a fabulous lunch; excellent food with a great atmosphere. If anyone would like to join please contact Noeleen Thomson on 07899 094777.

12. CHALGRAVE MEMORIAL HALL - Will Randell

- a) Introduction. It has been a challenging year for the small number of volunteers. The Hall Committee meets once a month.
- b) Finances.
 - The committee has received a grant from Asda.
 - Bookings are down but are beginning to improve due to the development in Houghton Regis.
 - Rates for hire of the hall have had to increase. Examples of running costs include insurance - £460 a year; RoSPA inspections; cost of replacing the playground - £60,000-£90,000.
- c) Links with the Parish Council. The hall committee is working with the PC to obtain funding for the playground from the Tebworth Solar Farm development.
- d) Children's Playground. The original deeds for the land are still being sought.

13. SPORTS CLUB REPORT - John Parker

Currently the club has 50 members. The club raises money for local schools e.g. St Georges Lower School.

Previous activities

Couch to 5k; 7 people graduated
Go Karting; 16 drivers took part

Upcoming activities

Quiz Night; April 26th, 2025
Ten Pin Bowling June 16th, 2025

Ongoing activities

Mile a Day MAD 1000 challenge
5 km Park Run at Houghton Hall every month
Yoga: Monday evenings.

John asked for ideas for other activities.

14. TIME AND DATE OF 2026 PARISH ASSEMBLY

To be arranged.

Formal meeting closed at 21.00

The public were then offered refreshments and given the opportunity to chat to councillors and guests.

Signed by Chair.....

Dated.....