

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

20th May 2025

7:30 – 9:00PM

AT BLAKEDOWN SPORTS PAVILION

Topic for presentation and discussion:

**‘Hidden Gems in
Churchill and Blakedown
and Where to Find Them’**

Also:

**Neighbourhood Plan Review – how things are shaping up
Reports from your District & County Councillors,
and a report from your local Policing team**

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED

THE WORK OF THE PARISH COUNCIL DURING 2024/25

Road Safety - After a long campaign, we are pleased to see speed enforcement measures being implemented on Stakenbridge Lane to reduce speeding and enhance community safety. We also replaced the stolen solar kit on the speed warning sign on Rocky Lane.

Environmental Initiatives - We successfully obtained grant monies from Natural Networks to fund 70% of the costs for preparative groundworks and the planting of a biodiversity garden at the Signal Box. This project, nearly complete, will be named in memory of the late Jim Long, who was passionate about the Signal Box. The remaining 30% of the costs were funded by The Churchill and Blakedown Villages Trust.

Community Engagement and Appreciation - This year we celebrated the dedication of our village litter-picking ladies, Judy and Wendy, by gifting them with flower bouquets at Christmas. Their tireless efforts have significantly contributed to keeping our villages clean and beautiful.

Maintenance and Infrastructure - We have taken on a contractor to perform lengthsman duties, ensuring that drains and footpaths around the villages are kept clear and other matters are reported to WFDC or WCC. Additionally, we have removed redundant posts from around the parish and continue to monitor the bin situation.

Planning and Development - As consultees, we have provided valuable feedback on planning applications for tree works and property development, sometimes making objections based on our local knowledge. We have also employed specialist planning consultants, funded by grant monies, to review the Neighbourhood Plan for the next 10 years. This includes writing a design code to establish a design framework for future housing developments in the parish.

Community Contributions - We made over £2,000 worth of grants and donations to local causes, including:

- £500 to the Historical Society for a new village notice board
- £500 to the Churchill and Blakedown churches for grass cutting around the grounds
- £201 for the playground inspection at the Sports Pavilion
- £750 to the Villages Trust for planting the garden at the Signal Box
- £184 to the Friends of Churchill Church for the community dog show event

Public Amenities - We replaced the broken bench on Birmingham Road and continue to work with Instavolt and residents to address the issue of stolen EV charger cables. The lease to Instavolt generates income for the Parish Council that is earmarked for car park maintenance and future resurfacing. Our car park remains a valuable village asset, offering free short-term parking.

Consultations and Collaborations - We have consulted on highways matters, including double yellow lines at Gladstone Place and in Swan Close. We also monitored developments at Station Drive and consulted on the layout and housing mix, with WFDC taking our feedback into account. Additionally, we continue to work with the local policing team under the Community Charter, setting priorities for policing in our parish.

Signal Box Improvements As sole trustee of the Churchill & Blakedown Villages Trust, we have made several improvements at the Signal Box, with funding support gratefully received from the Norman Dawson Trust, including installing new heating and flooring. The meeting room served as a warm space from November 24 to March 25. The room is available for hire for parties and train enthusiasts and hosts a coffee morning on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month from 10am to 1pm.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Consultation on the Revised Neighbourhood Plan - This summer we will be engaging with residents to gather feedback on the revised Neighbourhood Plan. Your views are invaluable to us, and we look forward to hearing your thoughts and suggestions to shape the future of our community.

Impact of Government's Devolution Plans - With the Government's devolution plans, some powers will be transferred from Whitehall to more mayor-led unitary authorities across England. Worcestershire is proposed to become a unitary authority by 2028, merging district councils into a single Worcestershire authority. This change will impact parish and town councils, including C&BPC, potentially requiring us to expand the services we provide.

Collaborative Efforts with Neighbouring Parishes In light of these changes, we plan to meet with neighbouring parishes to explore opportunities for collaboration on certain services. This is a new development for us, and we will keep you updated on our progress and any potential partnerships that may arise.

We are committed to keeping you informed and involved as we navigate these changes and work towards enhancing our community services. Your participation and feedback are crucial to our success.

THE FIGURES

Please note that these figures below represent the financial status of Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council as at 31st March, 2025 and are subject to external audit. Residents are permitted to view the accounts within a 30-day set time frame, this period is likely to commence in June or July, and we will confirm the dates on the website.

Income

During the year, we received a total of £80,699, as follows:-

Precept	£48,184
Other receipts	£32,514

Other receipts is made up of:	£
Lengthsman allowance from WCC	2,737
Damaged lighting column replacement fund received from at-fault party	1,250
Instavolt – annual rent of 2 car park spaces for EV chargers	3,000

CHURCHILL & BLAKEDOWN PARISH COUNCIL – ANNUAL REPORT TO RESIDENTS 2024/25

VAT reclaim from HMRC	4,318
Reclaim made (net of VAT) from The Churchill & Blakedown Villages Trust to cover costs incurred on its behalf during 23/24 and 24/25	5,299
Bank Interest	279
Miscellaneous	33
Cllr Marcus Hart Divisional Funds	500
WCC and WFDC towards grass cutting and bin emptying	2,015
Consultancy fees on the Neighbourhood Plan review	6,021
Natural Networks (70% of total project costs of Biodiversity works at the Signal Box Garden)	5,007
The Churchill & Blakedown Villages Trust (30% of total project costs of Biodiversity works at the Signal Box Garden)	2,055
Total other receipts	£32,514

Expenditure

By category, this is what we spent in the year 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025:-

Category	£
Staff Costs	19,577
Office running costs	1,813
Insurance	1,254
Audit Fees	614
Memberships	1,233
Newsletter	721
Banking fees	110
Donations and Grants	2,136
Chairman's Allowance	124
Training (Councillor/Staff)	105
Hall Hire	120
Poppy appeal/wreath	100
Environment i.e. Grass cutting and bin emptying contracts, trade waste, handyman, and planters	13,907
Lengthsman	2,737
Defibrillator	289
Energy – Footway lighting - Unmetered Supply & repairs	4,832
Speed Sign expenses	1,540
Car park – repairs and maintenance	216
Miscellaneous (Signal Box garden, Christmas Tree & New bench on Birmingham Road)	8,788

CHURCHILL & BLAKEDOWN PARISH COUNCIL – ANNUAL REPORT TO RESIDENTS 2024/25

Project – Consultation fees on Neighbourhood Plan Review	6,021
Costs incurred on behalf of C&BVT	3,113
Village Trust funds held by PC, sent to new Village Trust bank account	2,076
TOTAL EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR	71,426
We incurred in VAT	5,683
Total	£77,109

The Bank reconciliation at 31st March 2025 states:

Bank Reconciliation for the period 1 st April 2024 to 31 st March 2025	
	£
Lloyds Instant Current Account balance at 31/03/25	24,836.58
Unity Bank Treasurers Account balance at 31/03/25	8,071.75
Lloyds Treasures Account (Signal Box) at 27/03/25	0
Balance carried forward to 1st April 2025	32,908.33

Opening Balance as per 1st April 2024	29,329.18
Add receipts for the period	80,698.54
Less payments for the period	-77,109.07
Payment collected from bank during year that was showed on previous year's accounts	-10.32
Closing balance for the year 24/25	£32,908.33

Brian Hession

Chair (2024/5)

Keep up to date by coming to the meetings, following the website <https://churchillandblakedown-pc.gov.uk> , or the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/689908751214651>, or contacting clerk@churchillandblakedown-pc.gov.uk.