

CHURCHILL AND BLAKEDOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council held on Tuesday 9th September 2025 at Blakedown Sports Pavilion which commenced at 7.00p.m.

PRESENT: Chair: Cllr Hession; Cllrs, Richard Benney; Sue Fowler; Bryony Hayward; Martin Hickman; Claire Wood.

In attendance: 3 residents; 2 PCSO's; County Councillor – Marcus Hart; Parish Clerk – Louise Harris.

115/25 Chair's Opening Remarks: I hope you had a good summer and enjoyed the break; we are now back on, business as usual.

116/25 Apologies: None.

117/25 Declarations of Interest: None.

118/25 Community Policing:

- a) **To receive report from the Beat Officer/CSO** – The monthly report had been received by the clerk, circulated to all councillors, and was displayed at the meeting. PCSO Becky Rushton reiterated that suspicious activity had been seen on Sculthorpe Road around 2am on 13th August where a male driver of a white Citroen van was seen approaching houses. She reminded the public to remain vigilant. Patrolling continues and PCSO David Foden has joined the team.

Cllr Hickman reported that a grey Audi had been spotted in the area which was found to have registration plates on that belong to a Hyundai.

- b) **To decide on Community Policing Charter policing priorities for Qtr. 3 – October 25 to December 25** – After a short discussion, it was **AGREED** to continue with the following priorities for the next quarter: Burglaries; Rural Crime; Vehicle Crime.
- c) **To complete the Town and Parish Council Survey 2025 as issued by the Police and Crime Commissioner – closing date Tuesday 14th October 2025** – After a short discussion, it was **AGREED** that this be delegated to the clerk to complete in consultation with Cllrs Hickman and Fowler.

The meeting was adjourned for **Public Participation**, notes of which are attached at the end of these Minutes.

119/25 Dispensations: None.

120/25 Minutes: A member proposed approval of the minutes of the meeting held on the 8th July 2025. The proposal was seconded and **APPROVED**, and the minutes were signed by the chair.

121/25 District and County Council Matters: This item was deferred until Cllr Marcus Hart is present.

122/25 Traffic Issues: Update on Highways developments and on speed control measures: Cllr Hickman had a report to make on an issue at the bridge at Stakenbridge Lane. The chairman requested this be held over until Cllr Hart is present.

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The meeting was adjourned for **Public Participation**, notes of which are attached at the end of these Minutes.

123/25 Items for consideration:

- a) **To accept the proposal to replace faulty parish bins and lettering, details as circulated, under financial regulation 5.12** – A discussion was held about the options and pricing set out in the spreadsheet by the clerk and a query was raised about the purchase of plastic bins instead because they are easier to install and do not rust and using printed plaques as a cheaper alternative to gold stick-on lettering. The cost sought to replace 3 bins would be £963 plus £280 labour cost to fix them. Replacing the faulty gold lettering across all bins would cost £751 including labour, total c£2000. Cllr Fowler proposed that council approve the clerk's suggestion, paying out of reserves if necessary and then having a maintenance budget of £2000 each year for further upkeep/replacements, but there was no seconder. The discussion continued and the council **RESOLVED:**
- that the clerk would arrange a meeting to take place with the bin contractor before the next meeting to identify the best options for replacement.
 - that the council would spend £2000 out of the 25/26 funds – general reserves if necessary.
 - explore the cost of plastic bins instead of metal ones.
- b) **To respond to the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan consultation – date closing Sunday 26th October 2025 – RESOLVED** to delegate the completing of the response to the clerk in consultation with Cllr Hickman.
- c) **To respond to Worcestershire's Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy public consultation – closing date Friday 26th September 2025 – RESOLVED** to delegate to the clerk the completing of the response in consultation with Cllr Fowler.

124/25 District and County Council Matters: County Cllr Hart apologized for being late to the agenda item having been at a Stone Parish Council meeting.

The District Council report had been received and circulated to all councillors and was displayed. Cllr Hart confirmed the following:-

- He is awaiting confirmation that the naming of the roads on the Springbrook Gardens development would be as the council had requested: Pauline Hayward Close, Jim Long Drive, Norman Dawson Close.
- He will signpost the trustees of the Sports Pavilion to the Planning Manager at WFDC regarding S106 monies from Springbrook Gardens.
- He is saying a few words at Jim Long's private memorial event.
- No further complaints have been received regarding the Springbrook House following enforcement carried out by Allison Eggington at WFDC.
- He has dealt with a query from a resident regarding double yellow lines on the Avenue.
- Further updates on Brinton Park and the Piano Building and Local Government Reorganisation, as per his report. The Piano Building will be completed on December 25. Brinton Park has been funded by Heritage funding as the park is a heritage park.

The County Council report had been received and circulated to all councillors and was displayed. Cllr Hart confirmed the following on his report: -

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- The pavement resurfacing is underway along Stakenbridge Lane from the railway line up to Stoney Lane.
- Works to the broken drain connection on the A456 by the Swan Public House is imminent.
- He is chasing the update from WCC on the ponding issues at Station Drive.
- The damaged verges at Stoney Lane have settled down and they will be left for now.
- He has requested a weight restriction for Stakenbridge Lane/Rocky Lane.
- There is a full council meeting on Thursday to confirm support for the one unitary authority or the two split between North and South.
- County Hall is to be disposed of as not fit for purpose. The area may be used for new Worcester City school after demolition due to RAAC.

Cllr Hickman raised the issue of HGV's using the pavement to get around the corner and under the railway bridge on Stakenbridge Lane. He also reported that the height and weight signage on the bridge is covered by vegetation. Also, the vegetation on the 'S' bend on the A456 is due to be cut. Also reported: a lamppost had been damaged during the Miller Homes works on the A456 – it has been made safe, but it is going to be replaced. Cllr Hart reported that the damaged sign at Stoney Lane has been reported and during the pavement works at Stakenbridge Lane, Cllr Hart was successful in having the diversion route avoid Churchill Lane.

Thanks were given to Cllr Hart.

125/25 Items for Information:

- a) **To note the draft minutes of the Trust meeting held on Wed 23rd July 2025 and to note the next meeting of the Villages Trust date on the 23rd October 2025 at 7pm at the Signal Box –** Taken as noted. Cllr Fowler pointed out the incorrect date of the next meeting at the bottom of the minutes. Cllr Wood gave her apologies for the meeting on the 23rd October 2025.
- b) **To note the new NALC pay scales for the year 2025-26 backdated to 1st April 2025 – RESOLVED** adopted.

126/25 Planning and Development Control:

a) Planning Application received:

- i) 25/0508/LBC – Park Hall, Birmingham Road – Replacement windows - To ratify predetermined 'No objection if it complies with listed building requirements' reached by email due to time constraints - **RATIFIED.**
- ii) 25/0551/HOU – Strathfield, 9 New Wood Lane – Proposed rear extension – To ratify predetermined 'No objection' reached by email due to time constraints - **RATIFIED.**
- iii) 25/0609/HOU - 55 Belbroughton Road - Proposed dropped kerb – **NO OBJECTION.**
- iv) 25/0587/HOU - 7 The Croft - Single storey rear and side extension with replacement car port – **NO OBJECTION as long as the planning officer is happy with proposal on car port and building regulations.**
- v) 25/0590/TCA - Oak View, Churchill Lane - Fell Silver Birch located along front boundary of property – **OBJECTION and suggests that, given the excessive heat stress on all trees this year, that the tree remains until next Spring to see if it survives.**

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- vi) APP/TPO/R1845/10610 in respect of 25/0196/TPO - 11A Mill Close - Fell existing Scots Pine and replace with a tree of standard suitable species having a restricted root ball – **The inspector will be notified that the parish council maintains its position.**

b) Additional Planning Applications or other Planning Matters:

- i) **Neighbourhood Plan Review update** – Cllr Fowler updated members saying: The plan is being reviewed, and part of the review has been completed by consultants in draft form, with funding provided by Locality. Since the review began, the government has pulled the funding for Neighbourhood Plans. The wider context involves changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and forthcoming devolution. There is only one other parish in the district with a Neighbourhood Plan held by Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council. The review of the NP must fall in line with the NPPF and District Local Plan and County Council policies and so requires the work of a specialist consultant.

A discussion was held about whether the council felt it prudent to continue with the plan review in the current context and in reflecting on its usefulness to date. It was acknowledged that the plan was of no use in preventing the Land at Station Drive being released from green belt but had been useful in working with WFDC on the development of Springbrook Gardens. Proposed changes in the plan will involve reinforcing the green wedge around the parish on the North, West and East sides to prevent building up to the parish boundary, removing the Avenue from protected green spaces and taking out the requirements for surgery and local pharmacy due to population density not meeting the criteria. The main purpose of the plan is to set out requirements around development, community, links with businesses and pride of place.

Cllr Fowler will continue with the review in the face of uncertainty around funding and speak to consultants about a way forward in the hope that the plan can be completed at minimal cost.

c) Planning Notifications:

- i) 25/0310/FUL – Blakedown Car Park, The Avenue – Installation of 1 no. CCTV camera within car park – Granted.
- ii) 25/0528/TCA – St James Church, Churchill Lane - T1 Holly Tree -Reduce in height by a third and trim and shape lower branches, T2 Yew Tree - Reduce in height to 8 foot to bring in line with the other Yew Trees – FOR INFORMATION ONLY.
- iii) 25/00154/EN3 – 39B Birmingham Road - Building out of keeping with the area – Acknowledgment of notification – please see enforcement notification.
- iv) 25/0508/LBC - Park Hall, Birmingham Road - Replacement Windows – Listed Building Consent Granted.

127/25 Financial Report and Payment of Accounts:

- a) **Bank Balances as of 4th September 2025:** Noted.

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Unity Trust Treasurers Account (PC Current Account)	£10,227.12
Lloyds Business Instant Access Account (PC Reserves)	£31,885.48
Lloyds Community Account	£42.50
TOTAL FUNDS AT BANK AT 4th September 2025	£42,155.10

- b) To approve and sign the Receipts & Payment Schedule for August 2025 – **APPROVED.**
- c) To approve and sign the bank reconciliation with supporting bank statements to 6th August 2025 – **APPROVED.**
- d) To approve and sign the Receipts & Payment Schedule for September 2025 – **APPROVED.**
- e) To approve and sign the bank reconciliation with supporting bank statements to 4th September 2025 – **APPROVED.**
- f) Note the Conclusion of Audit of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2025 – **NOTED.**

128/25 Clerk's Report: The report had been shared prior to the meeting and was displayed. The clerk spoke on the new item stating that it was unclear what the scope of the work would be to meet the additional assertion that the parish council is required to meet at the external audit for 2025/26.

Not showing on the report, the clerk mentioned that some work is ongoing to ascertain how the Himalayan Balsam down at Churchill Lane can be dealt with next year. There were some ideas discussed for voluntary work and the clerk is talking to WCC to ascertain if the Lengthsman Scheme supports this work and what is involved.

Action: the clerk to speak to the Hagley, Churchill & Blakedown Wildlife Watch group leaders.

129/25 Councillor's Reports and items for future agendas:

- i) Neighbourhood Plan.

130/25 Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 14th October 2025 commencing at 7.00 p.m.

131/25 TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST, DUE TO COMMERCIAL SENSITIVITY, FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM:-

- a. To appoint a supplier to conduct electrical and structural testing of the parish council owned footway lighting columns – the public were excluded from the meeting and after a short discussion whilst looking at the options, the council **RESOLVED** to appoint I-Vision for the service at a cost of £600 plus VAT.

Meeting closed at 20:30.

Signed.....

(Chair to Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council)

Dated – 14th October 2025.

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Brief notes of Public Participation – 9th September 2025

The two residents present were there to view proceedings of the council, one in the interest of becoming a parish councillor.

A resident reported the following:-

- Inconsistent temporary traffic lights on the Birmingham Road during road works.
- A lamp out on Station Drive, No. 16 [post minute note – the column is No.12].
- Fly tipping on Waggon Lane – bag of cycle tyres - has gone now. Grass verge is a mess.

APPROVED AT MEETING ON 14/10/25

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