

CHURCHILL AND BLAKEDOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council held on Tuesday 10th March 2026 at Blakedown Sports Pavilion which commenced at 7.00p.m.

PRESENT: Cllrs, Mark Adams; Sue Fowler; Bryony Hayward; Martin Hickman; Gillian Moncrieff; Claire Wood.

In attendance: District Councillor – Ian Hardiman; Parish Clerk – Louise Harris.

31/26 Chair's Opening Remarks: The chair opened the meeting by acknowledging that we are fast approaching the anniversary of the death of Jim Long and asked all present to take care when leaving the meeting. Best wishes were also conveyed to Cllr Benney for a speedy and full recovery after an operation.

32/26 Apologies: Cllr Benney; Cllr Hession, (accepted).

33/26 Declarations of Interest: None.

34/26 Community Policing:

- a) **To receive report from the Beat Officer/CSO** – The monthly report had been received by the clerk and circulated to all councillors, and it was displayed at the meeting. It was noted that the presence of a police helicopter for 1-2 hours over the parish two weeks ago and any associated events were missing from the report. A discussion was held about instances of anti-social behaviour by a group of youths.
- b) **To decide on policing priorities for the parish over the next quarter, April to June 2026** – After a short discussion, it was DECIDED that the policing priorities from April 2026 should be Anti-Social Behaviour, Speeding and Rural Crime. A query was raised regarding inappropriate parking on the Belbroughton Road and the councillor was advised that parking on double yellow lines is a matter for WFDC and if the vehicle is causing an obstruction, then a photo can be taken and the image sent to Operation Snap.

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

35/26 Dispensations: None.

36/26 Minutes: A member proposed approval of the minutes of the meeting held on the 10th February 2026 and the minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record.

37/26 District and County Council Matters: The reports had been received by the clerk and circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting and were displayed at the meeting. Cllr Hardiman took questions on the district council report. A discussion was held about some of the projects that WFDC are undertaking, including parks development and funding for the carpet museum and ideas were shared on how the profile of the Kidderminster Carpet Museum could be raised. No questions were raised regarding the district council report.

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The county council report was then displayed and members commented on how much progress had not been made. A concern was raised regarding a fallen tree on a bridal path and how it had been reported but still no progress. Cllr Hardiman suggested the clerk contact the officer at WCC who deals with these matters, to chase.

[Post meeting minute: The bridal way concerned is number 541(C) / 543(B) and the tree has since been removed by a local resident and WCC have been updated].

A discussion was held regarding the hedge at the corner of the A456 and Churchill Lane and it was noted that WCC have this matter in hand.

There were no further comments or questions asked and thanks were given to Cllr Ian Hardiman for attending.

38/26 Traffic Issues: Update on Highways developments and on speed control measures: None.

39/26 Items for consideration:

- a) **To make a representation on the Wythall Parish Neighbourhood Plan as invited by Bromsgrove District Council according to Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (as amended) 2012** – Cllr Fowler reported that the Wythall Parish Neighbourhood Plan had been very well written and structured and commented that the parish is quite complex with a lot going on. It was **DECIDED** that C&BPC would respond congratulating the parish on an exemplary plan.
- b) **To respond to the Blakedown Bolt safety strategy & map for the event running on the 19th June 2026** – Members had read the detail and acknowledge that the event is improving every year. It was **RESOLVED** to respond with thanks for consulting with the parish council and that the PC supports the event.
- c) **To approve for the clerk to complete the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) qualification** – A query was raised about the cost of this being shared with Hagley Parish Council but Hagley PC already have a qualified clerk. After a short discussion, the council **APPROVED** this.
- d) **To agree to pay the clerk overtime to complete CiLCA, where necessary, and to provide member support** – following clarification of the wording of this item that overtime would not be claimed but rather additional hours, the council **APPROVED** this and to support the clerk throughout the year.
- e) **To agree to respond to WCC consultation on future Waste Management plan, closing date 15th April 2026, and decide on next steps (circulated 25/02/2026)** – After a short discussion about this, it was **RESOLVED** that the parish council would seek guidance from Cllr Hart on how to respond to this and Cllr Fowler would draft a response and circulate to all for comments.
- f) **To move to Scribe Accounting Software from April 2026** – Following a short discussion and some questions answered, it was **APPROVED** that the council would move the accounts onto Scribe Accounting software from 1st April 2026 and the clerk was authorized to decide on how the existing data is transferred onto the new system, subject to a discussion with the proprietors of the software as to how this will be best achieved.

40/26 Items for Information:

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- a) **To receive a report from Cllr Hession on Sports Pavilion AGM held on the 26th February 2026 –**
The report had been received by the clerk and shared with all councillors, and it was displayed. A discussion took place around the points therein and how the Sports Pavilion can be supported to become profitable.
- b) **To note clerk's annual pay increase from SCP18 to SCP29 in accordance with the NALC Pay Scales 2024/25 and Contract of Employment – increases annually on 1st March –** the clerk updated the council about the typing error in this item which should read 'SCP28 to SCP29 in accordance with the NALC Pay Scales 2025/26...' **NOTED.**

41/26 Planning and Development Control:

a) Planning Application received:

- i. **26/0022/HOU – Hay View, Crown Lane – Demolition of outbuildings and construction of two storey extensions.** ii. **26/0110/TCA - St James Church, Churchill Lane - Tree Works: Removal of Conifer 9 (No.8) and Trim Branches of Yew Tree (No.9) –** No objection.
- ii. **26/0110/TCA - St James Church, Churchill Lane - Tree Works: Removal of Conifer 9 (No.8) and Trim Branches of Yew Tree (No.9) –** No objection.

b) Additional Planning Applications or other Planning Matters:

- i) **Neighbourhood Plan Review update** – Cllr Fowler reported that the amended design code has been sent to AECOM and it will be sent to Locality in due time. Some sections had to be rewritten and some irrelevant place holder text removed. All design considerations we want to see for the parish are in there and a reference to density has been made in the hope that we can encourage developers to keep plot sizes as big as possible. The main elements of the design code have been taken from the current NPPF. When the report comes back, we can finish off the Neighbourhood Plan and move forward with it. Cllr Adams suggested that the forthcoming waste management plan could impact the NP in terms of the PC's strategic approach but the NP is about housing, traffic and amenity.

c) Planning Notifications:

- i. **26/0083/PNR - Churchill Farm , Churchill Lane - Proposed change of use of agricultural buildings to two dwellinghouses – [CHANGE OF USE, PRIOR APPROVAL - FOR INFORMATION ONLY] -** the clerk was asked to express the concern of the parish council to the planning officer as regards this areas potential for biodiversity as it is a non-statutory wildlife site.
- ii. **26/0133/PNHE – 10 Churchill Lane - Enlargement of a dwellinghouse (bungalow) by construction of additional storey – [NO STATUTORY CONSULTATION – FOR INFORMATION ONLY] –** the clerk was asked to express the concern of the parish council to the planning officer as regards this areas potential for biodiversity as it is a non-statutory wildlife site.

42/26 Financial Report and Payment of Accounts:

- a) **To note the bank balances as at 4th March, 2026:**

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£13,932.86 - Unity Trust Treasurers Account (PC Current Account)

£37,795.67 - Lloyds Business Instant Access Account (PC Reserves)

£17.00 - Lloyds Community Account

£51,745.53 in TOTAL AT THE BANK – Noted.

- b) To approve and sign the Receipts & Payment Schedule for March 2026 – APPROVED AND SIGNED.**
- c) To approve and sign the bank reconciliation with supporting bank statements to 4th March 2026 – APPROVED AND SIGNED.**
- d) To appoint TPC Audit Services for internal audit 2026/27 at a baseline cost of £300 for service – APPROVED** to appoint TPC Audit Services for the 2026/27 internal audit as set out in the engagement letter dated 20th February 2026 at a baseline cost of £300.

43/26 Clerk’s Report: The clerk had circulated the report to all prior to the meeting and was displayed at the meeting. A discussion took place around point four, the requests from the Friends of Blakedown Station. The council commented that there is a plan to have the perimeter fence painted but this is subject to funding as part of a larger decorating project at the facility and the Villages Trust would be happy to allow access to a tap inside the box to enable the watering of the planters on the railway platforms.

44/26 Councillor’s Reports and items for future agendas: None.

45/26 Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 14th April 2026 commencing at 7.00 p.m.

46/26 TO CONSIDER EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST, DUE TO COMMERCIAL SENSITIVITY, FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:-

a. Appointment of Grass Cutting contractor from April 2026 – March 2029

b. Appointment of Bin Emptying contractor from April 2026 – March 2029

With no public or press at the meeting, the meeting continued. Cllr Fowler presented on the findings of the working party. Questions were asked and the clerk declared a conflict of interest in respect of Pristine Gardens Limited. After a short discussion, the council **RESOLVED** to appoint Pristine Gardens Limited as contractor for the grass cutting and bin emptying contracts commencing 1st April 2026 with an annual review of service delivery.

Meeting closed at 2100hrs

Signed.....

(Chair to Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council)

Dated – 14th April 2026.

Brief notes of Public Participation – 10th March 2026

None.

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