



Chagford Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly of Chagford Parish Council (CPC) held at Endecott House on Thursday 23 April 2026, commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Members present: Cllr Belinda Hayter- Hames (Chair), Cllr Andrew Parrott, Cllr Gill Printy, Cllr Stuart Wright, Cllr Lark Ash-Matthews, Cllr Dhevdhas Nair, Cllr Rosina Kellman, Cllr Gay Hill and Cllr Frances Everson

Apologies received from Cllr Christine Malseed

Also in attendance: WDBC Cllr Jane Elliott, DCC Cllr Sue Davies, the Clerk Emily Young, James Green Headteacher Chagford Primary School and Josh Scillitoe Neighbourhood Highways Officer for Chagford and Hatherleigh. Along with approximately 25 members of public.

215. Chairs welcome and report – thank you everyone for coming and welcome members of the public. Cllr Hayter-Hames said she will deliver her report after the presentations.

216. Minutes of the last annual parish meeting on 17 April 2025 to be approved and then signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record of that meeting – There was one amendment to add Cllr Gill Printy's apologies for absence. It was proposed by Cllr Everson to approve, seconded by Cllr Nair, agreed by all. Cllr Hayter-Hames signed and dated the minutes.

217. Guest speaker – Josh Scillitoe – Neighbourhood Highways Officer for Chagford and Hatherleigh c/o Devon County Council.

He has worked in this role for approximately 5 years.

He is the first point of call for:

- *Road surfacing
- *Surface dressing
- *Traffic issues; parking, zebra crossings, etc
- *Pot holes
- *Drainage

Current work in the area: Today he has been working in Manor Road clearing the drains with the 'jetter'. He has just issued a 'soft closure' on the path over the leat at the rear of Ellis Drive car park/top of Drovers lane. (Soft means advisory).

Highways have 3 self help groups\schemes:

- 1/ Snow wardens (CPC use)
- 2/ Road wardens (CPC use)
- 3/ Grounds maintenance

Parish Councillors:

Belinda Hayter-Hames (Chair), Stuart Wright (Vice Chair), Frances Everson, Lark Ash-Matthews, Neil Smillie, Andrew Parrott, Dhevdhas Nair, Gill Printy, Gay Hill, Rosina Kellman & Christine Malseed
Parish Clerk: Emily Young. Telephone 07399815164 Email: clerk@chagfordparishcouncil.gov.uk

www.chagfordparishcouncil.gov.uk

Chagford Parish Council have an active Road Warden group of 2 volunteers. They have both completed the Chapter8 training to work on the highway and they try to repair smaller defects.

If you look on this website there are details of the different category of pot holes:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem/report-a-pothole/>

Timescales to fix varies from up to 7 days - up to 28 days.

They no longer 'seal' around the edges of the pot holes due to concerns with slippage.

From his experience there isn't enough money being spent on maintenance. They used to do regular surface dressing which 'seals' the road, but this is not done anymore. He is seeing worse issues as work is generally reactive rather than proactive. Please be assured all the highways workers are trying to do their best.

An example of some of the questions and answers:

Possible zebra crossing in Chagford?

Not aware of any current plans but costings are in the region of £100,000.00

Adoption of Bellacouch roads?

The roads have already been adopted.

Are there any traffic restrictions planned in Ballacouch Meadows to stop the public from parking there and encourage them to use the car park instead?

I am not aware of any current plans to put restrictions in Bellacouch estate.

19.50 Josh Scillitoe left the meeting.

218. Guest speaker James Green – Head Teacher Chagford Primary School

Been in post for about 3 years. Before being Head Teacher he was a teacher, then senior teacher in Hackney, before coming a Head Teacher at Chagford. It is a real privilege to be the Head Teacher of this school.

The school covers nursery age up to year 6 (age 11).

They have 67 girls and 71 boys.

Overview:

Small multi-academy trust (part of Dartmoor MAT)

138 children on role

Mixed age classes

14% of the children receive free school meals

15% are SEND (both rates are below national averages)

They are a values driven community primary school

Ethos: Care, community, challenge is deeply embedded in daily life and shapes behaviour, relationships and decision making. The school's christian character is

Parish Councillors:

Belinda Hayter-Hames (Chair), Stuart Wright (Vice Chair), Frances Everson, Lark Ash-Matthews, Neil Smillie, Andrew Parrott, Dhevdhas Nair, Gill Printy, Gay Hill, Rosina Kellman & Christine Malseed
Parish Clerk: Emily Young. Telephone 07399815164 Email: clerk@chagfordparishcouncil.gov.uk

www.chagfordparishcouncil.gov.uk

central to its identity with collective worship, pastoral care and values-led expectations contributing to a calm and respectful culture.

The last OFSTED inspection was in June 2022 where the school was judged 'good'. It is getting ready for another inspection now under a new framework.

They have very low behaviour issues, the children feel safe and listened to. They include SEND in all aspects, there is a strong relationship with the families. Phonics and reading are good. Statutory testing results are all above national expectations. They have a strong focus on writing and maths.

They have a stable staff turnover.

Offer effective support for disadvantaged pupils and 94% of parents would recommend the school to others. The PTFA is very active and positive.

More recent things:

School council

House teams captains

Yr 6 ambassadors (role models)

Working on:

SEND attendance

Writing and maths outcomes

Keeping results high

Prioritising disadvantaged pupils

They now have a 'forest school' where 1 teacher is trained. Exciting times ahead.

An example of some of the questions and answers:

Q Do you allow mobile phones?

No

Q Can parishioners access the amphitheatre in the school grounds outside of school?

Definitely open to discussion about this. Please contact me.

Q What kind of community engagement is possible for people without primary children to get involved in the school?

We would be very welcoming to those wishing to get involved. Please contact the school to make further enquiries.

Q What about school trips for those children whose families cannot afford to go?

Again, we are very inclusive. The PTFA are very good at fund raising. Please contact the school to make further enquiries.

Parish Councillors:

Belinda Hayter-Hames (Chair), Stuart Wright (Vice Chair), Frances Everson, Lark Ash-Matthews, Neil Smillie, Andrew Parrott, Dhevdhas Nair, Gill Printy, Gay Hill, Rosina Kellman & Christine Malseed
Parish Clerk: Emily Young. Telephone 07399815164 Email: clerk@chagfordparishcouncil.gov.uk

www.chagfordparishcouncil.gov.uk

219. Guest speaker – West Devon Borough Councillor Jane Elliott

In May 2023 I was elected to become Chagford's West Devon Borough Councillor. There are 7 areas that WDBC are responsible for:

1/ Waste and recycling

2/ Housing – homelessness casework but little amount of affordable

3/ Car parks – please note each year there will be an inflationary increase

4/ Leisure services – Fusion has gone into receivership and will be replaced by another company. Leisure centres in Tavy and Okehampton will continue to be available for everyone to use.

5/ Community health and wellbeing – at the moment there are some grants available for community and village halls. Up to £25k - deadline 12 May 2026.

6/ Crisis and resilience fund – looking at proactively helping people struggling with oil for home heating, council tax, etc.

7/ Collecting council tax – 10% goes to WDBC, 5% goes to Chagford Parish Council, 70% goes to Devon County Council, 11% Police and 4% Fire services.

Local Government re-organisation (LGR). Devon put 5 different ideas to the Government! A decision is expected in July.

An example of some of the questions and answers:

Q Chagford is a tourist town, so why is there an assumption to charge for parking?

To cover running costs. Car parks generally don't make money. If charges weren't made then the council tax would increase for locals.

Q There appears to be a short supply of affordable housing, so why is a property owned by LiveWest (WDBC social housing) in Mill Street up for auction?

LiveWest have a number of properties that have fallen into disrepair, which they will try to sell off. In the legal framework it says something like if they sell 1 property they then need to take another back on, but this can be anywhere in WDBC.

Q In WDBC car park there appears to be 8-10 vehicles permanently parked. Will these be moved?

No because there may be circumstances which means they need to have parking. For example mobility issues.

220. Guest speaker – Devon County Councillor Sue Davies

Introduced by saying what a supportive and generous community Chagford is. You have a proactive and hardworking Parish Council.

Devon County Council have set their next budget at £873M; £610M comes from council tax and government contracts\grants.

76% of the budget goes on things like children services (covering fostering and children support like SEND which is growing), Adult social care and statutory elements.

Parish Councillors:

Belinda Hayter-Hames (Chair), Stuart Wright (Vice Chair), Frances Everson, Lark Ash-Matthews, Neil Smillie, Andrew Parrott, Dhevdhas Nair, Gill Printy, Gay Hill, Rosina Kellman & Christine Malseed
Parish Clerk: Emily Young. Telephone 07399815164 Email: clerk@chagfordparishcouncil.gov.uk

www.chagfordparishcouncil.gov.uk

There is a special SEND school in Okehampton that suffered a severe fire in February which is needing a re-build. Children now temporarily going to Tavistock.

In Chagford parish the parish council have established a road warden scheme and the friends of Chagford library group offer great support. The library offers so much more than just a library. Open 6 hours a week. The recent survey highlighted the amount of support for libraries and the results should be out soon. The message from DCC does appear to be that community volunteering is likely to increase.

Cllr Davies has a small locality budget which opens on 11 May. Please contact her directly if you wish to apply or have any questions.

sue.davies@devon.gov.uk

Chairs report – Cllr Belinda Hayter-Hames

It's been a year of change.

Sadly we lost Jill Millar who was the Chair of Chagford Parish Council.

Ruth Wright retired as clerk and Emily Young joined.

Rachel Short left as councillor and Rosina Kellman joined.

The granted aided work at Padley Common is now finished, despite the terrible winter, with boardwalks and new gates installed, largely paid for by a "Farming in Protected Landscapes" grant from Dartmoor National Park.

With help from the Chagford Conservation Group paths on Padley have been widened, leaky dams installed to help protect the wetlands and the three habitats where endangered species of butterflies live gradually opened up and protected. CPC have adopted the red ex-BT phone box and this will be tidied up later in the year and a defibrillator installed.

At Bellacouch open spaces there is work to be done to the top leat.

Parking and car parks – Jill Millar did lots of work in this area with the developer.

The Bellacouch new car park is open and EV chargers have been installed along with toilets. We hope to put solar on the roof of the small business units.

We have agreed with WDBC, that they will make the top car park, which they own and which is to be resurfaced in early summer, slightly more expensive for longer stays in order to encourage more use of Bellacouch car park. The signage is also to be improved by Highways. This will be better evaluated in the summer.

The restricted parking zones, when first introduced, were transformational in assisting traffic flow. More recently there were consultations as to whether these should be replaced with double yellow lines. In June last year Highways produced a proposal for the removal of the restricted parking zones and replacing them with limited lengths of double yellow lines. This was not met with approval as there was concern that the traffic flow would be adversely affected. It was therefore decided to

Parish Councillors:

Belinda Hayter-Hames (Chair), Stuart Wright (Vice Chair), Frances Everson, Lark Ash-Matthews, Neil Smillie, Andrew Parrott, Dhevdhas Nair, Gill Printy, Gay Hill, Rosina Kellman & Christine Malseed
Parish Clerk: Emily Young. Telephone 07399815164 Email: clerk@chagfordparishcouncil.gov.uk

www.chagfordparishcouncil.gov.uk

keep the restricted parking zones and these are due to be repainted in the next month or so in a phased approach.

Lamb Park – outline permission application for 36 houses. The planners and developer negotiated the rate of affordable housing over some two years, reducing it from 45% to 28% on the grounds of viability. The application went to DNPA committee this month, at which CPC expressed their deep dissatisfaction at the reduction of affordable housing, along with expressing concerns about sewage capacity. The planning committee voted against the application on the grounds of the reduction of affordable housing.

CPC would like to run a housing needs survey, possibly through Chagford Community Trust. (It was suggested to include periphery areas to get a true picture).

The proposal to replace the First-Responders at the Chagford Fire Service with a volunteer body has been put on hold.

Chagford parish council will attend the Friday flea market every other month with WDBC Cllr Jane Elliott. Starting on the first Friday in June.

An example of some of the questions and answers:

Q. Will there be parking restrictions in Bellacouch Meadows?

No plans at the moment.

Q. Do you have accurate data on the numbers of people who live and work in Chagford and need a car but do not have a parking space outside their homes?

No but we can make enquiries.

Q. Precept increase 3 years in a row of around 40% why?

There are plans for some large projects and money needs to be saved.

There is currently £234K allocated for future projects; the cemetery is at full capacity, upgrades are needed to the playpark, the toilets in The Market House need renovating along with work on the whole building to address damp and heating.

There is work needed on the damaged leat in Bellacouch so a fund is needed.

Q. Is it possible to have newsletters?

Yes, we would like to issue these quarterly.

Thank you to everyone who came and participated.

Meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Parish Councillors:

Belinda Hayter-Hames (Chair), Stuart Wright (Vice Chair), Frances Everson, Lark Ash-Matthews, Neil Smillie, Andrew Parrott, Dhevdhas Nair, Gill Printy, Gay Hill, Rosina Kellman & Christine Malseed
Parish Clerk: Emily Young. Telephone 07399815164 Email: clerk@chagfordparishcouncil.gov.uk

www.chagfordparishcouncil.gov.uk