

CHALTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of Chalton Parish Council
held at Chalton Village Hall Monday 9th March 2026 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Keith Featherstone, Steve Grayson, Tom Hose, & John Reynolds.

IN ATTENDANCE: S. Buckingham (Clerk to the Council) & 6 members of the public.

Public Forum : Six members of the public attended the meeting and contributed to the forum.

2182 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mary Walsh who could not attend. No apologies were received from Ward Cllr Gary Purser who did not attend the meeting.

2183 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

2184 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2026 had been circulated.

RESOLVED: It was PROPOSED SECONDED and UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2026 were a correct record and were signed by the chair.

2185 **REPORTS**

2185.1 WARD CLLR REPORTS

2185.1.1 No report or response to summons from Ward Cllr Gary Purser.

2185.1.2 Cllr Mary Walsh could not attend this meeting due to illness but communicated a report to the clerk.

Central Bedfordshire Councillor Mary Walsh – Report to Chalton PC 9th March 2026:

There is not a great deal to report as we come into the new financial year for CBC. The biggest issue that we have faced in recent weeks – is to agree a budget. This was required by Government to be in place by the 11th March – if not the Government would take over the administration. As it stands, the whole Council didn't agree the proposed Budget – although the combined opposition groups, had managed to introduce some improvements to it. As a response to the legal requirement, we and other opposition members, allowed the proposed Budget, together with those changes we had managed to get through, to be approved - by either abstaining or in some cases, voting against. I am a member of the Central Bedfordshire Community Alliance, which is an Independent Group within the Council, and we were of one mind in relation to the response to the proposed Budget. I voted against as the budget is putting up both the Council House rents and Council Tax, while also cutting Council Tax reliefs for our poorest residents. I understand the need for a balanced budget, but not at the expense of our most vulnerable residents. The reliefs had originally been introduced as the cost of taking residents to court for non-payment were high, and didn't increase their capacity to pay. So, we will be spending more on trying to get blood out of stones. Many of you and the residents of this Ward, will have had cause to complain about the state of our roads – potholes and the damage caused by construction vehicles high amongst those complaints. We have managed to push through an amendment to the budget to allow more spending on our roads. This specified using better quality materials to repair potholes. I understand that the condition of our roads is also becoming a focus for Government, and the Council can expect some further funding as a result. Please do encourage residents to report potholes and other road or pavement issues on Fix My Street, as these will then be checked and put on a schedule to address them – according to severity/safety issues. Although I do pass on the many complaints made to me directly, I cannot track their progress and can't always specify exactly where they are. It can lead to delays in addressing them if not using the adopted system – residents can check their status and progress on the app. One.network (Causeway) is also a useful tool to check where there are roadworks, closures, holdups and diversions before setting out on your journey. I am very aware of the concerns and anxiety around the number of approved applications for

renewable energy and battery storage in and around the village of Chalton, and will do whatever is needed to support this Parish Council in getting those concerns addressed. I am connecting with both our MP and CPRE Beds in respect of this and other planning issues, and will continue to support the PC in any way I can.

End of Report of Cllr Mary Walsh.

2169.1.2 No apologies, report or communications were received from the other Ward Cllr, Gary Purser.

2186 **CLERKS CORRESPONDENCE**

The clerk's correspondence summary had been circulated for the meeting. There were no queries raised against the March correspondence.

2187 **FINANCE MATTERS**

2187.1 To Approve Payments and Expenses since the last meeting.

Balances and Credits to account

The Clerk circulated a finance report prior to the January meeting. There were no issues raised about items in the report.

CPC account summary since the January PC meeting were as follows:

Bank Accounts 05/03/26	Amount £
Barclays Community Current Account	£4,352.85
Barclays Saving Account	£24,605.61

Credits to the CPC account since the January PC meeting were as follows:

Credits to CPC Bank Accounts 05/03/26	CR Amount £	CR Awaiting
<i>Interest to Saving Account on 2/3/2026</i>	£52.19	
<i>VAT CLAIM HMRC returned for the period April 1st to Dec 31st 2025 *Paid into Current account since the Jan PC meeting on the 22nd January 2026*</i>	£8,861.53	

TABLE PF PAYMENTS AND EXPENSES AUTHORISED AT MARCH 2026 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Online Banking Payment	Invoice No.	Date of Invoice	Payee	Item	Current A/c Debit	VAT CLAIM 2025/26
Online Authorisation Completed	CPC Grant award	02/02/26	Chalton Lower School	Chalton PC Annual Grant awarded £500 to school for mental health & emotional wellbeing resources & teaching aids	500.00	
Online Authorisation Completed	26/2394R P	06/02/2026	Fly Design & Print	Printing x2 Posters for Chalton in the Chilterns Notice Boards	45.00	
Online Authorisation Completed	LCO01996	15/02/2026	Clear Councils	Yr 3 of 3 Parish Council Insurance Renewal	781.52	-
Online Authorisation Completed	CPC Grant award	09/03/2026	Chalton Women's Institute, (WI) Charity Group	Chalton PC Annual Grant awarded £150 towards an events wheelchair.	150.00	
Online Authorisation Completed	INV-026821	04/03/2026	D J Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd	Grass cutting at Chalton Village Blacksmith Common Cut area Sundon Rd Cut perimeter of Playground Cut Recreation Ground with village	330.17	55.03

Online Authorisation Completed	-	09/03/2026	Chalton PC Clerk	Salary £ 530.75 February Salary	£530.75	-
Online Authorisation Completed	IP 120PJ0033 15752611	09/03/2026	Chalton PC Clerk	HMRC NIC Month 11 February Acc Ref: 575611	£17.06	
Online Authorisation Completed		09/03/2026	Chalton PC Clerk	Clerk Allowance February + March	£52.00	-
No PAYROLL Paperwork Needs To be recorded in May PC meeting		09/03/2026	Sercha Buckingham	Clerk Salary £ 530.75 March	£530.75	
No PAYROLL Paperwork Needs to be recorded in May PC meeting		09/03/2026	Sercha Buckingham	HMRC NIC Month 12 March 2026 Acc Ref: 575***	£17.06	-

2187.2 Chalton Parish Grant 2025/26

The Council considered an application from Chalton WI for a contribution to the purchase of a wheelchair and approved a grant of £150. Evidence of purchase (receipt) was submitted to the Clerk and noted by the Council.

The wheelchair has now been purchased and is stored at the Village Hall. Chalton WI expressed their thanks to the Parish Council for its support.

2187.3 Annual Council Insurance Renewal (Year 3 of 3-year Long Term Undertaking)

The Council reviewed the annual insurance renewal (Year 3 of the 3-year long term undertaking) and approved continuation of the policy.

2187.4 Internal Auditor Appointment 2026/2027

The Council considered the appointment of an Internal Auditor for the 2026/2027 financial year and approved the appointment of Elizabeth Barnicoat.

2187.5 Harmony Energy – MOU Review and Funding Update

The Clerk advised that the MOU with Harmony Energy has expired and highlighted a lack of clarity regarding the future £5,000 contributions.

Councillors discussed the matter and considered options for future arrangements, including the potential to establish a trust or ring-fenced fund to allow 5K contributions to be accumulated and used flexibly for projects.

It was agreed that a meeting should be arranged with Harmony Energy to seek clarification and discuss future funding arrangements.

Action: Clerk to arrange a meeting with Harmony Energy.

2187.6 Chalton in the Chilterns (CiTC) HE Funded Poster Printing. To consider & approve expenditure

Cllr Hose presented proposals for HE-funded poster printing to members, including:

- Chalton's Historic Farm Buildings (Water End Lane)
- Blooming Chalton in Spring & Summer / Chalton's Great Divide (Playground)

The Council considered the proposals and approved the associated expenditure for the above (x2) new posters.

Members noted that further poster projects (x3) are planned for future consideration and funding. Totalling 5 more posters out of the CiTC Harmony Energy funds. The clerk noted that funds already earmarked for this project would still be enough to cover the printing costs.

HIGHWAYS

2188.1 To consider the provision of an additional Parish Council / *Chalton in the Chilterns* noticeboard to serve the Linnere area of the parish; to consider potential locations; and to approve entering into discussions with Linnere LIH & Developer regarding installation location(s).

The Council considered the provision of an additional Parish Council / Chalton in the Chilterns noticeboard to serve the Linnere residents in Chalton Parish in that area on the new road *Ipsmarch Street* near the new public Park opposite *Ivy Corner*. The proposal was approved in principle; however, the location is yet to be finalised. It was agreed that a suitable location will be identified and then put forward to the Linnere and developer for discussion.

2188.2 To receive an update on the proposed grass verge works at Chalton Luton Road / Water End Lane and to consider next steps, including timescales and any required action.

The Clerk provided an update on the proposed grass verge works. It was noted that the works order had been misplaced; however, Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) has provided reassurance that the works will be completed. The Clerk has followed up with CBC and requested that installation of the noticeboard be included within the works as a gesture of goodwill.

2188.3 To receive an update on the proposed double yellow lines and 20mph speed limit measures in Chalton Village, and to consider how the matter should be progressed.

The Council received an update from Central Bedfordshire Council regarding highways measures within the village. It was noted that decisions are based on traffic data, collision history, and potential displacement of parking. Current data does not support the introduction of traffic-calming measures or a 20mph speed limit.

It was agreed that a meeting/walk about will be arranged with the Highways Officer **in mid-April** to discuss all Highway matters and consider potential locations where parking or traffic issues may warrant review. Cllr Hose and Cllr Grayson to attend if date is suitable. Clerk to liaise with Highways to arrange meeting date.

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY (ProW) (Public Footpaths, Bridleway, BOATS) UPDATE

2189.1 Cllr Hose raised to the council to discuss Footpath 12 (FP12) and the potential for its reinstatement where it meets the boundary with Sundon. It was agreed to liaise with Sundon Parish Council to pursue reopening the route, with the aim of restoring access into the quarry area.

It was further agreed to seek advice from the Local Access Forum (LAF) and to pursue the matter with the relevant officer.

Action: Cllr Hose to liaise with clerk about contact Sundon Parish Council, the Local Access Forum, and relevant officers.

***** Chair -Asked to change the order of the Agenda to allow an attendee from CPRE John English to speak with members before planning items*****

John English (CPRE) attended the meeting and addressed members on planning and development matters affecting the area.

Mr English was looking to coordinate a more joined up response from the neighbouring Parish Councils of Harlington, Toddington, Chalton, Chalgrave etc. He referred to the proposed 500MW development and indicated that an appeal on the Permission in Principle (PiP) may be expected, noting this as a lower-cost route to establishing development in principle. He highlighted concerns regarding Central Bedfordshire Council's current five-year housing land supply position and outlined wider issues relating to the Local Plan, including housing targets and delivery rates. It was noted that while significant levels of housing are being proposed across the region, there are indications that delivery is slowing in some areas.

Reference was also made to infrastructure constraints, including water capacity, which may impact the timing of certain developments. Mr English further commented on developer land

banking and funding uncertainties linked to infrastructure contributions. CPRE highlight Food Security as a top concern.

The Council noted the information provided and will work to liaise with the neighbouring PC's through a joint meeting soon.

2190

PLANNING

NO NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AT THE TIME OF THE MARCH MEETING

- 2190.1 **PLANNING DECISIONS RECEIVED** - Update on decisions and recent planning applications:
2190.1.1 **Application CB/25/03316/FULL – Warden View**, Sundon Road, Chalton, LU4 9UA
Change of use from dwelling house (Use Class C3) to residential children's home (Use Class C2).
– **APPROVED**
2191.1. 2 **Application CB/25/03867/PIP – Land at Hillcrest, Luton Road, Chalton**
PIP (Permission in Principle) for proposed residential development comprising a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 9 dwellings. –**REFUSED**

2190.2 **PLANNING MATTERS**

2190.2.1 **CB/25/01098/FULL 500MW Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)**, Update on correspondence with MP and Secretary of State. Location: On land at Luton Road and west of Chalton Sewage Treatment Works, Chalton.

Decision: **APPROVED at January 2026 CBC Development Management Committee meeting.**

The Council discussed this application and received an update on correspondence relating to the above application since the January PC meeting.

It was noted that the Parish Council wrote to the local MP seeking assistance regarding the Development Management Committee process, including concerns over the short notice provided for the January DMC meeting. Copies of this correspondence were shared with neighbouring parish councils and relevant stakeholders.

The Council also submitted evidence in a letter to request to the Secretary of State to call in the application. A response was promptly received confirming that the application would not be called in.

A response relayed via the MP from Central Bedfordshire Council was noted. This confirmed that notification of the DMC meeting had been issued to the Parish Council on 7 January 2026, with follow-up contact on 8 January. The Parish Council had responded to advise it was unable to attend and requested deferral. At the DMC meeting, a statement from the Parish Council was read out in full, and the Committee was made aware of the concerns regarding the limited notice period. An apology was also noted from Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of the shorter than usual notification period.

The Council noted that a further letter had been sent to the local MP following confirmation that the Secretary of State would not call in application CB/25/01098/FULL.

The correspondence raised concerns regarding the absence of a clear national policy framework for the siting of large-scale battery energy storage systems, and the cumulative impact of energy infrastructure associated with the Sundon Substation on the local area.

The letter also sought the MP's assistance in raising these matters with the relevant Minister and in seeking clarification on how such developments are considered within the current planning framework.

The Council noted the update.

2190.2.2 **CB/25/01098/FULL 500MW BESS S106** – To note update / outcome (as applicable)

Section 106 Heads of Terms – Update

The Council noted that correspondence had been sent to the Planning Officer seeking engagement on the emerging Section 106 Heads of Terms, including matters relating to community benefit, monitoring, and long-term enforceability.

A response from the Planning Officer was received confirming that the Heads of Terms had been agreed by the Development Management Committee and are not subject to further review or amendment.

It was further noted that any community benefit contribution would not form part of the Section 106 Agreement and would instead be a separate arrangement to be agreed directly between the developer and relevant parties.

Members discussed the potential for engaging directly with Statera in relation to the proposed 500MW Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), particularly regarding community benefit arrangements. It was suggested that the Council write to the developer to request a meeting in order to provide input on the structure and priorities of any community benefit or levy.

During discussion, Members also raised longer-term considerations, including the lifecycle of battery infrastructure and the need for clarity around replacement and associated impacts. It was acknowledged, however, that the Council would first review any planning conditions attached to the development before determining its next steps.

The Council noted the update.

2190.2.3 Proposed Development – Land South of M1 Junction 12 / Toddington Services

Members noted receipt of correspondence from IM Properties and Moto regarding emerging proposals for land south of M1 Junction 12 and the Toddington Southbound Services.

The proposals outline potential development including strategic employment uses (such as industrial/logistics and a possible data centre), energy generation and storage, and enhancements to the existing motorway service area, including additional HGV parking and driver welfare facilities.

Members discussed the early-stage nature of the proposals and noted that a planning application is intended to be submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council in due course. It was further noted that public consultation is expected to take place in the spring.

The Council agreed to await further information and to participate in any forthcoming consultation to ensure local views are represented. Members also expressed an interest in engaging with the developers as proposals evolve. Councillor Featherstone expressed interest in understanding the proposed route for connecting power to the Sundon Substation.

2190.2.4 Local Green Spaces Submission CBC

2190.3 PLANNING APPEALS

2190.3.1 Appeal Reference APP/P0240/W/25/3372569

Site: Land off Sundon Road, north of Linmere Community Hall, Hockett Street, Houghton Regis

Appellant: AMP Clean Energy Application Ref: CB/25/01877/FULL

Proposal: Construction of a micro energy storage facility and part fenced enclosure. -

Appeal Decision: **GRANTED (ALLOWED WITH CONDITIONS)**

2190.4 ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATORY MATTERS

2190.4.1 CB/24/03164/FULL AMAZON Data Centers, Linmere Island – (EA Ref: EPR/AP3427SQ/A001)

To note update on Environment Agency environmental permit consultation. Permit online link: [EA Consultation Page](#)

Permit Decision: **ENVIRONMENTAL PERMIT APPROVED 29.01.2026**

2191 PLAYGROUND MATTERS

The Clerk advised that the annual playground inspection is due May.

It was noted that no further communication has been received from the adjacent landowner's representative following discussions in December 2025 regarding the boundary near the stream.

Cllr Grayson reported that two "No Playing of Football" signs are still to be installed on the playground fencing and that jet washing of equipment is all planned over Easter. He further noted that an area previously seeded has become waterlogged and may require improvement, including possible ground works and installation of a protective surface. It was also noted that a log requires repositioning near the entrance.

VILLAGE INDUSTRY
National Grid & UK POWER NETWORKS

UK Power Networks Update: It was noted that UK Power Networks (UKPN), which operates the local electricity distribution network, has been taken over an international energy group (including French state-owned interests). This was noted in the context of ongoing discussions regarding grid connections and infrastructure capacity in the area.

Switch gear works for the data centres have been ushed back-to-back end of 2026 into 2027. There was no update on delivering the work external to this as UKPN cannot comment on the individual's programme.

Correspondence – National Energy System Operator (NESO)

As our previous correspondence with National Grid had advised us to liaise with NESO, the Council noted that a letter had been sent to the National Energy System Operator (NESO) regarding grid connections, cumulative energy infrastructure impacts, and associated traffic and infrastructure pressures affecting Chalton.

The correspondence raised concerns regarding the disconnect between planning and connection processes, the lack of requirement to demonstrate viable cable routes, and the cumulative impact of multiple energy developments associated with the Sundon Substation. The Council also sought clarification on current and future connection arrangements and requested guidance on how to engage with NESO's strategic planning process.

The Council noted that a response from NESO is awaited.

POLICE Update

Police Matters

The Council noted reports of anti-social vehicle activity in the early hours (circa 2:00am), including dirt bikes, quad bikes and other vehicles in the Sundon Road area.

It was also noted that Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) movements through the village continue, although incidents are not consistently being reported. Concerns were raised regarding inadequate or unclear signage, including the absence of reference to 7.5 tonne restrictions and routing from Junction 12.

Members discussed the potential for improved enforcement, including the use of camera networks, and the need to address signage and routing issues. It was highlighted that the Transport Authority needs to be considered with the problem of HGVs – who have the power to stop HGVs licence

It was agreed that these matters should be highlighted at the Highways Authority planned meeting/walk about.

Action: Cllrs to raise concerns with Highways during their future CPC meeting.

COUNCIL MATTERS – Public Questions and matters raised

None enf of agenda items

Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved: That in accordance with Standing Order 3d, the press and public be excluded from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted (staffing matters).

Clerk Salary Review

The Council considered the Clerk's salary following the review of scales undertaken by Cllr Grayson. And Cllr Reynolds

Resolved:

- To increase the Clerk's hourly rate to SCP 28.
- To apply the revised rate with effect from [1 April 2026] and notify Payroll.

No agreement was reached on an appropriate backdating date due to the late hour. It was noted that backdating may be applied to reflect the period during which the Clerk's salary review should have been implemented.

It was proposed by Cllr Featherstone and Cllr Reynolds that the Clerk's hours be increased; however, no agreement was reached on the number of additional hours.

It was agreed that the Clerk's role and hours will be reviewed at a future meeting.

The Clerk will liaise with BAPTC for guidance on comparable salary points and how similar matters have been addressed.

2197 **Re-admission of Press and Public**

Resolved: That the press and public be readmitted to the meeting.

2198 **NEXT MEETING:**

Date and place of next meeting:

Meeting to be held at [Chalton Village Hall](#)
May 11th 2026 includes the Annual Parish Meeting before the May PC meeting

The meeting closed 10.25 pm

Signed Dated this _____ day of May 2026

Chair Steve Grayson.