

Bunbury Parish Council

MINUTES

of the meeting held at The Jubilee Pavilion, Bunbury, on

Wednesday 11th March 2026 at 7.20pm

Present: Councillors: Tracy Cosgrave, Maya Fowler, Peter Gorman, Nick Parker, Michael Pollen, Matthew Randall, Richard Slater, Mike Thomas, Andrew Thomson (Chair), Jane Turner.

In attendance: 3 members of the public.

Mar26-1. Apologies

All Councillors were present and so there were no apologies.

Mar26-2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensation Considerations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensation considerations.

Mar26-3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Subject to clarification that Cllr Thomas had been absent and that the sign referred to by Cllr Randall in Minute Feb26-6 was actually too far down the lane, rather than absent, the Council resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on the 11th February 2026 were a true record and that the Chair be authorised to sign them as such. Cllr Thomas abstained as he had been absent at the previous meeting.

Mar26-4. Unitary Authority Councillor Report

Borough Cllr Posnett reported that Cheshire East Council (CEC) had agreed its budget for 2026/27, including an increase in Council Tax of 4.9%. She went on to report that the Parkside planning application had been scheduled for Planning Committee on the 1st April, and that she had queried the fact that part of the land indicated on the plans as being used for the access splay was not owned by the applicant - in fact it is owned by CEC and so she had also asked about the policy and process for determining whether public land could be used in this way and if so how a price to the developer would be determined.

There has been a Call for Sites, in relation housing land supply, and a Special Educational Needs consultation, arising from the facts that there is bill going through Parliament at present and that, at £141m, CEC has the second highest dedicated school grant debt in England. There is also a Public Rights of Way consultation.

Responding to a question about recycling, Cllr Posnett confirmed that by April 2026 all Councils in England were supposed to have dedicated food waste collection services in place, which it is thought will reduce general waste and make three weekly collection of general waste feasible. CEC has already voted to introduce three weekly collection simultaneously with food waste collection but both had now been delayed until October 2026. Different collection trucks are needed for food waste. It was noted that it could be helpful to monitor fly-tipping once the new regime is introduced to establish whether the changes led to an increase in this problem.

Cllr Posnett confirmed that the new Strategic Mayoral Authority had come into being on the 9th March but that this would not impact CEC directly and elections for the mayor would not take place until May 2027, when other local elections are already scheduled.

Mar26-5. Public Forum

The Chair of Bunbury Village Day Committee (VDC) spoke to introduce herself and to thank the Members for their past practical support on the day and for the Council's financial support for the associated workshop held in the school. She went on to explain that the organisation and operation of the day had become a significant task, contributed to by many people across the village. She went on to express a hope that the members of the Council, individually, would be willing to support the event by overseeing the Gate Rota and several members expressed willingness to help. It was asked whether the VDC would be willing to organise the painting of

the exterior of the pavilion before Village Day and, although it may be difficult to achieve this before the Day itself, it would be taken to the Committee for consideration.

The Captain of the Bell Tower spoke in support of the application to be considered under Item 12 and also asked whether there had been any response from CEC about the red clothes recycling bin by the village hall. The Clerk reported that as yet there had been no response from Enforcement who had registered the matter as low priority.

A member of the public spoke to encourage attendance at the CEC Planning Committee on the 1st April in order to give weight to the widely held concerns about the Parkside planning application.

Mar26-6. Members' Reports & Items for Future Agendas

- ◆ Cllr Parker:
 - Asked for the contact list of Councillors to be circulated as he had been awaiting it for some time. He noted that the Clerk had informed him that he was already in possession of the email contacts but he found this unsatisfactory.
 - Noted that at the last meeting it had been resolved to remove the two bins at the Triangle; one bin has been removed but the other one is fixed in a way that has so far proved to be impossible to remove.
 - Felt that the Village Hall Committee should be asked to remove the clothes recycling bin if it cannot be managed in a satisfactory manner.
 - Will try to attend the CEC Planning Committee on the 1st April.
- ◆ Cllr Gorman reported that:
 - He would be re-organising distribution with a view to making each list more rational in the light of the new membership. In response to a request, he said that he would be willing to draw maps of the more obscure localities.
 - The residents of Wakes Meadow Have been discussing the planting of bulbs on the area of grass there and wished to know whether the Council would support a request to CEC for partial mowing.
 - He had noticed that the Council's response to the planning application at Heath House had not appeared on the planning portal. The Clerk confirmed that he had received more than one written confirmation that the response had been received.
 - There had been two break-ins at Grange Close while owners were absent. It was felt that the break-ins had been opportunistic but they had caused great upset and concern to those directly affected and others. It was noted that a degree of anti-social behaviour, such drinking and swearing, goes on around the play area (which is adjacent to Grange Close) after dark. Cllr Turner added that the presence of builders' tools and equipment, including ladders, had facilitated the break-ins and suggested that consideration be given to sending a standard letter to residents who gain permission for works asking them to ensure that their contractors secure all such equipment.
 - Leaflets about inappropriate and/ or dangerous parking were now available. These had been decided upon by the Council as a method of highlighting to drivers the problems caused by such parking. He invited all members to take and use some of them as appropriate.
 - He would like to add the details of new Members as administrators of the WhatsApp group.
- ◆ Cllr Fowler expressed content that one bin had not yet been removed from the Triangle as it served as a convenient point for depositing dog waste bags. Without a bin in that location, there is a gap in that facility between Darkie Meadow and the Highlands.
- ◆ Cllr Turner:
 - Sought clarification about the purpose of this agenda item. The Clerk clarified that while members could expand on the information that any other member reported under this item, a substantive discussion that led to the forming of a view or a decision was not permitted because all such matters must be pre-published on the agenda.
 - Noted that many pathways around the village were ill-maintained by CEC and had become very narrow as moss and old leaves encroach. She asked whether CEC issue a schedule of works specifying how often and when they undertake work to maintain footways. The Clerk responded that a schedule used be issued and such work was carried out two to three times a year but CEC had stopped issuing such schedules and that carrying out

routine maintenance had become very infrequent.

- Had reported a lampost out of order and asked how long CEC take to respond to such issues. The Clerk informed the meeting that it depends as they seem to respond more quickly to a report if it is a lamp in an otherwise unlit area but would simply add a lampost in an area with other functioning lamps to the routine maintenance schedule.
- ◆ Cllr Randall reported that:
 - He had attended the first of the Planning training sessions and that ChALC had not yet sent out the associated handouts.
 - He had had reports that littering in some areas had become a problem especially on School Lane. He felt that much of this was school related and suggested contact with the Head would be helpful.
 - He had been active in using the blue chalk spray to highlight dog excrement. The blue paint had stimulated conversation but he wondered whether small penalty signs in areas where this is a problem would be helpful.
 - He had received a report of intimidating anti-social behaviour from a vulnerable resident who has reported the matter to the police who are following up. He encouraged any such incidences to be reported to the police.
- ◆ Cllr Thomas reported that
 - The 'Saddlers Wells' sign has been damaged.
 - Some people had been taking dogs onto the playing field which is prohibited for health reasons and he asked how the rule could be enforced. The Clerk responded that although allowing a dog to defecate on the street and not clearing it up is a criminal offence, which the police can enforce, he was not sure how the prohibition of dogs from the playing field can be enforced and would try to find out and report back to the next meeting.
- ◆ Cllr Pollen:
 - Thanked the Clerk for his briefing note which he had found helpful in clarifying matters regarding decisions and minutes.
 - Asked for information about the various groups and committees around the village and their activities. Cllr Gorman suggested consulting the Village Website which provides information about most clubs and groups at www.bunburyvillage.info
- ◆ Cllr Cosgrave reported that the village had been featured on a BBC news item about the increase in the cost of heating oil.
- ◆ Cllr Slater gave an update on the Jubilee Playing Fields Charity, including the fact that the statutory annual submissions to the Charity Commission were now up to date and that a meeting with the user groups was being planned.
- ◆ Cllr Thomson reported that:
 - He had been asked by CEC about potential sites for housing and would be responding personally by pointing out the existing new and approved housing sites and stating that he did not wish to propose any further sites in the village.
 - Veolia had confirmed that they had not received a grant application but were in any case no longer funding Allotments. Grants from other sources would have to be considered.
 - As a qualified town planner, he would be very willing to offer support, in relation to understanding planning matters, to the new Members.

Mar26-7. Planning

a. Responses to Application Consultations

There were no new application consultations for consideration.

b. Updates on Application Consultations considered previously or other planning matters.

There were no updates.

Mar26-8. Village Day Stall

In further discussion, following on from the previous meeting, it was agreed that 4 major and 4 minor areas would be highlighted with an A3 sheet for each major area and an A4 sheet for minor areas. The content, including photos, for each area would be prepared by Members as below, and the Council would work to the timetable also shown below,

Major Content (A3) would be:

- Planning - Cllr Thomson
- Allotments - Cllr Salter
- Play Area - The Clerk
- Traffic management - Cllr Gorman

Minor Content (A4) would be:

- Paths - Cllr Randall
- Defibrillators - Cllr Slater
- Trees - Cllr Gorman
- General/ What is the Parish Council? - The Clerk

Deadline for production of draft content: 4th May 2026

Deadline for the Clerk to synthesise style and presentation and produce print-ready sheets for discussion at an informal meeting - 11th May

Informal co-ordinating and information-sharing meeting - mid May (date tbc)

The final A3 sheets will eventually be printed on A3 printers (Cllrs Gorman and Parker) and the Clerk will print the A4 sheets. The Clerk has an A3 laminator for final presentation of the printed material.

Feedback slips (the Clerk) and a questionnaire (Cllr Fowler), with a box for receiving them, would also be made available on the day, so that members of the public could provide feedback on any area of the Council's activities.

It was agreed to research the cost of PC-branded pens.

Two to three table top double display boards would be needed and could be bought (c£173 each) but this would be discussed at the next meeting once it had been established whether any would be available to borrow.

Members will let the Clerk know if they are available for the day so that a rota can be developed. The stall will cost £10 if the PC is classed as a charity or up to £25 otherwise.

Mar26-9. Play Area

a. Repairs and Maintenance

There has been considerable damage to the equipment, some of it deliberate but most of it due to the aging of the equipment itself. Some areas have had to be fenced off to prevent use and risk of harm.

The plastic matting in the grass is worn and needs replacement, another bearing on the roundabout has failed (having previously been repaired two years ago at a cost of several thousand pounds), and the timber 'kitchen' in the woods has now reached the end of its life and should be removed. The soft-bark mulch also needs to be topped up. It was agreed to consult the original installers; a quote for £375 plus VAT had been received for an inspection of the Timberplay equipment and adjustment of the zip wire. It was noted that over a quarter of a million pounds had originally been spent on setting up the play area.

There was a lengthy discussion about the various long term options, including to reduce the scope of the play area (for example by removing some equipment) or to raise funds to replace on a like-for-like basis.

It was agreed that a long-term strategy needs to be developed over the coming months. In the meantime it was resolved that some short-term work would be carried out: the zip wire would be re-tensioned and Timberplay would assess the other equipment that they had installed at the same visit, including damp penetration of the timber. Costs for replacement of the soft-pour surfacing around the bucket swing and for sufficient soft-bark mulch would be established. The roundabout would be made unusable.

In April, Saferplay are scheduled to carry out their annual RoSPA inspection and report which will cover all the equipment and following that the Council will be in a position to assess the longer term picture, both practically and financially, and develop costed longer term plans.

b. Preventing Vandalism

It was resolved to defer this item to the next meeting.

Mar26-10. Traffic Management

The Council had discussed the idea of producing a template for a standard letter to be sent to householders who gain planning permission, asking them to consider parking arrangements for tradesmen's vehicles, with a view to minimising dangerous or disruptive parking. A draft had been circulated in advance of the meeting for discussion and it was approved subject to the addition of a request to also ensure the security of ladders and tools.

Mar26-11. Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported that:

- ◆ The Village's PCSO role had been reprieved from redundancy but the role would now also include Nantwich and this is likely to reduce the Officer's ability to respond as quickly.
- ◆ Two road closures were coming up: Wyche Road, 15th March for up to 5 days and College Lane 23rd March for up to five days - in both cases the aim is to complete the work on the first day.
- ◆ Mention of the Call for Sites in relation housing land supply and consultations on Special Educational Needs and Public Rights of Way had been made by the Ward Councillor at item 4, above.
- ◆ Councillors who did not yet have photographs on the website were invited to stay at the end of the meeting to have photographs taken.

Mar26-12. Request for Financial Support for Maintenance of the Clock at the Church

The Clerk had circulated a request from the PCC of the parish church for financial support of up to £220 towards the maintenance of the clock. It was noted that this is the only way in which the Council is permitted in law to support the fabric of the church and it was resolved to agree support of £220 for the current year's maintenance.

Mar26-13. Mobile Hearing Service

A mobile Hearing Service has sought permission to use space in the car park every two months and it was resolved to agree to this.

Mar26-14. Village Sign Maintenance

It was resolved to carry this item forward to the next meeting and to extend it to include discussion of the area immediately around the sign.

Mar26-15. Finance & Governance

- a. **Receipts and Payments** - Members received the schedule of receipts and payments and approved the payments.

Mar26-16. Items for the WhatsApp Bulletin

It was resolved that notices about not leaving clothes bags around the red receptacle at the village hall and making ladders secure at night time would be disseminated.

The meeting closed at 9.55pm

Signed as a true record, by authority of the Council

Chair:

Date: **22nd April 2026**