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**Minutes of the meeting of the Chipperfield Parish Council held on 17th February 2026
at 7.45 at The Blackwells, The Common Chipperfield WD4 9BS.**

Councillors Present: P Foxall (Chair), G Bryant, CA Heaphy, W Bathurst, L Hinton, and M Paton.

In attendance: Mrs U Kilich (Proper Officer), Borough Councillor S Riddick and 10 members of the public.

83/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence

Resolved, proposed by Cllr Hinton, seconded by Cllr Paton, to approve the apologies for absence from Cllr Flynn and Cllr Cassidy. Unanimously agreed. Apologies for absence also received from Borough Councillor P Walker and County Councillor R Roberts.

84/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To declare an interest linked to any item on the agenda.
There was no declaration of interest to record.

85/25 Election of Chair for the Allotment Committee

The current Allotment Committee Chair, Cllr E Flynn has expressed his intention to step down and will open the floor for nominations for the appointment of a new Chair. The Council noted the resignation of Cllr E Flynn from the Allotment Committee with effect from 17th February 2026. Following the resignation, nominations were invited to fill the vacancy.

Cllr Malcolm Paton was proposed by Cllr Foxall and seconded by Cllr CA Heaphy, and, there being no further nominations, was elected unanimously to serve on the Allotment Committee.

86/25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION 15 minutes time allowed.

Cllr Foxall proposed that Item 92/25 6 Allotment be moved for discussion under Public Participation, unanimously approved.

Cllr Foxall updated on the current position of the allotments with the following statement. Some village allotments remain vacant or experience frequent turnover, particularly near the tennis courts. Historically, despite the aim of maintaining a balanced allotment budget, the allotments have run an annual deficit of around £400. This year, due to unlet plots and additional clean-up costs, as well as high water costs, the deficit is projected to exceed £1,000. The council meanwhile faces wider financial pressures from reduced external funding, including a loss of £4,000 in grants this year and an anticipated further reduction of £4,000–£12,000 in the coming year. These constraints make managing any additional deficits challenging, reinforcing the value of cost-effective solutions like the Tennis Club collaboration as an alternative to higher allotment rents.

Allotment Holders Concerns

An Allotment Representative sent the Clerk an email outlining the concerns the allotment holders have and shared these at the meeting, namely:

1. Loss of public amenity in favour of a private club
2. Lack of timely and candid consultation thus far
3. The proposal has effectively been presented as a fait accompli
4. Timing of commencement of works
5. Access by heavy plant & machinery
6. Damage to tracks, gates, and plumbing system
7. Security of the site during works
8. Making good after completion of works (CPC to take responsibility)
9. Noise and light pollution
10. Restrictions to allotment activity
11. Restrictions to on-site parking during works
12. Current courts are under utilised
13. Increased traffic/parking problems throughout the village around the TC especially during tournaments
14. Very few people at the TC are even aware of the proposal

Cllr Foxall welcomed the feedback from allotment holders and the opportunity to put this on record. He also noted that the Council has responded to the email sent, addressing each one of the points raised. Furthermore, Cllr Foxall stated that there is nothing fait accompli about this proposal, i.e. a planning application will be required followed by the Council applying to the Secretary of State. None of this has taken place, it is a time-consuming and far from certain process. During all of this process, the allotment holders are welcome to attend meetings and have their say.

Tennis Club Proposal

A Tennis Club representative then summarised the Tennis Club proposal as follows:

- **Membership and Accessibility:**
The club is open to all members of the community. Most club members are local residents. Membership is affordable (just over £100 per family annually), and social events are open to non-members to encourage wider participation.
- **Facilities and Usage:**
The club is often fully booked, particularly during summer weekends and evenings. Adding another court would alleviate congestion, enable more play, support social events, and provide opportunities for beginners, juniors, and smaller-scale tennis formats.
- **Community Engagement:**
The club regularly works with local schools to provide coaching, encourage youth participation, and enable school use of the courts. The additional court would expand these opportunities. It would also allow local tournaments to be hosted.
- **Financial and Planning Considerations:**
The club has some funds available and plans to manage construction efficiently with minimal disruption. Allotment owners will be consulted during the building process, and space will be maintained for agricultural equipment. Measures such as fencing, hedging, and floodlight restrictions will be observed. The club intends to minimize noise, visual impact, and disruption to neighbours.

- **Detailed Plans:**

Updated drawings of the revised Tennis Club proposal showing a double court instead of a separate third court were handed out by the representative. These drawings responding to a request by Allotment holders at a previous meeting.

- **Overall Goal:**

The proposal aims to support community access to tennis, promote youth participation, and enhance the club's contribution to village life while managing financial and logistical responsibilities responsibly.

Further Points Raised

- **Traffic and Parking:**

The proposed expansion of the Tennis Club, including a second court, may increase traffic and place additional pressure on parking, particularly during events. Residents highlighted existing congestion near the village hall and stressed the importance of managing visitor flow and parking to minimise disruption.

- **Impact on Allotments and Environment:**

There are concerns about the effect of construction and increased activity on nearby allotments, including potential damage to hedges, roots, and beds. Allotment holders emphasised the need to protect existing plots and maintain environmental standards.

- **Lease and Financial Arrangements:**

Any new lease arrangements with the Tennis Club are yet to be negotiated but could potentially include a more frequent rent review than at present (5 years). Any rent received would be part of the allotment budget and would help offset allotment costs and allotment rent increases.

- **Funding and Grants:**

Questions were raised about whether the council actively seeks additional funding or grants to support projects like this, given ongoing budget pressures. The council pointed out that Dacorum Borough Council own many of the assets within the village, therefore, opportunities for applying for grants are limited.

Next Steps

Cllr Foxall acknowledged the need to balance differing community views, mediate between competing interests, and ensure that any development supports both local clubs and village residents. Financial constraints limit the council's ability to absorb additional costs, and careful planning is required.

Cllr Bathurst underlined that financial pressures are the main reason why the Council continues to support the Tennis Club proposal.

Cllr Paton suggested that a working group be established with representatives of Allotment Holders, The Tennis Club and the Council. All parties supported this proposal.

Cllr Foxall noted that given the Tennis Club is funding all the costs of the proposal, it is up to the Tennis Club whether they continue with this proposal or not. Also, there will be plenty of opportunity for all persons affected to provide further inputs should this proposal proceed.

87/25 MINUTES

- a. To approve the minutes of the meeting of 13th January 2026.

Resolved, proposed by Cllr Bathurst, seconded by Cllr Paton the accept the Minutes of 13th January 2026 as a true and accurate representation of the meeting.

Unanimously agreed.

- b. To discuss any matters arising from previous meetings
Nothing to discuss.

88/25 REPORT FROM BOROUGH/COUNTY COUNCILLORS

To receive a report from Borough/County Councillors

Report from Cllr S Riddick informed members that there is not a lot happening at DBC now.

89/25 CHAIRMANS REPORT & CORRESPONDANCE RECEIVED

For any items you cannot “click” please email the Clerk for information.

- a. Scottish Widows lowering interest rate on savings account from 1.10% to 0.95% AER
- b. Unity Trust bank charges to be increased to £7 per month
- c. Dacorum Environmental Forum Agenda and Minutes
- d. Road Safety issue raised by a member of the public – It was noted that a School Crossing Patrol Officer has been appointed to monitor pedestrian crossing adjacent to The Cake Shack
- e. DBC General Planning Update for Council members only – How the reorganisation will have an impact on the local authorities.
- f. Government launch consultation on Hertfordshire’s Local Government Reorganisation proposals. The Council will need to decide whether to respond or not.
- g. DBC Further Consultation for budget review – Further information required to set the budget for 2026/27. The Clerk will aim to complete the form before the closing date of 6th March 2026.
- h. Email received regarding the village clock and associated report – the quotation and the report will be submitted electronically to the Clerk for further discussion.
- i. Email received regarding the Allotment Minutes of 7th January 2026 – discussed under Public Participation.
- j. Email received regarding Allotment Holders Meeting on 26th January 2026 – discussed under Public Participation.
- k. Email received on the results from Police and Crime Commissioner to discuss the Road Safety Budget – This item will be discussed further at the March meeting.

90/25 CLERKS REPORT (verbal)

- a. To update and discuss the current action report – the application for the Unity Trust Credit Card is in process. Cllr Bryant is in constant communication with Leander regarding the installation of the two finger posts.
- b. Latest news from Dacorum Borough Council. Nothing to report.

91/25 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES

- a. Cllr Foxall proposes to approve the YTD Summary for January 2026
Resolved, proposed by Cllr Bryant, seconded by Cllr Hinton to approve the YTD Summary for January 2026. Unanimously agreed.
- b. Cllr Foxall proposes to approve the Receipts and Payment Summary for January 2026
Resolved, proposed by Cllr Bryant, seconded by Cllr Hinton to approve the

Receipts and Payment Summary for January 2026. Unanimously agreed.

- c. Cllr Foxall proposes to approve the Bank Reconciliation as of January 2026
Resolved, proposed by Cllr Bryant, seconded by Cllr Hinton to approve the Bank Reconciliation as of January 2026. Unanimously agreed.
- d. Cllr Foxall proposes to approve allotment deposit increase from £75 to £100
Resolved, proposed by Cllr Hinton, seconded by Cllr Paton to approve the increase in Allotment Deposit from £75 to £100.
- e. Cllr Foxall proposes to approve the amended Allotment Rules
Resolved, proposed by Cllr Hinton, seconded by Cllr Paton to approve the changed to the Allotment Rules. Unanimously agreed.
- f. Cllr Foxall proposes to approve £150 plus VAT for WCAG 2.2 Level AA compliant audit
Resolved, proposed by Cllr Bathurst, seconded by Cllr Heaphy to approve the £150 plus VAT for WCAG 2.2 Level AA Complaint audit. Unanimously agreed.
- g. Cllr Foxall proposes to appoint Audit Solutions to carry out the internal audit for 2025/26 this being their last year. CPC will need to engage with another provider for 2026/27
Resolved, proposed by Cllr Paton seconded by Cllr Bryant to appoint Audit Solutions to carry out the Internal Audit for 2025/26. All in favour.
- h. Cllr Foxall proposes to approve the annual subscription £916.28 with HAPTC for 2026/27
Resolved, proposed by Cllr Heaphy seconded by Cllr Bathurst to approve the annual subscription with HAPTC for £916.28. All in favour.
- i. Cllr Foxall proposes to approve the charges applied by Community Action Dacorum from 1 April 2026 as follows
New yearly payroll charge (paid in April) will be £68 plus VAT
New monthly payroll charge including pension will be £32 plus VAT
Community Action Dacorum Annual Membership Charge £45.00
Resolved, proposed by Cllr Bathurst, seconded by Cllr Hinton to approve the charges applied by Community Action Dacorum as of 1st April 2026. Unanimously agreed.
- j. Cllr Foxall proposes to approve the following policies
 - Accessibility Policy
 - Members Interest Policy
 - Privacy Policy
 - Records Management Policy and Retention ScheduleResolved, proposed by Cllr Bryant, seconded by Cllr Hinton to approve the four policies listed. Unanimously agreed.

92/25 REPORT FROM WORKING GROUPS AND COMMITTEES

1. OPEN SPACES

SANG update – A regular meeting was held with the SANG Officer. The resurfacing of the easy access paths is the next major works planned and will be

put out to tender. A boardwalk will be installed around the sweet chestnut to protect its roots. A meeting is scheduled to take place on 15th April for the Friends of Chipperfield. Works at the bottom of Windmill Hill have been undertaken to improve access for horse riders.

2. YOUTH AND EDUCATION

New school gates have been installed; September intake process will commence. The nursey teacher is now a qualified woodland teacher and will be able to take children to the woods supervised.

3. POLICE REPORT – Nothing to report

4. HIGHWAYS

It was unanimously agreed to discuss the PCC response to the request for funds for 2 new Speed Indicator Devices at the March 2026 meeting once the Council have more information on the subject. Key issues are the proposed maintenance fees and the degree of effectiveness of such devices.

5. PLANNING

Reported under General Planning update

6. ALLOTMENT

To discuss the Tennis Club Proposal with the Allotment Holders. Please refer to Public Participation.

93/25 Exclusion of Press and Public; To **RESOLVE** that under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded for the remainder of the meeting, because it is likely that publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution, arising from the nature of the business proceedings.

94/25 Future Agenda Items

To discuss and agree on the installation of two new Speed Indicator Devices.

95/25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on the 30th of March 2026 following the planning meeting @ 7.45 at The Blackwells The Common WD4 9BS.

The meeting concluded at 21.12