

**MINUTES OF THE CHEDDLETON PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT
CHEDDLETON COMMUNITY CENTRE, HOLLOW LANE, CHEDDLETON ON
28/10/2025, AT 7.00 pm.**

ATTENDANCE: Chairman Councillor K Grocott

Councillors S Beardmore, S Bagnall, V.B Cornes, M Cunningham, A Grocott, G Grocott, K Harvey, S Rogers, L Shaw, T Williamson, M Worthington
Clerk (for the minutes) V Cornes

1. **APOLOGIES** - Apologies were received from Councillors M Ahmad, O Pointon and G Grocott.
2. **SWEARING IN OF RECENTLY ELECTED COUNCILLOR** – Mr Stephen Johnson, who had been recently elected as Councillor, was sworn in and welcomed to Cheddleton Parish Council.
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – Councillor S Johnson declared an interest in item 16 on the agenda.
4. **MEMBERS SEC, 33 DISPENSATION REQUESTS** – Councillor V Cornes requested a 3-moth dispensation from Councillor duties from 1st November, 2025, in order to take on the role of Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) until a suitable replacement for the Clerk could be employed. This was agreed by the Chair. Councillor Worthington thanked Councillor Cornes for the work that she had taken on.
5. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**– There were no announcements
6. **STANDING ORDERS 2025 UPDATE**- Councillor Rogers had made some amendments to the new Standing Orders and had circulated these to the Council. There was, however, a maximum spend figure still to be agreed, which would require input from the Clerk. Councillor Rogers proposed that it should be put on the agenda for the next meeting. This proposal was seconded and agreed by members present.
7. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME** – Member of the public, Helen Bridgett, questioned the competence of the Council. She stated that his was not only about Councillors ability but the ratio of elected Councillors to co-opted Councillors. A discussion followed and it was agreed to check how many Councillors were elected at the 2023 elections and at how many are currently co-opted. Nathan, the son of Mahfooz Ahmad, Council Chair, pointed out that he believed his father's recent illness, was a result of the bullying and humiliation caused by the public at recent meetings. He called for more kindness and respect for each other. It was agreed that Mahfooz should be kept in the loop as regards Council matters. Councillor Rogers pointed out that there were still loads of emails in the Clerk's inbox that had not been replied to. Councillor Cornes agreed with her but pointed out that we hadn't had a clerk since early June and that though she had tried to identify urgent ones, she had to prioritise more urgent work. She also suggested that more of the Councillors could contribute to the workload. The Chair agreed but pointed out that like himself, some Councillors worked full-time and could not contribute as much as Councillors who did not work. He commented that the current Clerk was being missed very much and stressed that a replacement Clerk needed to be recruited as soon as possible.

8. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24TH SEPTEMBER 2025** – Typing error page 4, should read G Grocott. Page 5 item 14, ‘loan equipment n and working’ needs to be added. It was agreed that otherwise the minutes were a true record of the meeting,
9. **MATTERS ARISING** – Councillor Rogers raised a question on item 2 of the minutes. At the previous meeting Councillor Salt had said that she had sent a disclosure of her relationship with James Fernihough, who was being co-opted, to the Clerk on 3rd June 2025. Councillor Cornes was asked to find out if it had been received. She had spoken to Louise, who had shown her a copy of that email, dated 3rd June. Councillor Rogers asked if Councillors could be shown a copy of the email. Councillor Cornes said that she would need to ensure that there were no confidentiality issues and stressed that if it could be shown to Councillors, it was not for public viewing. On page 4, the potential acquisition of The Oval, Mill Lane Wetley Rocks had been discussed and the PC had been actioned to explore the issues around it but nothing had been done, Councillor Harvey suggested that actions should be put in the minutes with Councillors names or initials on the right-hand side. **ACTION – V CORNES TO RECORD ACTIONS IN MINUTES.**
10. **EVENTS** - Paula, the PCSO would be holding a surgery at Cheddleton Community Centre on Saturday, 1st November between 10 am and noon, and that the public and Councillors were all invited to attend. Councillor Rogers asked where the poppy wreaths were for the Memorial Service at St Edwards Church as she had offered to lay a wreath after the service. Councillor Worthington confirmed that he had the wreaths.
11. **CORRESPONDENCE**- There was no correspondence owing to the Clerk’s absence.
12. **FINANCIAL MATTERS**-Local Government Services had agreed a pay rise for Council Clerks, backdated to April 2025. This would apply to our current Clerk. The NALC Agreement and a copy of the pay scale was shown to councillors, A couple of Councillors asked what would happen if it was refused. Councillor Cornes explained that the unions could take legal action and there could be equal pay disputes, and also that it would make recruiting difficult. She proposed that the increase should be accepted, this was seconded and a vote by a show of hands was unanimous. June and July’s accounts and reconciliations had been sent to all councillors and were duly signed off, Councillor Cornes asked the Council for permission to pay the accounts and this was agreed by those present. Councillor Cornes was asked if the sale of the garages had been completed. she replied that the deposit had been paid but that the sale was not yet completed.
13. **UPDATE ON DEFIBRILLATORS**-Councillor Rogers reported that the defibrillators were all present and in working order,. One or two would be replaced in the near future as they were coming to the end of their battery life. There had been suggestions to move the one at the Red Lion to the Flint Mill, but no one knew who now owned the Red Lion. There was an issue with the one at the John Pointon Centre because it was only accessible when the Centre was open. There was a suggestion the Moorside School, that has three defibrillators could move one outside. Councillor Rogers will look into this. **ACTION S ROGERS TO LOOK INTO DEFIB, AT THE FLINT MILL AND AN OUTSIDE DEFIB, AT MOORLANDS SCHOOL.**
14. **UPDATE - HIGHWAYS ISSUES WITH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL** - Councillor Beardmore reported that there were a number of works between Cellarhead and Plough Bank, she also reported that between 10th and 14th of November, there would be work done on the pavements in Ox Pasture.

15. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES -

HR Committee – Councillor Cornes reported that the last HR Meeting has been a closed meeting to discuss staff issues and therefore could not be reported on.

CCMC- Councillor Williamson reported that the new signs ordered for the Community Centre Car Park were now in place.

Advanced Proteins – Advanced Proteins had posted some information on Facebook instructing the public on how to report bad smells.

Playing Fields Committee- An update was given on Buttercross,, which was now restored and just needed some cosmetic work. It had been suggested to have a formal opening. There were some problems with metal playground equipment Grange Pond clearance was to be done. Councillor Cornes will find out who to apply to for funding. **ACTION V CORNES TO IDENTIFY FUNDING SOURCES.**

16. Bridge Ey – Charles Taylor had kindly offered some outdoor garden furniture to be put on Bridge Ey, a picnic table, bench and bird table. Councillor Steve Johnson offered to carry out risk assessments on the furniture, which will then be installed. **ACTION S JOHNSON TO UNDERTAKE RISK ASSESSMENTS AND ARRANGE FOR FURNITURE TO BE PUT ON SITE.**

17. Parent and Toddler Group – This group met weekly in Cheddleton Community Centre but was struggling to pay the cost of hiring the room because not enough people were attending. The group was a lifeline to the ones that did attend and the group had appealed to the Council for help with funding, The Chair proposed offering the group £15 per week to help with costs. The proposal was seconded and it was voted on by a show of hands and accepted. Councillor Cornes will inform the group and, if they accept, a payment schedule will be set up. Councillor Rogers said that she had some Support Staffordshire leaflets, which the group may find helpful. **ACTION V CORNES TO INFORM THE GROUP LEADER JANE OF THE DECISION.**

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS – There was no other business to discuss.

19. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME- Member of the public, Wendy Johnson drew attention to the lack of timely responses to emails, She also mentioned that the Parish Council website is not very inspiring or user friendly. Councillor Beardmore said she builds websites and suggested a Go Daddy website. It was agreed that this be put on the agenda of the next meeting. **ACTION V CORNES TO ADD TO AGENDA.**

20. FORWARD AGENDA ITEMS – Standing Orders, Suggestions for website improvements.

21. DISCUSSION OF STAFFING MATTERS – Members of the public were requested to leave the room as per the 1960 Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, as confidential issues would be discussed, The Chair thanked members of the public for attending. Councillor Cornes said that with the help of the SPCA, she had advertised for a full-time, permanent Clerk and had received applications from three candidates. Two of these applicants wanted full-time posts, but the third was only willing to work part-time. One of the applicants was a gentleman from Branston, near to Burton-on-Trent and the other was a lady from Rugeley. Interviews for the two full-time applicants were to be arranged in the near future. There was some discussion regarding who should be on the interview panel. Councillor Cornes as Chair of the HR Committee would be one of the interviewers, the Chair, or his representative, and it was suggested that the current Clerk would be there to advise, some Councillors suggested employing two Clerks on a job-share basis, but as the third applicant was the only one who wanted part-time, this was not an option. The Clerk's Settlement Agreement, which the Council had agreed to, was discussed, Councillor

Confirmed that written into the agreement was a condition that it would be in full and final settlement, and the Clerk would have to agree that no further claims would be made against Cheddleton Parish Council. Councillor Cornes was asked if the applicants had been sent a copy of the Clerk's full job description and she confirmed that they had. As this was the case, it was pointed out that the Clerk did not necessarily have to be present at the interview. Councillor Cornes suggested that the third applicant, Jane Chadwick, who worked as the Bagnall Parish Clerk, should be employed on a locum contract, to help to reduce the huge backlog of work that had piled up during the Clerk's sickness absence. Jane had family commitments which prevented her from considering a full-time post, This suggestion was received favourably by the Council, and Councillor Beardmore commented that Bagnall had an excellent record regarding planning applications. **ACTION - VC TO ARRANGE INTERVIEWS.**

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 21,55 PM,