

**MINUTES OF THE CHEDDLETON PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT
CHEDDLETON COMMUNITY CENTRE, HOLLOW LANE, CHEDDLETON ON
25/11/2025, AT 7.30 pm.**

ATTENDANCE: Chairman Councillor K Harvey.

Councillors S Beardmore, S Bagnall, V Cornes, M Cunningham, G Grocott, S Johnson, O Pointon, S Rogers, L Shaw, T Williamson and M Worthington.

Clerk (for the minutes) V Cornes.

Several members of the public also attended.

1. **APOLOGIES** - Apologies were received from Councillors M Ahmad, A Grocott and K Grocott.
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – Councillor Beardmore made a declaration of interest in item 13 Community Speed Watch.
3. **MEMBERS SEC, 33 DISPENSATION REQUESTS** – Councillor M Worthington requested a 3-month dispensation because his wife was suffering medical issues and was attending medical appointments and he was accompanying her to these. A dispensation was granted.
4. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**– Councillor Harvey expressed his concern that the Chair, Councillor Ahmad has suffered a stroke, which from his family's point of view, had been triggered by harassment and humiliation by some of the people present at the meeting, both internal and external. He stated that he would not like to be treated in the way that the Chair was, and he pointed out that Councillor Ahmad had served the community for a great number of years and that he deserved respect. He asked the temporary clerk to confirm that Councillor Ahmad was making progress; she confirmed this but added that he was far from being fully recovered. Councillor Harvey asked those present to reflect on this. Councillor Rogers stated that other councillors had also been addressed disrespectfully; Councillor Harvey agreed but added that it should not be happening at all and that any bullying or disrespect that was witnessed or could be proven, would be dealt with.
5. **STANDING ORDERS 2025 UPDATE**- Councillor Harvey asked if the Standing Orders were now complete as a figure was required and had needed input from the Clerk. Val Cornes confirmed that she had spoken to the Clerk who has said that the very maximum should be £25,000. She had passed this information on to Councillor Rogers, who was preparing the final draft. Val Cornes commented that a vote by full council was required for acceptance. **ACTION: COUCILLOR ROGERS TO RESEND THE FINAL DRAFT TO COUNCILLORS AND V CORNES TO ADD TO DECEMER AGENDA.**
6. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME** – Member of the public, commented that it would take many years of research by a university to prove that public behaviour towards anyone at a meeting could lead to a medical episode. She also said that records of said meetings should record such behaviour in order to prove it. Another member referred to an incident where a Wetly Rocks resident had been barricaded in his home and asked if that was not also bullying. Councillor Harvey replied that he was not in possession of the full facts and that it would need to be investigated. It was then asked what the Council could do about it. Councillor Harvey replied that that the Council had to do something in both the cases of the Chair's

illness and his family's concerns and in the case of the resident who was being harassed. He said that the Council has to make a decision on what to do and, if nothing could be done about the situation, to give a reason why not. He also commented that if anything could be done, it would need to be done according to the rules of the council. Member of the public, stated the Councillor Harvey had made a comment about there being more public present than councillors and that the Council had to stay in the rules, and a lot of the public had responded because rules were not always followed. Councillor Harvey agreed that this was the case. Mrs Johnson stated that the public needed to show their dissatisfaction of the Council when rules were blatantly broken. Councillor Harvey stated that the public were there in order to make a difference and that he would do his best to see that a difference was made. He also pointed out that residents had the opportunity to join the council if they wanted to and that they could put themselves forward for election. A resident asked what was the alternative word for 'volunteer' and was informed that it was 'public servant'. She stated that Councillors are therefore unpaid public servants and not volunteers. Councillor Rogers commented that Councillor Georgia Grocott was making extensive notes on her tablet, Councillor Grocott stated that she was making notes of the meeting for her own information to refer back to.

7. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25TH OCTOBER 2025** –Councillor Rogers pointed out that there was a spelling error in item 13, which should have read Moorside, not Moorlands. Item 21 didn't read properly as it appeared that a Councillors name had been missed out. Val Cornes will correct these items. Councillor Rogers said that she was surprised that item 21, which referred to matters relating to the Clerk, would be discussed while the public were present. Councillor Cornes explained that no personal issue would be discussed until item 28 on the agenda, before which the public would be asked to leave the room as allowed by the 1960 Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act. Councillor Harvey asked if the minutes could be approved. This was proposed and seconded and the minutes were agreed to be a true record of the meeting.
8. **MATTERS ARISING** – Councillor Rogers said that Councillors had not been given sight of the email that was sent to the Clerk by a Councillor, disclosing that she was in a relationship with another recently co-opted Councillor. Val Cornes said that she had spoken to the Clerk who had informed her that she was not willing to release it without the permission of the Councillor that had made that disclosure. Val Cornes asked if anyone was willing to ask The Councillor concerned for her permission to circulate the email, but no one volunteered. She confirmed that the disclosure email, dated 3rd June, 2025 had actually been sent and the Clerk had allowed her to see it to prove its' existence. Councillor Rogers said that she found that hard to believe because a declaration of interest was not private. Val Cornes said that the issue was, had that Councillor made that declaration on the date that she stated, and that she had.
9. **EVENTS** – Councillor Rogers announced that the Cheddleton Pudding Race would be held on the following Saturday and that every entrant would receive a Christmas pudding. She warned that some roads would be closed and that it would be very congested. She also announced that Santa would be at the Flint Mill on the 3rd December and that St Edward's Church, Cheddleton, was holding a craft fair at the same time. These events would be followed by a musical concert at 7.00 pm and tickets for this were on sale for £8.00 each.
10. **CORRESPONDENCE**- There was no correspondence owing to the Clerk's absence.
11. **AGAR AUDIT**-Val Cornes stated that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) audit had been carried out and signed off by external auditors to confirm the

Council's proper financial management and accountability. The documents had been circulated to Councillors and Councillor Rogers pointed out that the auditors had said that the reconciliation had been difficult because cashbook figures were not available. Councillor Harvey pointed out that this didn't point to any wrongdoing, merely that the Council was not necessarily using the best methodology. He also stated that the Council hadn't had a Clerk for a while and was having to do the best that it could. Councillor Harvey said that moving forward, the Council would, hopefully, be in a better position to be fully compliant. The audit was signed off by the Chair, Councillor Harvey at the meeting.

12. FINANCIAL MATTERS- Local Government Bodies had ratified pay rises on the SLCC pay scale and backdated it to April 2025. Cornes had circulated the accounts to the end of September, but some Councillors had not had time to read the September accounts because they had only been circulated earlier that day. Councillor Rogers said that she could not see any payments made for the purchase of the garages at Wetley Rocks. Val Cornes stated that the payment had been made in October and that she had not yet input the figures for October. Councillor Rogers wanted to know how much had been paid as a deposit, Val Cornes did not know because the Chair had dealt with this transaction and she had not made the payment herself because she did not yet have access to the online banking. Councillor Johnson made reference to two payments to L Green on 30th September and wanted to know what they were for. Councillor Harvey said that one payment would be her salary and the other could be her pension or expenses, but this would be verified. Councillor Harvey made a suggestion that each committee, should be given a budget and manage its own finances. The balance sheets were signed off by the Chair of the meeting and by designated signatories. Val Cornes asked Councillors for permission to pay the bills, this was seconded and a Councillors voted in favour of this by a show of hands. . **ACTION - VAL CORNES TO ESTABLISH WHAT THE TWO PAYMENTS TO THE CLERK WERE.**

13. COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH IN WETLEY ROCKS- Councillor Su Beardmore was approached at the end of August or beginning of September when there was roadworks being carried out in Wetley Rocks. Residents had some concerns about traffic speed and safety with traffic coming through the village. Trucks are getting larger and many have difficulty passing each other. Su went to some meetings and talked to residents and she put together a paper on this issue. Su has spoken to Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire Safer Roads about this. As a County Councillor she has access to a sum of money, which would fund the setting up of a speed watch group, which would be made up of volunteer residents who would like to do this and to undertake the training. Staffordshire Speed watch has agreed to carry out a risk assessment. Su had brought this to the Council and invited questions and comments. Councillor Harvey asked if they had contacted other such groups to get feedback. Endon had set up a speed watch group and it appeared to be having some success, and it was suggested to use the Endon approach as a model. Councillor Harvey asked if it would be done through the County Council and member of the public, Sarah leigh, explained that the issue had been brought before the Parish Council to raise awareness, A discussion followed on the bad state of the speed cameras in the Parish.

14. REST CENTRE- Val Cornes said that a while back, the Parish Council had been approached by SMDC to enquire if we would consider allowing the Community Centre to be used as a rest centre in a local emergency. She had invited the caretaker, Mrs. Christina Beardmore to the meeting to give her views on this. Mrs. Beardmore thought that it would be impractical because of the lack of facilities in the centre. There was a kitchen, which was used when the hall was let out for parties, wakes etc. There was a smaller room, which was used as a creche, the meeting room and the larger hall down the corridor. There were only a few toilets and little other furniture apart from tables and chairs. Mrs. Beardmore said that

people would have to lie on the floor. The centre was unsuitable for long-term stays. Councillor Rogers commented that the maximum length of a stay would be no more than 48 hours, Mrs. Beardmore will discuss it further with Val Cornes. **ACTION – VAL CORNES TO DISCUSS FURTHER WITH MRS. BEARDMORE.**

15. UPDATE ON DEFIBRILLATORS-Councillor Rogers reported that at the Parish Assembly, the previous evening, AED had done a huge PowerPoint presentation showing that they are willing to continue with their support of SMDC. After the meeting AED replaced the pads at The Hollybush and the Black Lion pubs. Discussions are ongoing with regards to relocating the defibrillator at The Red Lion to the Flint Mill. Sue had checked with Moorside school regarding putting a defibrillator on the electric gate so that it would be available 24/7, but no-one had got back to her.

16. UPDATE - HIGHWAYS ISSUES WITH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - Councillor Beardmore reported that Park Lane was due for some roadworks at the end of December. There was a brand new watermain being put in at Luzlow Lane that runs into Thorneyedge Road at Rownall. The road would need to be closed off at two different points which would make driving difficult while work was being carried out.

17. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES -
BURIAL GROUND COMMITTEE – Councillor Cornes reported that the last meeting had been held in May, shortly before the Clerk went off sick. Some risk Assessments had been carried out but it was uncertain if the risks reported had been followed up. Val Cornes said that she had liaised with the Clerk who has confirmed that the risks identified had been acted on, other issues, however, still needed to be dealt with; access to St Edward’s Lawn Cemetery and the Vera Heath legacy. These issues would be addressed at the next meeting on December 2nd.

CCLC- Councillor Mike Worthington reported that the main bone of contention at the meeting was Bridge Ey. He stated that Reverend Dr. Henry Hope did not want the money in the face of public opposition and the land would not be sold.

CCMC- Councillor Williamson reported that he had resigned as Chair of the CCMC in December, however, because they were facing attendance challenges, he was still acting as Chair. There had only been three Councillors in attendance at the last meeting. Councillor Williamson urged other Councillors to consider joining the committee. He announced that there would be a meeting in January 2026 to draw up proposals for the Community Centre car park to put before the following Council Meeting, Councillor Williamson had obtained quotes for proposed work at the tearoom, Councillor Lorraine Shaw had looked into whether or not the boilers had been serviced and established that all boilers had been serviced in April this year. Both buildings needed new batteries in the carbon monoxide sensors, so she would look into that. Councillor shaw also reported that there was some damage to the external part of the flue. She had contacted the contractors who had quoted £280.00 + VAT to carry out the repair. She proposed that permission be given for this repair to be carried out. This was seconded and voted on by a show of hands in favour of the repair being carried out.

ADVANCED PROTEINS- Councillor Rogers had nothing new to report,

PLAYING FIELDS COMMITTEE- Councillor Rogers reported that the restoration of Butter Cross was now complete. There are plans for a celebration in Spring to mark its completion, Himalayan balsam pulling was on the agenda for next year. Community Path Initiative Fund Project – park 38 was to be put on the next agenda. A number of leaflets showing circular walks around Cheddleton and Wetley Rocks had been found and anyone who wanted copies were invited to take some, a number would also be distributed to public

areas, e.g. pubs and the tearooms. ROW obstructions had been referenced. Work ongoing on the playing fields. Councillor Shaw reported that the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust were visiting in January, reference the pond. The missing bench had been found in Steve Billing's lock up. Stan and Christina had asked for it to be removed because of the Fun Run as access to the toilets was needed.

18. **CHEDDLETON PARENT AND TODDLER GROUP** – Val Cornes had informed the group leader, Jane of the Council's decision to award them £15.00 a week to help with the room hire as the group had been struggling financially. This offer had been gladly accepted and a payment plan had been arranged.
19. **MEMBERSHIP – STAFFORDSHIRE WILDLIFE, CPRE AND SUPPORT STAFFORDSHIRE** – Val Cornes announced that all three subscriptions were now up for renewal The Council voted in favour of renewing all three of them. **ACTION – VAL CORNES TO PAY SUBSCRIPTIONS,**
20. **SUGGESTIONS FOR WEBSITE IMPROVEMENT** – Councillor Harvey had already suggested that the hierarchy of committees be put on the website, he said the Clerk should not have to run every committee and the onus ought to be on the Committees themselves to set agendas and to do the follow-up work. Councillor Georgia Grocott pointed out that the website was not user-friendly and it was difficult to navigate. Councillor Su Beardmore had offered to help with the development of a new website at the last meeting but it first needed to be established who the present host was and how difficult it would be to create a new one. Su offered to put forward some proposals and asked for ideas.
22. **UPDATE ON MOORLANDS PARTNERSHIP BOARD AND PARISH ASSEMBLY-** Councillor Rogers announced that the two meetings that she attended on behalf of the Parish Council only has a budget of just over £50,000.00 to give to historic buildings and they can only grant up to £8,000.00 per project. The Parish Assembly indicated that what would come to all Parish Councils ahead of LGR and Devolution, is a listing of all street furniture in the Parishes and who is designated responsibility for each item's maintenance, (Parish, Town or County). There were be a greater expectation from the public for more responsibility for local councils.
23. **LGR UPDATE-** Councillor Harvey commented the LGR had to submit their proposals by 28th November 2025. Cabinet was meeting today, 27th November. Councillor Harvey stated that the Council needed to be kept informed as to progress, and he asked Councillor Pointon if he could help, Councillor Rogers stated that was no need for this as Mike Gledhill and Councillor Swindlehurst had stated that any new information would be passed on by the Parish Assembly.
24. **BRIDGE EY – SUPPORT FOR MOTION TO BE A LOCAL GREEN SPACE –** Councillor Harvey said the three was now a committee and they wanted the support of the Council to apply for this status. The Council were in favour of this. Resident pointed out that the local plan was under review and the application needed to be made as soon as possible. Councillor Harvey asked resident to keep the Council updated an any progress with this matter.
25. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS** – Councillor Pointon stated the Council's email, Stackmail, was not fit for purpose and was a deterrent to communication, various suggestions were made but it needed to be established first of all, who had set this up and could it be changed, Councillor Pointon also commented that at previous meetings, it had been proposed to set up a group

WhatsApp but nothing had been done. Councillor Georgia Grocott said that she would be happy to set this up if Councillors would let her know their phone numbers, it was agreed that other equipment needed to be updated too, e.g. presentation screens etc. Councillor Grocott said that her school was upgrading their display equipment and she would find out what they were doing with the old ones.

26. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME- Member of the public, observed that at the last meeting, she had brought up the subject of general power of competency to the Council and whether they hold it or not. She stated that this affected the decision making and if decisions were flawed, it could cause problems. She further questioned GPC as it depends on the ratio of elected and co-opted Councillors and the qualifications of the Clerk. Councillor Harvey said that five Councillors were co-opted, Sue Rogers, Georgia Grocott, Kevin Grocott, Tom Williamson and James Fernihough. However, it transpired that although Councillor Beardmore was an elected County Councillor, she was a co-opted Parish Councillor and that Councillor Harvey had been co-opted. Helen Bridgett stated that because of the high ratio of unelected Councillors, The Council was not competent. Councillor Harvey pointed out that there was little that we could do about it until the next elections, when the public would decide who to vote in.

27. FORWARD AGENDA ITEMS -Standing Orders, press and media Policy, Data Protection Policy.

AT THIS POINT, MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WERE REQUESTED TO LEAVE THE ROOM, AS PERMITTED BY THE 1960 PUBLIC BODIES (ACCESS TO MEETINGS) ACT WHERE CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES WERE DISCUSSED,

28. PARISH CLERK RECRUITMENT – CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES –
Council agreed in favour of offering Melanie the post of Parish Clerk

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 22,10 PM,