MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF CHILCOMPTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2026 AT THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Cllrs Pike (Chair), Manley, Sinclair, Bowhay, Moore, Newman and Holme.
Also Present: A Rixon, Clerk (minutes), and Somerset Council (SC) Cllr Sam Phripp (from Item 4).
Apologies: Cllrs Terry, Simmons and Mattick.

1. The Chair opened the meeting. Apologies were received from Cllrs Terry, Simmons and Mattick and the reasons for absence approved. There were no interests declared. The new Clerk was welcomed to her first official meeting as Clerk. A member of the public, Mr Peter Rusbridger, was welcomed to observe.

2. The Chair suspended the business of the meeting to allow **public participation**. Mr Rusbridger noted that no planning applications had been recorded on the Agenda and this did not allow members of the public an opportunity to attend and comment on them. He asked that all planning applications being discussed be publicised in future. It was noted that only one had been received, relating to a private house extension in Bakers Lane. It had been received after the Agenda had been finalised so had not been listed. The Parish Council (PC) assured Mr Rusbridger that efforts would be made to ensure that planning applications would be well publicised so parishioners could let the PC know their views before it makes comments on the applications it is consulted upon. The Chair reconvened the meeting.

3. Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting on 9 September 2026: The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed accordingly.

4. Clerk's Report and Action Log

a) The PC noted the appointment of Alysa Rixon as Clerk to the PC (and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)) with effect from 28th September 2026, following a period of employment shadowing the former Clerk since 7th September. The PC recorded its formal thanks to Malcolm Rigby for his service as Clerk.

b) The PC noted the circulated action sheet with matters outstanding from previous meetings. It was noted that the action sheet would be kept updated by the Clerk and circulated ahead of each PC ordinary meeting.
Traffic Safety at Lynch Hill: It was noted that SC Cllr Phripp had met with a parishioner to discuss the issues with the works and would provide feedback to SC. This action could now be logged as completed.
Allotments: It was noted that the search for potential allotment space was ongoing but there were no specific actions to take at this time.
Co-op one way scheme: Clerk to contact SC to look into progress.
S106 money for school: It was noted that there was no more action for the PC to take on this issue.
Bowden Hill Green bollards: It was agreed that this would be taken up with SC but was considered non-urgent.
Flags: It was noted that SC Cllr Phripp is progressing this with SC to have the flags removed. Unfortunately this is taking longer than anticipated due to safety precautions required. No further action at this time for the PC.
Heritage Asset list: Cllr Manley continues to pursue this and will report back when there is

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progress, but it is considered non-urgent.

Plaque on bench: Cllr Sinclair was thanked for organising this.

i) **VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol):** The Clerk had researched purchasing a VoIP service to manage phone calls. This would cost in the region of £6–£10 a month. The PC resolved that a telephone number is necessary and approved this expenditure.

Action: Clerk

ii) **PO Box:** The Clerk reported on PO Box options and costs. It was considered that there is unlikely to be much post, but that it would be better to have a formal address for the PC. In the first instance, it was decided to approach the Village Hall to see if there was scope to use this as the official address.

Action: Clerk

iii) **Email and Document Storage:** The PC agreed that a more secure electronic document storage is required and approved the purchase of a licence for the Clerk to administer (either Microsoft 365 or Google Workspace). Expenditure was approved up to £70 per annum.

Action: Clerk

iv) **PC Vacancies:** It was noted that there were two vacancies and the Clerk had put up notices as required by SC inviting parishioners to submit a request to SC by 15th October should they wish for an election to fill these vacancies. If ten electors make this application, then an election will need to take place. Otherwise, it is for the PC to co-opt Cllrs to fill these vacancies. Clerk to advise on next steps once confirmed by SC.

Action: Clerk

v) **Standing Orders (SOs) & Governance Review:** The Clerk reported that the PC's SOs had fallen behind the latest guidance and required a major review. She would also be looking at a drafting and review schedule for making sure that core policies and procedures were kept up to date, such as Financial Regulations and GDPR requirements. The Clerk will draft SOs, polices and procedures and present to the PC in increments for approval.

Action: Clerk

5. **Committee and Working Group Reports:** There were no reports to consider at this time.

6. **Asset Management:** Cllr Sinclair's report on the need to replace the picnic bench at the Old Rec was noted. Cllr Mattick had recommended possible replacement furniture. It was noted that the replacement would be more durable (recycled plastic instead of wooden). It was noted that the larger 6–8 seater cost £745. It was resolved to replace the bench with a maximum expenditure of £745.

Action: Clerk & Cllr Mattick

7. Skate Park

The Clerk reported on the proposed removal of the skate park at Wells Road, summarising: the condition and safety history of the equipment, including unresolved defects identified in the RoSPA inspections, the latest being August 2026; the response from Chilcompton Sports confirming its support for removal; the outcome of parishioner consultation via the parish magazine, in which one objection was received from one parishioner, who has not evidenced his claim to ownership of the equipment, nor provided any evidence of local support for retaining the skate park, despite being given opportunity to do so; and advice received from the Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC), dated 21 September 2026.

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The PC confirmed its decision to remove the skate park equipment, having had regard to: (a) the safety and condition evidence set out in the RoSPA inspection reports; (b) the absence of any evidence that the equipment is owned otherwise than by the Council; (c) the support of Chilcompton Sports and the outcome of parishioner consultation; and (d) the advice received from SALC. The Clerk was authorised to proceed with the quotation from Penny's previously considered (Minutes 9 Sept 2026, item 8).

Action: Clerk

8. Events

a) **Remembrance 2026:** The silhouettes had been erected and wreaths purchased. SC Cllr Sam Phripp and MP Anna Sabine have accepted the invitation to attend. Cllrs are seeking someone to lay a wreath on behalf of the Royal British Legion. Cllr Pike to coordinate.

Action: Cllr Pike

b) **Events funds and EPOS:** Events funds will be kept in the same account but separated in the reporting to ensure transparency. The Clerk has been investigating options for an electronic point of sale (EPOS) system to allow card payments to be taken at events.

Action: Clerk

c) **Future Events:** Cllr Newman reported upcoming events included the pop-up café at the Village Hall (this weekend and 28th November), and a Christmas event on 5th December. The Clerk would ask Cllr Mattick if he could provide a Christmas tree, as in previous years. It was noted that £500 donation has been received from the garden club out of the profits from the last Garden Trail event. Another Garden Trail is due to take place in 2027.

Action: Clerk

9. Traffic & Transport – Feasibility Study

It was noted that a number of concerns had been raised by parishioners about traffic safety. A draft statement of work had been circulated for initial proposals and quotes to undertake a study and provide recommendations for priority measures across the parish. This could then be used as evidence for funding implementation. The PC agreed this was a priority issue.

Action: Cllr Holme

10. Litter Picking

Cllr Sinclair had asked for this to be put on the Agenda as the coordinator of the litter picking had stood down and nobody had come forward to volunteer from a request in the magazine and on the website. Cllr Sinclair was concerned that the litter in the village could soon get out of hand if this was not kept going. Cllr Manley expressed an interest in helping to keep this going. Cllr Sinclair undertook to contact the outgoing volunteer coordinator to ask for the details of the volunteers and what was involved in the coordination.

Action: Cllr Sinclair

11. Finance report to 30 September 2026. The Clerk presented the estimated receipts and payments for the first half of the 2026-27 financial year (1 April to 30 September 2026). It was noted this was an estimate only based on last statements up to 4 September 2026. Expenditure to date was below the income available proportionate for the time of year. Not every line of expenditure had been set a budget as yet. Cllr Holme would provide support to look at setting budgets to end of year and for the precept setting process.

Action: Clerk and Cllr Holme

The Clerk informed the PC that she had applied to NatWest to move to a free service Bankline Community account, for which the PC would meet the criteria, but had been refused as this is not open to the type of account already held and would only be available to new customers. Setting up

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the free online banking with the existing account would not be an option as there would be no appropriate controls in place. There is a chargeable Bankline product that would cost £20 a month and would provide real time management of finances, electronic payments etc but with appropriate controls. The PC resolved to proceed with this account given the urgency of this matter, but would then consider moving banks / re-applying to Natwest to move the PC to a Community Bankline account.

Action: Clerk

12. Planning

2026/1933/HSE two-storey extension in Bakers Lane

The PC resolved to support the application, subject to ensuring that neighbouring rights of way were honoured.

Action: Clerk

The PC noted a recent offer to add a planning applications page to the website free of charge. Some code would need to be added to the website. The PC resolved they would like to proceed with this. Cllr Holme noted that the CARO (Chilcompton Against Rural Over-development) group may wish to add this to their own website.

Action: Clerk

13. Matters for information and items for a future agenda

(i) Cllr Sinclair advised he and Cllrs Mattick and former Clerk Rigby had represented the PC at the Druid ceremony in memory of the late Cllr Richard Morgan, which was well attended.

(ii) The PC agreed to put on the November agenda consideration of installing a new bin on Abbey Road, as requested by SC Cllr Phripp due to the amount of litter along that road.

Action: Clerk

14. Date of next meeting: This was fixed for Wednesday 11th November 2026. Planning meeting Wednesday 28th October if any planning applications are received.

15. The PC resolved that, in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting (Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, s.1(2)).

16. Staffing: The PC resolved to ratify the terms of the Clerk's contract. The PC further ratified the basis of the Clerk's leave entitlement calculation. The PC also approved an increase in contracted hours from 35 to 40 per month from October 2026. The PC noted the Clerk's desire to opt in to the pension scheme. The Chair undertook to take the necessary steps with NEST.

Action: Cllr Pike

Close: The Chair closed the meeting at 9.15pm.

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