

WHITCHURCH VILLAGE COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH OF WHITCHURCH HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28th MAY 2026 IN THE WVCA HALL

Present: Cllrs: M Dury (Chair), S Bingham, S Bryant, R Chandler,
P O'Leary, V Perry.
Miss F Marshall (Clerk) & P May (District Councillor B&NES)

2026/01 INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Mark Dury-Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. He welcomed 4 members of the public and appreciated that they took time out to attend on an evening. Mark introduced himself as the new chair, he read a statement out thanking all for their continue support in making the village a better place. He addressed events such as the 70th Anniversary of the end of the second world war with beacon lighting and thanked the Scout Group for providing a BBQ he also thanked the local Legion as well as the Cricket Club for providing access to their club house. Mark is also pleased how the Christmas Lights switch on has become more popular and thanked all that helped to make the event run so smoothly last year. He wanted to thank Lee for his continued support in maintain the village keeping it neat and tidy and carrying out many works within the area. Other achievements were mentioned including new benches, the continued success of the playpark, flower displays and hanging baskets. Mark also addressed the massive changes over the past year. Firstly, Sue Dyer retired as the Clerk after 20 years of sterling service and he thanked her for her time spent at the Council. Francesca the new Clerk has now replaced her since November and has done brilliantly in her 6 months in the role where there has been so much to learn. In January Nick the existing chair retired after 6 years in seat he had done a fantastic job and has left the village in a much better place. Chair Nick resigned as he moved out of the village and onto new adventures. Also, in January Cllr P Orchard also resigned he also thanked Pat for her time especially when it came to planting. Then in May Assistant Clerk Jane Dury also retired after 6 years' service, Jane was also thanked. Mark advised that we have a new replacement for Jane starting in the next few weeks. Mark advised that it will undoubtedly be no different this year, especially when negotiating proposals for housing, but he is sure we will do the rights thing for the community. He would also like to thank District Councillor Paul May for all his help and support with trying to keep the Village a Village.

2026/02 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING 2nd APRIL 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd April 2024, were agreed and signed as a true record of the meeting by Mr M Dury - (Chair)

2026/03 CONFIRMATION OF OUTCOMES FROM THE WVC AGM HELD ON 6TH MAY 2026

Mark Dury-Chair advised that he has now been elected as the new chair for Whitchurch Village Council taking over from Nick who had done a great job helping the village in his time in seat. He will be sitting for a year as he has other projects in the pipeline so unable to commit any longer. He is pleased that Cllr P O'Leary will become Vice chair. Mark explained that the Sub committees for each individual areas will remain the same until we have managed to appoint 3 new councillors. Mark expressed his joy at being a village council and advised if anyone knows anyone that wants to become a councillor, he is happy to speak about his own experience and explain in detail what is to be expected of you.

2026/04 THE COUNCIL INVITES ALLOTMENT HOLDERS TO JOIN THIS INFORMAL CATCH-UP. OFFERING A RELAXED OPPUTUNITY TO DISCUSS THEIR EXPERINCES, SHARE FEEDBACK AND RAISE AND TOPICS THEY WISH IN REALTION TO THE ALLOTEMENTS.

Chair M Dury welcomed a member of the allotment holders and asked them for their feedback. The allotment holder asked if there was the possibility of adding netting to the bottom half of the cricket fencing to stop the issues with the Stag entering the site and destroying crops that allotment holders had spent money and time growing. They explained that this had been a big nuisance and was getting worse. The Councillors agreed that this can be done and we will investigate if this can be funded by Cil Money to cover the cost of the netting. Clerk Francesca to investigate further. The second issue was with access to the site for all those hold an allotment on the site as there is no direct access for any deliveries of soil etc. They must go through the main playpark which is not ideal. They asked if the area next to the park that is overgrown could be cleared and a second gate added with access to cars and extra parking as they currently must use the spaces provided for the park users which has limited parking times and also uses quite a lot of them up not leaving many free. The Council were unsure if this would be viable, but the Clerk will do some investigating and then the committee will investigate this further as some of the land may belong to the Cricket Club.

2026/045 UPDATE OF VILLAGE COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

The Chair gave an update on the progress the Village Council is making to help make the village a safer and better place to live and work.

Including the following: -

General Maintenance

The village is under continuous maintenance with grass cutting, hedge trimming and continued general upkeep of the Village. We will keep doing this to make sure the area looks as nice and presentable.

Cemetery Improvements

We are working with our maintenance man to improve the cemetery to its formal glory. The pavements that were falling into the grass areas have had new edging stones and the pavement repaired, this area will now be covered in topsoil and seeded. This has now made way for some more burial plots to be added to the site. We have also replaced the fence area that had broken and fallen so this is now stable. We will plant the mini roundabout in the centre to make good and the continued clearing of rubbish and fly tipping will be kept on top of as best as we can.

Continue with floral displays

Millennium Garden/planters/hanging baskets

Members of the Village Council and other volunteers plan to continue to maintain the Millennium Garden and the seven planters around the village. This will be done the first week in June. These are filled with seasonal plants and perennials to bring colour and vibrancy to the communal areas and are well received and commented on by residents.

The eight hanging baskets are planted by B&NES Nursery in Bath and paid for by the Village Council. They are planted up twice each year with a summer & winter/spring display. These are being replaced the first week in June also. The Chair thanked all the Councillors and other volunteers who help with the floral displays on a regular basis.

Playpark Improvements

The work that has been already completed in the playpark continues to be used a lot and seems to be a success. We still are in the process of looking into adding a wooden trail which we hope to complete by 2027.

Speed Indicators

These have become a welcome sight for villagers and seem to have had some impact on reducing speeding vehicles, although there seems to still be issues with the traffic coming from Bristol. We will keep an eye on this in the future.

2026/06 UPDATE FROM PAUL MAY DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr P May introduced himself and advised that he has not missed a meeting so far this year. He is proud of what Whitchurch Village Council do and says its lovely to be engaged with all involved and thanks them for the continued support towards himself also. Cllr May will continue to support the village as best as he can. He advised that the village originally didn't have a value and the village has previously been dominated by B&NES, He advised that previously they wouldn't do anything to help the village but now he has been on board things have changed. Paul is standing for his seat again and if successful will continue to do his best for the future of the village. Good news is that the crossing across the A38 to the playpark has been agreed and will be implemented hopefully now in September previously July. There is still a threat for development within the village as the housing numbers still need to be met and the status of Green Belt is no longer relevant in areas. 1000 houses on Horse world are in the pipeline and while landowners are willing to sell this continues to be a massive threat to the Village. Cllr Joel Hirst from strategic planning attended a meeting in the village with several village councillors and Paul and advised that he had no clue how these developments are not appropriate for the area. He will report back and liaise with Cllr May going forward. Paul also advised that fix my street will be using AI to help any issues and to improve the service.

2026/07POLICE REPORT

Clerk Francesca was unable to obtain a police report after several attempts and was eventually advised by the police to go online and have a look and the general report. Not ideal and she hopes to get someone who can possibly attend other meetings going forward.

2026/08 WHITCHURCH VILLAGE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION REPORT

Cllr S Bryant and Chair of the WVCA introduced herself and explained that she is now the new chair of the WVCA since November. Sharon explained that since taking over the role the hall has become fully compliant and now has the Fire Risk assessment signed off. They had issues with Asbestos which has now been cleared and no longer an issue. WVCA received CIL funding from WVC to get the hall safe and usable. The funds have been spent on replacing the radiators/windows and installing fire doors. The Village Council office is still left to do. Decorating should be starting in July for 3 weeks. Starting with the big hall and then the foyer and office. They are hopefully having fire retardant curtains made shortly. This then means most of the CIL monies are spent but the hall is now compliant.

2026/09 QUESTIONS AND ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None received.

Meeting Closed at 7.35p.m.