

Meeting:	CLAPHAM PARISH COUNCIL 21 st April 2026 at 7pm
Council Members in attendance:	Cllr. Phillipa Simms, Chair (PS) Cllr. Jacky Fraser (JF) Cllr. Sarah Walker, Vice Chair (SW) Cllr. Tamsin Bromley-Rahike (TBR) – in attendance for 30mins only Cllr. Michael Walmsley (MW) Cllr. Nigel Sparrow (NS) Cllr. Adrian Langley (AL) Cllr. Eric Cooper (EC) – late arrival Cllr. Chris Hardwick (CH) – appointed during this meeting
Apologies received:	Cllr John Reid (JR) Cllr. John Keech (JK) Cllr. Ian Gaskin (IG) Cllr. Allan Prudham (AP) Cllr. Charlie Tompkins (CT)
Non-attendance:	Cllr. James Petrides (JP)
Borough Council Member:	Borough Cllr. Jane Walker (JW) Borough Cllr. Jon Abbott (JA) – late arrival
Clerk to the Council:	Rosemary Plum (RP)
Public Attendance	1 x resident

MINUTES OF MEETING

1. Apologies for Absence

- I. PS advised that due to ongoing health concerns, AP will attend meetings when well enough.
- II. NS proposed sending best wishes card to AP. SW to arrange digital greetings. SW

2. Declarations of Interest

Declarations received from:

- EC allotment plot holder
- CH allotment holder
- PS Village Hall Chair

3. Co-Option of Councillor

- I. Resident Chris Hardwick put himself forward for cooption as Parish Councillor. This had been discussed at March 2026 Parish Council meeting.
- II. When asked by NS why CH wants to become a councillor, he replied he wants to be more involved in the parish and give back to the community. He further said he is not aware of specific relevant talents at this stage.

- III. NS reminded all of:
- a. the need to be mindful of the parish council meeting dates set annually. CH confirmed his availability.
 - b. The parish council is independent, non-political and therefore other than Borough Cllrs there is no involvement in politics and it's important to remember this.
 - c. All new Councillors are required to attend training event. RP to arrange. **RP**
- IV. EC supportive of CH joining the Parish Council and remarked on his sterling work for the support and diligence in getting involved with the resolution of the Fetlock Close village green. PS also added that CH was at the forefront of flood protection in times of emergency.
- PROPOSAL: To co-opt Chris Harwick to the position of Parish Councillor.
- PROPOSED: Cllr. Phillipa Simms
- SECONDED: Cllr. Sarah Walker
- VOTE: Unanimous

4. Open Forum

- I. JF advised that a resident is unhappy about another resident in Paddock Close who constantly has bonfires burning outdoors. JW confirmed people are allowed to burn domestic rubbish but if it is creating nuisance, the complainant should go report the matter online to the Borough Environmental Health team.
- II. EC – raised concern about a rough piece of track behind bus stop at the Fox & Hounds that presents danger to pedestrians walking to the Medical Centre. RP report to Borough. **RP**
- III. EC reported railway bridge near Folly Park covered in graffiti. RP ask Network Rail to clean. **RP**
- IV. EC – questioned the placement of green canvas along railings near properties at Glebe roundabout. Resident owns the land and believed to be protecting newly planted hedge.
- V. JW – Oakley Road resident has asked for removal of bus shelter from their side of the road because it's unsightly and nobody uses it. RP to look into improving the condition of the bus shelter. **RP**
- VI. Parish Council may consider getting a bus shelter cleaner as many shelters are unsightly. RP speak to Oakley Clerk for more details of the person they use. **RP**
- VII. EC advised that 420 native hedge saplings will be planted along FP14 by the Allotments Association.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes were agreed as a true reflection of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

PROPOSED: Cllr. Nigel Sparrow

SECONDED: Cllr. Michael Walmsley

6. Matters Arising from the Minutes (for information only)

Nothing to report.

7. Clerk's Report (for information only)

- RP has written to senior Borough portfolio holders, Highways managers and Local Police formally requesting support in resolving the traffic speeding issues in Green Lane and parking issues across the Parish.
- Suitable solutions and costs requested from Borough with regard to the corner of The Close where unlawful parking on grass verge continues to be a problem.
- Soakaway and road resurfacing through the allotments completed to schedule and stakeholders are very pleased with the work. Nearby residents have thanked the Parish Council.
- High Street/Riverside Gardens kerb line to be swept and gullies cleansed on Tuesday 21st April between the hours of 09.00 – 15.30. A letter to residents will be posted on Friday and parking notices will also be placed along the highway between Motorhouse and 105 High Street. It is hoped residents will comply, especially the garage in order to achieve a successful outcome.
- National Keep Britain Tidy national Dog fouling campaign. Councillors agreed to the purchase of national marketing kit. NS noted we continue to witness issues with people not picking up dog excrement in Green Lane.
- £100 donation received towards new defibrillator to be sited outside the Village Hall plus promise of donation from another resident and Football Club intention to fundraise.
- Envco minutes corrected to show JF as in attendance
- Assist Clerk has started her role of 20hrs per week and will be available all day Monday and Tuesday and until 1pm on Wednesdays. Key responsibilities for the role includes Burials, planning, parking, correspondence list.

8. Police Matters

a) Crime Figures

Report circulated prior to meeting.

I. **Borough Council Report**

- II. New GP surgeries approved for Wixams, Great Barford and Wooton and will be funded by ICB East and developers.
- III. Queens Bridge, Bedford being demolished. New bridge going through consultation and will be designed by communities either side of river. Expected to take 1 year without a temporary bridge being put in place.
- IV. New government planning guidance calls for developers submitting planning application for 151+ houses, even if Borough Council intend to refuse, to automatically submit the application to the Secretary of State for determination, without going to Inspectors.
- V. Changes in legislation means reduction in number of planning applications allowed to be called into Local Borough Planning Committee.

- VI. Timetable for Borough Local Plan 2050 has been published. This means Parish Council should have a say on where local housing may be situated and may add weight to NDP when aligned with Borough Local Plan. Expected completion 2029.
- VII. Borough planning department is receiving large number of speculative development applications.
- VIII. Support now available for 549 Bedford Borough residents requiring domestic heating oil but only for people on income support or low incomes.
- IX. Household Support grant no longer available. Childrens' Services have got a holidays activities and food scheme, children need to be registered and it will provide free hot meal during school holidays.
- X. Council has let their part of the Beales building which has been tidied up. Expected to be used as a dance studio.
- XI. Adult and Childrens' Services – huge amount of money spent and undergoing review to transform the system to best value.
- XII. Food waste collection – few teething issues. Borough doesn't benefit financially from the scheme which has been implemented for environmental adherence. Scheme is funded by the Government for this year only.
- XIII. Ward Councillor funding will be reinstated but vastly reduced.

9. Environment Committee

a) Report from meeting 14th April 2026

- I. Report circulated prior to meeting.
- II. Litter picking – cubs have been out twice in the last month and very well received around the village with specific areas of bad littering being targeted. This offers community aspect for cubs who are very happy to continue.
- III. Low levels of dog fouling noted and overall condition of streets is generally quite good compared to recent years. FP14 is good and other target areas including playing field are doing a lot better. Keep Britain Tidy dog fouling campaign is a good thing to adhere to.
- IV. NS called for further discussion about land in front of AWA, next to Tesco Supermarket. Envco wants to look into how we can tidy and beautify it to make it a focal point in the centre of the village. Need to ascertain who owns the land within the fenced off area.

b) Emergency Flood Group & Plan – Update

- I. RP has drafted and circulated new plan.
- II. Need to recruit new members to the Group – RP drafting introductory letter to 'recruit' volunteers.

10. East West Rail

a) Update

- I. Round of public consultations underway at the present time and this will be the last opportunity to comment/engage. Consultation

opportunities are now considerably reduced. Details available online with interactive map. Cllrs. Urged to view and feedback comments to EC/PS/SW.

- II. Secondary access for HGV construction is potentially via Green Lane.
- III. BeFare Group has a meeting on 7th May.
- IV. Parish Council calling for tunnel and EWR have produced document saying its feasible but they are not prepared to put it in place. Meeting with Parish Council proposed for end of April to discuss further. RP to circulate document.
- V. Important for Parish Council to submit response as part of consultation before 9th June closure date. Parish Council to hold an event in Clapham to give residents opportunity to ask questions and see drawings. EC/SW/PS will continue to liaise between meetings to keep continuity and inform the response document.
- VI. CT thinks the route and design has now been confirmed with only finer details still to be clarified. What's more alarming is the lack of a tunnel, the thought of using Green Lane for access and we need to concentrate on these key points. Green Lane is already outdated and cannot wholly unsuitable for construction traffic.
- VII. RP to circulate tunnel paper and link to consultation. RP
- VIII. Mayor of Bedford and Borough Cllr. Nicky Gribble met Government Ministers last week with updates expected later this week. They are keen for Borough to support any Parish consultation response.
- IX. EC called for names of suitable experts able to support the Parish Council with advice.
- X. Parish Councillors want to know if EWR have considered any alternative for the proposed Green Lane traffic access which, for the Parish Council, is a red line. Councillors feel there is no reason for traffic through Green Lane as other access routes are being created near Carriage Drive.

11. Planning Committee

a) Update - validations & decisions

- I. Report circulated prior to meeting.
- II. Additional updates since the report was circulated include: The Baulk, Spriggs Close, Bellini Restaurant site.

b) NDP update

- I. Still out for public consultation without any overwhelming interest in responding from local residents.
- II. SW will draft a consultation report for submission to the Borough. SW

12. Communication

a) Updates

- I. Overall around 70 young people have attended the latest term of the Youth Club with several new young people joining the group and

some of the original members of Clapham youth club bringing along friends.

- II. The members have recently produced brilliant work as part of the Young Voices of Bedford – Community Safety and Belonging media project. They've also taken part in photography and printed art workshops and had a visit from the Police Education & Diversion Team, with a film focusing on criminal exploitation and county lines.
- III. They are enjoying opportunities to try new skills, be creative, and talk openly about safety within their local community.

13. Allotment Committee

a) Update

- i. Nothing to report as no meeting in April.
- ii. EC has stepped down from Allotment Association Cttee and also from the Parish Council Allotments Cttee.

14. Burial Ground

a) Update

- I. RP drafting Cemetery Memorial and Grounds Inspection Policy and Green Lane Cemetery Rules and Regulations
- II. In accordance with Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management, we will be arranging site inspections for any breaches of terms and conditions of burials.
- III. ICCM providing training on legislation and legal aspects of approaching plot holders or their relatives.

15. Highways & Footpaths

a) Update

- I. The Close – grasscrete can be put in place but doesn't mean this becomes a designated parking area. If traffic wardens are in the area or called out, it will still be considered parking on the grass verge where there are double yellow lines on the road and a parking ticket will be issued. Adding grass crete to tidy up the verge cannot create parking spaces where there are already double yellow lines. Residents have already expressed concern about reduction for visibility for drivers from cars being parked on the verge in future. RP awaiting costs from Borough.
- II. AP has renewed request for speed monitoring and controls in Highbury Grove after an accident between a bus and motorbike driven by a DVLA examiner.

RP

16. Village Hall

a) Update

- I. Newly introduced quiz night was very well received and raised £400 towards Village Hall and Football Club maintenance costs. Next event 1st May.
- II. Donations for prizes welcomed

- III. £5k grant secured from Harpur Trust for completion of interior works.

17. Finance

a) Payment of Accounts

Accounts to be ratified were circulated to members prior to the meeting.

PROPOSED: Cllr. Sarah Walker

SECONDED: Cllr. James Petrides

18. Correspondence

- I. Resident has requested maintenance and repairs for base of the Cody Road Bus Shelter. *"This stop is heavily used and should be of the same standard as all other bus shelters in the village. During the winter months passengers have to stand in mud to shelter from the rain and during the summer months they have to share the shelter with bees which nest underground. We have reported the bee situation to the Borough Council who have previously attended but apparently have no responsibility to provide a concrete or slabbed base. Could something please be done with the base of the Cody Road Bus Shelter. This stop is heavily used and should be of the same standard as all other bus shelters in the village."* RP
- II. Resident: *"I wanted to bring to your attention an issue we've been experiencing with a tree located outside our designated car parking area which I understand is under the council's responsibility. Although the tree itself does not belong to us, it has become significantly overgrown and is now extending over our fence. As a result, branches are hanging directly over my vehicle, and it's causing ongoing problems. There is a constant fall of leaves, sap, and other debris, which is not only messy but has also started to stain and potentially damage the surface of my car. I would really appreciate it if this could be looked into and the necessary maintenance carried out to trim the overhanging branches. It would help prevent further inconvenience and potential damage. Please let me know if you need any further information from me."* RP

19. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 19th May 2026 - Annual Parish Meeting and Annual General Meeting in the Methodist Church Hall

The meeting was closed by the Chair at 21.01hrs.

Signed as a true reflection of the meeting:

Signed	
Dated	19 th May 2026

Chair