

CHACOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Notes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on **Monday 13th April 2026** at **7pm** in Chacombe Village Hall.

21 members of the public Cllr Taylor (PC Chairman), Cllr Tustian, Cllr Merrow-Smith, Cllr Jenkins, and Parish Clerk.

1. Welcome and apologies – Cllr Taylor welcomed those in attendance to the meeting and noted this is the highest attendance level at an APM for some time.
2. Report from Parish Council Chairman

This year has been a relatively stable year for Chacombe Parish Council. Due to the natural 4-year election cycle for Councils in England, all Councillors' roles finished at the end of Apr 2025. The good news was that the majority of our Councillors chose to stand again and were duly re-elected into post on May 1st. At the time, we thanked Colin Lester for his time with the Council and also welcomed our newest Councillor, Pete Merrow-Smith who joined our merry band at election time. Pete moved into the village a couple of years ago and brings a fresh set of eyes and experiences to the table. It is great that he is keen to get involved in our community. This is demonstrated by the fact he has recently taken on the PC/Village Hall liaison role and has been a great addition to the PC. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our current Council team, Brendan, Chris, Faye, Pete, Robert, and our dedicated clerk, Kirsty, for all their efforts in supporting me and the Village over the course of the last year. We have lots of things going on and it is great to see particular individuals taking a lead where their knowledge and experience can be of benefit.

Again this year, we have been indebted to Councillor Faye Wright and her expertise in Planning to lead our responses to the various planning applications that have come up during the year. Of particular note has been the Reg 18 Consultation on WNC's Local Plan and her experience in compiling our response has been invaluable. Councillor Chris Williams also shares his expertise by continuing as our IT/website champion. Over the last couple of years, he has integrated both the VH and BCCT content into the website, (we are keen to include further village content too), and has recently built the village events calendar which we are keen to populate for the benefit of all.

The ongoing frustration with Highways about the speed of traffic in the village continued throughout the year. We are still awaiting a visit from a WNC Councillor to give the official 'green light' for an 'advisory 20mph scheme' from WNC. As has been stated many times before, all villagers can do their bit by driving at low speeds in order to protect our friends and families walking to the pub, allotments, school and other village amenities. Stay vigilant and stay safe.

On the health and safety theme, the good news is that our two defibrillators, located in the centre of the Village on 'The Ring', next to the Parish Council Noticeboard and at the School, have not had to be used this year. They are checked regularly by Councillors Wright and Williams to ensure that they are in good working order should an emergency situation ever arise. The Council have also recently held defibrillator and basic first aid training for Villagers, in conjunction with our local branch of St John's Ambulance. Their regional lead, Keir Stopps, who is becoming a 'friend of Chacombe' having attended various events previously, such as the Coronation party and our annual fireworks, led the session for an hour or two. This concluded with a Q&A which all of the 15 attendees found very informative and worthwhile. The PC are more than happy to arrange further sessions if there is more interest from other residents. Please let us know if interested.

Along with the defibrillators, all of our Assets, such as lampposts, benches, bins etc. have been inspected quarterly to help us keep track of their condition throughout the year. Thanks to Andy, Chris and Faye for doing these necessary checks. Any remedial work required has then been actioned accordingly. We did have an incident back in the Autumn of 2024, when the bus stop on Thorpe Road near the George & Dragon had a lorry reverse into it and was destroyed. There have been prolonged discussions with WNC, Stagecoach and the lorry's company, to arrange a replacement. This is still in progress as the wheels of WNC, and the insurers don't turn very quickly, particularly when buses are involved!! We have also had some challenges with our dog poo bin contractor this year. Several residents were quick to point out when the bins had not been emptied and in some places were overflowing. We contacted the contractor and gave them a chance to improve the service. Unfortunately, as a consequence of the service continuing to be below the standards required for a couple of months, we terminated the contract and have taken on a new contractor from February this year. To date their service has been fine. Hopefully this will continue for the foreseeable future but we will be monitoring the bins on a regular basis.

The PC have had somewhat more success in engaging with WNC in the wake of the flooding experienced by several Chacombe residents during Storm Bert. back in Nov 2024. The key action taken was to get the WNC flood team engaged with the village. In Dec 2025 they published their official report and have identified various ongoing actions for key stakeholders. One of which is the WNC Highways team who have now identified the drains, ditches and culverts that need attention and are implementing a programme of clearing accordingly. WNC have also written to other local landowners in the vicinity about their responsibilities in keeping drainage channels clear with regular maintenance. All Councillors thoughts are with our villagers who have been, and still are, affected by this event and with on-going liaison with WNC flood team and others, will do what we can to help prevent future storms triggering such a damaging event.

The PC would also like to give a big 'Thank You' to all others who give their time to help the village and whose work isn't always recognised. Jeff Annells, who has been our Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator and Police Liaison contact for several years, chose to step down from the roles in Oct. On behalf of all residents, the Council thank him for all he has done. These have now been taken on by recent arrival to the village, Brian Riddell, and our thanks to him for taking up the baton

from Jeff. Elsewhere, John Roulstone has been our Footpath Warden and Ian Eames has again taken on the unenviable task of emptying the bins around the village. Our thanks to them too.

During the dark months, CS&SC again delighted us all with the fireworks display and the Christmas Float which are the envy of many other local villages. As a Parish Council we are always looking to support villagers' activities and provide services and benefits to the village. So, if villagers have any event ideas, proposed village improvements and/or want to raise any issues or concerns where you may need our support, please do use Public Time at the Parish Council meeting, held on the first Monday in the month, unless a Bank Holiday, to speak to us directly. The agenda is published on the Parish Council website, the village notice board and in the Chacombe Chimes as well. If you would also like to get more involved and are considering becoming a councillor, please do get in touch. Your contribution would always be valued.

Finally, a big thank you from The Parish Council to all the other groups that are active in the Village, many of whose Annual Reports are available now too. It's great to live in such a close and friendly, village community, something that we should all cherish and protect.

Andrew Taylor
Chairman

3. Reports from other village organisations

CHACOMBE WI

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 13.04.25

We currently have 17 members and are always looking to welcome new members to the group. Why not join us for one of our advertised Open Meetings which afford villagers, including men, the opportunity to join us to listen to the speaker and stay for refreshments. Starting this month, these will be held at Chacombe Park as they have kindly offered us the use of their newly refurbished activities room for our Open Meetings.

This year they include:

The Secret Life of a Medieval Nun on 16th April

African Marimbas, Listen and Play on 18th June

The Life of a Film and TV Extra in Retirement 17th September

If there we have spaces on craft evenings where numbers are limited, these are also offered to the village to prebook a place. The Painting lesson each January with Barry Whitehouse from the Artery is always popular.

We continue to get involved in community projects and have recently knitted poppies for the winter refurbishment of the Standing with Giants exhibition to be relaunched this month. Chacombe WI also continue to plant and maintain the Elms Mental Health Hospital garden at the front of the building and some of the funds raised at the Plant Sale on 9th May will provide this year's funding.

Hilary Maggs
Chacombe WI

CHACOMBE CHIMES
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 13.04.25

The Chimes is a non-profit making village newsletter run by volunteers set up to keep the village informed. We raise money from advertising and donations and are very grateful to the Parish Council for continuing to fund the remainder of the printing costs.

Thank you to the correspondents in the village organisations for their regular input into the Chimes and out delivery team who get the newsletter out to every house in the village each month.

Anyone can contribute to the Chimes so we are always looking for villagers to send in articles of challenges and achievements for us to include or maybe you have an experience you wish to share.

We are pleased to have seen an increase in advertisers this year and together with grant money we applied previously this has enabled us to reduce the funds requested from the Parish Council for the 2025/26 year. However, some of these adverts are one offs or for a few months so we are always looking for new advertisers to come on board. If you have a business or work for a company you think would be interested in advertising in the Chimes, please put them in touch with the Editor. Adverts for quarter page start at £5.50.

Hilary Maggs
Chacombe Chimes

Berry Close Charitable Trust
Report for Annual Parish Meeting 13th April 2026

This year has been a relatively quiet one for BCCT as our Committee has remained the same throughout. Thanks to Dominic and Felicity for performing their Secretarial and Treasurer roles so effectively. However, a few of our Trustees, have stepped down from their official roles, namely Geoff Jones, Stephen Large and Sue Shepard. They all remain in and around the village and are available to lend a guiding hand if and when necessary. Many thanks to them for their hard efforts in keeping Berry Close in great condition throughout their time as Trustees.

However, the Parish Council continue to kindly cover the remaining gap in leadership, with Andy Taylor, performing the role of 'Acting Chairman'. There is still officially a vacancy in the Chair and we would be delighted if any existing Trustee, Member or any other Villager would be interested in taking on the role either now or in the short/medium-term future.

Berry Close remains at the heart of Chacombe's community, as it provides the venue for various village events. It has been used as a car park for funeral guests attending the church, a rounders field during the CS&SC Summer Party and as a launch pad for the fantastic Fireworks display, again organised by the CS&SC back in November.

Aside from these feature events, it has been lovely to see so many villagers, and visitors, using Berry Close day-to-day. With the field, the wood, the Leat and meadow areas, Berry Close provides such a lovely variety of spaces for whatever you fancy doing, be it walking dogs or just stretching your legs, having some family fun or finding quiet contemplation. With these users in mind, we have recently had some tree work done in March in the Bennetts Wood part of the Close. Many of you who have been down there since will have seen the great work done by Giles and his tree surgery team who have not only thinned out the coppiced area and chipped the felled trees, but have also spread the chippings on the paths, thus saving our next 'Working Party' a significant job in May (w/e of 16th -17th). We would encourage any villagers to use the Close whenever you want to, but in doing so please respect the area, and other users, by picking up any litter or dog mess, putting it in the bins provided and generally leaving the area as you found it for others to enjoy too.

Finally, votes of thanks go all members, Trustees and the Parish Council for their continued support of BCCT and to all those who give time to the periodic working parties organised in the spring/autumn to keep it in a condition that is safe for all to enjoy.

Andy Taylor
BCCT Acting Chairman – April 2026

Allotment Association

Generally a fairly quiet year. End of 2024 the allotment was flooded along with many houses in the village. Tree cutting and ditch clearing took place on the allotment by members in the early new year.

Was a break in with a rotavator and some petrol stolen. Cut through the dummy security camera, also broke into abutting gardens and stole from sheds. Police were informed and crime numbers issued but nothing came of it. Committee members appreciate there is little that can be done but are advised not to leave valuable items on the allotments. Second time in two years.

At time of AGM with the parish council all plots were taken, however, we have just had one half plot become available.

Chacombe Sports and Social Club provided a verbal report.

Village Group: The Betty Cameron Playfield, Chacombe

Representatives Present: Chair: Chris Shore

Treasurer: Phil Shore

The Betty Cameron Playfield was invited to join the APM to give a brief overview of our responsibilities.

The BCP is currently run by only 2 active Trustees, Chris Shore and Phil Short.

Maintaining and financing the playfield is our main concern due to low numbers of regular volunteers. Mowing for the past year was mainly done by Bruce Maggs who kindly offered his spare

time to undertake the weekly/fortnightly job during the growing season, and the litter bins were empty weekly/fortnightly by Chris Shore.

Maintenance of the park equipment is mainly done by Chris Shore for small jobs but expert help is brought in for larger jobs, where possible we have been able to find volunteer assistance from people with the relevant skills within the village of Chacombe.

Phil Short keeps a record of yearly accounts and makes sure all relevant outgoing payments are up to date. Phil has also recently moved the BCP bank account to the Co-Op bank as our previous bank, Lloyd were unable to support our requirements any further.

We do have an annual general tidy up of the park which we have been successful with attracting volunteers from within Chacombe to support us with. We also run the glowstick stall at Chacombe fire works night which brings in approx. £100 per year. We currently have around £2500 in our bank account with annual costs approximately £800 – £1000. For larger repairs or installation of new equipment we try to apply for funding from larger organisations, this has been successful in the past, but we find it very hard to find funding for annual running costs. For this reason, we would be very open to the possibility of joining as part of a larger village group, possibly Chacombe Village Hall so that annual running costs for things like mowing can financially be undertaken by a larger group with close support from Chacombe Parish Council. To explore this further we had supplied Andy Taylor with a copy of the conveyance and deeds of appointment for The Betty Cameron Playing Field Trust, and we will meet up with the Andy Taylor and members of the Village Hall committee on the 7th May 2026 for further discussions.

Chacombe Village Hall Chairman gave a verbal report.

Church Handbell Ringers

The Chacombe Handbell Team meet every Wednesday 630pm to 8pm during term time at the Chacombe village hall. There are 9 of us in the team and Ruth Hatherell leads us. We are a very active team and do concerts at Christmas in the village church and Methodist chapel as well as play in the local care homes. We also play to Musical Memories, Lark Rise care home and Chacombe Park during the year. We would love more people to join us. It is not necessary to read music! We are a friendly group and have lots of fun. If you are interested Please contact Jacquy Randles jarandles@btinternet.com

Church Bell Ringers

The Chacombe Church bellringers usually meet every second Thursday in the month but this is flexible as we have to accommodate ringers commitments. There are six bells and we have about seven or eight ringers but only three are from the village so anyone interested in learning the skills of ringing will be very welcome to join us. Ringing bells is a very rewarding hobby and is great fun. Apart from practising on a Thursday we are often asked to ring for weddings which is very rewarding and also for Church Services. If you are interested and would like to 'have a go' please do not hesitate in contacting Rosemary Steel on 077457 83336.

4. Any other issues parishioners wish to discuss

Discussions were held regarding how to find out what events people in the parish want to continue and would support, and how to get more volunteers involved in organising the activities as at the moment it seems to be the same groups of people taking on the roles in numerous groups. It was suggested that the village calendar be updated to include all events and then a QR code showing people how to get to the calendar to see what is on for the next 3 months could be helpful. The PC will look into this along with considering what are the best methods of communication within the village.

Meeting closed @ 8:25pm