

CHARSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH

Minutes of Meeting Held on Tuesday, 19th May 2025

Present: Councillors Pedgrift (Chair), Moor (Vice Chair) on the phone, Haird, Youngman, Rixon and Viviane Ward (Clerk) /Pam Hembra (supporting Clerk during handover)

Attendees: 1 Member of the Public

Apologies: Councillor Crone, District Councillor Dan Cleary

		Action
1.	Update on the Parish Council's achievements and activity over the year and on what is being proposed for 2025/2026. Chairman's Report attached below Send on Friends of Charsfield	Clerk
2.	To approve the Annual Parish Minutes of 7th May 2024. The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.	
3.	To Receive Reports from Other Organisations. Village Hall AGM Report attached below Charsfield Recreation Ground AGM Report attached below	
4.	Open Forum for the Public to Raise Questions There were no questions from the public.	
	Finished 19:20	

REPORTS

Charsfield Parish Council – 19th May 2025 from Jan Pedgrift – see below

Charsfield Village hall AGM – 28th October 2024 - see below

Charsfield Recreation report - 22nd November 2024 – see below

Parish Council's achievements and activity over the year 2024/25 – Jan Pedgrift (Chair)

It has been rather a challenging year and at times very difficult to progress the issues close to the village's heart. However we keep plugging away at the powers that be on your behalf.

A representative from the Parish Council regularly attends the Community Partnership meetings for our area to promote the profile of Charsfield. This is an important forum for funding and policy making and essential in giving the smaller villages a voice.

We are also represented on the East Suffolk Planning Alliance – a relatively new organisation working closely with East Suffolk Council on future planning policy for Suffolk.

The aftermath of Storm Babet has initiated a long-term project to protect Charsfield from future danger of flooding affecting the whole village. Our thanks to Steve Moor and the Charsfield Flood Action Group who have worked incredibly hard to provide the Leading Flood Authority with information for the S19 report. Now the Parish Council and the CFAG are committed to holding the authorities to account to fulfil all the recommendations.

The Emergency Plan has been completely revised and should be ready for publication soon.

Road Safety is always a hot topic and following our survey last year several measures were put in place to address the concerns that were raised. The Parish council asked pupils at Charsfield Primary School to design signage to help alleviate the traffic problems in their vicinity. The results will shortly be exhibited in the telephone kiosk and we hope to have the new road signs erected later this year.

We were granted £34,000 to run a feasibility study into our Community Energy Project thanks to John Collins and his group for all the hard work completing the application. Hopefully work on this will start shortly when the funds are received.

The owner of The Three Horseshoes has advised us that he intends to put the pub up for auction in September at a reserve of £250,000. It is still the ultimate aim of the parish council that the pub is brought back to life but this is proving increasingly difficult.

The Public Space Protection Order requiring owners to keep their dogs on a lead on Charsfield Recreation Ground was renewed by East Suffolk District Council for a further three years.

We are indebted to Garry Stratton who has devoted hours to the village website and the Friends of Charsfield email list and always responds to my (and Pam's) frantic phone calls. He is working closely with our new Clerk to revitalise the current system.

Peter Clitheroe has continued to test the water quality of Potsford Brook on behalf of Deben Climate Centre and provide a report to the parish council. We are extremely thankful for the time and effort he devotes to this project.

The telephone kiosk project was finally completed and a grand opening in October was followed by a very successful community day in the village hall with a mix of generation enjoying the events.

The Blythe Meadow residential development finally got under way this year and the Parish Council is building relationships with Hartog Hutton to understand plans and discuss any issues that might arise over the new build.

Thank you to our village historian, John Fox, who has provided exhibits for functions in the village hall this year and a fascinating commentary of his interviews with Bernard Catchpole for our VE Day celebrations. Look out for future displays in the telephone kiosk and various sites in the village.

Thanks also to Charsfield Village Hall Management Committee for running the hall for the village efficiently and a special mention to Angela Farmer for keeping the grounds so beautifully and her weekly litter pick round the roads of Charsfield.

I would like to thank Pam and Viviane and all my fellow councillors for their hard work and support during the last year.

We await with interest the result of devolution and how it will affect parish councils – 2026 will be a very interesting year but I leave my post confident your new council will continue to fight your corner.



Charsfield Village Hall

Minutes of Charsfield Village Hall Annual General Meeting

Monday, 28th October 2024

Present: Trevor Boyd, Chris Haird, Pam Hembra (PJH), Garry Stratton, Viviane Ward, Peter Holloway, Pauline Llewellyn, Martin Lyne

Members of the Public: Jan Pedgrift, Lynn Miller, Nigel Creasey-Smith

1. Apologies for Absence

Nikki Hind, Liz Holland, Amanda Little,

2. Minutes of Last AGM dated 19th October 2023

signed as a correct record by Trevor Boyd

3. Chairman's Report – see below –

Received and approved with thanks and thanks to Trevor Boyd

4. Treasurer's Report – see below and attached

Received with thanks – approved by all with thanks to Chris Haird

5. Other Reports

Technology – see below – received and approved

Hall Hire – see below – received and approved

Bar Report – Hope to transfer back to Amanda soon

General Maintenance – see below – received and approved

Vicarage garden will lop low hanging branches

6. Election of Committee

The Committee stood down.

The following were the nominees to the Village Hall Management Committee:

Chris Haird
Peter Holloway
Martin Lyne
Viviane Ward
Liz Holland
Trevor Boyd

Pam Hembra
Pauline Llewellyn
Garry Stratton
Amanda Little
Nikki Hind

All were approved and agreed and will continue in their current roles

Trevor Boyd was nominated as Chair of the Village Hall Management Committee.

Margaret Salter – non-voting member – co-opted

7. Any Other Business

- Concern has been expressed that the hedge of trees between the Village Hall and 1 St Peter's Close was overgrowing onto the car park. It was recognised that, of primary importance, the trees must not be pruned back to an extent that may harm or disfigure. Nigel Creasey-Smith explained that he engaged Mark Runnacles to maintain the trees, next in Sept 2025. The committee agreed that the decision on judicious trimming back should be left to the professional discretion of Mark Runnacles.
- Fire door difficult to shut
- The Parish Council would like to thank the Village Hall Management Committee for their care and maintenance of the hall.

Chair Report for Charsfield Village Hall AGM - 28th October 2024 - Trevor Boyd

I am pleased to be able to report that hall activity and bar participation is thriving and continuing to be enjoyed by the village community including many of our new inhabitants. I note that the hall bookings and bar patronage are up for the year by some twenty per cent, exceeding all previous years and without any increase in prices. Only with the commitment and enthusiasm of all of the committee and the assistance of others has this been possible.

We are grateful to our regular users Cotton Club, Pilates, Stretch & Tone, Bowling Club, W.I., Rec. Ground. They are much appreciated. Other bookings have ranged from Minecraft Holiday sessions to Antiques Valuation. Thank you to Viviane and Nikki for managing and increasing the bookings, handling publicity and looking after the hall. As usual, we have been pleased to host various village social occasions. Peter organised another sold-out band night and the annual CADS show was packed with full houses raising substantial charity donations.

The Friday night community bar has become a regular fortnightly date in the diary and a meeting place for the village. Thanks to Margaret and her dedicated team of volunteers without whom we could not successfully run the bar. Amanda unfortunately has had to take leave from running & keeping the bar stocked and we hope to see her back fully fit before long. Meanwhile Chris and I have been holding the fort. Thanks to Liz for doing the annual stock take. We were pleased to provide, for the first time, a CharsBar stall at CharsFest this year. We are, of course, conscious not to become reliant on the community bar income should the Three Horseshoes re-open.

Garry has kept our I.T. facilities in order including maintenance of the hall website, having fully integrated it with the Charsfield website, and has recently installed broadband Wifi connectivity throughout, bringing our facilities now very much up-to-date with a more advanced capability than the majority of halls. Peter, as usual, has attended to various maintenance tasks on the hall structure, sometimes with the help of village volunteers which is much appreciated. Thank you to Martin for maintaining our various contracts. You can see from Chris' financial report that our finances are in good order with a satisfactory operating surplus. We are constantly maintaining and improving the hall and annually check that operational risk and safety issues are recognised and managed.

We value Pauline's contributions on the Committee. A special mention goes to Angela for taking excellent care of the hall garden. It always looks great. Finally, I am indebted to Pam as secretary who, along with the rest of the team, makes my role an easy one. We look forward to continuing to support village social activities and enhancing the use of the hall.

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Charsfield Village Hall Year End Accounts 2023/2024

In summary:

	31/07/24	Prior Year
Income	£12,805	£9,382
Expenditure	£10,449	£9,504

Excess income for period	£2,356	(£122)
Excess income less Grants	£2,356	(£122)
Project / Capital expenditure	£2,217	£1,570
Excess operating income for period	£4,573	£1,447
Barclays Bank	£43,389	£40,940
Petty Cash	£309	£402
Bar Stock	£1,218	£835

As a result of some very hard work by the Committee this year the financial situation of the Village Hall has once again improved. The team have grown the Hall usage including family events and innovatively encouraged more Bar attendees resulting in the income received from hiring of the Hall and the Bar takings exceeding all previous years and this is without any Hall Hire or Bar price increases since April 2022, which suggests the team have also absorbed an inflationary cost rise of approximately 10% over the last 2 years.

Due to our status and size, we prepare "receipts and payments" accounts which show that we have an excess income for the year and if we remove the project/capital spend we made an overall operating surplus of £4,573. However, due to timings, two regulatory invoices were not received in time and there was a notable respite in terms of the maintenance costs even with the increased Hall usage, normally c£1,000 pa hence a more realistic operating surplus would be £3,270, having covered our annual running costs of approximately c£6,000.

This year's projects included refinishing of the Main Hall floor and a significant upgrade of the Wifi c£2200 along with the repainting of the front & back doors which was kindly completed pro-bono by a generous villager, thank you. We will continue to work through the agreed multi-year project list and deal with surprises as necessary which includes the hot water heater having to be replaced in August.

It is very important to the Committee that the Village Hall remains both affordable and is regularly used by our Community at all times of the day and week. We are also focused on reducing our reliance on bar receipts, which is an important step, as we are committed to closing the regular Community bar when/if the Three Horseshoes re-opens so that we do not negatively impact their cashflow. We are also very conscious of the forthcoming budget and the impact that may have on the cost of living and government mandated fees, licences and certifications which we are required to hold. We will continue to run Community bars on a regular basis and also invest in core projects which enhance the usage of the Hall.

Marketing and Hall Hire – Viviane Ward

Village hall hirings have gone well this year. We are often complimented on how nice the hall is - the floor has made a difference and Nikki keeps it lovely and clean. We have had two elections this year - one for the police commissioner and another for the general election. This has been a welcome addition to our income. The newcomers from last year have continued, which is a good sign - Stretch and Tone/Yin Yoga and Minecraft holiday session for kids. CADS was held again this year, which also provides a good contribution to hiring. The regular hirings and events have continued e.g. Pilates, WI, Bowling Club, Cotton Club and Flower Show. We are continuing to advertise in the Parish Magazine. The main challenge now is to maintain hirings, plus explore day time hirings when the hall is largely empty.

Technology Report

Stage Lighting

The Village Hall is served by a sophisticated stage lighting system, which continues to be used successfully for performances and events. There is good coverage for support in using the system, with no operational issues during the past year.

Website

The Village Hall website is running smoothly with no issues reported.

It is planned to harmonise the look and feel with the Charsfield Village website. This has been agreed in principle and an estimate received for the work. This would have no impact on the functioning of either website and we would retain both the charsfieldvillagehall.org.uk and charsfield.org.uk domains.

Data Management

Many Village Hall documents are stored electronically in secure Google Drive folders.

There are no current operational issues.

Wi-Fi and Data

The Wi-Fi and broadband service was originally configured for the hall automations and to provide limited internet access. Expectations and demand for online access have continued to increase, along with the need for a robust broadband connection for cashless payment. To meet this need, a wired broadband connection and new Wi-Fi equipment have been installed, along with a new service contract. This will provide a faster, more reliable broadband connection and improved Wi-Fi coverage in the hall. The new service has been in place for three months and has proved reliable.

Automations

Automations are in place that enable remote monitoring and control of heating and lighting, as well as equipment such as the bar fridges. While not always intuitive, these systems generally work well.

There has been one instance of the Hive heating control system reporting a communication error. This was resolved following support from Hive.

Sound System

A simple two channel stereo amplifier is available for the playing of music and use of a microphone. This equipment continues to meet the requirements for, eg background music for the Community Bar and other events, and basic public address.

Where higher specification sound equipment is required, eg for performances, discos etc, this is been provided by the performers or hirers.

An apparently random noise has been experienced very occasionally when using the microphone. This continues to be monitored, but cannot be reproduced during testing. Apart from this, no issues have been reported with the sound system during the year.

Garry Stratton
10 October 2024

Maintenance Report – Peter Holloway

Both annual fire and boiler checks are up to date although the boiler engineer had to return to fit new boiler parts. Leaking taps in the ladies toilet have fixed. Replacement of the water heater in the kitchen has been completed although this incurred some extra electrical wiring.

Thanks to Ian Miller for painting the kitchen door. We need to be aware of essential paint work we should consider outside next year.

A section of one of the shed floors needs replacing.

The weeds on the patio and surrounding area were trimmed and Trevor has made a great job power washing the slabs. We also cleaned out the debris from the gutters caused by the overhanging branches from the neighbouring trees and removed some of the lower branches. Nuisance from the over hanging tree debris continues to be a big problem?

Charsfield Recreation Ground Committee Chair's report for the Year 2023-24

Summary

1. Introduction
2. Fundraising
3. Grants
4. ROSPA report
5. Recreation ground maintenance
6. Tennis
7. Looking ahead 2025

1. Introduction

During 2023-2024 a number of new faces have joined the committee.

Jan Pedgrift has become President of Charsfield Recreation Ground charity. Jan is well known in the village and has a wealth of experience with her former involvement in the creation of the recreation ground and role as secretary on the committee. She is also chair of Charsfield Parish Council.

Sue Mcentegart has become the new secretary

Arthur Considine has become the new treasurer.

Jan Carley – vice chair

Jan Richardson – conservation and assistant secretary

Ian Miller – recreation ground maintenance

Steven Smith - recreation ground maintenance and transport

Thanks goes to the committee during the last year for all their efforts especially their commitment to Charsfest.

2. Fundraising

Charsfest

Charsfest went ahead this year as planned and in spite of the weather was a success. The inclement weather impacted the numbers attending but a good net income of over £800 was raised after expenses.

Our thanks to all those that supported Charsfest, including those that helped with the set up and recovery of the marquees and tables, chairs, BBQs and our of course our stallholders.

Thanks also go to:-

- The village hall for providing and operating the bar
 - David Wolf and Amanda Illing for providing the P.A. system, additional marquees and the Crepery.
 - Jeremy Gugenheim for taking over the P.A. system at a moment's notice.
 - Peter Holloway for organising the vintage fire engines and other vehicles and doing the MC
 - Alan Ward for all his work in helping the setup and transportation of tables and chairs and for organising the vintage motor bikes and etc.
 - Markham Funeral Service for providing "Jim" – the Suffolk Punch
 - To everyone else that turned up on the day and made it a success
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- The Autumn and Spring brunches, along with the Autumn quiz raised over £750.
 - Donations included generous donations of £300 from our friends at CADS and £200 from the village hall. Our thanks.
 - The 100 club raised nearly £700
 - We also received a grant from Charsfield Parish Council for £1000 towards the day to day running costs of the recreation ground.

3. Grants

Antony Wilson was successful in obtaining a grant for £15,000 from the Holiday Foundation. This money has been ring fenced for the Children's play area. The funds will go towards repairs to existing equipment and for a new perimeter fence.

The ROSPA report highlighted a number of areas that need improvement. See section 4.

Sizewell C Community Fund – grant opportunity

A meeting with a representative of the Sizewell C Community Fund was held on 29th October and was attended by Antony Wilson and Gerry Smith.

The viability of a grant application was discussed and would be based on any significant impact that the construction of Sizewell C would have on the village. Work is already in progress excavating a large area of land just North of Wickham Market. This has been earmarked for a "park and ride" for Sizewell C workers. It has already been recognised that the park and ride would see a significant traffic increase on the B1078. However it is up to the community to provide evidence to support the application.

As indicated a major impact will be the significant increase in traffic on the B1078. This will have a direct impact on road safety and an increase in both noise and pollution. It could also have a direct impact in relation to diverted traffic in The Street as demonstrated recently by the closure of the B1078.

The recreation ground is currently working in collaboration with Simon Rixon from Charsfield Parish Council and Martin Lyne and Chris Warman who have been involved with the community speed watch and SAVID programmes.

4. Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) report

- The ROSPA report identified a number of issues with the children's play area equipment. The report reflected a number of areas that were identified in last year's report.
- One "Amber/Red" issue identified last year was the climbing rope equipment and resulted in this apparatus being taken out of use.
- The wooden supports of the infants' swings were once again identified as deteriorating.
- The rubber chippings base also needs to be improved/replaced. This was highlighted again in this year's ROSPA report.
- The remaining wooden edging was also highlighted again and a number of possible solutions have been explored but as yet no decision has been made.
- The issues highlighted in the report have been categorised in a work plan and prioritised. Some are simple fixes, some will need volunteers and some will require major repair (wooden swing supports for example). One item, the zip wire, will require a visit by a professional contractor employed by the original supplier (Kompan). Kompan has been contacted. Money from the grant secured by Antony Wilson has been set aside for this work
- Some of the play equipment is 15+ years old and so it is not surprising that it is showing its age. To this end the committee is looking at the potential for grants to replace equipment and to fund new projects going forwards, such as the conservation area and to improve access to the recreation ground for the local school. The Sizewell C Community Fund is an example of this work.

5. Recreation ground maintenance

- Access from St Peter's Close – pathway complete. The original planned access was to the northwest corner of recreation ground. The path was to be provided by Park Properties and was to intersect the existing tarmac path. However this changed to the current access with Park Properties provided the path to approximately the same length. This has led to a gap between the toilets and access to St Peter's Close. This work highlighted the challenge involved to engage contractors for "smaller jobs". It took 12 months to obtain 2 estimates and for the work to be completed.
- Wildlife flower area – this was planted towards the end of June which was late quite in the growing season. However a number of flowers did bloom. It is anticipated that we should see a good variety of wild flowers next spring.
- The quality of the grass has continued to improve from the previous year. The regular cutting and weed suppression has come at an increased cost but the results can be seen.
- The hedges around the car park have now been cut back and are looking neat and tidy.
- One third of the conservation area has been cleared. This is in keeping with the plan from Suffolk Wildlife Trust which recommended that the area should be "managed" over a 3 year period. Another third will be cleared next year

6. Tennis

- 24 annual household permits have taken out for this season (23 in 2023) and 2 single use permits. The household permit offers exceptional value for money at £30 for the year.
- The online booking system is proving popular for new permit holders.

- The income from the tennis section has increased from the previous year.
- Some maintenance work will need to be undertaken in 2025. This includes weed management and cleaning of the tennis and MUGA court surfaces.

7. The challenges going forwards

- The day to day running costs of the recreation ground have increased significantly. The addition of the toilet block has added a further £700 a year in recurring costs. This includes standing charges for the utilities and annual servicing contracts. In addition costs of insurance, maintaining the hedges and grassland have all increased. The day to day running costs are now in the region of £4,000 - £4500. This is before any repairs to the play equipment is taken into account.
- The committee is made of volunteers from the community who give their time and effort to ensure that the village has an area that people can go and sit, walk their dog or take their children/grandchildren into a safe quiet environment.
- There are usually 4 committee meetings a year plus an AGM. The “hands on” maintenance at the recreation ground involves some gardening (weeding, using secateurs and a rake), tightening loose bolts, for example. There are usually 2-3 “task force” mornings a year.
- I would urge individuals within the village community to ask themselves whether they could give some of their time to support the activities at the recreation ground, either by joining the committee or participating in a task force activity. The adage “many hands make light work” does apply and one can glean a great deal of satisfaction by being part of and contributing to the community.

My thanks to those that supported us on Sunday mornings during the year.

It is difficult to acknowledge but unfortunately it is true that if we do not have the support of the community then there is a genuine risk that the recreation ground will become unviable and would therefore close. Please do consider either joining the committee or giving some of your time help on a “task force day”.

With your support we will ensure that there is a recreation ground in Charsfield that can be enjoyed by all and be there for future generations.

Thank you
Gerry Smith
Chair
Charsfield Recreation Ground Committee