



Village Hall
York Road
Earls Colne
CO6 2RN

13th May 2026

To: Members of Earls Colne Parish Council

You are hereby summoned to attend

**THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
TO BE HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL (LARGE HALL)
ON TUESDAY 19TH MAY 2026 AT 7.15 PM**

for the purpose of transacting the following business

S Gaeta

Clerk to the Council

AGENDA

1. **To elect the Chairman**
2. **To receive the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office**
3. **To elect the Vice Chairman**
4. **Apologies for Absence**
5. **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting** held on 21st April 2026 to be taken as read and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.
6. **Declarations of Interest (existence and nature)** with regards to items on the Agenda. Councillors are reminded that the code of conduct provides that should they have a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter under discussion, they should speak only in the public session, then withdraw from the room and not seek to influence a decision about the matter.
7. **To re-confirm and appoint additional bank account signatories**
8. **To approve the continued use of variable direct debits for the following:**
Streetlighting, business rates, water, energy, telephone and broadband, HMRC, ICO, sanitary disposal, photocopier, website, IT support.
9. **To review the membership of Councillor oversight roles and Committees and approve any amendments**
10. **To review the appointment of Members to external bodies and approve any amendments**

- 11. To review the Terms of Reference for Committees and approve any amendments**
- 12. To review and (re)adopt the following policies and procedures, with any amendments required:**
 - (a) Standing Orders
 - (b) Financial Regulations
 - (c) Communications
 - (d) Publication Scheme
 - (e) Asset Management
 - (f) Complaints Procedure
 - (g) Data Retention
 - (h) Environmental
 - (i) Financial Investment Strategy
 - (j) Financial Reserves
 - (k) Grievance and Disciplinary
 - (l) Grant Awarding
 - (m) Member-Officer Protocol
 - (n) Statement of Internal Controls
 - (o) Data Protection
 - (p) Habitual and Vexatious Complainants
 - (q) Equality and Diversity
 - (r) Privacy Notice
 - (s) Health and Safety
 - (t) Health and Safety Handbook
- 13. To adopt the Operational and Financial Risk Register and Risk Matrix 2026/27**
- 14. To appoint the Internal Auditor for financial year 2026/27**
- 15. Braintree District Councillor Update**

To receive an update from Councillors Spray and Courtauld.
- 16. Public Participation session** with respect to items on the Agenda and other matters that are of mutual interest. During the public session, Ben Blackborow from ECC Youth Services will speak about the support and services available for young people in Earls Colne.
- 17. Chairman's Update**
- 18. Clerk's Update**

To receive an update from the Clerk.
- 19. Finance and Internal Control**
 - (a) To receive a budget update.
 - (b) To consider the insurance quotes received and agree on a provider for 2026/27, including any Long Term Agreement.
 - (c) To review the start times of monthly meetings and agree any changes.
 - (d) To consider the request from three councillors to revisit resolution 25/168 and to agree to delay its implementation in light of further information.
- 20. Planning**

To consider the following planning applications:

TPO

 - (a) **26/00992/TPO** – Tree works on T5 Oak at 23 Monks Road.
 - (b) **26/00900/TPO** – Tree works on T3 Cedar at 19 Kemsley Road.

TPOCON

- (c) **26/01050/TPOCON**– Tree works to remove 5 Sycamore trees at 1 Church Hill.
- (d) **26/01034/TPOCON** – Tree works to reduce Norway Spruce and cut back Holly and Yew at 39 York Road.
- (e) **26/01035/TPOCON** – Tree works to thin and lift Redwood crown at 40 Park Lane.
- (f) **26/00947/TPOCON** – Tree works to T1 Maple and G1 Cherry and Plum at 13 Park Lane.
- (g) **26/00951/TPOCON** – Tree works to fell Holly tree at 15 Swallow Field.
- (h) **26/00953/TPOCON** – Tree works to H1 Hedge of Laurel, Red Robin and Euonymus, T2 Magnolia Tree and T3 Ash Tree at 1 High Street.

LBC

- (i) **26/00908/LBC**– Internal alterations to an existing single storey rear brick extension, conversion of an adjoining shed to extend kitchen and form a WC, with associated removal and relocation of internal walls and installation of plumbing and electrical works at 2 Lower Holt Street.

FUL

- (j) **26/00537/FUL**– Part retrospective application for the construction of 17 poultry breeding and rearing units at Chalkney Mill, Tey Road.

21. Highways

To receive an update on outstanding Highways matters.

22. Village Environment

- (a) To receive an update from the Open Spaces team.
- (b) To receive an update on Earls Colne in Bloom.

23. Health and Safety

To receive an update on health and safety matters.

24. Village Hall

- (a) To receive an update from the Village Hall team.
- (b) To agree to procure and fit additional internal notice boards in the hall. Anticipated costs outlined in the accompanying request form.
- (c) To call in our normal small works plumber to investigate and replace the under sink water heater in the bar area if required.
- (d) To agree the quote from Essex Plumbing for £2,145 + VAT for a system flush and fitment of a chemical dosing point.

25. Accounts for Payment

To approve the accounts for payment.

26. General Information

To receive any brief notices or reminders from Councillors or the Clerk. No decisions will be made under this item.

Request that the Council delays implementation of resolution 25/168, on the grounds that it failed to declare major expenses, and for other reasons detailed below.

- A. The cost of structurally testing lamp posts has not been addressed. The sums are likely to be substantial. There is no budget for such expense.
- B. Planning permission has not been addressed, neither has the potential for planning fees. There is no budget for such items
- C. The costs of the bases for the proposed benches have not been supplied. These would be required for a S106 claim
- D. The choice of cedar for the proposed planters is based on the implication that plastic planters were voted down at the November meeting. That was not the case, as the motion was withdrawn.
- E. There appears to be a strong likelihood that some equipment will be required to achieve movement of water to the planters. No cost has been provided and there is no budget for such expense.
- F. Installation costs of benches, litter bins, noticeboard and planters have not been supplied. There is no budget for such expense although it can be claimed under S106.
- G. Earls Colne in Bloom will need to supply details of any planting schemes to ECPC for full council approval as ECPC is expected to pay for them. The alternative would be for the Group to formally come into being when they could apply for a grant.
- H. There is a strong body of opinion within the village in favour of the use of recycled plastic street furniture. That opinion has not been considered. There are many suppliers of benches, bins, planters and noticeboards so like for like comparisons are easy. All plastic wood are more vandal resistant than ornamental wood.



REQUEST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

**Sections shaded Blue to be completed by
the requesting member**
**Sections unshaded to be completed by
the Proper Officer or their delegate**

Item topic	Emendation of Personnel Committee Terms of Reference	
Advisory Group/Committee recommendation?	No	
Proposed by	Bob Cook	
Seconded by (if known)	Ian Sparks	
Proposed outcome – i.e. discussion, decision *	The item to be discussed and decision to be voted on For discussion and voting at Council Annual MEETING	
If motion, please indicate required wording *	Proposal: To amend the Terms Of Reference for the Council Personnel Committee	
Background (provided by the proposer)	Attached is a copy of the proposed amendment document for perusal.	
Background (provided by the Proper Officer)	Request from councillors	
Financial implication (anticipated by the proposer)	None anticipated	
Financial implication (anticipated by the Proper Officer)	None	
Legal implications	None	
Proposer's signature	Bob Cook	

Explanatory Notes:



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Standing Orders 9 and 10 apply to notices of motion:

9. Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer

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Motions received shall be recorded in a book for that purpose and numbered in the order that they are received.

Motions rejected shall be recorded in a book for that purpose with an explanation by the Proper Officer for their rejection.

10. Motions at a meeting that do not require written notice

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- vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
- vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
- viii. to require a written report;
- ix. to appoint a Committee or sub-Committee and their members;
- x. to extend the time limits for speaking;
- xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
- xii. to not hear further from a Councillor or a member of the public;
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- xvii. to close a meeting.



REQUEST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

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Item topic	Village Hall Notice Boards
Advisory Group/Committee recommendation?	Yes VH Group
Proposed by	Bob Cook
Seconded by (if known)	
Proposed outcome – i.e. discussion, decision *	Discussion and Decision
If motion, please indicate required wording *	That ECPC will procure and fit more internal notice boards.
Background (provided by the proposer)	The VH group's large report highlighted the number of areas where the hall has suffered considerable damage to wall surfaces. This proposal plans to place noticeboards of various sizes in positions where the paintwork has been damaged but are natural locations for notices. A supplier of reasonably priced boards has been found and 4 off A3 boards purchased. This request is for funds for further boards that we would like to have in place before any painting takes place. The plan is to provide sufficient boards to satisfy a perceived need. The Hall Hirers conditions will be amended to caution against using other than the provided boards. Infringement will come at a cost.
Background (provided by the Proper Officer)	As above
Financial implication (anticipated by the proposer)	Already purchased £33.09. Further boards at a maximum cost of £250.00. Use of CW labour to fit. Estimated 3 hours total £60.00. Sundries £10.00
Financial implication (anticipated by the Proper Officer)	VH budget



Legal implications	None
Proposer's signature	R P Cook

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REQUEST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

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Item topic	Village Hall Heating System Overdue Preventative Maintenance
Advisory Group/Committee recommendation?	Yes VH Group
Proposed by	Bob Cook
Seconded by (if known)	
Proposed outcome – i.e. discussion, decision *	Discussion and Decision
If motion, please indicate required wording *	That ECPC accept the quote for a system flush and fitment of a chemical dosing point from Essex Plumbing.
Background (provided by the proposer)	The VH group can find no trace of the system ever having been flushed. As a result of a leak, the system has been run for several months with no corrosion inhibitor. In itself, this is poor practice but we had no choice whilst the various problems were resolved. Running a heating system with no inhibitor greatly increases the chances of corrosion and sludge build up so we feel that it makes an long overdue flush into an urgent requirement. Adding the dosing point future proofs the system to some degree. If we experienced non catastrophic leakage the automatic top up system would keep the system running but the inhibitor would become diluted. This unit gives us the ability to add inhibitor ourselves and avoid potential corrosion. Essex County Plumbing and Heating are very familiar with our system and we would prefer to use that expertise and avoid the need for Councillors to attend for long periods whilst the work is completed.
Background (provided by the Proper Officer)	As above



Financial implication (anticipated by the proposer)	Essex County Plumbing and Heating quote is £2145.00 ex VAT. That includes £50.00 for a leak sealant that we may chose to omit on the day of work. This expense should be considered in the light of recent news that the recently agreed expensive and extensive work to mend a leak and reinstate the floor is no longer required.
Financial implication (anticipated by the Proper Officer)	VH budget
Legal implications	None
Proposer's signature	R P Cook

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REQUEST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

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Item topic	Non Working Under sink Water Heater in Bar Area
Advisory Group/Committee recommendation?	Yes
Proposed by	Bob Cook
Seconded by (if known)	
Proposed outcome – i.e. discussion, decision *	Discussion and Decision
If motion, please indicate required wording *	That ECPC call in our normal small works plumber to investigate and replace if required.
Background (provided by the proposer)	The lack of hot water was discovered when the hall was hired recently. This is a H&S issue as well as being inconvenient for our users.
Background (provided by the Proper Officer)	As above
Financial implication (anticipated by the proposer)	Based on a recent replacement in the Main Hall Ladies' WC the maximum cost for a replacement unit would be £300.00
Financial implication (anticipated by the Proper Officer)	VH budget
Legal implications	None
Proposer's signature	R P Cook

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Item topic	Procurement of Bar Equipment
Advisory Group/Committee recommendation?	Yes
Proposed by	Bob Cook
Seconded by (if known)	
Proposed outcome – i.e. discussion, decision *	Discussion and Decision
If motion, please indicate required wording *	To procure a further 12 marked wine glasses.
Background (provided by the proposer)	A hall hirer has booked the bar and advice from their outside supplier of bar services was that we needed a minimum of 30 of each type of glass. The Twinning Association used the bar recently and reported that whilst they managed by using random glasses, they felt that, as a minimum, a further 12 marked glasses were needed. The VH group viewed the TA hiring as a trial run so are happy to respond by obtaining a further 12 glasses.
Background (provided by the Proper Officer)	As above
Financial implication (anticipated by the proposer)	Nisbets supplied good quality glasses and we propose returning to them. Price was £46.19 ex VAT and with free carriage. Carriage might not be free on a smaller order.
Financial implication (anticipated by the Proper Officer)	VH budget Approved under Financial Regulations – not an agenda item



Legal implications	None
Proposer's signature	R P Cook

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REQUEST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

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Item topic	Floor Scrubbing Machine
Advisory Group/Committee recommendation?	Yes VH Group
Proposed by	Bob Cook
Seconded by (if known)	
Proposed outcome – i.e. discussion, decision *	Discussion and decision
If motion, please indicate required wording *	That ECPC procure a Truvox Multiwash 340 floor scrubber.
Background (provided by the proposer)	We have large areas of floor that we don't have time to clean as often as we should. We have had several complaints from the likes of Pilates groups who need to be on the floor. Mopping, when done, is a very time consuming physical job. We think that any caretaker needs the proper equipment to do a proper job. The recommended machine washes, picks up and leaves the floor almost dry. Mopping doesn't pick up anywhere near as well. This is amply demonstrated by the current situation in the small hall where lots of sticky spangles are proving troublesome. The machine would pick them up. This machine would be used at least once a week and would demonstrate that we value our cleaning staff. It would be ideal all through the hall for post party spot cleaning.
Background (provided by the Proper Officer)	
Financial implication (anticipated by the proposer)	Maximum cost £2620.00 plus VAT



Financial implication (anticipated by the Proper Officer)	
Legal implications	
Proposer's signature	R P Cook

Explanatory Notes:

- * 1. If discussion is required before a decision and the proposer is not clear on what the outcome of discussions may be, please indicate 'to discuss and decide' - a motion will then be formulated at the meeting;
- * 2. If discussion or consideration is required *without* a decision, please indicate 'to discuss', 'to consider' etc;
- * 3. If a decision is sought and a motion required (for example, a recommendation by a committee), please indicate this.

Standing Orders 9 and 10 apply to notices of motion:

9. Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer

A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting which it is tabled for and in any event shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.

No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least five clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.

The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with Standing Order 9(b) above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.

If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with Standing Order 9(b) above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer so that it can be understood at least three clear days before the meeting.

If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the Councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.

Subject to Standing Order 9(e) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.



Motions received shall be recorded in a book for that purpose and numbered in the order that they are received.

Motions rejected shall be recorded in a book for that purpose with an explanation by the Proper Officer for their rejection.

10. Motions at a meeting that do not require written notice

- a. The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer:
 - i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
 - ii. to move to a vote;
 - iii. to defer consideration of a motion;
 - iv. to refer a motion to a particular Committee or sub-Committee;
 - v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
 - vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
 - vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
 - viii. to require a written report;
 - ix. to appoint a Committee or sub-Committee and their members;
 - x. to extend the time limits for speaking;
 - xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
 - xii. to not hear further from a Councillor or a member of the public;
 - xiii. to exclude a Councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
 - xiv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
 - xv. to suspend a particular Standing Order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory requirements);
 - xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - xvii. to close a meeting.

Earls Colne Parish Council

Amended article

The Terms of Reference for the Personnel Committee have several items which to be addressed and updated. The following is an updated Paper which addresses these items. Items of change are highlighted in red.

Earls Colne Parish Council

Amended article

1. Terms of Reference

The Council's Personnel Committee will be responsible to the Council for **HR** matters relating to employed staff. **Committee members will be elected to support the Parish Clerks day-to-day administration function using delegated powers. The Committee will send recommendations to the full Council on employment policy and remuneration issues for approval.**

In particular, the Committee will:

- a. Recommend Policies relating to employment, equality, health and safety and termination of staff, ensuring compliance with current UK employment legislation.
- b. Determine and review general terms and conditions of service in line with NJC Green Book and Statutory requirements **subject to Full Council approval.**
- c. Review **administrative** staffing establishment **and requests from line managers** to ensure the Council's needs are met.

[Type sidebar title]

[Type the sidebar content. A sidebar is a standalone supplement to the main document. It is often aligned on the left or right of the page, or located at the top or bottom.

Use the Drawing Tools tab to change the formatting of the sidebar text.]

- d. **Subject to Full Council approval, will oversee** recruitment **with Council approval**, appraisal, training, performance management and staff welfare.
- e. Ensure grievance and disciplinary procedures follow the ACAS Code of Practice and principles of natural justice.
- f. Ensure compliance with GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018, **or as subsequently amended by Parliament**, regarding personnel records.

2. Constitution

1. The Personnel Committee shall consist of six Parish Councillors, elected annually by the Parish Council after the Statutory election of **the Parish Council Chairman and Vice Chairman**.
2. The Committee will elect it's own Chairman and Vice Chairman.
(NOTE: this has not been done and election has been carried out by the Council contrary to above)
3. **The Chairman's and Vice Chairman's roles will be to liaise with the Parish Clerk on all staffing matters.**
4. The quorum will be three members **of the Committee**.
5. If a Member is subject of a grievance or disciplinary matter, they shall withdraw from the Committee until the matter is resolved.

3. Sub-Committees

To ensure fairness in grievance and disciplinary matters:

a) Grievance Sub-Committee

Formed from three members of the Personnel Committee (not involved the matter).

Hears staff grievances in line with the Council's policy and ACAS code **after liaison with the Parish Clerk.**

b. Disciplinary Sub-Committee

Formed of three members of the Committee (not involved in the matter). **The Parish Clerk, who is the manager of all staff, will decide how to deal with the matter and will arrange how the matter is to be dealt with.**

Hears disciplinary cases **sent to the Sub-Committee by the Parish Clerk** applying the Council's policy and relevant employment Law.

Hears appeals against grievance or disciplinary outcomes.

Decisions of the Appeals Panel are final within the Council.

4. Staffing matters

The Personnel Committee has delegated powers to:

- a. Deal with recruitment and selection of staff (**as currently employed or recruited by the Council**)

- b. Review staff roles and responsibilities **in liaison with the Parish Clerk**, and pay within approved budgets.
- c. Approve staff training CPD, and appraisal systems.
- d. Oversee staff health, safety and wellbeing at work.
- e. Ensure Policies are in place for dignity at work, equality, whistleblowing and flexible working requests.
- f. **The Parish Clerk will manage the staff and be responsible for the allocation of all duty rosters after liaison with Council members with particular responsibilities.**

5. Rules of Procedure

The Committee shall meet at least twice yearly and additionally as required.

Decisions will be by a simple majority; the Chairman has a casting vote.

Minutes will be taken and published, ensuring confidential items are not disclosed.

The Chairman shall report to full Council as appropriate on non-confidential matters.

6. Confidentiality

All staffing matters are strictly confidential.

Members must comply with the Nolan Principles of Public Life and GDPR.

Breach of confidentiality will be treated as a serious matter.

7. Review

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed annually at the Annual Meeting of the Council or sooner if required by legislative or organizational changes.

ECPCHALLongterm2026.

Future Action Points, items of concern and current activities. This is a **continuing progression** of the original document prepared to support budget requests.

We believe this should be read and understood by all Councillors as we are all responsible for the Hall even though we have a delegated team.

The hall has suffered from many years of underspend on maintenance and care. Many areas and fittings are tired and dated. There are also some areas of major concern.

We believe that the Council as a whole needs to understand this and view the budget in the round. Would "your" budget be better spent elsewhere?

The team also strongly believe that the hall is under-used. We feel that it's a bit of a financial nightmare and that we should be making better use of it's earning potential by making it more attractive to hirers.

We have attempted to put a value on most remedial actions. In some cases, because the scale of the problem is as yet unknown, they are best guess.

The accuracy of the guess is unimportant, but the fact that there is a financial risk isn't.

The classification of importance is also unimportant. All of these items need attention.

(Values marked * are the ones used in the summary sheets).

Effectively, this is also a Hall Manager's check list.

URGENT Level 1

Heating System

During the heating season the hall is heated when the hirers are present. The length of the warm up period ahead of the hire is longer in the colder months and shorter when the weather warms up. There are late evening and early morning short runs just to keep the chill off. In view of the price of gas, it is a cost efficient exercise to do this. The task of programming the heating times, from creating the timetable spreadsheet to inputting that to the 4 controllers takes about 45 minutes. The advice from our Heating contractor is to do exactly what we are doing. His opinion is that the current price of gas has superseded the "old" advice about keeping buildings warm. He looked at our hirer's timetable and advised us to carry on with the plan. He also advised that, as a default for energy saving reasons, all outer doors should be self closing.

In summer, we expect the place to be overly warm at times. The fixed glazing that we we inherited will add to the problem and will probably be a constant reminder that we need to replace the windows and make it a nicer, more welcoming, place.

We will be looking to facilitate window opening. If successful, it comes with some risks of hirers failing to resecure windows.

The system appeared to be losing water. It has now been checked and a small leak rectified. The apparent loss after the check was because the system takes a considerable time to settle down after disturbance. We now

know that the system needs bleeding probably 5 times over the course of a fortnight to be clear of trapped air.

For the future:- Our regular heating engineer can fix all leaks but a specialist would be needed to trace it (or them) if they were not obvious.

If underfloor work is ever needed it is probably best left, if possible, until the summer, which is less upheaval for hirers. There is some spare flooring under the stage that might be needed if floor work is involved in the main hall. That is basically carpentry work. We have made contact with a local contractor with the requisite skills for the work. **May 2026:-** Estimated cost for repairing 1 leak under the main hall floor is at least £1k plus £1k for floor work.

If a leak is detected under a solid floor, excavation will be needed with expensive re instatement. **If we cut holes in the small hall floor do we then patch it up or consider replacement of the entire floor?** Estimated cost of a leak repair is £1k and groundworks £1k.

Our regular heating engineer also has access to specialist contractors for floor work.

Old under-floor pipes are bad news. Solid floor leaks also raise the possibility that we might need to re route substantial sections of pipework.

The system is currently not inhibited (corrosion protected)(May 2026). We plan to get it flushed and inhibited in the summer at a likely cost of around £1500.00. Inhibiting a heating system is not luxury optional extra and should be done soon.

If we ever have a leak under the main hall (suspended) floor, remedial work will present an opportunity to test the substrate for dampness. We will be able to monitor the humidity under the floor. Specialist assistance on the dampness, budget £2k

External Works

We now believe that we have a handle on what the contractor wants us to pay for and have discussed it with them. Not all of the work they quoted for has been done and not all that was quoted has been invoiced. We have made further proposals on how to clear up outstanding works.

The project to replace the front windows will be the next task.

Main Hall Floor

A small section of floor in front of the stage had suffered damage from rising damp and was replaced in about 2020/21. The exercise was neither trouble free nor entirely successful and the underlying dampness was addressed by an extractor on the opposite wall. **We feel that the improved ventilation was essential but that it wasn't correctly targeted. The area in front of the stage probably has very little airflow and that is contributing to the rapidly increasing amount of new blackening in front of the replacement section. We can be certain that the damp problem is still with us.**

For the sake of clarity, experience tells us that black on the top goes all the way through so it can not be sanded off.

The floor to the south side (nearer the entrance lobby) is now showing signs of bowing. That is, the floor is no longer flat (as sanded) and each plank has some curvature. We think that is because the damp is affecting that section and causing swelling.

At the time, the floor was sanded and re sealed (2019 ish), the contractors said that we could not consider another sanding as the floor wasn't thick enough.

We believe that, as a minimum, we need to be budgeting an annual reserve so that we can do the job when the need arises. In around 2019, the quoted replacement cost was £12,000.00 ish. The 2026/7 budget includes an £8k * pa reserve with an optimistic 3 year target. The job will probably not be as simple as a new floor, because we will need to address the underlying issues of dampness. As a minimum, we probably need to consider adding a membrane to the substrate and possibly re-instating the ventilation that was largely stopped up when the kitchen extension and lobby were added. That might mean getting the underfloor area air piped to outside. (Digging up the floor or the use of a boring machine to create space for new pipes.)

We believe that reserving £8k per year with a 3 year target for the estimated "simple" replacement is imprudent and insufficient.

There is a sump under the stage that is set into the water table and collects surplus water which is periodically pumped away. When storing anything under the stage, free access to the sump must be maintained. In heavy rain, the Con Club driveway drains to beside the Chamber notice board. That can't be helping. We need to look at directing Con Club water away to the road and not to under our floor. We possibly need to consider lowering the level of the ground beside the hall.

If any section of the floor failed, the project to resolve the issues would involve paying for professional advice and project management.

The potential size of repair bills raises the possibility of making serious inroads into our reserves or taking out loans.

Known (Current budget to Reserve) £8k *

Potential £30k plus

Lobby Roof.

The roof leaks in three places in heavy rain. Usually not all at once, and presumably dependent on quantity of rain and prevailing wind.

The contractor who renewed the roof reports that the roof is sound but that some mastic work is needed, particularly around the roof lights. The mastic contractor is due to visit by the end of May 2026.

This is urgent because leakage means that the roof structure is being degraded. There is also a risk of electrical problems.

Estimated specialist cost £500.00 *

Hall Hirer Access.

It's unwise to expect our long run of lack of issues with hall security to continue. The lack of a person who can be called out for hall problems is a concern that needs to be urgently addressed.

We have an agreed plan to replace the existing hirer key safes with electronic versions to improve the situation, but it currently needs more thought on how to make it work properly. The original proposal failed to consider who would be on the end of the emergency contact phone, whose phone that might be or who might be expected to turn out in an emergency.

A villager who lives locally has stepped forward to express interest in being the emergency contact. White Colne have such a person and they get paid for call outs and attendance.

An alternative access scheme, using cards, was investigated but discarded for cost reasons. Two types of electronic key safes systems are currently being evaluated.

Questions about the, as yet un-enacted, Martyn's Law have been reviewed after the assistant Clerk and one Councillor attended an on line course. The Hall are largely unaffected. Nevertheless, we do have safeguarding issues which arise because the halls cannot be securely segregated.

The question of an emergency contact phone applies to all current suggestions.

Until the new key safes are in place we need to ask the Clerk to periodically change the access code.

The fitting cost of the electronic locks was not included in the original motion. Known minimum of £500. * (Electronic Locks plus fitting)

High Priority Level 2

1. Main Electrical Supply Board.

We have been advised that we should consider an update to the main supply board to MCB/RCD, a more up-to-date, and safer, unit that should see us safe from major changes for at least 10 years.

Currently, we just meet regulations but after the anticipated updating of the regs, we won't. At best, we probably have to do this within two years so we need to be putting money away. We feel that electrical safety items should be done sooner than later.

Known Cost £3,700.00* Two more quotes needed

2. Clerk Security

We need to look at the safety and security of the Clerks. We need a better camera entry system. The cameras purchased by the previous admin are record only. They may have their uses but entry security isn't one of them. The office door needs beefing up, the glass needs to be replaced, the lock should be controllable by the clerk from the desk and we should probably look at installing a panic alarm. An unknown carpenter has already been contacted.

We also need to review the safety of the assistant Clerk whose workstation is in the main chamber and outside the office.

The Hall hirer access contractor may have advice.

Known Estimated Cost £ 3k*

3. Chamber Street Door

The closing and latching of the door needs to be addressed from a security point of view. The door doesn't consistently self latch which leaves the Clerk vulnerable and the Assistant Clerk, especially so.

We may need to make access from the stairs into a coded lock option that the Clerks can control via the intercom system.

Known Estimated Cost £300.00* **Expenditure Agreed by Full Council**

4. Floor Washer machine

The existing floor washer is incomplete, unserviceable and never used. It will be scrapped.

We need to replace that with a decent machine that washes, picks up and dries. We should be regularly (weekly at least) washing the hall floors but they are a minimum of 3 hours of hard labour by mop and bucket, and the

caretaker doesn't always have time. We believe that we should obtain a professional machine that washes and recovers the water and dirt for around £2500.00 ex vat. That machine would also be ideal for the toilet and lobby areas and speed the jobs up. In a crisis we could accept help from volunteers or take on casual staff to do the job or reallocate a CW. We believe that supplying a decent machine will demonstrate that we value the caretaker and should help to keep them motivated. Our hirers also deserve better. We could also consider taking on a "floor washer" or diverting existing Community Worker effort to the task.

A Numatic cordless machine has been demonstrated in the hall and is considered to be the machine we need.

Known Cost £2.5k* (corded machine). We await the price of a cordless machine.

There is a health and safety issue here. We have users who lay on the floor. We need to take account of that.

5. Notice Boards.

The damaged paintwork shows us that we need notice Boards in order to satisfy the need for posters and notices whilst avoiding damage.

This project would need to precede painting.

We suggest that we use the simple "click" type with round corners.

A4 are £4.99 and A3 are £6.50. There might be a case for A2 too. Each site will need an individual approach. Estimated cost includes paying for fitting.

Known Estimate £300.00*

May agenda item. 4 x A3 boards already purchased.

The prohibition of sticking anything to the walls will be added to the Hall Hirers conditions of Hire.

6. Bar Glass Washer.

Looking at this is part of our plan to make the hall more attractive to hirers and get hall hire rates, and income, up.

The glass washer has been rectified and serviced.

Two hirers have asked for it to be working for their hall hire.

For future reference:-

Approximate cost of Parts:-

Element £130.00 *

Main Thermostat £60.00 *

High Level Stat £47.00

PCB (Controller) £380.00

Fitting of any or all replacement parts on a return visit is £55.00 *

We might then need to consider an annual maintenance visit.

2026 = £95.00

7. Bar Bottle Cooler and Bar area improvements.

Bar bottle cooler now in place.

Correct glasses purchased.

A few more wine glasses are needed.

We can now consider it to be a workable bar.

8. Martyn's Law

ECPC Village Hall is largely unaffected.

Safeguarding of vulnerable users, Hall door locking and use of the hall partition are considered elsewhere in this report.

9. Split the Kitchen

In conjunction with splitting the halls, access to the kitchen should be just that, and not a through passage. **If necessary**, we can overcome the difficulty of the hirers having access to drinking water by providing bottled water. Locking the kitchen also means that hirers don't have access to the hall that they are not hiring. This measure also helps with efforts to make the caretaker efficient. Needs to be done, for security purposes. That whole issue (item 8) needs to be reviewed urgently.

Would need 2 x key safes (**one at each end of the kitchen**) and Fitting Costs. Budget cost £300.00 *

10. Split the Halls

We should probably start to use the divider in the lobby. If we can be sure that the toilets for each hall are only used by the respective hirers and that the others are not, the caretaker can apply their efforts proportionately and we can make better use of the available hours. We would have better control over their activities and the hours worked would be more efficient.

We may need to consider locking the lobby partition and have keysafes available. Each hall already has it's own doorbell.

Budget cost £200*

Medium Priority Level 3

1. Toilet Flushes

The flushing mechanisms are showing their age. The ease of flushing and the speed of response to operating the levers in several toilets is poor. We need to consider replacing the cisterns/flushes. One toilet seat needs replacing.

We await a report from our regular small works plumber. The cost of the first phase of works has been agreed by full council.

Known budget costs £400.00*

2. Inner Fire Doors

The recent Fire Inspection noted that some of the obligatory door seals are defective. **We await a visit from a carpenter. To some extent, this work will need to be coordinated with painting.**

Known Budget Cost £500.00*

3. Door Blinds

One window blind between the hall and lobby needs to be replaced. We should also consider fitting blackout roller blinds to the other doors to enhance hall users' privacy.

Known Budget Cost of 3 blinds is £60.00*

4. Return the single lobby door to standard Spec.

As standard, doors are normally set to lock on closing with provision to disable the automatic locking for the period of hire. That means that it's just a door that people can use just the same as at home but without needing a key. (Pull the handle and the door opens). Hirers would be given the option to disable the self locking whilst the hall is in use. The door would then self close (as it should do) but still be openable. The idea is that the heat in the lobby is retained and a buffer of warm air is in place between the outside world and the halls. Contractor to be approached.

Can saving energy and money ever be a bad idea?

The safeguarding of vulnerable users applies to this item.

Budget cost £250.00*

5. Rectify the faulty locking on the left hand door (from the inside) of the double lobby doors.

Both doors can be set to non self locking (fuel saving mode) and the key to do this is already on the hirers' key set. The left hand door drags and the locking off mechanism is faulty. We need a contractor to remedy the dragging of the lower bolt. It would also improve the hirers' experience. The default on both doors should be to self close. The right hand one would need attention to stop it self latching open.

Budget cost £400.00*

6. Rectify the Rear Door locking system.

The lower bolt drags on the ground and users report that it is difficult to close correctly. This causes a security issue because the user of the hall may not be strong enough to correctly close the door. We have had several recent incidents of the Caretaker/Councillor finding the door unlatched. Propose asking a contractor to shorten the lower bolt. Lubrication of the bolts has improved the situation but the dragging bolt needs attention. We think that the door needs a closer for energy saving reasons. The key is very fiddly so not a practical entry point unless that is resolved and more keys purchased. We might need to replace the entire mechanism. Budget cost £1,000.00 or £250.00* for remedial action.

7. Painting and Decorating

Currently, the decoration of the entrance lobby and small hall are incomplete but passable. We also have a lot of damage from posters being stuck to walls with bluTack.

"Don't stick stuff onto the walls" will become part of the hirers' conditions with financial penalties for infringements. Parties and Christmas seem to be when the damage occurs.

Although it has been done in the past, we think that Caretaking does not leave any time for painting.

We have concluded that we should get the work done by professionals. We need to make it clear that we need a contractor who is prepared to work round the hirers as there are some fairly long periods of non use of the halls. We think that this approach would give us some visible progress and a decent finish.

Some painting has been approved by Full Council.

Three painters have been approached and have quoted. There is a wide gap between their prices so the suggested approach is to use the cheapest in (say) the kitchen or bar to assess their work. Then review the situation.

We feel that the priorities are:-

Bar, Bar Store and Bar Seating £650

Kitchen

Chamber

Mr T. (one of the quoting painters) didn't like the stark white in the lobby. We agree. We discussed "National Trust" green and blue for there but not everywhere. Definite pastel shades. VH team to decide if and when and put it to Council. We have specified Dulux trade or close alternative paints.

We should also be creating specific reserves for the jobs.

We could consider replacing some or all of the toilet mirrors that are showing signs of ageing.

Whilst we should be looking for grants, we should also take a prudent view and make financial provisions. Or just save up by creating reserves.
Known, most urgent, £650 *

Summary of Costs of Priority 3 tasks (including a single paint project)
£2510.00

8. Rear Lobby Entrance Grit Trap

There is currently no way that visitors who use the rear door can clean their shoes. We need a mat well or grit trap so that the Small Hall floor can be kept cleaner. Poor weather and the winter add to this problem.

Low Priority Level 4

1. Downpipe on outer wall of bar seating area

Appears to be blocked. Lower end not visible so where the water eventually goes is unknown. Probably not helping the underlying high water table problem.

2. External Window Sill - Clerk's Office

Whilst assessing the S&S work we noticed that the window sill to the south window of the Clerk's office appears to need a repair, at best. It's oak, so won't be cheap if a replacement is needed. Say £1,000.00. note that there are Heritage/Conservation issues on repair work.

Could be part of the window project if that is progressed reasonably soon.

Estimated Repair Cost £1k*

3. Main Hall front doors

These are not as easy to close as they should be. We have had recent episodes of doors being left open/unlatched. They need attention from an expert. Fitting a pull handle and giving clearer advice might help.

Minimum budget £400.00*

4. Roof/Ceiling Insulation

Whilst the heating upgrades were in progress we were able to inspect the insulation above the Small Hall. It's thin and well below the current suggested thickness. We need to plan for improvements and look for "ECO" grants. We need a plan in place ready for when the grants appear.

The insulation above the Main Hall has not been inspected.

5. Curtains/Blinds

All curtains and runners are showing their age. We feel that, as a minimum, the runners should be replaced. The practicality of doing that but not replacing the curtains at the same time needs to be considered.

6. Remote Thermostats

There is a case for setting the temperatures and times remotely. Possibly a task for the Assistant Clerk. The cost of a remote system has not been explored. No action currently planned as VH team prepare the weekly spreadsheets and they and the caretaker adjust the timers, so is cost free.

7. Add a Commercial Dishwasher to the kitchen.

Should we make the kitchen more attractive to hirers by providing a commercial dishwasher.? This is a long term project that would need more research and costings. Franke Kingfisher, counter top model.
£1116.00 plus fitting £150.00
Estimated Cost £1266.00 *

8. Add a Commercial microwave to the kitchen

Nisbetts, Samsung £580.00 *

We feel that it would make the hall more attractive to hirers.

9. White Kitchen fridge

Appears to not be working properly. Say £400.00. It would be a larger type fridge (no freezer compartment) and the actual unit should be a spot decision on the day. No urgency until we have hirers, but do we even need two fridges?.

10.. Small Hall Projector Screen.

The projection system in the Small Hall projects onto a plain wall. In an ideal situation, we'd have a proper screen. There is very little demand for this so we consider the wall to be sufficient. We need to make clear that access, other than to play BluRay films, to this system requires a computer, some expertise, and practice. It is not Plug and Go. Work needed on written operating procedure.

Summary of Level 4 Estimated Costs £3,246.00

Capital Projects and Long Term Improvements

1. Front Section Wooden Windows (Replacement)

These were part of the "grand plan". They are old, single glazed, insecure and failing. We need to progress this. Note that there are "heritage" issues here too.

Budget Cost £60k but grants are involved.

Estimated cost to us £30k*

2. Small White "sash" windows on South face (Toilets)

All are rotten and need to be replaced. They are possibly part of the inherited "big" plan, We suggest that we start replacing in fours or reserving or looking at grants.

£4,000.00 pa annual reserve as a minimum, and hope for the best.

Any grant income would be a windfall, but it would be imprudent if we made grant income part of our plans.

We need to have priced plans on file so that we can quickly respond to grant availability.

Known suggested annual reserve £4k*

3. Large Sash Windows in Small Hall

We have very old, but recently repaired and painted, sash windows that cannot easily be opened. Opening is **currently** impossible now that the secondary glazing has been fitted. We have already had complaints about lack of ventilation **so will be investigating ways round the problem.**

We need modern, properly insulated, windows. When we get to this we will need to robustly oppose the "Conservation" view that they need to be made of wood.

Priced plans are needed for the file.
Known Estimate £10k*

4. Large Sash Windows in Large Hall

The small comments also apply to these windows. They have not been repaired or painted.

Priced plans needed for file.

Known Estimate £10k*

5. Paper Towels

All toilets have a single rolled paper towel dispenser. We need alternative/back up folded towel dispensers, a second dispenser or electric dryers.

Known Dispensers estimate £100.00*

6. Prepare Long Term Toilet Refurbishment Plan

We probably need to have ready made renovation projects planned and priced. Should grant funds become available, we would then be in a good position to get the claim in early. For a start, the toilets, whilst functional, are very dated so we need design schemes ready to go.

Outside assistance needed.

Estimated £50k*

May 2026 edition

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