

CHELFORD PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held

Thursday 14th May, 2026 at 7:30p.m.

at Chelford Primary School, Oak Road, Chelford.

Present Councillors C. Montaldo (Chairman), B. Brindley, T. McCrum, S. Mort,
M. Shepherd, D. Wilson, S. Wilson.
The Rt Hon Esther McVey MP.
Members of the public (9).
Dr. E. M. Maddock – Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllrs J. Fielding, C. Howlett, E. Michell.

DECISION (a) To note the above apologies for absence.

2. **Minutes:** The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held 8th May, 2025 had been previously circulated.

DECISION (a) That the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held 8th May, 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. **Parish Council Chairman's Report for the civic year 2025/26** – Councillor C. Montaldo presented the following report to the meeting.

Hello everyone and thank you for attending our annual meeting.

I would just like to say a few things to report on the progress and achievements of our Parish Council over the past year before our guest speaker takes to the floor.

Firstly, I am happy to report that we have reached a full complement of councillors this year, now standing at ten, which strengthens our ability to be able to serve the community. I myself have only been chairman for one year but I have thoroughly enjoyed it and believe the parish council has done its best to serve Chelford over the last 12 months and I would like to thank the clerk and the other councillors for their continued support.

We have managed to secure the release of £68,396.59 of Section 106 funds, enabling local community organisations to apply for funds to help continue their valuable work. This was of course from the previous development by David Wilson on the old cattle market but it had not been forth coming for some time and was an issue we pressed forward with.

We have also maintained ongoing initiatives, such as continuing to provide dog poo bags for community use which may seem minor but following on from a recent review, proves the dog poo bag dispensers have been well used over the last year which means less mess on the pavements.

We have also continued enhancing our village with floral displays, both within the village itself and at the railway station and are always trying to improve this with the providers we use.

As you can imagine, our planning work has been extensive over the last 12 months. We considered 33 planning applications, including two larger residential developments, and represented the Parish at two Cheshire East Planning Committee meetings to ensure our community's voice was heard. We understand that the two larger developments have been a contentious issue for residents and we have put forward very strong arguments against these developments in writing and at the planning meetings and I would like to thank my fellow councillors for all their help in this regard even if the desired outcome was not achieved.

CHELFORD PARISH MEETING

In terms of maintenance and improvements, we have carried out a range of projects to include the following –

- Maintenance work at the brick bus shelter
- Retreatment of two benches at Mere Court Park
- Replanting of the leaning parish boundary sign at Holmes Chapel Road
- Repainting the red telephone kiosk at the roundabout
- The installation of two new speed indicator devices at either end of the village.

Speaking of speed, we fully appreciate that speeding is an ongoing issue within the village and we continue to make Cheshire East Council aware of our concerns and are looking at what other implementations we can install to assist people to recognise the speed limit of 30mph. These include village gateways and further signage. However, a positive point is that the speed watch group, who I would like to thank for their continued support and effort, have reported that since the two new speed indicators have been installed, they have noticed a drop in their results meaning they are having an impact.

We have also supported local groups with contributions and grants where we have provided 2,000 crocus bulbs to the Chelford Edging Group and awarded £650 in grants to Connecting Chelford.

In terms of the Chelford Activity Park down at the village hall area, we have made significant progress such as -

- We have reinstalled the tennis net posts
- Secured extensions to the play area safety surfacing
- Installed a perimeter pathway
- Commissioned cleaning and tidy up works, which are currently in progress
- And selected gym and trim trail equipment, which will be installed this summer

Looking ahead, we are pressing for a new litter bin at Dixon Drive where the notice board is, picnic tables at Mere Court Park and as stated before, the installation of village gateways.

These projects are awaiting funding release and installation and further updates can be found at future parish council meetings or by checking the meeting minutes, details of which can be found on the parish council website.

Finally, we continue to monitor and report highway defects and footpath issues to Cheshire East Council, ensuring that our community remains safe and well maintained.

In summary, this year has been one of steady progress and practical improvements, all aimed at enhancing the quality of life for our residents. Although we do not always achieve the desired outcome with Cheshire East Council, we are proud of what has been accomplished and remain committed to serving our village with dedication and care.

Thank you and moving onto item 4 of the agenda please welcome Esther McVey.

DECISION (a) To receive the report.

CHELFORD PARISH MEETING

4. The Rt Hon Esther McVey MP

The Chairman welcomed The Rt Hon Esther McVey MP to the meeting and invited her to lead the question and answer session with residents.

The Rt Hon Esther McVey MP congratulated the Parish on successfully filling the vacancies on the Parish Council. The parish was also congratulated on its great community spirit which had been recognised by the recent awarding of the Kings Award for Voluntary Service to Connecting Chelford.

It was noted that a resident question and answer session had been held recently at Chelford Parish Hall at which queries had been raised about availability of s.106 funding for infrastructure improvements; a suggestion for a roundabout at the junction of Dixon Drive and Pepper Street with Knutsford Road; requests for improvements to footways within the parish which are narrow and uneven. Efforts to secure improved broadband for the parish appear to be progressing with initial preparation work having taken place recently.

- (a) **Proposed residential development within Parish:** A resident raised concerns about the conduct of the Cheshire East Council Strategic Planning Board meeting which had considered the proposal for development to the east of the railway station. It was considered that the decision was made based on inaccurate information and that issues relating to landownership were not fully considered. The Rt Hon Esther McVey MP suggested that the Parish Council, and wider community, have an opportunity to negotiate an outcome which can deliver improvements for the whole community and that a longer term, pragmatic approach may yield greater benefit.
- (b) **Trees at Mere Court Park:** A resident raised concerns about the trees in Mere Court Park which are adjacent to the boundary of Chelford Primary School. Following tragic events in Wilmslow, it was queried whether these trees have been subject to a safety inspection.
The Rt Hon Esther McVey MP advised that she would follow this matter up with Cheshire East Council as she is already working on matters relating to trees within the area. It was noted, however, that this strip of land does not appear to fall within the ownership of Cheshire East Council.
- (c) **Cheshire East Council:** A resident raised concern about the quality and speed of responses from Cheshire East Council.
The Rt Hon Esther McVey MP advised that she was aware that response speed had become worse recently. Cheshire East Council has a number of senior positions where the officers are either on long-term leave or the post is vacant. The authority is still subject to improvement notices, however, progress to meet the targets is rather slow. Efforts will be made to press for improvements.
- (d) **Cheshire East Council:** A resident queried the sustainability of the current senior staffing situation at Cheshire East Council and at what point positive actions could be taken to resolve the issues.
The Rt Hon Esther McVey MP advised that there are concerns about the handling of staffing matters at Cheshire East Council and that she would be encouraging the authority to act more robustly towards restoring senior management at the Council.
- (e) **Parish footways:** A resident raised concern about the footways within the Parish which are uneven due to tree roots and also have a camber which is difficult to negotiate for wheelchair users.

CHELFORD PARISH MEETING

The Rt Hon Esther McVey MP advised that this issue was also raised at the recent question and answer session and that she is following this up.

- (f) **Parish footways:** A resident raised concern about the quality of footway repairs. There is considerable frustration where Cheshire East Council will not carry out repairs, however, this is further exacerbated when poor quality repairs are carried out which leads to frequently recurring defects.
The Rt Hon Esther McVey MP advised that she was aware of concerns about the quality of highway repairs. There appears to be confusion within Cheshire East Council about which issues should be prioritised and what repairs should be carried out. It was disappointing, however, that funding had been made available to Cheshire East Council for highway repairs but this had not been fully utilised and the unspent funds had been returned to the Government.
- (g) **Adlington New Town:** A resident asked about the rationale for the proposed Adlington New Town.
The Rt Hon Esther McVey MP advised that there had been an active group campaigning against the proposed development. It has been recognised by Government, however, that the cost to deliver necessary basic infrastructure to support the proposed development was not feasible at this time.
- (h) **Railings at railway bridge:** A resident raised concern about the missing railings at the railway bridge on Knutsford Road. The broken railings had been removed following a collision, however, no replacements had been installed.
The Rt Hon Esther McVey MP advised that she would follow up on this issue.
- (i) **Street lights on Knutsford Road:** A resident raised concern about the current lack of street lighting on Knutsford Road between Chelford Parish Hall and the roundabout. The lights had been reported to Cheshire East Council several months ago, however, no repairs have yet been carried out.
The Rt Hon Esther McVey MP advised that she would follow up on this issue.

DECISION (a) To thank The Rt Hon Esther McVey MP for her attendance at the meeting.

5. Public Forum

No issues were raised by residents for discussion.

DECISION (a) To note that no issues were raised.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 8:12p.m.

Signed:.....

Confirmation date: 11th June, 2026