

EPWELL PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 16TH MARCH 2026
IN EPWELL VILLAGE HALL AT 8PM

Councillors Present

Matthew Platt (Chairman), Peter Gibson and Nicola Rudge

Christine Coles (Parish Clerk) and three villagers

- 26/12. To receive apologies for absence**
Cllr Brook (personal), Cllr White (personal) and District/County Cllr Chris Brant
- 26/13. To receive Declarations of Interest under the Council's Code of Conduct relating to business on the agenda**
No interests were declared.
- 26/14. To approve the minutes of the meetings of 10th November 2025 and 12th January 2026**
The minutes were both approved and signed as a true record of the two meetings.
- 26/15. Public participation session**
A member of the public spoke about a car which has been creating an obstruction when large vehicles such as the dust carts come to the village. The verge is damaged and a mess. The car is parked legally but not in an ideal place. Double yellow lines and wooden posts were discussed. A discrete conversation took place before Christmas but there is no resolution. It was agreed the Parish Clerk write a letter.
- 26/16. To discuss the play park, bringing it to a safe condition to reopen for the summer and agree working party dates**
It was agreed to meet on 25th April for a tidy up. Donna Boyles has received a quote for new swings and ERA have money in their bank account. The pavilion roof was discussed which requires repair as the ridge was not finished. The work in the park will be done in two phases. Phase 1 will be what can be afforded and Phase 2 is to look at good quality exercise equipment. Grant opportunities will be looked at.
Action: Donna Boyles to circulate the tidy up date on the group chat and get quotes to fix the pavilion roof.
- 26/17. To receive an update on the Local Government Re-organisation (LGR) consultation**
There is a consultation and three options to choose from. The deadline to respond is Thursday 26th March 2026 at 11.59pm. It will be an end to two tiers of local government and one unitary tier will be created to provide all of its services to residents. A decision will be made this summer and we expect to be notified of the Ministerial decision confirming which proposal will go ahead. There will be shadow authority elections in May 2027 and vesting day is 1st April 2028 when the new authorities will take over and replace the existing six councils.
- 26/18. To discuss arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting**
This will take place on Friday 15th May. The meeting provides a forum for the council to report on its activities, for local organisations to provide updates and for parishioners to ask questions and raise issues.

26/19. To receive an update on the forthcoming Parish Council elections

The current term of office for all Councillors ends on 11th May. The Parish Clerk will receive the nomination papers to give out and there are five seats. The official election notice will be published on 30th March and the forms have to be completed and returned in person to the Cherwell District Council offices between 31st March and 4pm on 9th April.

Action: The Parish Clerk to post an election notice on the notice-board on Monday 30th March 2026. The Chair agreed to post the Statement of Persons nominated notice on the board on 10th April.

26/20. Financial Report

To receive the cashbook and bank reconciliation

The current bank balance in the Lloyds account is £13,686.55.

The following payments were approved under statutory powers:-

£554.16 To Parish Clerk (hours) and £138.60 to HMRC (tax)

£16.74 to Parish Clerk (mileage)

£228.00 to OALC (membership)

26/21. Village Matters

- *To agree the cost to purchase a post for the new defibrillator.* The Chair has a post to put the defibrillator on and will proceed with the installation.

- *To discuss a herb and plant sale for ERA.* This is a charity event and builds spirit within the community.

- *To discuss setting up a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.* There have been a few burglaries in the village recently. The neighbouring village of Broughton have set up a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

Action: The Parish Clerk to find out how it was set up.

- *To thank Cllr Rudge for organising International Women's Day.* Thanks was given to Cllr Rudge for her work.

26/22. To discuss the following highway matters

- *Drainage issues and meeting Highways.* Communication is ongoing with Highways and their recommendation is to install a new drain. A highways representative has visited the village and will come back again when it rains.

- *Condition of verges.* The verges are not in great condition and laybys are full of mud.

- *Damage to the road and kerb in Back Lane.* Already discussed under public participation.

26/23. To receive an update on planning

- *26/00177/CLUE, Certificate of Lawfulness of Existing use for land within the red line to be used as amenity land at Rectory Farmhouse, Back Lane.* It was agreed to support.

26/24. The following correspondence had been circulated

- CDC, Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Extension of Consultation period. Noted.

- CDC, Spring Clean 2026. Noted.

- Cotswolds National Landscape, Change of address. Noted.

- Highways, Road closure on Sibford Road 14th-16th April. Noted.

26/25. To note next meeting date and time

Annual Parish Meeting on Friday 15th May 2026 and Annual Parish Council meeting on Monday 18th May 2026.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.30pm.