

CHESELBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - TUESDAY 5TH MAY 2026

First of all, I would like to thank all of the Parish Councillors, Roger Hall, Nicky Searle, Dennis Walsh and Graham Waters and our dedicated Parish Clerk for their hard work and the support they have given to the Parish Council over the past twelve months. I was honoured to be re-elected as chair of the Parish Council in May last year and at the Parish Council's AGM which follows this meeting, a new chair will be elected by councillors.

I am sorry to announce that for personal reasons, Cllr Nicky Searle will be stepping down as a member of the Parish Council at the end of the council meeting which follows this meeting. In over four years as a member of the council, Nicky has worked tirelessly for Cheselbourne and I know that I speak for everyone when I say she will be greatly missed. The Parish Council wishes Nicky all the very best for the future.

This means that after this evening, we now only have four councillors out of a full complement of seven. The Parish Council has tried to recruit new members either directly or more widely through the Village News but sadly, no one has yet come forward. We will keep trying. If any residents are interested in helping to make a difference in our lovely village, please contact the Parish Clerk, Amanda Crocker. Amanda's contact details can be found on the Parish Council website.

Cllr Nicky Searle, together with a dedicated group of volunteers, has arranged regular (bi-monthly) litter picks both within the village and along the roads leading into it from as far as the junction with the B3142 near the Northbrook roundabout. The Parish Council is grateful to everyone who gives up their valuable time to help keep the village and its environs as neat and tidy as possible.

Over the dark and very wet Winter months, community speed watch was not active but now that Spring is upon us, the Parish Council is restarting these sessions on as regular basis as possible. The Parish Council is looking to increase the number of volunteers available - the more volunteers we have, the greater the number of speed watch sessions. It is encouraging that several people have already put their names forward for speed watch training and the Parish Council has put a notice on the village WhatsApp group and Facebook page setting out broadly what being a speed watch volunteer entails.

After a long process (begun in December 2021), finally the speed limit through the village was reduced from 30 mph to 20 mph in October last year. Special thanks for a successful conclusion to this long process go to Cllr Searle and former councillor, Carol Byrom.

Cllr Hall carries out monthly inspections of the children's playpark to determine what maintenance, if any, may be required to keep the equipment in good order. The Parish Council notes from Cllr Hall's reports that some (mainly) cosmetic work may be required to some of the equipment during the course of this year and this will be kept under review by the Parish Council.

Fortunately, with the exception of the village hall field, there has been no real flooding in the village during this year. Residents may recall discussions held a couple of years ago between Cllr Waters and the Environment Agency and Dorset Council that the stream will find its own course and this may mean that the field naturally floods during spells of wet weather. This may help protect properties downstream. This issue is being kept under review by the Parish Council.

I should add that the Parish Council does liaise with the school regarding the flooding of the village hall field.

I would remind everyone that sandbags are available for householders' use from the store at Meyden Revel. The Community Emergency Response Plan was last updated in December 2023 and a copy of this can be found on the Parish Council's website.

Late last year, the finger post at the Dewlish junction was once again badly damaged with the "Cheselbourne arm" broken off. I am delighted to say that together with support from Dewlish Parish Council, this has now been repaired and we hope it will be returned to its original position very soon. Thanks go to Cllr Searle for making this restoration happen.

The Parish Council, together with some other parish councils in the area, continue to support the bi weekly bus services to Dorchester and Blandford. In the last financial year, the Parish Council contributed £350 towards the service and will review its continued support later this year. It is understood that the service overall is well used.

Defibrillator training - the Parish Council notes that defibrillator and CPR awareness training sessions may not have been made available for several years. Residents who are interested in undertaking training should contact the Parish Clerk, Amanda Crocker in the first instance. If there is sufficient interest, the Parish Council will look to arrange a training session with Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance. I should also add that defibrillator training is taking place in Ansty on 9th May and a link to this has been put on the village WhatsApp group and Facebook page.

Finally but not least, some thank yous (in no particular order) on behalf of the Parish Council and all Cheselbourne residents:

- The Roberts and Bere families for organising the putting up and decorating of the Christmas tree outside the school which is admired by everyone;
- Everyone who maintains the flower boxes at the entrances to the village and near the school;
- Sara Timlin for all her work in maintaining the defibrillator by the front door of the village hall;
- Stephanie Worth for her hard work in ensuring that the village news is published each month and to everyone who distributes it.
- Bev Waters and the village hall committee for ensuring that the hall remains at the centre of village life;

- Everyone who maintains the book exchange and keeps the bus shelter clean and tidy.

If I have missed anyone whom I should have thanked, please accept my apologies for not having done so.

Finally, if you have any concerns or ideas you wish to raise with the Parish Council, please contact the clerk, Amanda Crocker or any of the councillors directly. Alternatively, please do come to one of the bi-monthly meetings which always begin with an open forum. Contact details are on the Parish Council's website.