

CHAIR'S REPORT JUNE 2026

REMEMBRANCE DAY

At the November meeting of the Council, I said that I wished to initiate a conversation with The Royal British Legion and Buckden Churches Together about having the main Act of Remembrance at 11 am at the War Memorial and not inside the Parish Church. My first step was to contact the Chairman of the RBL in Buckden who was opposed to such a move, despite the views of the RBL nationally. I then asked the Chairs of all the Parish Councils in Huntingdonshire what they did, and of the 24 who replied, 16 had a War Memorial and only two of those had the 11 am Act of Remembrance in their Church.

It was not until earlier in May that I was invited to meet a small group of representatives of Buckden Churches Together, along with the Chairman of the RBL in Buckden. Their general view was that it should remain as it had been for many years, with some being very insistent that it should continue to be part of a religious service.

This is totally against the advice of the Royal British Legion nationally, which states that “although it may be bookended by formal and/or religious ceremonies, the Act of Remembrance at its core is simple, brief and non-religious. The organiser may assemble whatever readings, music or other elements to accompany the Act of Remembrance so that it is relevant for the community attending and encourages and allows for wider participation in Remembrance”.

Although some present were not supportive of trying to seek the views of the whole village through “Roundabout” it was agreed that this would be placed in the November edition. Peter Mount of the Legion always writes an article about Remembrance Day and would add this to it.

This is not being addressed as quickly as I had hoped, but it is a move forward.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS

There are two changes that I would like to see in our Minutes.

The first is that we should record not only those who are present and those who send apologies that are accepted. We should also record as absent those who do not attend and do not send their apologies.

The second is not to record who proposes and second a proposal. If it is resolved, it is the decision of the meeting and recording it as such should be sufficient.

COUNCILLORS DETAILS

At the Annual Assembly the Council was asked to publish the addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses of all Councillors.

Whilst I have always been happy for my details to be available, the situation has changed considerably in the last few years with trolling and other threats. I do not believe that telephone numbers or addresses should be made available.

We have just been advised by the National Association of Local Councils that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has stated that from 29 June 2026 local authorities, including Parish Councils, must not publish an elected or co-opted member's home address in local authority registers of interest. Although this applies only to this specific situation, I believe that we should apply it everywhere unless any member requests otherwise.

However, our Council email addresses should be made available as that allows responsible access, but gives the Council the ability to change email addresses if there is any abuse of that.

I also suggest that we list on our website the Members of all our Committees and Advisory Groups

OVERHANGING TREES

I have been approached by a resident who has an overhanging tree which is in a public open space owned by Huntingdonshire District Council. The garden that it overhangs is only a few yards deep and so the tree has a significant detrimental impact on the enjoyment of that garden although it cannot be claimed to restrict light under the legal definition.

The owner of the property has been told he is within his rights to cut back the overhang, but he feels that it should be the owner of the tree who should do it. When one of the Parish Council's trees caused a similar problem, we did not expect the householder to deal with it – we paid for it to be done.

I feel that we should support the householder in this case, and others.

FINANCE

Now that Mark Williams is no longer a Councillor the Clerk has only Emily Lankfer to support her. After having conversations with Caroline Underwood and Anne Howell-Jones I think that my experience of Parish Councils would work well with Emily's much greater technical knowledge to assist the Clerk.

STAFF CONTRACTS

After advice from NALC, CAPALC and Worknest Anne Howell-Jones and I have agreed with Ramune the new Contracts for the staff and the Council is asked to note it.

ADDITIONAL MEETING IN AUGUST

Later on the Agenda will be a report on Silver Street which may result in the need for a Council Meeting on Tuesday 11th August.