

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF CULWORTH PARISH COUNCIL GENERAL MEETING
held on Thursday 15th May 2025 at 7.30pm pm in the Village Hall**

Present:	Andrew Wilby (AW)	Chairman
	Andrew Field (AF)	Councillor
	Jose Rowling (JR)	Councillor
	Amy Harrison (AH)	Councillor
	Clive Waller (CW)	Councillor
	Rob Stewart (RS)	Councillor
	Gary Denby (GD)	Parish Clerk
Public:	Darryl Timmins	Village Hall Committee
	Charlie Timmins	
	Julie Waller	
	Chris Harrison	
	Freddie Rolt	
	Stephen Kerridge (SK)	
(Total 14)	Martin Rowling	

Welcome to members and public by AW

1. **Appoint a Parish Council Chairman** 2025-26 from amongst the qualifying Councillors
AW was proposed by AF, seconded by JR
AH was proposed by AH, seconded by RS
AW was duly appointed, using his casting vote as Chairman
2. Received Councillors' completed Acceptance of Office forms.
Supplied Councillor's Declarations of Interested forms (to be returned in 30 days)
3. Apologies received: Cllr Catherine Ruffley (CR)
4. Councillor declarations of interest & dispensations in the following agenda items: None
[AH declared a belated interest in 8.4.]
5. Receive minutes of the meeting held on **3rd April 2025** as an accurate record of the Parish Council official acts and decisions. Proposed by JR, seconded by AF and agreed by Councillors.
6. Receive reports and minutes from the **Annual Parish Meeting** held on 3rd April 2025.
Carried forward **GD**.
7. **Public Concerns** (prior notice the the Chair or the Parish Clerk is recommended)
 - 7.1 SK reported upon a recent HS/2 public event at Sulgrave. The current diversion via the Sulgrave turn may only be required for a year, the cut-and-cover tunnel works being completed at that time. Meanwhile Banbury Lane which passes his home is already in a poor state and likely to deteriorate further, with increased local cut-through traffic. Might a vehicle Weight Limit or Access Only restriction be applied? AW noted that HS/2 has statutory powers (they supply a diversion but have no responsibility to enforce it). We await appointment of a new Highways Monitoring Officer at WNC.
 - 7.2 SK commented upon local flooding contingency with regards Mr Buckleys's field.

- 7.3 SK had difficulty finding the meeting's agenda (on the noticeboard and the Parish Council's web site www.culworthparishcouncil.gov.uk under Parish Council Documents).
- 7.4 SK queried who takes responsibility for dogs in the Parish Council Play Park. AW noted the displayed sign at its entrance. Owners must take responsibility for their pets.



8. **Matters Arising** from previous Parish Council minutes

8.1 Ref 5.1: Clerk's letter to Treetops requesting an update to their previous report Dec 21

JR advised council that Treetop Services (Mr Pointon) is no longer in operation. However, she will provide the Clerk with the details of a contractor who previously worked on the Cricket Field and the Burial Ground **JR**.

8.2 Ref 5.3: Update of a revised Complaints procedure

N-CALC have produced a simplified one-side Complaints Procedure for use by the public (requires the Chairman's details to be added). It limits the scope of such complaints and specifies unreasonable behaviour by the complainant. It is now used by nearby councils; to be distributed to Councillors for comment **GD**.

8.3 Ref 5.4: Update on practising with the new Scribe accounting system.

This is a new cloud-based accounting and cemetery system for the Clerk, assisting in producing the annual audit reports. Access was granted for practice and set-up back in February. However, the Clerk has had insufficient free time to set it up or use it. A full refund has therefore been agreed, pending the wishes of your next Parish Clerk.

8.4 Ref 12.3: Tree works required for over-hanging branches from the cricket field?

AW has spoken with Chris Harrison with regards the removal of a remaining small tree with one-sided growth on the Cricket field, next to his boundary. AF proposed its removal, seconded by RS and agreed by all Councillors present **AF**.

9. Ref 7: Progress report on new Street Light electricity supply contract GD

The Clerk is still missing the power specifications (day sensor and night usage) for the new LED lamps, in order to develop a new power certificate. He need to chase our AJR contractor for the details. The new lamp outside The Rectory also still does not seem to be working properly, our contractor AJR being advised on 4th April **GD**.

10. Culworth Burial Ground update – Nothing to report.

11. Update on the Community Hill Field Trust (CHFT)

AW reported that a meeting is imminent, before the summer holidays, to consider a revised specification and reduced pricing for the new building. This is resultant from a referendum a few years back, upon which grants were obtained for the first phase now completed; this being the second phase of work to replace the decrepit village hall.

12. Review of the Council's delegation arrangements:-

Interested parties in the following areas (to be proposed and nominated next time):-

12.1 Vice Chair (included in all Chair-Clerk correspondences; a rapid pick-up if needed)

12.2 Independent Finance Officer - maybe CR? Signatories: Chair + AH+ CR?

12.3 Planning Committee – RS + CW + AF are willing

12.4 Play Area safety checks weekly (how to log?) - CW is willing

12.5 Monthly defibrillator checking - CR was reported as willing

12.6 Occasional village trees and footpaths - RS is willing

12.7 Occasional assistance with Burial Ground - JR + AF willing; Lighting check - AF

12.8 Ad hoc village maintenance - CW (lead)+ AF + RS willing

12.9 Liaison with school - AH willing; church JR + AF willing;

CHFT AW willing; Cricket club - JR willing;

HS/2 JR maybe?; Police Liaison rep AH + AF willing

12.10 A new role in Parish Communications with Parishioners – AH promoting this

The above are quite flexible and subject to adjustments at this time.

13. Agree upon Parish Council meeting dates for 2025-26 – see APPENDIX A

These have more frequency, to assist the new Councillors. Approved by all Councillors present. [NOTE: The June date had to be moved to **Thu 12 June**, to allow for the Internal Audit to complete; the July date has had to be moved to **Mon 14 July** to facilitate Councillors' attendance. Other dates are as planned.]

14. Review and refresh the Parish Council Governance Documents held publicly at:-

www.culworthparishcouncil.gov.uk/community/culworth-parish-council-18681/policies-etc

- Parish Council **Standing Orders** 2022 (22 pages);
- **Codes of Conduct** 2021 (14 pages)
- Equality Statement 2022 (1 page); Complaints Procedure 2021 (2 pages)
- Burial Ground Policy 2022 (5 pages)
- NALC **Planning Guide** 2025 (66 pages)
- NALC **Good Councillor** guide (99 pages)

- **NEW** Culworth Policies and Procedures (Bullying, Data, Planning, Social Media...)
- Review carried forward to the next meeting, allowing new Councillors to read them.

15. Correspondence received by Councillors

- 15.1 4 Apr: N-CALC mini eupdate 04/04 – Close of Nominations; membership invoices
- 15.2 24 Apr: WNC invite to their Annual Parish Conference on 12 June
- 15.3 24 Apr: N-CALC mini eUpdate 17/04 – **Procurement changes** (over £25,000) Feb 25
- 15.4 24 Apr: WNC Never bin batteries
- 15.5 30 Apr: WNC Town & Parish Briefing edn 34 Apr 25 link
- 15.6 30 Apr: WNC Local Plan briefing part II invite 5 June online
- 15.7 30 Apr: N-CALC training treat – Being a good employer 4 June
- 15.8 30 Apr: WNC thousands of pupils allocated primary school places
- 15.9 30 Apr: WNC first half Precept received 29 April for £19,000
- 15.10 30 Apr: N-CALC training treat – Misuse of Social Media to intimidate and harass 30 Apr
- 15.11 30 Apr: N-CALC mini eUpdate 11/04 – Rose of Northamptonshire; Domain names
- 15.12 30 Apr: WNC Fire Service consultation on its Community Risk Management Plan
- 15.13 30 Apr: WNC Police Liaison Representative (PLR) update
- 15.14 5 May: N-CALC mini eupdate 02/05 – Local Government Pay final offer 3.2%
- 15.15 12 May: Summons to your Annual Parish Council Meeting on Thu 15 May
- 15.16 12 May: Hiscox renewal invitation for Parish Council public liabilities insurance
- 15.17 13 May: WNC Councillors' completion of Election Expenses returns
- 15.18 14 May: Local Elections – ward allocation
- 15.19 14 May: WNC PLR May update – Road Safety Edition

16. Planning (items available at wnc.planning-register.co.uk + Advanced Planning + Parish)

- 16.1 2024/2800/OUT: Extension to existing barn to form living accommodation for pub owners and / or staff at The Red Lion, High Street OX17 2BD by 1 July. Councillors supported this application. Pending.
- 16.2 2024/2589/FULL: New agricultural barn, new track and access to land adjacent to Peas Furlong, Sulgrave Road by 14 June. Councillors Objected to this application on grounds of its dangerous access on the brow of a hill within a National Speed Limit (60 mph) area. Pending.

17. Audit and Accounts

- 17.1 Receive March and April statements from the Unity Trust accounts – Outstanding **GD**
- 17.2 Consider budget update to the end of the financial year 2024-25, reconciled to above Carried Forward to the June meeting **GD**.

- 17.3 First half Precept of £19,000 received from WNC on 29 April 2025
- 17.4 Renewal of Parish Council insurance with Gallagher from 1 Jun 2025 for £962.42

- 17.5 Consider N-CALC advertisement and rates for a **Replacement Clerk (Autumn 2025)**

The Clerk has been drafting an N-CALC notice to advertise the up-coming vacancy, due to retirement to Stratford upon Avon in the Autumn. Whilst the former Clerk's have been able to provide a full day per week to these duties, the current incumbent has only

been able to find roughly a half day per week, due to a parallel unexpected commitment looking after an elderly widowed parent up in Nuneaton. His two other Parish Councils are likely to advertise for a lower-qualified Clerk, sharing a person between the pair of them. Culworth may require someone more CiLCA qualified, given the complexity of the ongoing CHFT project? This will be above the current budget allocation.

17.6 Review the Parish Council Financial Risk Assessment

17.7 Review the Parish Council Asset Register

17.8 Review the Parish Council subscription to other bodies (N-CALC, SLCC, ACRE..)

The Village Hall usefully subscribes to Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)

17.9 Consider and approve Internal Audit documentation

Section 1 & Section 2 of Council's Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ending 31 March 2025.

Carried forward to next meeting, pending full reconciliation of the accounts **GD**

17.10 Update on opening an additional Parish Council savings account for Christmas bazaar
This needs to be re-issued by the Clerk and re-circulated for authorisation **GD**.

17.11 Consider and approve the Parish Council payments listed below, excluding that to CuttleFish for the domain renewal. Might the current web supplier be able to renew the .gov.uk domain **GD**? Proposed by JR, seconded by AH and agreed by all Councillors present. To be authorised with Unity Trust by AW + David Mumford (former Councillor).

Description / Power	Amount	VAT	Total
Description / Power	Amount	VAT	Total
Cuttlefish Parish Council web site culworthparishcouncil.gov.uk domain renewal to 4 June 2026; Clerk email address clerk@culworthparishcouncil.gov.uk to 31 May 2026 <i>Local Government Act 1972, Section 142 Local Government Info</i>	£75.00 £35.00	£22.00	£132.00
Roger Smith outstanding mowing invoice from December 2024, Burial ground mowing 14 th Nov (Inv 805) <i>Open Spaces Act 1906, ss.9 and 10</i>	£24.00	-	£24.00
Roger Smith mowing of Burial Ground x2 March; strim BG x Mrch; Mow-strim Play Park 18 th March (Inv 832) <i>Open Spaces Act 1906, ss.9 and 10</i>	£114.00	-	£114.00
Cartwright Landscapes mowing of Greens and other areas on 27 th March 2025 (C46173). <i>Open Spaces Act 1906, ss.9 and 10</i>	£70.00	£14.00	£84.00
Cartwright Landscapes mowing of Greens and other areas on 14 th and 28 th April 2025 (C46249). <i>Open Spaces Act 1906, ss.9 and 10</i>	£140.00	£28.00	£168.00
Gallagher Insurance renewal for Hiscox Policy 8188401 from 1 st June 2025 for public liability and assets, also employers liability (0.5% increase). <i>Local Government Act 1972, Section 140 Insurance by local authorities</i>	£864.66	£97.76	£962.42
Gary Denby Parish Clerk gross remuneration and expenses (6 weeks) including home office expenses 3 Apr – 14 May 2025 <i>Local Government Act 1972 Appointment of Staff s.112</i>	£388.08 £42.90	-	£430.98
Yu Energy Street lighting electricity charges 01 – 31 Mar 2025 (DD) 360 p/day standing; 47.5 p/kWh (Inv 023873591). Out of Contract <i>Highways Act 1980, lighting functions s.98</i>	Night £152.09 Day £49.73 Stand £111.60	£7.60 £2.49 £15.67	£329.09
Yu Energy Street lighting electricity charges 01 – 30 Apr 2025 (DD) 360 p/day standing; 47.5 p/kWh (Inv 023873591). Out of Contract <i>Highways Act 1980, lighting functions s.98</i>	Night £131.86 Day £43.86 Stand £108.00	£6.59 £2.16 £14.15	£297.23
Yu Energy Re-bill issued due to incorrect energy charges Credit note issued. DC			CR £297.23

Scribe credit since Clerk has no time to learn and develop its Cloud based finances and cemetery system. May 2025.			CR £1,194.00
Transfer from PC saver account 20425856 to PC T2 Funds to avoid going overdrawn after large April expenditures (insufficient after Yu Energy DD) on 25 April 2025			£1,000

18. N-CALC online training opportunities for Parish Councillors & Clerk

Off to a flying start: 12, 24 June, 2, 22 July, 16, 23 Sept; Finance for Councillors 10 Jul
 Planning Nuts and Bolts: 15 Oct, 9 Dec; Conservation Areas: 27 Jan;
 Agendas and Minutes: 16 Oct; Freedom of Information Essentials: 22 Aug;
 Misuse of social media... TBA northantscalc.gov.uk/training-page

19. Items for the next Parish Council agenda. None.

20. Date of next meeting: **Thursday 5th June, 7pm** in the village hall

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Chairman

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Date

Meeting closed at 9 pm

APPENDIX A: Parish Council Meeting Dates for 2025-26

Culworth Parish Council Meeting Dates for 2025 - 26

Generally on the 1st Thursday of the month
at 7pm in the Village Hall, **unless otherwise stated.**

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 2025 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

15th May **Annual General Meeting of the PC**
(6 weeks) (1st May: local elections)

5th June **(3 weeks) Finalise Internal Audit**

3rd July **(4 weeks)**

NO AUGUST MEETING

4th September **(9 weeks)**

2nd October **(4 weeks)**

6th November **Draft Budget discussions**
(5 weeks)

NO DECEMBER MEETING

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 2026 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

8th January **Budgeting and set Precept**
(9 weeks)

5th February **(4 weeks)**

5th March **(4 weeks) Pre-cricket season!**

2nd April **Annual Parish Meeting then the PC**
Review Accounts, prepare for Audit
(4 weeks) - a dual meeting date
(6th April: Easter bank Holiday)

14th May **Annual General Meeting of the PC**
(6 weeks) (4th May: Early Bank Hol)

Members of the public and press are welcome to attend