

# CULWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Culworth Parish Council Held at 7pm on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2026 in the Culworth Village Hall

Welcome to members and public.

Attending:

Andrew Wilby (AW)  
Andrew Field (AF)  
Catherine Ruffley (CR)  
Clive Waller (CW)  
Jose Rowling (JR)  
Amy Harrison (AH)  
Rob Stuart (RS)  
Peter Coville (Clerk)

Members of public:

Kim Watts (KW)  
Shaun Oxley (SO)

Meeting opened at 19:10.

1. **Apologies** received and acceptance  
No apologies received.

2. **Annual General Meeting business**

2.1 Election of Chair and acceptance of office form

Andrew Wilby offered to stand as chair for 2026-27. He was proposed by JR and seconded by AF. Carried unanimously. AW signed the acceptance of office form.

2.2 Election of vice-Chair and acceptance of office form

AF offered to stand as Vice-chair for 2026-27. He was proposed by CR and seconded by JR. Carried unanimously.

2.3 Reapproval of committee/working group structure – Finance, Planning etc including chairs

Finance committee – AW/AH/AF/JR

Planning working group – CW/RS/CR

It was proposed that the Chair and Vice-chair are authorised to attend either meeting at their discretion but only have a casting vote if required. It was clarified to councillors the differences between a formal committee and a working group in terms of public notice, public attendance, ability to take decisions and published minutes and agendas.

The above structure was proposed by JR seconded by RS and carried unanimously.

2.4 Reappointments to outside bodies - VHT, Police, Tree warden and any other to be moved.

The following councillor roles were identified and all confirmed they would continue for the next year:

AH – School; Police; Social Media

CW – Play park warden; quarterly asset inspection

JR – HS2 and roads; Internal Control Councillor

CR – Defibrillator

AF – Street light warden; Village Hall representative

RS – Tree warden

AW – CHFT representative

\*Clerk to ensure that website is up to date with the above.

3. **Councillor declarations of interest & dispensations** in the following agenda items  
None reported.

4. **Receive, comment on and approve minutes** of the meeting held on **9<sup>th</sup> April 2026**  
as an accurate record of the Parish Council official acts and decisions - **All**

The minutes previously circulated were proposed by CR seconded by AH and the motion was carried unanimously. AW signed the minutes.

\*Clerk to publish minutes to website.

5. **Matters Arising** from previous Parish Council minutes (action items)

5.1 Procurement for Hill Field building – process to be followed – **Clerk/All**

Clerk explained the process to be followed (both for procurement legislation and council “value for money” requirements) based on the proposed standing orders under agenda item 8.2.

A summary has been provided by the Clerk to CHFT’s project manager/chairman and the required procurement documents will be presented to the council prior to a contract decision in either the June or September meetings – or at a special meeting if required to meet the timeline of the project. There were no questions raised at this stage.

5.2 Granite Setts – **CW**

CW is waiting for the contractor to coordinate a working day with another job in the village.

\*CW to collect smaller setts from JR.

AH raised the loss of the ability bus service that was previously discussed at the April meeting. It appears that 2 villagers are using the service. Villagers would appreciate an interim service but this depends on the status of the WNC replacement proposal. Volunteer car drivers paid mileage by the PC were suggested but there were concerns over insurance and liability although generally volunteering is covered under domestic comprehensive policies. There is also a challenge about waiting for users while they shop in Banbury in order to bring them back. The Greatworth bus does not run a regular shopping trip to Banbury but focuses on day trips.

\*AH is to research when new service is coming and what it will entail and report to the council.

6. **Standing Agenda Items**

6.1 Ward Councillor report (if present) – **AE**

N/a – Councillor Eastwood is out of the country.

6.2 Thanks

None noted for this meeting.

6.3 Public participation (prior notice to the Chair or the Parish Clerk is recommended) – **All**  
*Speeding in village*

SO stated that he has concerns around speeding through the village particularly down the hill towards the Eydon junction. He has seen speeds of 60mph clocked on the speed awareness sign on the hill. This is not just commuters and construction cars but also large farm vehicles with trailers driving in excess of 40mph. These would be unable to stop on the steep hill.

SO met with 2 officers at the recent police surgery who offered to get training to organise a community speed watch as they do not have the resources or location to position a camera van in the village. He wants to know if there is support within the village to deliver this.

\*AH to discuss with tagged PCSO as to how to deliver this scheme and to publicise it for volunteers.

#### 6.4 Burial Ground update (if any) – **JR / AW**

Gate repair is still outstanding. AF has decided that the post needs to be moved in order to make the gate secure. In order to enable this to happen it was moved that a maximum budget of £250 for this repair be pre-approved so that payments can be certified and authorised by the Clerk. Proposed AH, seconded AW carried unanimously.

\*AF to request help if needed.

#### 6.5 CHFT update – **AW** and **Clerk**

AW gave a brief update on the progress of the Hill Field project. The current preferred contractor is for a metal framed building which can be clad as required and will have a more durable structure than a wood framed building. The footprint will be larger than the existing village hall and pavilion combined and meets the requirements of stakeholders. The aim is to have a similar footprint/shape to the original building.

The most immediate problem is to obtain revised planning permission. AW will meet with WNC's chief planner in conjunction with cllr Alison Eastwood when she returns from abroad in order to push the project ahead as efficiently as possible.

\*AW to send recent CHFT update to councillors.

The Clerk noted that it is also necessary to confirm that the new ownership structure, the VAT treatment and the funding plan integrate and follow regulations (charity, HMRC and council). There is significant complexity to this which the Clerk is taking advice on.

SO asked where the new hall will be sited. It will be on the site next to the Hill field car park where the council owns the freehold.

##### 6.5.1 Motion to grant authority for the Clerk to authorise the application for planning permission by CHFT for the Village Hall Trust site and for the Hill Field site

On the basis that this will be for an amendment to plans only this was proposed by CR, seconded by AH and carried unanimously.

##### 6.5.2 Motion to grant authority for Clerk and Chair to begin the process of applying for the Public Works Loan to fund the construction of the new community facility

AH requested Clerk to check if there is any deadline on use of the loan once it has been secured.

On the basis that a full feasibility paper will be presented to council for consideration before the loan application is signed this was proposed by JR, seconded by RS and carried unanimously.

## 7 **New agenda items**

### 7.1 Culworth school – consultation on integration with East Midlands Academy Trust (EMAT) – **All**

AH: A list of questions has been submitted to the EMAT consultation as well as a request for contact with the council. The questions have been posted on the website and Facebook. AH will feedback on any response.

KW noted that there has been a long period of uncertainty for the school and that EMAT has already helped with practical issues over the last holiday. It is hoped that EMAT will bring stability and good governance. KW also noted that any purchase will have to pass through the DoE and the diocese – but that EMAT wanted the transfer to go through before the start of term in September. Unfortunately due to the many different heads in the last 5 years the historical documentation is not well retained. The school is currently run under the Evolve trust.

There is some concern about the ownership of the underlying land and buildings and how this might fit into a transfer.

JR noted that Martin Rowling and Jenny Howse are original trustees relating to the school and that there is a small trust fund relating to the school that was set up by the Misses Danvers.

The Clerk noted that the land parcel of the school is not showing as a registered cadastral parcel with the Land registry on Parish Online and therefore there is unlikely to have been a transfer of the title since at least 1990 when compulsory registration was introduced.

It was generally agreed that clarity is required around school ownership as well as the other questions and therefore:

\* AH will encourage EMAT and the Evolve trust as well as any identified trustees related to the school to attend the next council meeting.

#### 7.2 Comments on Annual Parish Meeting note before distribution – **All**

No comments noted.

\*Clerk to publish to website.

#### 7.3 WNC New road safety strategy feedback – **All**

\*CR to complete. Deadline 12 May. Clerk to (re)send email.

#### 7.4 National allotment survey – nominated person to complete.

\*JR to complete. Clerk to (re)send email.

### 8. **Finance and governance**

8.1 Discussion and approval of Finance and Management Risk Assessment for 2026-27  
The Draft Finance and Management Risk Assessment was circulated prior to the meeting. This was updated by the Clerk for the current year. It was explained that this document was intended to represent risks to the council that may prevent it delivering its public services.

AH requested that general procurement risk was added under the financial heading – with appropriate controls related to the financial regulations, the standing orders, the bank mandate and review of payments in council meetings.

It was also decided to note the following to complete the draft document:

- War memorial to be incorporated into regular asset checks.
- Clerk to complete control measures for VHT project relating to procurement, VAT and charity law compliance.
- Clerk to complete control measures for procurement risk as noted above.

On the above basis and subject to the above edits it was moved to approve the document and to publish it on the council website. Proposed by AH seconded by CW carried unanimously.

\*Clerk to complete updates and publish the document to the website.

#### 8.2 Review and approval of Council system of internal control (Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Policies)

Clerk briefed the council on the use of the new NALC templates for the Standing Orders and the Financial Regulations for the council. Where necessary the Clerk has inserted wording appropriate to the operation of Culworth Parish Council. Text in bold is a statutory requirement and has not been changed. These documents were circulated before the meeting.

The Internal Auditor is appointed through NALC and is an experienced Clerk independent of the Parish. The external auditor is appointed centrally through tender.

It was moved to accept the two revised documents for immediate use and publication to the council website. It was also moved that the council note that it has reviewed the council's current system of internal control (governance, policies and procedures) and concluded that it is effective for the year 2026-27. Proposed AF seconded RS carried unanimously.

\*Clerk to publish revised documents to council website and ensure all other governance documents are up to date.

8.3 Comments from Internal Auditor, draft AGAR form – discussion of actions to be taken (to be approved at June meeting)

The Clerk walked the council through the comments raised by the Internal Auditor in her report and set out his suggested responses. These were discussed and any questions answered. The Clerk noted that the audit had been a helpful and positive experience. The responses will be documented in a paper for the June meeting which will be circulated to councillors. The responses will then be formally minuted at the June meeting for publication.

8.4 Terms of reference of planning committee – if required

It was agreed to maintain this as a working group that will allow full council discussions on a more informed basis. Clerk to ensure going forward that all planning applications are forwarded to this group for consideration and reporting to full council.

8.5 Privacy policy requirement

Clerk informed the meeting that based on feedback from NCALC that the basic requirements of a privacy policy are included in the council's policies and procedures document (data management, records retention etc).

\*Clerk to draft an appropriate response to this audit finding and consider whether privacy policy elements should be extracted from the policies and procedures document and presented separately for clarity.

8.6 Motion to delegate authority to the Clerk / RFO and Chair to authorise payments under the agreed budget for that type of expenditure as per the revised Financial Regulations (proposed above) section 6.15 up to £500 (Clerk alone) or £1,000 (with the consent of the Chair). Payments will continue to require 2 other UNITY signatories for approval and be notified on the next meeting agenda.

Proposed by JR seconded by AH carried unanimously.

*Standing items – finance and governance*

8.11 Accounting/budget position review 2026/27

Noted – no questions at this early stage in year.

JR left meeting at 21:00 for personal reasons.

8.12 Review and approve cash reserves statement as at year end

The cash reserves statement as at 31 March 2025 was previously circulated by the Clerk to the council. No questions were raised.

8.13 Financial check and bank reconciliation (every quarter Apr, Jul, Oct, Jan)

Completed new version of check (to tie in with change to cashbook format) by JR – no issues noted. Signed copy retained.

*Bank balances:*

Events account £1,467.88

Reserves account £71,443.58

Current account £22,331,35

8.14 Payments review and approval (as necessary) (**Appendix A**)

The Clerk apologised that the payment of admin expenses to him of £56 for Land Registry searches listed as paid has actually not been paid and requires approval. It was moved to the correct list in these minutes.

Motion to note and approve the payments as listed in Appendix A. Proposed RS seconded CW carried unanimously.

9. Correspondence received by Councillors – see **Appendix B**  
No comments.

10. **Planning (items available at [wnc.planning-register.co.uk](http://wnc.planning-register.co.uk) + Advanced Planning + Parish)**  
None received.

11. **Items for the next Parish Council agenda**

AH: Discuss use of events budget for the year (CF – cycling day; AF more coordination of events between PC, PCC and School)

\*Clerk – obtain quote for dig bin service from recommended supplier and inform Marcus Young of this and check notice period.

Moving waste bin from old football field

\*RS – ask Edgecote estate if they own concrete road and if happy for bin to be moved

Internal audit report acceptance and responses

AGAR section 1 review and approval

AGAR financial statements review and approval

Notice of public rights period and provision of information

Update on School transition.

12. **Meeting items to publish on Social Media (Facebook and Whatsapp)**

None except school consultation (already published to website news feed and on FB).

Next meeting: **11 June 2026, 7pm** in the village hall. CR provides apologies in advance.

Meeting closed at 9:15pm.

Signed as a true record of the proceedings.

*Andrew Wilby*

Andrew Wilby, Chair

11 June 2026

Copies of all council papers are available for download at [culworthparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://culworthparishcouncil.gov.uk)

## Appendix A – Payments for approval / noting

### TO BE PAID

01-Apr-26 Cartwright Landscaping 47158 Mowing and strimming Mowing / Trees - S96 Highways 80	(172.80)
01-Apr-26 Cuttlefish 2827 Domain renewal and email Local Govt Info Newsletters - S142 LG Act 1972	(132.00)
12-Apr-26 Roger Smith 951 Mowing and strimming Churchyards & Burial Grounds – S215 LG Act 1972	(50.00)
12-Apr-26 Roger Smith 951 Mowing and strimming Play Park Support – S164 Public Health Act 1875	(40.00)
14-Apr-26 Texprep 27881 Newsletter printing Local Govt Info Newsletters - S142 LG Act 1972	(27.50)
13-Apr-26 Peter Coville various HM Land registry document downloads Admin includes NCALC & Audit & subscriptions	(56.00)

### NOTIFIED AS PAID

30-Dec-99 Valda Electricity bill (DD) Lighting – S301 Highways 80	(179.27)
05-Apr-26 Coltman Forestry 60 Tree works Mowing / Trees - S96 Highways 80	(950.00)
15-Apr-26 Signomatic 2435169 Signs Signs – S72 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984	(91.18)

All the above have been examined, verified and certified by the Clerk.

## Appendix B – Communications received by Councillors

2 Apr	WNC: FW: Community Transport
2 Apr	WNC: New Crisis & Resilience Fund (CRF) now live
8 Apr	WNC: Northampton puts forward bold bid to become UK Town of Culture 2028
8 Apr	CommMiniBus: Replacement bus services in West Northants - progress update
14 Apr	WNC: TTRO(26/27) W069 - Welsh Road, Culworth closure July 2026
14 Apr	WNC: <u>Provide Feedback – West Northamptonshire Road Safety Strategy</u>
24 Apr	WNC: Town & Parish Briefing - edition 45
27 Apr	WNC: Residents to help shape the next generation of events in West Northants
27 Apr	WNC: plan to bring three-weekly black bin waste collections to WNorthants
27 Apr 2028	WNC: Council to consider bringing waste and recycling services in-house from 2028
28 Apr	Parish Online Newsletter #66
28 Apr	National Allotment Survey