

MINUTES OF MEETING OF CULWORTH PARISH COUNCIL GENERAL MEETING

held on Thursday 14th July 2025 at 7.30pm pm in the Village Hall

Present:

Andrew Wilby (AW)	Chairman
Andrew Field (AF)	Councillor
Jose Rowling (JR)	Councillor
Clive Waller (CW)	Councillor
Rob Stewart (RS)	Councillor
Catherine Ruffley (CR)	Councillor
Gary Denby (GD)	Parish Clerk

Public: Simon & Karen Theobald
(Total 10) Martin Rowling

Welcome to members and public by AW

1. Apologies received: Cllr Alison Eastwood West Northamptonshire Council (WNC)
Cllr Amy Harrison (AH)
2. Councillor declarations of interest & dispensations in the following agenda items: None
3. Receive minutes of the meeting held on **12th June 2025** as an accurate record of the Parish Council official acts and decisions. Proposed by RS, seconded by JR and agreed by Councillors present.
4. Receive reports and minutes from the **Annual Parish Meeting** held on 3rd April 2025. Carried Forward **GD**.
5. **Public Concerns** (prior notice the the Chair or the Parish Clerk is recommended)
 - 5.1 ST noted that the Parish Council web site was still out of date with regards current membership. The Clerk gave his explanations. Joanne Wilby is also assisting.
 - 5.2 ST reported a footpath style issue which **RS** (Foot Paths Warden) will look into.
 - 5.3 The village signs at the top end of the village are extremely weathered. This was raised in the September 2024 minutes (4.1) using Eydon as an example with sott.co.uk signs. This requires photos and ideas for a design, which can be opened to villagers **GD**.
6. **Matters Arising** from previous Parish Council minutes
 - 6.1 Ref 10: Quotation received from **Steve Smith (Stonemason)** for cricket ground wall re-pointing, estimated at £300 - £500. This are all the loose stones on the inner side of the wall near to the entrance. Acceptance was proposed by JR, seconded by AF and agreed by all Councillors present. Invoicing needs to specify more clearly the length of wall and time taken, having always provided value in the past **GD**.
 - 6.2 Ref 11: Appointment of Vice Chair – was carried forward
(included in all Chair-Clerk correspondences; a rapid pick-up if needed).
AF was proposed by CR and seconded by JR;
AH was proposed by RS and seconded by CW. AF was duly elected 3:2.

6.3 Ref 11.1: Appointment of an Finance Committee and corresponding signatories

It has been suggested this comprise the Chair and Vice Chair, together with JR due to her experience of the Parish Council accounts, plus one other AH with her enthusiasm. Agreed by all Councillors present. The Committee will have a busy year, looking at project details and making recommendations to the Parish Council public meetings; also approving interim payments of budgeted items (reported subsequently). The proposed first meeting of the Finance Committee is **Thu 28th May 7pm at AW's**.

6.4 Ref 11.3: **CW** lives close to the Play Park and is willing to form a regular inspection and recording regime. It was suggested that the Parish Online system available to the council could be used to record and photograph individual items of equipment, record its most recent inspection dates and produce tabular reports of the same or the council. **RS** might also use Parish Online to record and photograph individual trees within the remit of the Parish Council, its summary report being a guide - checklist to professional inspections of the same. To this end it was agreed the three shall get together for an informal introduction to Parish Online and its abilities [on **Wed 23rd July at GD's**].

7. Consider N-CALC advertisement for a replacement Parish Clerk in the Autumn

It was suggested that the advertisement figures used to 'recruit' GD back in the summer of 2023 might be more useful for the new Clerk in the Autumn. This to be distributed as soon as possible for comment and then promotion over the summer (competing with neighbouring Eydon for a similar skill set) **GD**.

8. Budgeting considerations for an annual £1,000 pa for community events

AW proposal: "That the Council allocate a budget of this allocation for successive years £1000 for Community Events for the current civic year and review this allocation annually as part of the budgeting process." Proposed by AW, seconded by RS and agreed by all Councillors present. To be monitored by the Finance Committee.

9. Culworth Burial Ground update: £37 cheque received for a monument re-inscription for Daphne Margaret Claridge by Humphris Funerals.

10. Community Hill Field Trust (CHFT) update – see final item

11. Consideration of new Clerk and Chair email addresses utilisation

Through the CuttleFish annual subscription, the Parish Council has new email addresses to the Chair and Clerk, not yet used. The challenge is to retain an archive of former Clerk emails received, within the 'free domain' of gmail.com (presently using 4 of 15 Mbytes of data space). The latter may disappear any any time (there is no contract), subsequent to account non-use. It is also unclear whether this free gmail account can auto-forward to the new Clerk's email (as this might encourage its redundancy).

Maybe have a monthly action for the new Clerk to login to the gmail account and review any correspondence still using the old address, and forward to the new system **TBA?**
The new email accounts need to be activated and access passwords assigned **GD**

12. Update on Culworth Christmas Paper Trail and its budget

CR has not received any further details, nor aware of what was made on the recent, very successful village BBQ raffle, nor what monies has been carried forward to the Christmas event. It was agreed the organiser shall be invited to the Sept meeting **GD**.

13. Correspondence received by Councillors

13.1 20 June: Quote for street light Supply Tariff quotes for Valda Energy (1 and 2 year)

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

14.1 2025/2686/TCA: Notification of tree work at Puzzle Cottage, Queens Street OX17 2AT for intended tree works including: Remove 1x Ash tree and work to 1x Oak tree in the Conservation Area. Councillors considered these works to be sensible had had no comments upon them.

The above led to a discussion on the urgent need for the Parish Council to perform its own tree works. AF met with **Joshua Robbins of Rural Works** earlier today for a walk-around the village. He has produced the Inuit Quickbooks email quotation below:-

Burial Ground:-

- T006 1st beech inside the gate: cut back branches from neighbours building
- Oak tree: crown lift and dead wood
- Small Oak tree: tidy
- Sever ivy

Burial Ground bottom left hand side:-

- Walnut and Sweet Chestnut: crown lift. This is to remove low hanging branches over the public footpath and school buildings
- Beech tree crown: lift and remove dead wood
- 07 Trees overhanging from Church yard running parallel to the footpath: Crown lift to approx 3m **to allow coffin bearers and visitors to pass beneath the trees**

Castle Mound Field.. School tree

- T001 Large Oak tree: crown lift over public path and dead wood

Castle Mound Field...Parish

- Dead Elm overhanging into field: remove
- Ash tree: remove dead wood

Cricket Field

- Oak tree near "in"entrance": remove epicormic growth
- Tree on the boundary of Butts Close houses: remove overhanging branches over the road
- Holm Oak: remove two limbs and dead wood

The Green

- Oak and Horse Chestnut trees: remove any dead wood and minimal tidy

Remove all arising

Quotation 2537 estimate: £830 + £166 VAT = £996.00

Councillors considered the above remedial work to be urgent, particularly those in the burial ground which could impinge upon the activity or injure pall bearers and visitors. Proposed by CR, seconded by CW and agreed by all Councillors present. The Clerk will need to seek a TCA Planning Permission, since within the Conservation area (WNC are short staffed) **GD**.

The Parish Council also needs to renew – update its previous tree survey – after the above works **TBA**.

15. Audit and Accounts

15.1 Receive update on Parish Accounts to 30 June 2025 (Q2):

Current T2: £13,942.99; Deposit £56,105.46 CHFT: £4,436.56

The above have been reconciled against the Parish Council spreadsheet. This awaits summary into the updated budget sheet for distribution **GD**.

15.2 Update on the new Street Lighting electricity contract

Now arranged with Valda Energy for two years fixed rate via Direct Debit monthly.

£720 pa standing charge (light + sensor)
£1,935 pa at £39.5 p/kWh for 4.9kW light
£142 pa at £39.5 p/kWh for 360W sensors

Total £2,797 pa + VAT from 1st July 2025

It was noted that the new LED lamp No7 outside of The Rectory on Queens Street is still not operating, though the trees engulfing it have now been cut-back. **AF** agreed to chase the contractor again, also to ask about the implications of moving the village defibrillator into the disused telephone box on The green (a more obvious placement for visitors to the village).

Customer Details	
Name:	Mr Gary Denby
Business name:	Culworth Parish Council
Customer reference number:	187520
Tariff:	Valda SmartChoice
Energy Supply Details	
Energy	Electricity
Site address	10a Lime Avenue, Daventry, Northamptonshire, NN11 3PG
MPAN	1100039906470
Fixed term period	24 months
Charges:	
daily standing charge	100p
per kWh unit rate	37p
Commission rate	2.5p/kwh
Estimated consumption	4908kwh

15.3 Opening an additional Parish Council savings account for Christmas Paper Trail

Councillors agreed that a Unity Trust bank Mandate change shall be arranged to add two signatories and add a further interest bearing savings account, if possible **GD**.

15.4 Consider and approve the Parish Council payments listed below. Proposed by CR and seconded by AF and agreed by all Councillors present:-

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 (late payment 2	£75.00		

July 2025) Local Government Act 1972, Section 142 Local Government Info	£35.00	£22.00	£132.00
Cartwright Landscapes mowing of Greens and other areas on 9 th , 26 th June 2025 (C46399). Open Spaces Act 1906, ss.9 and 10	£140.00	£28.00	£168.00
Staniford expenses for Culworth Fun Day: Cash & Carry, Lidl, Gas Local Government Act 1972, Section 145 Provision of entertainment	£294.96		£294.96
Almond Tree Strategic Consulting Ltd on behalf of CHFT for development of draft prospectus including travel expenses	£2,100.00 £51.30	£430.26	£2,581.56
Gary Denby Parish Clerk gross remuneration and expenses (4 weeks) including home office expenses 15 May – 11 June 2025 Defibshop replacement Mediana A15 Defibrillator Pad Local Government Act 1972 Appointment of Staff s.112	£258.72 £28.60 £79.95	£15.99	£383.26
Yu Energy Street lighting electricity charges 01 – 30 Jun 2025 (DD) 360 p/day standing; 47.5 p/kWh (Inv 02775248 FINAL). Highways Act 1980, lighting functions s.98	Night £117.42 Day £36.91 Stand £108.00	£13.12	£275.45
Valda Energy Street Lighting charges 01 – 31 July 2025 (DD 19/07) 481.5 kWh @ 37 p/kWh and 31 days at 100 p/day 24 month contract. Highways Act 1980, lighting functions s.98	Elect £178.16 Stand £31.00	£10.46	£219.62
Transfer return of monies moved by Unity Trust Bank to cover over-draw on current T2 account on 25 April 2025	From T2 Acct 5843	To Saver Acct 5869	£272.94
Transfer return of monies used to keep current T2 account in credit in mid-late April 2025, due to late payment of Precept by WNC	From T2 Acct 5843	To Saver Acct 5856	£3,000.00
Transfer of PC T2 Funds to make CHFT saver account 20425869 reconcile with report 24 July 2024 having a surplus £14,118 . Subsequent draw-downs under CHFT instruction.			TBA

16. Items for the next Parish Council agenda:

- 16.1 CW reported that a dozen new slats have been purchased from Main Line Timber, for the picket fence around the Play Park (on Councillor expenses, to be submitted). They are more substantial and with less knots than the originals. Half of them have been used utilising screws, with screws being added to the current slats too. The bottom end of the Play Park is in need of strimming, since the dry grass is now waist high. He is halfway through developing an equipment safety check list. The last RoSPA safety report was nearly a year ago – the Clerk agreed to obtain a quotation for a new one **GD**.
17. Date of next meeting: **Thursday 4th September, 7pm** in the village hall. CR offered her apologies.
18. **Consider obligations and financial commitments required of the Parish Council**
AW proposal: "That the Council welcome and agree to the strategy and action plan provided by the CHFT for the provision of the new Village Hall/Pavilion on the Hill Field."

IN CAMERA DUE TO FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS & COMMERCIAL CONFIDENCE

See additional minutes, their release pending agreement between all parties concerned

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Chairman

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Date
Meeting closed at 8.30 pm (earlier than anticipated)