

## MINUTES OF MEETING OF CULWORTH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

**Present:** Andrew Wilby (AW) Chairman  
Stuart Rolt (SR) Vice Chairman  
Martin Rowling (MR) Councillor  
David Mumford (DM) Councillor

Gary Denby (GD) Parish Clerk

**Public:** Cllr Alison Eastwood (AE) West Northants Council (WNC)  
Jose Rowling (JR)  
(8 total) Catherine Ruffley (CR)

Welcome by Andrew Wilby to Councillors and members of the public, to this additional meeting called for the co-option of up to two Parish Councillors.

1. Apologies received: Nancy Guinness (NG) (London Conference)
2. Councillor declarations of interest & dispensations in the following agenda items:  
MR with regards co-option of candidates.
3. **Co-option of up to two Parish Councillors** for the casual vacancies caused by the resignations of Cllr Mullins-Blyth and Cllr Michelle Koster. The vacancies were notified to WNC and have been advertised for the prescribed period of fourteen days; no demand for an election being received from parishioners.

Given there were two candidates present for two vacancies, Councillors voted for them both together, knowing their backgrounds and interest in village matters: Proposed by DM, seconded by SR and agreed by all Councillors present.

AW welcomed JR and CR onto the council, the latter signing their acceptances of office and agreeing to complete their WNC Register of Interest by the next meeting (returning to GD). Parish documents pertaining to Codes of Conduct and the Council's Standing Orders are hosted on the Parish Council web site at [www.culworthparishcouncil.gov.uk/community/culworth-parish-council-18681/policies-etc](http://www.culworthparishcouncil.gov.uk/community/culworth-parish-council-18681/policies-etc)

4. Receive minutes of the meeting held on **11<sup>th</sup> January 2024** as an accurate record of the Parish Council official acts and decisions. Proposed by SR, seconded by DM and agreed by all Councillors present.
5. **Public Concerns** (prior notice to the Chair or the Parish Clerk is recommended)  
AE reported upon a Zoom meeting with regards the un-opened 'Greatworth T & Sugrave Road' route. On 7<sup>th</sup> Feb the sign-off paperwork was finally delivered to WNC, with opening now anticipated for 15<sup>th</sup> February.
6. **Matters Arising** from previous Parish Council minutes
  - 6.1 Ref 5.2: Removal of the goal posts from the former football field. AW has written to Rupert Heseltine, mentioning the goal posts which are in one piece and in ground sockets. DM was able to lift them out; they'll be taken to MR's yard for the time being.

- 6.2 Ref 6.1: Chasing the order for Woodlands Trust trees (postpone to Oct 2024)  
Carried forward NG.
- 6.3 Ref 6.2: Update on the next Village Newsletter, finding a new Editor – ongoing AW.
- 6.4 Ref 9: HS/2 local construction update on 18<sup>th</sup> January at The Forge coffee shop. JR reported upon a number of villagers attending, over a period of time.

## **7. Village Litter Pick on Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2024 (14 sets from WNC)**

MR has this in hand. It has been promoted in the village newsletter. If there are sufficient volunteers, it will also be very useful to clean the village road signs.

## **8. Update on the Culworth Hill Field Trust CHFT (cricket ground)**

- 8.1 Ref 5.1: Update on Culworth Hill Field Trust (CHFT)

AW reported that Northants Highways have now agreed to having tarmac installed over the field's entrance verge, enabling Phase 1 of the project to be completed. This will enable a final balance to be calculated and returned to the Parish Council, to enable the Phase 2 development of a replacement village hall.

With regards the residual spoil heaps, one will be used to level-up the site, the other is planned for removal.

John Duggan has very kindly agreed to remain as Chairman a while longer, to facilitate the hand-over for Phase 2 development. With Parish Council elections due in May 2025, there is likely to be quite some change-around of village volunteers at that time, for the CHFT, the Council, village hall and other organisations. There will need to be quite a recruitment drive for all concerned, and for more recent incomers to take-up the reigns.

- 8.2 Ref 6.1: Update on concluding the CHFT account; return of unused funds for Phase 2: Carried forward (see above).

## **9. Update on Adult Gym and Children's Play Areas improvements**

- 9.1 Ref 6.3: Update on applying for the final part of the Play Park HS/2 grant  
In progress: The final report produced by Michelle Koster in October has been accessed, alongside the financials report required for the final submission **GD**.
- 9.2 Ref 6.4: Development of a Play Park joint Risk Assessment (meeting TBA)  
A joint meeting between the Chairman, Jim Powell and Dave Osborne of the Cricket Club and the Clerk needs to be arranged, according to their availability **JR**.
- 9.3 Ref 6.5: Consider quotation for a child safety fencing from Paul Lewis (Moreton Pinkney)  
This has been requested by the Clerk, with a reminder sent on 6<sup>th</sup> Feb (he may be busy hedge laying). Councillors noted that that within the 2024-25 budget there is a provision of £1,000 toward this fencing, plus £2,000 towards a RoSPA inspection and any necessary repairs. Since time is of the essence, SR proposed that a received quotation in the order of £1,500 might be readily agreed with the contractor, seconded by MR and agreed by all Councillors present **GD**.
- 9.4 Ref 6.6: Update with regards temporary public safety signage: Carried forward **GD**

- 9.5 Return CPC funds to Parish Council; closure of project's bank account 20425856. This account remains open, as the only account for which a physical paying-in book is available (for cheques regarding the burial ground). Unity Bank are presently unable to provide paying-in books due to problems with their supplier!

## 10 Updates on the Parish Council Burial Ground (MR GD)

The burial of Anne Lindsey Brookes (deceased 27 Dec 2023) took place on 17<sup>th</sup> January (committal only). Form to be completed, scanned and returned to Bucks Registrar **GD**.

The interment of Frances Jean Marshall ashes (deceased 20 Dec 2023) took place on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023. Form to be completed, scanned and returned to Bodicote Registrar **GD**

## 11 New official portrait of King Charles III to be available to Parish Councils

A new official portrait of HRH King Charles III is being released for local authorities, including Parish Councils in February 2024. It is intended for hanging in public buildings.

The portrait was taken at Windsor Castle last year by photographer Hugo Burnand. It shows His Majesty wearing a Royal Navy uniform of an Admiral of the Fleet and official medals and decorations. It is without charge to Parish Councils. Councillors agreed that the Clerk should request a copy for Culworth Parish [tpc-portraitscheme.cubiquityonline.com](http://tpc-portraitscheme.cubiquityonline.com) **GD**.



## 12 H/S 2 local construction development (15<sup>th</sup> Dec; Forge Coffee on Thu 18 Jan)

SR reported back on local activities. There is little to directly affect Culworth.

## 13. Correspondence received by Councillors

- 13.1 13 Jan: N-CALC mini eUpdate 12/01 – Open letter from NALC Chair
- 13.2 24 Jan: WNC invite to a Tree Strategy workshop on 13<sup>th</sup> Feb (in person / Zoom)
- 13.3 24 Jan: HS/2 Liaison Group report back from 15<sup>th</sup> Dec 2023 (SR attended)
- 13.4 24 Jan: WNC Cabinet approval for their office optimisation plans!
- 13.5 24 Jan: N-CALC mini eUpdate 19/01 – Royal Portrait of His Majesty the King
- 13.6 29 Jan: WNC Town & Parish briefing – Jan 2024
- 13.7 29 Jan: N-CALC mini eUpdate 26/01 – Procurement £30K; **S137 expenditure limit** (£10.81 \* 182 tax base = £1,967 limit for Culworth for 2024-25)
- 13.8 6 Feb: WNC invite to contribute to a Transport Policy Statement
- 13.9 6 Feb: WNC recommendations on Northampton's micro mobility scheme
- 13.10 6 Feb: N-CALC eupdate Jan/Feb 2024
- 13.11 6 Feb: WNC consultation on Post-16 school travel in West Northants
- 13.12 6 Feb: WNC workshop on 13<sup>th</sup> Feb to develop a Tree Strategy
- 13.13 6 Feb: ONS Community Connections (population projections)
- 13.14 6 Feb: NACRE friendship visits and warm packs
- 13.15 7 Feb: Police Liaison Rep: Tue 26 Mar Safer Communities Event near Towcester **MR GD**

14. **Planning (items available at [wnc.planning-register.co.uk](http://wnc.planning-register.co.uk) + Advanced Planning + Parish)**

- 14.1 2024/0315/TCA: tree work at Mountfield, High Street OX17 2BR to include removal of Leylandi, removal of Monkey Puzzle and removal of Ash tree. Pending.
- 14.2 2023/7582/TCA: tree work at 1 Queens Street OX17 2AT to fell Cherry tree whose roots lifting slabs next to buiding and interfering with drains. No Objections 22 Jan 24.
- 14.3 WNS/2024/0179/TCA: Tree work at Culworth House, Queens Street OX17 2AT to include fell of one pine tree in Conservation area. No Objections 17 Jan 24.
- 14.4 WNS/2023/6671/FUL-LBC: Partial demolition of existing garage and its replacement with an extension housing a ground floor bedroom at Myrtle Cottage, Sulgrave Road OX17 2AP by 5 Oct. Approved 28 Nov 23.

15. **Audit and Accounts**

- 15.1 Parish Council **Precept for 2024-25** acknowledged to be at **£38,000** on 24 Jan 2024, for an electorate tax base of 182 on 24 Jan (est £209 per Band D household).
- 15.2 Ref 11.1: Clerk's contract of employment was reviewed and signed-off by the Chair and Clerk on 8 Feb 2024, without any adjustments. The Clerk's registration with the Pensions Regulator & HMRC PAYE can now proceed **GD**.
- 15.3 Ref 6.1: Update on VAT recovery for the Cricket field and Play Field expenditures Carried forward (there is generally a 3 year window) **GD**.
- 15.4 Ref 11.4: Transfer of Burial Grounds feet back to Parish Accounts; closure of this saver account. See 9.5 above.
- 15.5 Update on Parish Council street lighting, approval of AJR Electrical quotation for No3 outside 16 Barley Hill to replace lamp or replace the head £295 or £653 + VAT. Councillors agreed that this area is generally quite dark, that their preference is to replace the whole lighting head. Clerk is to advise AJR **GD**.
- 15.6 GD Completed WNC update on all electrical verge assets (lighting, speed sign...).
- 15.7 Receive quotation for path & verge spraying 2024: **Complete Weed Control £866.40**  
*Weed control to areas in the village as done in the past*
- *Culworth Paths - Footpath alongside the pub, around the bus shelter, path up past school and gravel area in the cemetery.*
  - *Castle site - the castle moat for nettle and other weeds. Uncut field area for large docs*
  - *Cricket And Football areas - Spraying off nettle and docs around the edges of the fields*
- The weed control of the football area can be removed. That aside, Councillors agreed to proceed, proposed by JR, seconded by DM and agreed by all Councillors present. Clerk to advise the contractor **GD**.
- 15.8 Receive revised quotations for street lighting electricity renewal from Yu Energy via Clear Utility Solutions with N-CALC group discount: for 1 year only £1,891 + VAT; for 2 years at £1,787 pa; for 3 years at £1,765 pa. [Q1-Q3 £708; 24-25 Budget at £1,100]

Councillors considered that the market price for energy still has some way to fall from its previous peak. Therefore SR proposed and JR seconded that the Yu Energy contract

should be renewed for just one year, agreed by all Councillors present. Clerk to inform the contractor **GD**.

15.10 Ref 12.8: Updates to the Parish Council Asset Register (+play equipment, bin & bench) Carried forward **GD**.

15.11 Ref 12.9: Consider options for gaining interest on reserve monies. Carried forward, pending the Clerk gaining the latest interest rate and form from the Natowide Building Society in Banbury **GD**.

15.12 Consider and approve the Parish Council payments listed below, proposed by SR, seconded by DM and agreed by all Councillors present:-

<b>Description / Power</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>VAT</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>AJR Electrical</b> for new LED head on wooden post outside No4 Butts Close; also install new LED lamp on lamp on corner of Puzzle Cottage	£708.00	£141.60	£849.60
<b>Texprep</b> printing of January newsletter x60	£25.00		£25.00
<b>Gary Denby</b> Parish Clerk gross remuneration and expenses (4 weeks) including home office expenses 11 Jan – 7 Feb plus reimbursement of British Legion cheque	£228.16 £26.00 £25.00	-	£279.16
<i>Yu Energy Street lighting electricity charges 01 – 31 Jan 2024 (DD)</i> <i>62.8 p/day standing; 18.8 day 13.9 night p/kWh</i>	£82.44 £15.03	£4.12 £0.75	£102.34
Transfer of all £1,528.80 from the Play Park account to the Parish Council General account (in the main, Burial Ground fees).	-	-	-

16. **Councillors' Comments:** None.

17. Date of next meeting: **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> March**

Meeting closed at 9 pm

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**Chairman**

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**Date**