

**DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING OF CULWORTH PARISH COUNCIL GENERAL
MEETING held on Thursday 2nd October 2025 at 7pm pm in the Village Hall**

Present:	Andrew Wilby (AW)	Chairman
	Andrew Field (AF)	Councillor
	Jose Rowling (JR)	Councillor
	Rob Stewart (RS)	Councillor
	Amy Harrison (AH)	Councillor
	Clive Waller (CW)	Councillor
	Catherine Ruffley (CR)	Councillor
	Gary Denby (GD)	Parish Clerk
Public:	Cllr Alison Eastwood	West Northamptonshire Council (WNC)
	Jim Gibbs	
	Peter Kerridge	
	Martin Rowling	
(Total 13)	Chris Harrison	

Welcome to members by AW.

1. **Apologies received:-** None, all present.
Peter Coville sends his apologies (applicant for Clerk position), since he's about to set off on holiday. He's had responsible positions in a couple of national Accounting companies. He's indicated a willingness to undertake the CiLCA training available to Clerks through N-CALC.
2. Councillor declarations of interest & dispensations in the following agenda items: None.
3. Receive minutes of the meeting held on **4th September 2025** as an accurate record of the Parish Council official acts and decisions. AH requested the removal of ~~whose proceeds and raffle are towards this event~~ from section 12; change cricket pitch to cricket ground in section 6.4. Proposed by AF, seconded by RS and agreed by all Councillors present, signed by AW.
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 AE reported upon the saving of £115,000 within the WNC budget for the current year, yet a £50 million shortfall needs to be addressed by the end of March 2026. WNC Councillors have started to consider their budget for 2026-27.
 - 5.2 AE advised Parish Councillors of WNC's plans to have an Ice Rink a Christmas Fair this year. The Northampton Museum is hosting a fascinating History of Northamptonshire in 100 objects www.northamptonmuseums.com *a journey through 150 million years of Northamptonshire's past. From prehistoric treasures to modern marvels, 100 remarkable objects reveal the people, events, and industries that shaped the county, each telling a unique story of its cultural, social, and economic heritage.*
 - 5.3 Yesterday there was a visit by HS/2 representatives and a drive down the Banbury Lane, looking at the quality of the road. Some large vehicles use this route, but not HS/2. This includes a regular school coach pick-up coach for Chenderit school. An advisory

20mph speed limit can be suggested for the Culworth end of the route, but not enforced. A 17 ton weight restrictions limiting large vehicles might be considered, but would need exceptions? We could ask for the 'NOT a SAT NAV route' sign to be reinstated. Looking ahead, could proper reinstatement of the road (by Northants Highways?) be assured, after HS/2 have completed their local works?

- 5.4 Speeding traffic through the village has been clocked at 50mph and above and reported to the police. AH has reached out to our assigned PCSO but has not heard back. Could a 'Speed Watch' group be organised (trained volunteers with a calibrated camera)?

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

- 6.1 Ref 6.3: With regards to 'Culworth' village signs, one may respond to cleaning (**AF**), the others are unreadable. AH has received three quotations for replacement signs, around £1,000, delegated to the Finance Committee to consider which represents best value.
- 6.2 Ref 14: **AF** agreed to make contact with his lead at the Electricity Board, to inquire about replacing the rotten former telephone pole which supports the council's new LED street light closest to the church entrance.

7. Culworth Burial Ground update: No activity to report.

8. Community Hill Field Trust (CHFT) update: See 6.1 above.

A joint CHFT meeting was planned for the end of October, with some progress towards a Pre-Application meeting with them with regards to the Village Hall site. However, with the planning department overloaded with Pre-App requests, all were cancelled, in favour of a form! Subsequent correspondence directly with the Planning Team may result in a one-to-one advisory meeting...

9. Update on utilisation of new Clerk and Chair email addresses – for new Parish Clerk.

10. Update on Christmas Trail event: No activity to report.

11. Update on the development of a Social Media Policy

AW suggested we crack on with this project. Do we need a team meeting to consider approaches to Newsletters, maybe a Coffee Morning exploring residents' perspectives of the Parish Council; updating the web site and new social media streams?

The village Newsletter contains the views of its volunteer contributors, not necessarily those of the Parish Council which funds it. **AH** will work with the current editor Joanne Wilby with regards some new ideas. The latter has updated the Parish Council site with Councillor names and details, also face pictures when supplied.

With regards to social media, what are villagers most familiar with, how does it vary between generations? N-CALC have a boilerplate Social Media policy we might adopt: proposed by AH, seconded by CW and agreed by all councillors present: to be added to the council's published governance documents **GD**.

12. Correspondence received by Councillors

- 12.1 5 Sep: Update on Parish Council web site updates

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

- 13.1 2025/3453/TPO: Works to 1x Oak and 1x Beech subject to TPOs at Graveyard St Marys Church High Street Culworth. Pending. Councillors had no comments.
- 13.2 2025/3488/TCA: T1 Scots Pine - Section fell to ground level T2 Scots Pine - Section fell to ground level T3 Lawson Cypress - Section fell to ground level T4 Yew - Section fell to ground level due to interference with the oil tank at Culworth House Queens Street Culworth OX17 2AT. Pending. Councillors had no comments.

14. Audit and Accounts

- 14.1 Receive update on Parish Accounts to 31 September 2025 with its first half year summary against budget. Receipt of Precept second half £19,000 on 29 Sept. See [APPENDIX A](#).

On 30 Sep 25 The Unity Trust T2 everyday account held £22,853.09
On 30 Sep 25 The Unity Trust saver account held £59,438.26, including £332 interest
On 30 Sep 25 The Unity Trust CHFT account held £6,282.46, including £30.64 interest
These cash holdings reconcile to the Parish Council spreadsheet to 30 Sept 2025.
The latter is summarised in the summary provided in [APPENDIX A](#).
Provided to JR (copied to AW and AF) who will verify this again at home **JR**.
Clerk has yet to register his 2025 income to date with HMRC (for P45) **GD**.

- 14.2 Receive Clerk hours expended to end of September 2025 (first half year)
Printed summary provided for September and year to date. See [APPENDIX B](#).
The Clerk has expended 217 hours in the first nine months of 2025. This is 100 hours above his regular availability of 3.5 hours per week (117 hours), but is 17 hours below that of a more reasonable 7 hours per week (234 hours).

- 14.3 Update on bank mandate to add two new signatories

AH has kindly obtained the online form required to add two signatories to the Unity Trust mandate for the Parish Council accounts. As previously agreed, Cllr Amy Harrison and Cllr Andrew Field are to be added as account signatories. Proposed by Cllr Rob Stewart, seconded by Cllr Catherine Ruffley and agreed by all Councillors present.

The printed signature sheets were therefore signed by AW and GD. AH to scan and return these to Unity Trust, referencing this minute point. A copy of the new mandate instructions to be forwarded to the Clerk for future reference **AH**.

- 14.4 Consider and approve the Parish Council payments listed below. Proposed by AH, seconded by RS and agreed by all Councillors present. JR and AW to authorise:-

Description / Power	Amount	VAT	Total
PKF Littlejohn external audit fees for 2024-25 review (£504 2023-4) <i>Local Govern't Act 1972, Section 111 Subsidiary powers, discharge of functions</i>	£315.00	£63.00	£378.00
Gary Denby Parish Clerk gross remuneration and expenses (4 weeks) including home office expenses 4 Sep – 1 Oct 2025 + office paper <i>Local Government Act 1972 Appointment of Staff s.112</i>	£258.72 £28.60 £11.67	£2.33	£301.32
Valda Energy Street Lighting charges 01 – 30 Sept 2025 (DD 19/09) <i>Highways Act 1980, lighting functions s.98</i>	Forward £35.66 Elect £118.58 Stand £30.00	£7.43	£191.67

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
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15. Items for the next Parish Council agenda

15.1 The Finance Committee intend to meet at The Forge on Monday 20th October at 7pm. The committee considers it has sufficient breadth of experience to interview a potential new Parish Clerk; other Councillors are welcome too.

16. Date of next meeting: **Thursday 6th November, 7pm (DRAFT BUDGET 2026-27)** in the village hall

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Chairman

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Date

APPENDIX A: Parish Council Budget 2025-26 against income and expenditures to 30 Sep

Culworth Parish Council Expenditures for 2021-2025, budget 2025-26 against expenditures for 2025-26 to date

Expenditure Item		Expenditure 2022-23 Audited	Expenditure 2023-24 Audited	Expenditure 2024-25 Audited	Budget 2025-26	Expenditure 2025-26 To 30/09
1	Grass Verge & Greens Mowing S96	£3,946	£1,499	£1,030	£1,500	£630.00
2	Tree / Footpath Maintenance	£880	-	£122	£2,000	-
3	Subscription NCALC, SLCC + PoL	£456	£329	£307	£1,600	£322.06
4a	Electricity supply un-metered	£2,232	£1,021	£2,062	£1,100	£1,257.85
4b	Street light maintain & upgrade	£1,278	£1,361	-	£1,600	£1,440.00
5	Parish Council Insurance	£834	£885	£957	£1,100	£962.42
6a	Clerk salary 3.5 hrs / week + hols	£6,472	£2,774	£4,722	£3,436	£1,746.28
6b	Clerk / Office Expenses / Other	£969	£778	£471	£500	£298.24
6c	Clerk & Councillor Conf / Training	£282	-	£42	£500	£88.00
7a	Audit Int+Ext – N-CALC + LJ	£200	£707	£924	£500	£441.00
7b	N-CALC acting as DPO	£10	£10	£12	£10	£12.00
8	Village Hall rental	£117	£171	-	£300	£126.00
9	Burial Ground Maintenance	£643	£1,105	£1,599	£1,600	£669.00
10	Dog and litter bin maintenance	£1,274	£1,274	£1,383	£1,500	-
11	Village Newsletter– Sec 142	£400	£303	£280	£300	£121.20
12	Village web site & maintenance – S142 Gov't Info	£220	£102	£239	£1,100	£150.00
13	Jubilee / Coronation RBL–Sec 137	£1,769	£0	£25	£25	£30.00
14	Recreation Grants	-	-	£13	£1,000	£294.96
15	Citizens Advice Bureau	£100	-	-	£100	-
16a	Cricket Field CHFT support	£114,288	£106	£392	£500	£531.31
16b	Cricket Field CHFT funding	-	£3,429	£17,892	-	-
17	Community Play Park fund-support	-	£75,000	£3,131	£8,000	£398.00
18	Rebuild reserves for new assets	-	-	-	£15,000	-
19	VAT as a refundable expense	£25,307	£16,650	£3,256	-	£1,755.56
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (inc VAT):		£161,677	£107,503	£38,858	£43,271	£11,273.88
20	Precept request	£25,000	£37,000	£38,000	£38,000	£38,000.00
21	Burials & Monuments	£331	£1,376	£985	£500	£446.00
21	Bank Interest: CHFT & Ppark	£152	£426	£919	£500	-
22	Community Infrastructure Levy	-	-	-	-	-
23	Play Park grants	-	£62,615	-	-	-
24	Donations / awards	£130,681	£130	£5	£160	£5.10
25	Recovered VAT	£16,428	£10,793	£15,723	£3,516	-
TOTAL INCOME		£172,592	£112,341	£55,632	£42,676	£38,451.10
Excess income over expenditure		£10,915	£4,838	£16,774	-£595	£27,177.22

APPENDIX B: Clerk hours expended in September 2025 and for the year to date

		Sep25						
Date	Description Target 3 hrs per week, Or 12-15 hours per month	Miscellaneous	Correspondence	Accounts & Budget	Audit	Agendas & Minutes	Meetings	Burial Ground
1.9.25	Update accounts, prep budget update			1				
1.9.25	Emails, chase invoices		1					
1.9.25	Complete Sept agenda and distribute					3		
3.9.24	Reconcile spreadsheet to statements A-A			2.5				
4.9.25	Print reports for meeting					1		
4.9.25	Setup of payments			1				
4.9.25	Telecon Chair, meeting prep	0.5						
4.9.25	Preparing VAT reclaim 2024-25			1				
4.9.25	Public meeting						2.5	
15.9.25	Enhance External Audit variances report				2			
29.9.25	Draft outline agenda, locate bills for payment					1		
29.9.25	Email approval of tree survey quotation		0.5					
29.9.25	Draft September minutes (12 sheets!)					4		
29.9.25	Ordering Play Park and Tree reports		1					
30.9.25	Update accounts, prep budget update			3				
TOTALS	25.00	0.5	2.5	8.5	2	9	2.5	0

YTD

Month	Days	Target Hours	Actual Hours	Difference
3.5 hours per week contracted (4 hour paid), equates to a target of 0.5 hours per day				
January (Precept, tenders) *	31	13.3	32.0	18.7
February (no meeting)	28	12.0	8.0	-4.0
March (draft end of year accounts) **	31	13.3	10.0	-3.3
April (Annual Parish Meeting, Accts)	30	12.9	11.0	-1.9
May (Annual General Meeting, Procs)	31	13.3	25.5	12.2
June (Accounts meeting)	30	12.9	21.0	8.1
July	31	13.3	27.5	14.2
August (no meeting) ***	31	13.3	-3.0	-16.3
September	30	12.9	25.0	12.1
October	31			0.0
November (budgeting)	30			0.0
December (contracts renewals)	31			0.0
Accumulated over / under hours worked		117.0	157	40.0

Hours reimbursed, beyond 4 hours weekly***: 20.0
Total extra Hours reimbursed 60.0
(LEL 2024-25 permits £123 pw or £6,396 pa; 180 hrs at £16.17 per hour is only £2,910)