

**DRAFT SUMMARY OF FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING FOR
CULWORTH PARISH COUNCIL
held on Thursday 20th October 2025 at 7pm at Forge Coffee**

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|-----------------|------------------------|------------|
| Present: | Andrew Wilby (AW) | Chairman |
| | Andrew Field (AF) | Councillor |
| | Jose Rowling (JR) | Councillor |
| | Amy Harrison (AH) | Councillor |
| | Catherine Ruffley (CR) | Councillor |
| | Rob Stewart (RS) | Councillor |
| (Total 5) | Gary Denby (GD) | Clerk |
| Public: | Mr Peter Coville (PC) | Applicant |

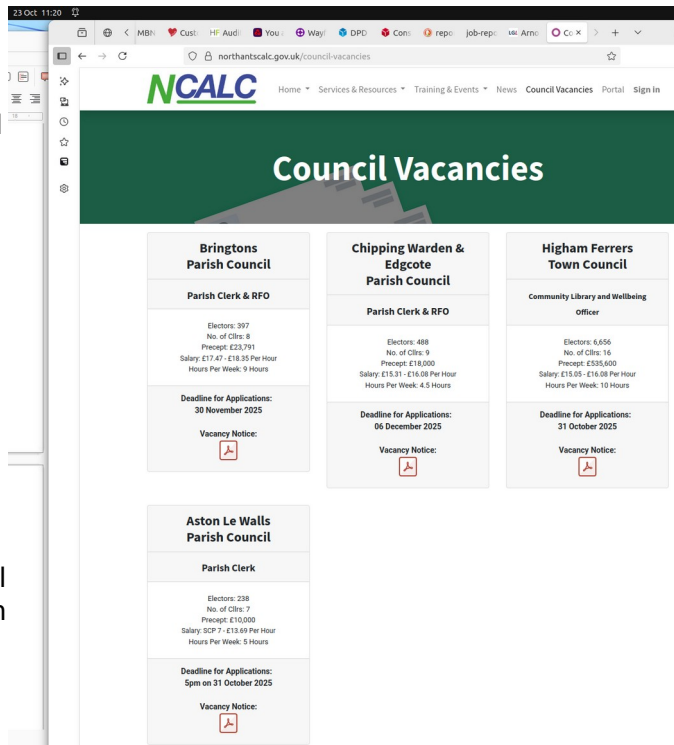
Welcome to committee members and other Parish Council members by AW. The meeting was called to receive the application for a replacement Parish Clerk (the current Clerk is retiring imminently); also to agree and amendment to the Unity Trust bank mandate.

1. Apologies received:- Clive Waller
2. **Peter Coville introduction** of himself to the Parish Council
 - 2.1 A relative new-comer to the village (only ten years), Peter is a Chartered Accountant, though not practising for the past eight years. His accountancy career started with Arthur Anderson accounting firm, moved to Deloitte and Touche and then onto BP. His specialisation was is the assessment of trading risks; helping to define what matters and does not matter (removing redundant procedures and processes). Peter is a highly risk-aware person.
 - 2.2 Much to the disappointment of colleagues, Peter took a career break 2015-16 and then semi-retired in 2017 to pursue interests as an instructor in outdoor pursuits such as rock climbing, ski instruction and mountaineering.
3. **Job Description** (see Advertisement in APPENDIX A)
 - 3.1 From his twelve year experience, GD described the three roles of a Parish Clerk:
 - The scribe roll dealing with minutes and correspondence; also assisting with Planning Applications received from the West Northamptonshire Unitary Council.
 - The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO - not always the Clerk), maintaining the accounts spreadsheet and its reconciliation against the bank statements; also the internal audit (of procedures, not the day-to-day invoices and payments) and any queries raised by the external auditor (since the income Precept is greater than £25,000 pa).
 - An informal legal advisor to the Parish Council, hoping to keep them within the ad-hoc legal framework in which they operate and handle public monies. This is the purpose of the CiLCA training, available to all Parish Clerks (about 50 hours on-line then 150 hours of assignments, demonstrating a growing familiarity with the 'Clerks Bible' – the Arnold Baker yellow book on Local Council Administration - 50% of which comprises extracts from the government legislation covering councils, some being quite vague!)

4. Concerns discussed openly

4.1 From the job advertisement, Peter is aware of the current pattern of Parish Council meetings (quite variable intervals, no meetings in December or August). CR would like to avoid future Thursday evenings. PC would for preference, like to avoid his most busy outdoor season in June and July, as much as is possible. The meetings schedule can be adjusted in Jan 2026 onwards, proposed by the Clerk and agreed by Councillors **TBA**.

4.2 The Parish Council receives its local training and technical support from Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (**N-CALC**), an annual subscription body which provides a conduit for government legislation and provides council-relevant training for Parish Clerks and Parish Councillors. Their very helpful CEO is **Danny Moody**, assisted by Deputy Chief Executive Lesley Sambrook-Smith. GD will inquire whether there are any training opportunities open in the immediate future **GD**.



4.3 Whilst N-CALC supports and trains the Parish Councillors (and Clerk), an organisation called the Society of Local Council Clerks (**SLCC**) is a subscription body that more specifically supports Parish Clerks, their training and specific issues that may face them (be aware of GDPR and potential Freedom of Information requests).

4.4 The advertised Clerk's Job Advertisement includes a salary of £7,500 pa for 30 worked hours per month, with its annual Precept Demand for £38,000. This related to Local Government Pay Scale LC2:24-27, which is £33,000 - £35,700 pa pro-rata. Danny Moody raised a query with this attribution to LC2, which the Clerk will query when introducing Peter to Danny Moody **GD**. Peter indicated his acceptance to proceed on this basis. AW suggested that his salary be reviewed (after 6 months?) on the basis of the hours required for the job .

4.5 Peter is the Treasurer for the Culworth Hill Field Trust (CHFT), whose remit has been to facilitate the grant applications for the Hill Field (cricket field) and its developments over the past couple of years: re-seeding, the new cricket nets (must be added to the Council's Asset Register) and ground works for the new village hall facility.

Peter trusts that his additional role as Parish Clerk will facilitate communication between the three parties, with openness precluding any potential conflict of interest. Councillors present agreed. Peter will receive the support of Councillor Jose Rowling, a previous Clerk for the council with much historical knowledge of village actions and activities, including the village church.

4.6 Peter does not have any experience in the support or development of public web sites (as used by the Parish Council at www.culworthparishcouncil.gov.uk). GD agreed to support Peter in gaining familiarity with this **GD PC**.

5. **Adoption of Peter Coville as the replacement Parish Clerk**

5.1 JR proposed that Peter Coville be adopted as the replacement Clerk and RFO for Culworth Parish Council, seconded by AF and **agreed by all Councillors present**. A draft Contract of Clerk Employment has been prepared, originated by N-CALC, to be forwarded **GD**. GD suggested an effective start date from 1st November 2025, allowing an overlap period for hand-over between the two Clerks. PC was keen to start preparations, so he will be forwarded 'The Essential Clerk' document in plain English **GD**.

5.2 To enable PC's attendance at the November Parish Council meeting, it was agreed that this shall be put-back to **Thu 13th November** (village hall bookings permitting) **GD**. In turn, this opens-up Monday 10th November as an opportunity for both Clerks to meet at 7pm, to hand-over file archives; also to comprehend the issues behind the first draft 2026-27 budget being presented at the November meeting **GD PC**. Peter will send directions to his home, to facilitate a timely arrival **PC**.

6. Revision to the **Unity Trust bank mandate**.

6.1 The current signatories on the council's online Unity Trust account are Andrew Wilby, Jose Rowling and Gary Denby, with David Mumford still available if required.

6.2 To facilitate the hand-over to the new Parish Clerk, it was proposed and agreed that Cllr Amy Harrison be added to the account as a signatory. JR acts as the (quarterly) independent finance checker (the Clerk has not absconded with the funds!). It appears that all have the ability to prepare new payments (though the Clerk holds the physical card reader device), with two others being required to log-in and authorise each payment. The printed forms were authorised by AW, JR and GD, for scanning and forwarding to Unity Trust, having added the above meeting minute **AH**.

6.3 Once **Peter Coville** is fully in position, the mandate will be revised again to add him as a signatory; also to remove GD and former signatories (DM and SR) **PC**.

7. **Payments approved** by the Finance Committee.

The following regular payments to contractors, within the current budget, were approved by Councillors for authorisation by JR and AW (DM may assist):-

| Description / Power | Amount | VAT | Total |
|--|--------|--------|--------|
| Roger Smith strim Burial Ground 5 th , 26 th September; Mow & strim play area 22 Sept (Inv 909) <i>Open Spaces Act 1906, ss.9 and 10</i> | £82.00 | - | £82.00 |
| Cartwright Landscapes mowing of Greens and other areas on 9 th August 2025 (C46680). <i>Open Spaces Act 1906, ss.9 and 10</i> | £70.00 | £14.00 | £84.00 |
| TexPrep Newsletters x80 Sept 2025. Inv 27601 <i>Local Government Act 1972, Section 142 Local Government Info</i> | £31.50 | - | £31.50 |

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Chairman

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Date

Meeting concluded 8.10pm.

APPENDIX A: Culworth Parish Council Job Advertisement – Sep 2025

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|--|---|
| Name of Council | Culworth Parish Council culworthparishcouncil.gov.uk |
| Job Title | Parish Clerk & RFO |
| Vacancy Statement | <p>Culworth Parish Council has a vacancy for a Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. This is a rural village in South Northamptonshire, close to Sulgrave Manor with its George Washington (USA) connections, on the old 'Banbury Lane' between Banbury and Northampton. The council set a 2025-26 Precept of £38,000 for its 322 electorate (accumulating reserves to assist with match-funding for the replacement village hall grants).</p> <p>The village has diverse low energy street lighting (26 items), with ownership responsibilities for the village cricket field, a play park and a burial ground, benefiting from nearby HS/2 activities. It has a mix of newly elected and established councillors (seven total), supporting the replacement of the Village Hall over the next year.</p> |
| Requirements | <p>Applications are invited from persons with an accounting or analytical background, with training offered. The parish clerk is responsible for the administration and finances of the council; its minutes and auditing process, also its burial ground, play park and contractors.</p> <p>The post includes meetings on <u>first Thursday evenings</u> for nine months of the year. The successful applicant is expected to have, or be prepared to obtain CiLCA (the Certificate in Local Council Administration). He or she must be computer literate, with good communication skills. Friendly and positive outlooks are essential.</p> |
| Salary | Salary £7,500 pa on Local Government pay scale LC2: 24-27, £33,000 - £35,700 pa pro rata, suited to an experienced or CiLCA-qualified Clerk. |
| Hours | 34 hours per month, including a pro-rata holiday provision of 4 hours per month (30 hours worked, averaging out at about a day per week), subject to negotiation. |
| Place of work | Work from home. |
| Please apply in writing with your CV or contact:- | |
| Contact | Cllr Andrew Wilby |
| Position | Chair, Culworth Parish Council |
| Address | wilbyawr@gmail.com Old Walls Cottage, The Green, Culworth. OX17 2BB |
| Telephone | 0780 329 5042 |
| Closing date for applications: | 5pm on Mon 29 September 2025 |

To find out about the role of the Clerk download an introductory booklet from the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) entitled "[The Essential Clerk](#)"