

CULWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes for the Meeting of Culworth Parish Council

Held at 7pm on Thursday 5th February 2026 in the Culworth Village Hall

Welcome to members, WNC Councillors and public. Meeting opened at 19:06.

Present:

Andrew Wilby (chair) (AW)	Peter Coville (PCov) (Clerk)
Andrew Field (AF)	Richard Butler (RB)(WNC Cllr Highways & Transport) (19:06 to 19:50)
Catherine Ruffley (CR)	Alison Eastwood (AE)(WNC Cllr Rural South ward) (19:19 to 19:50)
Clive Waller (CW)	
Jose Rowling (JR)	

1. **Apologies** received – Rob Stuart (RS) and Amy Harrison (AH).
2. **Councillor declarations of interest & dispensations** in the following agenda items
None noted or indicated.
3. **Receive minutes** of the meeting held on **8th January 2026** as an accurate record of the Parish Council official acts and decisions.
There were no comments on the draft minutes previously circulated. **CR** proposed that the minutes were accepted. Seconded **JR** approved unanimously. **AW** signed the minutes.
4. Receive reports and minutes from the **Annual Parish Meeting** held on 3rd April 2025 (**GD/AII**).
The reports and minutes prepared by the previous Clerk were received unanimously. These will be published to the website.

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

5.1 Banbury Lane / HS2 / roads – Councillor Richard Butler (WNC Highways)

Councillor Richard Butler (RB) kindly attended the meeting. He is the Cabinet member for Transport and Highways at WNC. He provided a brief on the current roads and pothole situation which is causing concern for everyone and damage to vehicles.

- Pothole reports are up 45% on 2024/25 – mainly due to the cold period fracturing the road surfaces and then the unprecedented amount of rain which (combined with vehicle tyres) has both caused more damage and made fixing the holes harder.
- There were 4,000 new incidents reported over the previous weekend in West NHants.
- There are 15 crews working 12 hour days but until the rain stops they cannot keep up.
- The **best action that WNC residents can take is to report the problems:**
 - Use fix my street. You don't need the exact location – just as good a description as you can. OK to report the same hold multiple times.
<https://www.fixmystreet.com/around?js=1&zoom=2&lat=52.12092&lon=-1.20807>
 - WNC has an emergency line on their website for dangerous potholes (>5cm deep and sheer walls) with a team on 24hr callout:
<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/highway-maintenance/report-potholes-or-highway-problem>

Banbury Lane

The very poor condition of Banbury Lane (currently closed due to HS2 viaduct works) was discussed. The main problem with Banbury lane is that the substructure of the road is very poor and even if it is resurfaced the new surface will crack as water causes subsidence in the road. Until the weather improves there is no point in trying to repair it. RB said that the plan is:

- Manage temporary fixes of the worst areas;
- When everything dries out conduct an inspection and workaround to identify a longer term solution;

- Consider speed/weight restrictions to reduce damage to the road surface. Although the road is currently closed local residents should be aware that it is just as quick to go round the new HS2 road as it is to take Banbury Lane – and less risky to your car.

As ever WNC has a limited budget for road repair without large increases in Council tax and revenue raising. There are many roads in WNC that need wholesale rebuilding due to poor substructure. The plan is for a phased approach to this.

Compensation

Compensation for damage to vehicles is paid using the form on the Council's website. This is managed by the contractor's (Kier) insurer. <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/highway-maintenance/damage-and-personal-injury-claims>

5.2 Report on progress of Tree Survey works **RS**

Deferred to next meeting due to **RS** apologies.

PCov noted that the TPO applications had been received by WNC (see section 10) and that the insurers had been chased regarding cover for **RS** to perform some of the work.

5.3 Re-siting and ongoing financial support for defibrillator **AF / JR**

AF stated that this will be installed on 25 February by AJR Electricals which will cost ~£200.

CR checks the defibrillator function and components being in date every month.

There was some discussion around whether to remove the lock on the cabinet. It was decided to leave the lock in place as it would both cost money to remove and the current process appears to work. Discussion on possible defibrillator training moved to future meeting once it has been reinstalled.

5.4 Agree future meeting dates **All**

It was agreed that the Clerk will circulate proposed dates via Whatsapp Poll for comment. **AW** requested a Finance Committee meeting (date 23 February 7:30 Forge Coffee) to train all Cllrs on parish confines (**JR**) and discuss any routine Finance Committee business.

5.5 Village signs – update on previous quotes and one additional quote (circulated) **All**

Some discussion was held around the 3 quotes obtained. It was decided that the shape of the EM Pell sign which is similar to Eydon and has some artwork was preferred. It was also proposed to replace the leaning pole on the Weston Road sign. Budget as per the quote £1,000. The Clerk offered to repaint the poles. **AF** noted that the same colour (highway grey) should be used as it would not show if any flaking occurred. The Clerk was authorised to enter into the contract.

Proposed by the **Chair** approved unanimously.

6. **Standing Agenda Items**

6.1 Thanks

Thanks to **RB** for attending the meeting and providing feedback on the roads issue.

Thanks to **AF** for organising the resiting of the defibrillator and repairing the Burial Ground gate.

6.2 Public Concerns (prior notice to the Chair or the Parish Clerk is recommended)

None reported.

6.3 Burial Ground update (if any)

AF – the new wall studs for the gate are in place but needs to obtain some spacer wood before the gate is installed.

6.4 CHFT update

AW - see newsletter (website, email and hard copy).

7. **New matters arising**

7.1 Kier road repair survey (circulated) **All**

The questions were discussed in detail and a response agreed for the Clerk to submit.

7.2 Feedback on WNC 2026-27 budget proposals **All**

It was agreed that individual responses are best as this does not directly affect the PC. Members of the parish are also encouraged to respond to the consultation. This has been publicised on the PC website.

7.3 Procurement procedures updates for CHFT Phase 2 **PCov / AW**

Deferred until next meeting.

7.4 Events programme for 2026-27 – use of council funds **All / CR**

The PC is willing to accept applications for Section 137 funding to support Village/Parish events. All residents are encouraged to step forward to organise an event. In particular someone to organise a Summer Fun day again would be welcome. The PC is not set up to run such events given everything else it has to do.

Please contact the Clerk for any information or help. The PC can also provide banking facilities to help, and Councillors can provide guidance on organising based on previous years' experience.

The PC, CHFT, Cricket Club, and Village Hall Trust are also looking for volunteers to get ready to manage and help set the direction for the new Hill Field facility.

Action: Clerk and / or AH to publicise this on Website, Whatsapp and Facebook.

7.5 Quote for weed control for 2026 (circulated) **PCov**

The quote from Complete Weed Control for spraying of paths and fence bases was discussed and approved.

Proposed by **CW** seconded by **AF** approved unanimously.

7.6 Request from Schools PTA re use of PC land for Easter hunt **All**

No objections raised – all in support of additional village activities.

7.7 Discussion around costs for putting an electricity supply on the Green **JR**

This would be to support future events on the green. **JR** noted that Evenly has a power box on the green but not sure where the power source comes from. **AF** noted that there would likely be significant expense in getting National grid to make the connection. It was agreed that the use of batteries for the Christmas tree appeared to work well and the expense and ongoing standing charge for a connection is unlikely to be justified for a seldom used supply.

8. **Finance and governance**

8.1 Update of the Unity Trust Mandate additions **PCov**

AF noted that he can access the account with no problems. **PCov** – no word yet from Unity on the latest requested changes.

8.2 Precept submission **PCov**

Complete. Approved budget to be posted to Parish Council website by Clerk.

8.3 Finance committee meeting and budget update **PCov**

There was a brief discussion around the latest budget vs year to date and expected costs to year end. The Council should be within £1,000 of expected expenditure for 2025/26 although there are significant variances either way within this £1,000 figure.

8.4 Clerk's hours and HMRC PAYE scheme **PCov**

PCov noted that he has completed setup of the PAYE scheme for the Council and downloaded the software. He plans the first Clerk's salary payment to be end of March to coincide with year end and quarterly thereafter to save administration.

The Clerk's worked hours for January 2026 were in line with expectations.

8.5 Payments review and approval (**Appendix A**)

All payments noted with no issues raised.

There was some discussion around the process to approve payments (members of the finance committee review invoices and the budget and a 3-way approval process is in place for Unity). It was agreed that this delivered sufficient control over payments. All invoices would continue to be reported at each Council meeting and the financial check conducted by **JR**.

8.6 Authorisation to set up a Direct Debit for Wave water **PCov**

Proposed **JR** seconded **CR** approved unanimously.

8.7 New Assertion 10 on Digital Governance – AGAR **PCov**

PCov noted that one of the requirements of this new AGAR assertion is that the Clerk has an "official" email address – based on the PC's domain name. It may or may not be possible to achieve this by year end (31 March) given time commitments as the process needs to be managed carefully to ensure all contacts are updated and that no data is lost.

8.8 Authorisation for Hugo Fox Direct Debit setup **PCov**

Proposed **JR** seconded **CR** approved unanimously.

9. Correspondence received by Councillors – see **Appendix B**

Noted. No comments.

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

10.1 TPO: COMMON ASH DIRECTLY ADJACENT TO ROAD. FELL TREE IN THE CRICKET FIELD. POTENTIAL TO REPLANT WITH SIMILAR NATIVE SPECIES GIVEN THE OPEN LOCATION. (application submitted by PC)

10.2 TPO 03/1992 TREE T005/TAG NUMBER 0572 PENDUNCULATE OAK (QUERCUS ROBUR) 21M HIGH. PROPOSE TO CUT THE HAZARDOUS LIMB(S) AND DEADWOOD FROM OVER THE FOOTPATH. (application submitted by PC)

10.2 2025/5037/TCA: Mountfield TPO tree works – being heard by full planning committee on 5 February 2026. Extension to previous application term.

Local Plan:

AE reminded all residents and Councillors to provide feedback on the proposed WNC Local plan – this drives our planning policy for the next 5-10 years.

All items noted. No comments.

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

Tree works progress
Procurement procedures

12. Date of next meeting: **Thu 5th March 2026, 7pm** in the village hall

Meeting closed at 20:52.

Andrew Wilby

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Andrew Wilby
Chair

.....6 March 2026...
Date

Copies of all council papers are available for download at culworthparishcouncil.gov.uk

Appendix A – Payments for approval / noting

15Jan2026 Andrew Field Village Christmas Tree General - S137 (3) LG Act 1972	(192.97)
15Jan2026 Jose Rowling Councillor expenses General - S137 (3) LG Act 1972	(34.50)
15Jan2026 Keenan Project Design 9247 Professional fees Cricket field support – S164 Public Health Act 1875	(2,450.00)
15Jan2026 Keenan Project Design 9248 Professional fees Cricket field support – S164 Public Health Act 1875	(3,500.00)
15Jan2026 Peter Coville PC event subsidy General - S137 (3) LG Act 1972	(70.00)
19Jan2026 Valda 1667492 Electricity bill – cfwd Lighting – S301 Highways 80	(18.39)
19Jan2026 Valda 1667493 Electricity bill – in advance Lighting – S301 Highways 80	(268.80)
20Jan2026 New Farm trees 11454 Village Christmas Tree General - S137 (3) LG Act 1972	(195.00)
20Jan2026 Wave Water 15832278 Water supply pavillion Cricket field support – S164 Public Health Act 1875	(24.48)
29Jan2026 Keenan Project Design 9248 Professional fees Cricket field support – S164 Public Health Act 1875	(700.00)

Appendix B – Communications received by Councillors

5 Jan	WNC: Fresh draft of West Northamptonshire Local Plan published
5 Jan	Cllr eastwood: Rural South Northamptonshire Ward - End of Year Report
6 Jan	WNC: Nominate an inspirational woman for the 2026 awards
9 Jan	NCALC: Friday mini eUpdate – 09/01/26
10 Jan	Resident: Defibrillator questions
16 Jan	NCALC: Friday mini eUpdate – 16/01/26
20 Jan	NCALC: Northants CALC Training Newsletter - January 2026
22 Jan	WNC: Community groups invited to apply for new Community Investment Fund
23 Jan	WNC: Town & Parish Briefing - edition 42
25 Jan	WNC: Have your say in the future of planning in West Northamptonshire
26 Jan	WNC: West Northamptonshire Council Draft Budget 2026 to 2027 Consultation
26 Jan	HS2 Liaison Group (WNC area): 16th January 2026 - Draft Minutes of Meeting
28 Jan	CQC publishes first assessment of adult social care in West Northamptonshire
28 Jan	Northants CALC eUpdate - Jan/Feb 2026