

Babraham Parish Council: Minutes of Meeting held 3rd September 2026

Present:

Stuart Laurie: Chair

Denise Dear : Vice Chair

Rob Attwood

Tim Jones

Kelly Hathaway

Cllr Peter Fane

Members of Public : 0

	Part I: Non-Confidential Information
2609/01	To receive and approve apologies for absence Stuart Hay (BRC)
2609/02	To receive members' declaration of interest for items on this agenda None
2609/03	To sign and approve minutes of meeting dated 9th July 2026 Approved and signed off
2609/04	Exclusion of the public To determine which items, if any, from Part 1 of the Agenda should be taken with the public excluded
2609/05	Report from South Cambridgeshire District Councillor P McDonald The full report can be found on the Babraham PC website, but in brief: <u>Council reaches carbon emission target</u> South Cambridgeshire District Council has reduced net greenhouse gas emissions from the services and facilities it runs by 45.3% since 2018, hitting a milestone in reductions set in its 2020 Zero Carbon Strategy. The strategy includes a further target to reduce estate and operations emissions by at least 75% by 2030. <u>CPCA bus service review</u> The Cambridge & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) launched a consultation in June on 'reimagining' the bus services across Cambridgeshire to implement the mayor's commitment to freeze the mayoral Council Tax precept, and to adjust services in the run up to the introduction of franchising. The precept freeze reduces funding by the rate of inflation (around 3–4% per year) so the required cuts are significant over the four-year mayoral term. The consultation aimed to improve value for money by focusing more closely on areas of greatest need and usage. This coincides with the expansion of the CPCA's Tiger on Demand service to replace less frequent conventional bus services. Service Review https://democracy.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/documents/s7450/Bus%20Services%20Reimagined%20-%20Service%20Change%20Proposals.pdf For us it means for example the 7A will be revised/changed in August 27 and the Tiger service may replace. The 26 and 17 service will be adjusted so need to look at these two and again a possible Tiger service replacement.

Mayors to be given Planning powers

The government announced on 23 August that mayors are to be given the power to override Local Planning Authority decisions on large housing developments as part of the government's devolution proposals. This will affect schemes with more than 150 homes, more than 15,000 square metres of commercial space, and buildings over 30 metres.

Home Energy Upgrade Guide

A new edition of the Home Energy Upgrade Guide for residents across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is now available. The guide has been developed through the Cambridgeshire Energy Retrofit Partnership (CERP), working as Action on Energy, a partnership of local authorities across the region and is funded by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA). It provides practical information to help residents improve the comfort and energy efficiency of their homes. It includes advice tailored to different house types, information on insulation, heating systems and renewable technologies, guidance on when to seek professional support, and details of available grants and services. Please help publicise this to residents. <https://www.actiononenergycambs.org/guidance-and-installation/>

2609/06

Report from Cambridgeshire County Councillors**Local Government Reorganisation**

On the last day of Parliament before its summer holiday, the [then] Secretary of State for local government announced that he would be delaying a decision on new councils for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. He said a decision would be made 'by October'. Following the installation of a new Prime Minister, he is no longer Secretary of State.

The Government has said no further information is required from the existing councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough before it makes its decision.

The Government has said that it expects local elections to the new councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to go ahead in May 2027, regardless of the delayed announcement

Significant improvement in children's services

Ofsted carried out a focused visit to Cambridgeshire in June and has recognised significant improvements in the County Council's provision of appropriate placements for Cambridgeshire children in care since their last visit in 2024.

Homelessness and temporary accommodation in rural areas

The County Councils Network (CCN) has published new analysis on homelessness and temporary accommodation in county and rural areas, showing that it is not just an urban problem.

- In March this year 23,186 children in county and rural areas were in temporary accommodation—74 per cent more than six years ago, almost double the national increase, and five times the increase in London.
- In March 2026 there were 22,230 households in temporary accommodation in county and rural areas, an increase of almost 80 per cent over the last six years. Almost one in five of these households are based in expensive 'nightly paid' private accommodation.
- Councils in county areas spent £124M on temporary accommodation in 2019/20, rising to £373M in 2024/25. This trebling of spend is a faster rate than anywhere else in England.
- Homelessness is also continuing to rise across county and rural areas, with local authority costs soaring in response: in 2019/20 councils in county areas budgeted £161M for homelessness, but this increased to £447M this year.

Agricultural water resilience grant scheme launched

A new grant scheme for farmers and growers has launched to help boost agricultural water resilience across Cambridgeshire. Farmers, growers and horticultural businesses can now apply for grants of between £2,000 and £50,000 from a £1.3M grant scheme designed to improve water efficiency, strengthen resilience to drought, and support sustainable food production.

£5m invested in winter readiness

The County Council's Highways & Transport Committee has agreed how to spend an additional £5M to help prepare more of the county's roads for the winter. This comes on top of record levels of highways maintenance funding, with over £78M allocated for highways in 2026-27.

Only £31.3M of the council's highways maintenance budget comes from the Government with the rest being funded by the council itself.

The council will also run a pothole innovation trial in October. This will test new equipment and materials under real-world conditions to identify the most effective approaches for future highway maintenance.

20mph programme review

The first-year evaluation of eight 20mph schemes introduced across Cambridgeshire since early 2024 indicates that the programme has been effective in reducing vehicle speeds. All eight locations recorded statistically significant reductions in average speeds, generally exceeding the background reductions seen elsewhere in Cambridgeshire. Speed reductions ranged from 6 per cent to 16 per cent, with the strongest performance seen in locations where pre-scheme speeds were highest.

Early evidence on collision outcomes is encouraging but remains inconclusive due to the relatively short monitoring period and low collision numbers in many settlements. The effectiveness of 20mph was discussed at the [Highways & Transport Committee on 1 September](#) and the Committee will continue to review the data moving forward.

Contract awarded for innovative road repair trial

Cambridgeshire County Council has appointed Winvic Construction Ltd to deliver an innovative trial aimed at tackling the long-standing challenges of maintaining roads built on peat soils.

The soil affected roads innovation trial will test new and more resilient ways of repairing highways affected by peat and weak soils, an issue that impacts a significant proportion of the county's road network, including 97 per cent of roads in Fenland. Whilst these roads are not regularly used by the majority of our residents, their impact on our highways spending cannot be understated, and tackling the issues of soil affected roads will benefit highways across the county by freeing up budget to be spent elsewhere.

[Soil affected roads innovation trial | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

Rewiring the State"

[The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority has been granted Established Mayoral Strategic Authority](#) status by the Government. Mayoral Authorities with this status will be in line for more powers to be passed from the Government to Mayors.

A statement by the Government at the end of July called [Rewiring the State](#) gives an idea of what this might involve. It includes giving Mayors control of budgets for 16-19 education, commuter rail services, social and affordable housing, with deputy mayors responsible for services from health to policing to education. A number of Planning powers are also

	proposed to be granted to Mayoral Authorities, with the Government currently out for consultation on this. From 2028 Mayors will also receive a share of local income tax and councils will retain more business rates.
2609/07	Report from Babraham Research Campus (BRC) representative None received
2609/08	Renovation of War Memorial Clerk has contacted several stonemasons for quotes, the contractor will be decided once all quotes are in. Clerk has applied for a grant towards cost of the renovation; outcome will be known early next year.
2609/09	Public participation time – 15 minutes allowed
2609/10	CSET- Still no news of when the public inquiry will be held. Better Than Busway group are getting together lawyers for opposing the scheme, they have approx. £200k for this, mainly raised by donations.
2609/11	Village Hall – There is a delay in building work as awaiting steel beams, which have been held up by the Iran war, the expected date of completion is now January 2027. Terms and conditions on the use of the Hall, money from the rent, maintenance, heating etc to be discussed. Clerk asked about claiming back the VAT on the expenditure so far and was told to go ahead and reclaim it. Clerk asked to find a solicitor to help with sorting things out, suggested that HRC Law be asked to see if they would be able to do this as they have knowledge of the legal work done so far.
2609/12	Forest Garden Project update- nothing to report
2609/13	Neighbourhood Plan- update: nothing to report
2609/14	Updates from last meeting. • Grange Farm development- it was agreed to send a letter of support. • EV charging points. Cllr Hathaway will do a survey among parents of children at the school to see who drives an electric car and how they feel about charging points.
2609/15	General Village Matters and new items for discussion: Zero Carbon application for Solar panels for the Village Hall- Clerk has submitted application but more information needed. Email scams to be aware of- Clerk advised that there are a lot of different email scams going about and advised asking before responding to any asking for money etc, not to open any links and to check whether they are genuine before replying. Streetlighting issue- suppliers of electricity had sent a bill for streetlights in parts of Sawston, this is ongoing but hopefully will be resolved soon. Chalk Farm house- overgrowth of trees and shrubs are blocking footpath, this to be cut back. The verge along the High Street has been levelled and cleared, thanks given to Chris from the Institute who helped taking the soil away. Daffodils to be planted along the wall- maybe see if

the school would like to help with the planting? Also see if Scotsdales would donate any bulbs. The verge will be seeded this autumn.
Pocket Park, the metal railings are looking rather poor, Cllr Attwood the repaint these.
Breakfast gathering- still to have a date decided.

FINANCE

2609/16 Receipts and Transfers (as of 26th August 2026))

2609/17 Payments (as of 26th August 2026)

A full list of payments was circulated, approved and signed off.

Clerk	Salary/Tax/Expenses-	confidential
Hugo Fox	Website provider 2 months	£71.98
C Morris	Bins/grasscutting	£400.00
SCDC	Election costs	£75.00
S Laurie	Trailer purchase	£300.00
KWA	Architects	£5095.45
P D Doyle	Builders Village Hall	£41,456.55
R Attwood	Expenses- trailer lights etc, petrol, brush	£90.07
Unity Trust	Bank Charges	£8.50
SEE	Streetlighting	£361.47

2609/18 Balances and Bank Reconciliation at 26th August 2026

Unity Current A/C balance	£1906
Unity Savings A/C balance	£383,988.68
Cambridge Building Society	£85,878.44
TOTAL	£471,773.12
Above total includes Reserves:	
Sec 106/ Village Hall	£348,878.21*
Public Art	£ 56,933.97
Playground	£25,000.00
Forest Garden	£421.32
Total Reserved	£431,233.50
Total remaining for PC	£40,539.62

*Village Hall is less VAT , this to be reclaimed by PC and put into the PC account.

- VAT to be reclaimed for this year, subject to advice from advisor £15,484.21
- Amount paid to P B Doyle so far is £80,097.18
- Clerks salary : NALC have awarded pay rise of 3.3% to Clerks salary- this was approved by Councillors

AUDIT 2025-2026

The documents required have now been sent to the External Auditor for their review.

	PLANNING
2609/19	Planning Applications: none
2609/20	Planning decisions: none
2609/21	Correspondence.
2609/22	Items for inclusion in the next meeting
2609/23	Date of next meetings: 8th October 7.30 12th November 7.30
2609/24	Part II: Confidential Information Exclusion of the Press and the Public: To resolve that in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and by reason of the confidential nature of the remainder of the business, the Press and the Public be excluded from the meeting. Signature: <i>Anne Charteris</i> 11th Sept 2026 10 Duxford Road, Hinxton, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 1RB 01799 531827 or Mobile 07890512309