

# ROWTON PARISH COUNCIL

5<sup>th</sup> January 2026

Commenced: 7.00 pm

Terminated: 8.45 pm

Present: Councillor Smythe (Chair)  
Councillors Fildes, Harrison, Hopwood, Scott and Shannon

PC Steve Harrison – Cheshire Police

## 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Williams, Borough Councillor.

## 2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest from Members of the Parish Council.

## 3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Extraordinary Parish Council held on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## 4. PUBLIC FORUM

In the absence of Members of the Public, the Chair invited PC Harrison to introduce himself and briefly explain the main policing issues affecting Rowton.

PC Harrison reported that speeding and parking matters were the main concern in the Parish. He further explained however, that due to legislative restrictions and operational practicalities, both issues were very difficult to enforce.

## 5. BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

In the absence of the Borough Councillor, the Parish Council discussed matters relating to the Parish. Members noted that the Borough Councillor had advised that there was a Budget available to the Parish, and would give this matter further consideration at the next meeting.

## RESOLVED

- (i) That a project for funding from Members Budget, be considered at the next meeting;
- (ii) That [if possible] the Clerk subscribes the Parish Council to the Cheshire West and Chester Council, Highways Volunteer Scheme;
- (iii) That Councillor Fildes be appointed the Lead Councillor, on the Highways Volunteer Scheme;
- (iv) That the Clerk contacts the former webmaster and asks that the old website is removed from the web, or a redirect to the new website is implemented.

## 6. BUDGET AND FINANCE 2025-2026

The Parish Council considered a report of the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer on the following matters:-

- (i) Transactions for Approval

## RESOLVED

- (a) That the invoice for Christmas Tree, be requested;
- (b) That the following transactions be approved:-

Payee/Payer	Description	Receipts	Payments
	Balance at 01/04/2025		

Cheshire West and Chester	Precept	£6,200.00	
HMRC	March PAYE		£54.00
Rowton Methodist Church	Room Hire		£250.00
C Davies	Expenses		£47.95
Mid-Cheshire Footpath Association	Annual Subscription		£8.00
Penny Lane Accounting	Payroll Services		£5.00
CHALC	Annual subscription		£135.72
C Davies	April Salary		£216.05
HMRC	April PAYE		£54.00
C Davies	Expenses		£58.60
Penny Lane Accounting	Payroll Services		£7.00
Zurich Municipal	Annual Insurance premium		£384.61
C Davies	May Salary		£216.05
M Smythe	Printing costs		£38.00
HMRC	May PAYE		£54.00
C Davies	Expenses		£33.69
Penny Lane Accounting	Payroll Services		£7.00
C Davies	June Salary		£292.57
HMRC	June PAYE		£63.40
M Clough	July Salary		£124.78
M Clough	August Salary		£223.12
HMRC	August PAYE		£55.60
Anthony Cartwright	6 months website		£84.89
HMRC	July PAYE		£31.00
HMRC	September PAYE		£55.60
M Clough	September Salary		£223.12
M Clough	Laptop reimbursement		£329.00
Michael Smythe	Printing reimbursement		£13.30
M Clough	October Salary		£223.12
HMRC	October PAYE		£55.60
Chistleton Parish Council	Cheshire Green Belt Alliance		£182.00
Cheshire West and Chester	Councillor Parker - Carols on the Green	£400.00	
HugoFox	Email		£2.99
HugoFox	Website Hosting		£143.86
HugoFox	Website Build		£226.80
Information Commissioner	Annual Subscription		£47.00
M Clough	November Salary		£223.12
HMRC	November PAYE		£55.60
Chistleton Parish Council	Cheshire Green Belt Alliance		£34.50
HugoFox	Email		£2.99
Melanie Fildes	Refreshments Reimbursement		£33.06

**(ii) Payments for Approval**

**RESOLVED**

**That the following payments be approved:-**

M Clough	January Salary	Approx. £223.21
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HMRC	January HMRC	Approx. £55.60
M Clough	February Salary	Approx. £223.21
HMRC	February HMRC	Approx. £55.60

**(iii) 2025-2026 Budget Expenditure**

**RESOLVED**

**(a) That the following Budget Head expenditure to 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2025, be approved:-**

**(b) That gifts for the three residents who installed and dismantled the Christmas Tree, be purchased by the Chair from his Chair's Allowance:-**

<b>Budget Head</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Budget Allocated</b>	<b>£ Difference</b>
Salary	£2,220.73	£3,428.33	£1,207.60
Insurance	£384.61	£400.00	£15.39
Venue Hire	£250.00	£250.00	£0.00
Subscriptions	£190.72	£290.00	£99.28
Website Hosting	£234.73	£170.00	£64.73
Website Update	£226.80	£200.00	£26.80
Clerks Expenses	£140.24	£400.00	£259.76
Payroll Services	£19.00	£80.00	£61.00
Office Equipment - Laptop	£329.00	£350.00	£21.00
Training	£0.00	£100.00	£100.00
Printing	£51.30	£100.00	£48.70
Carols on the Green	£33.06	£350.00	£316.94
Community Event	£0.00	£200.00	£200.00
Chair's Allowance	£0.00	£150.00	£150.00
Contingency/Miscellaneous	£216.50	£250.00	£33.50
	£4,296.69	£6,718.33	£2,421.64

**(iv) Explanation of Variances**

**RESOLVED**

**That the following virements be approved:-**

- £64.73 be transferred from the Subscriptions Budget to the Website Hosting Budget
- £26.80 be transferred from the Subscriptions Budget to the Website Update Budget

**(v) Bank Reconciliation to 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2025**

**RESOLVED**

**That the following Bank Reconciliation as at 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2025, be approved:-**

<b>Bank Reconciliation 23rd December 2025</b>	
<b>ROWTON PARISH COUNCIL</b>	
<b>Financial year ending 31 March 2025</b>	
Prepared by: Muna Clough, Parish Clerk & RFO	
Balance per bank statements as at	£
NatWest (79935931) - 5th December 2025	£8,192.47
Less: any unpresented cheques/payments	£36.05
Add: any unbanked cash - Unity	

<b>Net bank balances as at 23rd December 2025</b>	£8,156.42
<b>The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book (receipts and payments account) for the year, as follows</b>	
<b><u>CASH BOOK</u></b>	
Opening Balance at 1st April 2025	£5,853.11
Add: Receipts in the year	£6,600.00
Less: Payments in the year	£4,296.69
<b>Closing balance per cash book [receipts and payments book] must equal net bank balances above</b>	£8,156.42

**(vi) Bank Statements**

**RESOLVED**

That the following bank statements, as circulated with the Report, be received:-

- NatWest (79935931) – 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025
- NatWest (79935931) – 5<sup>th</sup> December 2025

**7. BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2026-2027**

The Parish Council considered a report of the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer on the Budget and associated Precept for 2026-2027.

A lengthy discussion took place over the need to ensure that the Parish Council was being diligent in respect of planning matters, and Members agreed that a rise in the Precept due to additional costs incurred in protecting the Parish from unnecessary development, would far outweigh any damage caused by unnecessary development. In considering this matter, Members were mindful that the Parish Council wanted to commission a Housing Needs Survey, and the cost was in the region of £4,000.00.

The Taxbase figure for 2026-2027 was 231.8. If the Parish Council added £4,000 to the proposed Budget for a Housing Needs Survey, and request a precept of £10,970, then the increase from this year's precept of £6200, would be 77%. However, in practical terms, this would cost each Band D property, £47.33 which was an increase of £20.05 for the year, or 39p per week per Band D property.

Members wished to minimise the Precept to the electorate, and agreed to use some Reserves towards the additional costs to be incurred for the Housing Needs Survey.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) That an additional Budget Head in the Budget for 2026-2027, for a Housing Needs Survey, in the sum of £4,000.00, be approved;
- (ii) That the Budget for 2026-2027, as Appended to these Minutes, be approved;
- (iii) That additional funding for a Housing Needs Survey, in the sum of £3,000.00, be approved, and added to the Precept;
- (iv) That a Precept request, for the sum of £9,970.00, be approved. (This equates to a Band D charge of £43.01, ie. an increase of £15.73 on last year's sum of £27.28).

**8. PLANNING MATTERS**

The Parish Council considered the following ongoing planning matters:-

- (i) Chester Greenbelt Alliance
- (ii) Proposed Development at Moor Lane - Councillor Scott presented a comprehensive summary on the proposed development and the implications.
- (iii) Proposed Developments in Christleton (A41 Adjacent to Mercure & Rowton Bridge Road).

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) **That individual Parish Councillors set up their own alerts for planning applications on the Cheshire West and Chester Planning Portal, to ensure they are notified of all planning matters;**
- (ii) **That Councillor Scott drafts a response to the proposed development at Moor Lane, to support the case of the Parish Council, and circulates to all Members for their approval, following which, the Clerk be authorised to submit the document to the Local Planning Authority.**

#### **9. PARISH PRIORITY STATEMENT FOR ROWTON**

##### **RESOLVED**

- (i) **That the Chair to draft the Rowton Parish Priority Statement the following day, and circulate to Members for their comments;**
- (ii) **That this matter be considered at the next meeting.**

#### **10. COMMUNICATION WITH RESIDENTS**

The Parish Council considered proposals to improve communication with residents.

##### **RESOLVED**

- (i) **That Councillor Harrison leads on promoting the work of the Parish Council on the Facebook page;**
- (ii) **That Councillors Harrison and Shannon ensure that the Notice Boards are kept up to date with timely information;**
- (iii) **That Councillor Fildes leads on promoting the work of the Parish Council on the WhatsApp Group;**
- (iv) **That the Rowton Roundup, is published once a year;**
- (v) **That the individual Councillors, detailed below, provide articles to the Clerk for the Rowton Roundup, by 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026:-**
  - **Chester Greenbelt Alliance – Councillor Hopwood**
  - **Precept increase – Councillor Smythe**
  - **Housing Needs Survey – Councillor Smythe**
  - **Village Clean up – Councillor Fildes**
  - **Carols on the Green – Councillor Shannon**
  - **Footpath and Bench – Councillor Shannon**
  - **Reminder to sign up via Facebook and WhatsApp – Councillor Harrison**
  - **Local policing updates – Councillor Harrison**

#### **11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members noted that the date of the next meeting was Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2026 at 7.00 pm at Rowton Methodist Church.

#### **12. URGENT ITEMS**

There were no items which the Chair was of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.

## ROWTON PARISH COUNCIL

## BUDGET

2026-2027

<b>Budget Head</b>	<b>Budget 2026-2027</b>
Salary	£3,650.00
Insurance	£425.00
Venue Hire	£250.00
Subscriptions	£250.00
Website Hosting	£170.00
Website Update	£100.00
Clerks Expenses	£100.00
Payroll Services	£100.00
Training	£100.00
Printing	£50.00
Carols on the Green	£350.00
Community Event	£200.00
Microsoft 365	£85.00
Information Commissioner	£50.00
Chair's Allowance	£50.00
Internal Auditor	£140.00
Planning Matters - CGBA	£750.00
Housing Needs Survey	£4,000.00
Contingency/Miscellaneous	£150.00
	<b>£10,970.00</b>