

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF CULWORTH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
held on Thursday 7th September 2023 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall**

Present:	Andrew Wilby (AW)	Chairman
	Stuart Rolt (SR)	Vice Chairman
	Michelle Koster (MK)	Councillor
	Martin Rowling (MR)	Councillor
	John Mullins-Blyth (JMB)	Councillor
	Nancy Guinness (NG)	Councillor
	Gary Denby (GD)	Parish Clerk

Public: Clive Waller
(9 total) Emily Collins

Welcome to members and the public from AW.

1. Apologies received – Alison Eastwood – WNC Unitary Councillor (out of the country)
2. Councillor declarations of interest & dispensations in the following agenda items – None.
3. Receive minutes as an accurate record of the Parish Council official acts and decisions:-
 - 3.1 Meeting held on **13th July 2023** proposed by SR, seconded by JMB, agreed by all Cllrs.
 - 3.2 Meeting held on **18th April 2023**, derived from brief emailed notes supplied by the interim Clerk Rebecca Boasman with the following refinements: Steve Kerridge will look into 20 mph restrictions; the blocked drains are down by Culworth Garage. Proposed by SR, seconded by JMB and agreed by all Councillors present.
 - 3.3 Annual Parish Meeting held on **18th April 2023** including two of the written reports, with the following refinements: Maddy Green attended and presented the Community Park report; the Culworth Charity report was offered. Proposed by MR, seconded by JMB and agreed by all Councillors present.
4. **Public Concerns** (prior notice the the Chair or the Parish Clerk is recommended)
 - 4.1 AW reported upon friendly discussions with parishioners residing on the boundary of the children's play park. Restrictions will be applied to ease the tensions being raised.
 - 4.2 A parishioner Joan Gottowik (age 96) wishes to donate a tree to the village in memory of her daughter, sadly lost to us last year. There is a plan in action, to receive 200 saplings tree / shrubs for the boundaries of the playing field site (autumnal planting), but they may not be sufficient. These two ideas need to be brought together.
 - 4.3 JMB has received a cheque for £1,000 for a bench on the play park. This needs discussion as to its appropriate location. A bench and litter bin have recently been installed on the play park, with the pavilion behind them! Emptying?

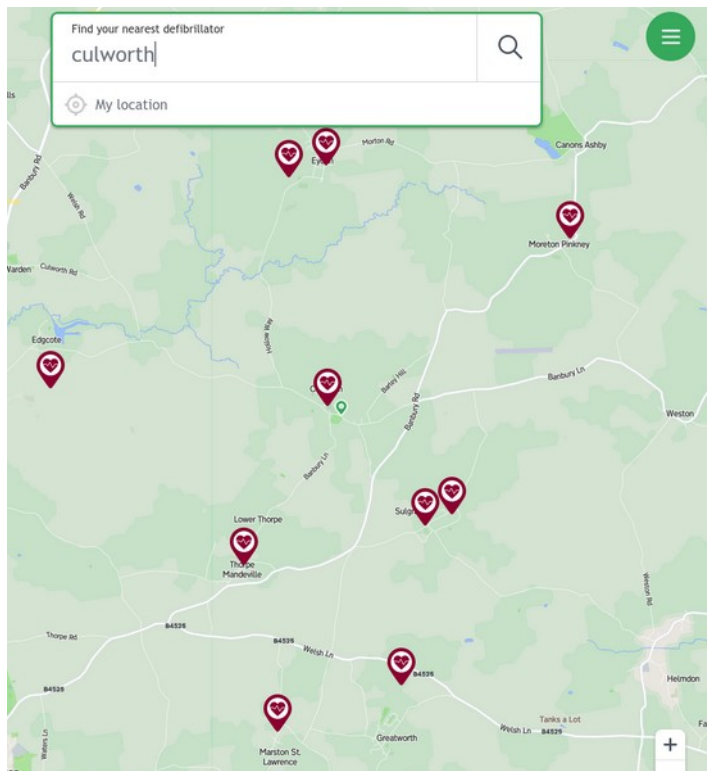


5. **Matters Arising** from previous Parish Council minutes

5.1 Ref 5.4: Registration of the village defibrillator with The Circuit (the 999 service)

The village unit has been registered on The Circuit for some time. After investigation, the Clerk found that the 'enable map location' box had not been checked, hence it was not appearing on the local map for 'available defibrillators'. This has been corrected and it may now be found on www.defibfinder.uk

There was discussion as to whether the village defibrillator might be more easily 'found' by members of the public if located within the unused telephone box on The Green? It was agreed to leave this suggestion with **JMB**, having established contacts with the school (its current location is by means of a public footpath, 'the school path', near to the village church).



6. Update on use of **Cricket Field improvements**

6.1 Ref 6.1: Update on grants received and their usage to date

Funding of £160,000 has been received from Sports England (£110,000), the Village Hall Trust, County Cricket Club and Parish Council funding. All is expended bar approx £6,000 with some smaller late phase projects outstanding. A VAT reclaim correction is required **GD**.

6.2 Ref 6.2: Update on the League's view with regards the new boundary position

Jim Powell was reported as having no boundary issues raised by the cricket league.

6.3 Ref 6.4: Any developments over the tarmac top cover for the car park

This has been put-back to the second phase of the village hall redevelopment.

6.4 Considerations of re-seeding the cricket outfield to remove grazing requirements

AW advised that the specially re-seeded inner wicket area has required 4-off mowings this season. The outer wicket area (hay meadow) has required 14-off mowings! At its own expense, the cricket club wishes to re-seed the outer areas (excluding the play park area and ground fringes for biodiversity), in order to reduce its maintenance care. They will employ a professional company to achieve this; the kill-off chemicals are unknown but will be used responsibly (regards the adjacent play area and children).

7. Update on **Adult Gym and Children's Play Areas improvements**

7.1 Ref 7.1: Update on grants received and their usage to date

HS/2 grants totalling £45,000 of £54,118 awarded have been claimed to 13 June 23. The remaining £9,118 awaits the final safety inspection and final invoicing from Kompan, with completion documentation being supplied to HS/2 **MK + GD**.

Kompan has been paid its first two instalments, the is third awaiting payment (below). A final instalment is due a couple of months after the site is opened. A VAT reclaim is also necessary, encompassing the correction for 6.1 above **GD**.

7.2 Ref 7.2: Report on park opening and resolution of snagging works & future checks

The Kompan protective fencing was removed at the start of July and the park was open for use during the children's school holidays, as hoped for. Kompan addressed the snagging work and certified the site as safe to use themselves (documented?).

It has been much appreciated by villager children and visiting grand children, sometimes as many as 20 or so at a time! Mums are getting to know each other and each other's children. From the coffee cups felt behind, there is also quite a following by visitors to The Forge cafe. Good feedback has been received.

7.3 Ref 7.4: Development of a joint Risk Assessment associated mitigating measures

The Clerk has produced an initial outline, for discussion with affected parties. Is there an initial Kompan risk assessment, alongside their site design (repairs and checks)? These need to be amalgamated and discussed with all parties concerned before the Spring 2024 **GD**.

7.4 Considerations of a low palisade fence to exclude dogs

AW reported that surveying other parish council play parks, it is evidently best practice to have some form of restrictive boundary fence to keep children from wandering away and to deter unattended dogs from wandering in. This can be addressed over the winter. To reduce noise nuisance to nearby residents, it seems only fair to restrict the park use to between 8am and 8pm (or dusk when dark winter nights).

7.5 Public Signage requirements for the play areas, as an official bye-law

AW has drafted initial signage which was discussed and is shown in [Appendix A](#), seeking to add clout to it by the passing of a local bye-law (may be complex and ineffective; not recommended by the 'Clerk's bible': Arnold-Baker on Local Council Admin). This should simplify the current green notice being proposed by Maddy Green (the Parish Clerk's contact details should also be removed) **MK**.

7.6 Arrange regular safety checks of the Community Park equipment

Kompan has provided JMB with a schedule of regular and periodic safety checks. He has found a few loosened bolts, which he re-tightened. Tightening requirements should reduce over time, as things settle in. JMB has suggested a monthly rota of volunteers be arranged to facilitate this and share the load, perhaps recruited from the original list of interested parties? Perhaps utilise Duke of Edinburgh award students?

Councillors agreed that AW and SR will discuss the above matters with the play area group, to help expedite some timely decisions **AW SR**.

8. **Correspondence received by Councillors**

- 8.1 13 Jul: N-CALC appointed internal auditor's reported
- 8.2 12 Aug: N-CALC mini eUpdate 11/08 – AI Task group, last call
- 8.3 17 Aug: Bringing forward Parish Council meeting to Thu 7th Sept
- 8.4 21 Aug: WNC final recommendations to Boundary Commission
- 8.5 23 Aug: WNC Town & Parish Briefing Aug 23
- 8.6 23 Aug: WNC to host prestigious Rugby world Cup 2025
- 8.7 27 Aug: Parish Council web site to cost £120 + VAT pa from 4th Oct
- 8.8 1 Sep: N-CALC mini eUpdate 01/09 – Model Financial Regulations, Making a Complaint
- 8.0 6 Sep: N-CALC training newsletter – September 2023

9. **Planning for use of the Community Infrastructure Levy**

It has previously been agreed that all CIL funds will be allocated towards the Play Park for the time being.

10. **Consider WNC's Community Governance Review**

This was brought about by WNC Electoral Services inviting the Parishes to contribute to their Community Governance Review during 2023-2024, with a response required by 18th August (just 19 days notice, in the holiday period for a once in a decade opportunity – rather dubious practice, for a department supposedly supporting local democracy). Consequently Danny Moody of N-CALC alerted all Clerks to the situation and Preston Capes duly noted its 'interest' on 9th August.

Two weeks later, the Council was presented with a list of particular areas of concern and given just one week to respond by the Electoral Services Manager (by 4th September):-

Change of Parish Name, Change the Number of Councillors, Change the Parish boundaries, Change of the Parish Warding arrangements, Merging with another Parish.

Councillors agreed to remain with the current arrangements. WNC to be advised **GD**.

11. Consider whether to continue using HugoFox to host the Parish Council web site

This was introduced as a 'free of charge' loss-leader in order to capture an audience. Now that the site usage has been established, charges are to be made from 2 October 2023 at £10 monthly. Whilst the site does not offer all the integration, document searches and filtering and the professional email addresses of a professional site, it represents reasonable value for the time being. The Clerk is developing work-arounds for most of its limitations. Councillors agreed to continue with this provider for the time being. The Clerk will setup a Direct Debit, or arrange an annual subscription **GD**.

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

- 12.1 WNS/2023/6671/FUL-LBC: Partial demolition of existing garage and its replacement with an extension housing a ground floor bedroom at Myrtle Cottage, Sulgrave Road OX17 2AP by 5 Oct. The Planning Committee is to circulate its thoughts on the matter to Councillors and make a response based on their feedback **MK**.
- 12.2 WNS/2023/6001/FULL: Alteration and single storey rear extension, internal remodelling and refurbishments. New roof light in existing roof. Oak frame car shelter to front forecourt at Mountfield, Hight street. OX17 2BE by 9 Aug. The Planning

Committee is to clarify certain aspects to Councillors and make a response based on their feedback **MK**.

- 12.3 WNS/2023/6433/LBC: Listed building consent to repair damaged parapet following a vehicle collision at Trafford Bridge Farm, Welsh Road, Edgecote by 6 Sept. For information only, no response required (HS/2 repairing their own likely damage).
- 12.4 WNS/2023/0199/FUL: Proposed Erection Of A Garage/Home-Office To Replace An Existing Barn And Installation Of Solar Panels at The Barn Paddocks Farm High Street OX17 2BE by 13th March 2023. Council's decision not recorded. Decision Pending.
- 12.5 WNS/2023/0156/FUL & LBC: Conversion of an existing garage building to provide first floor ancillary accommodation, and the associated building works at Fulford House, The Green OX17 2BB by 8th March 2023. Approved 17 Aug 23.

13. **Audit and Accounts**

- 13.1 Ref 12.1: Clerk's contract of employment; registration with Pensions Regulator & PAYE Carried forward **AW**.
- 13.2 Ref 12.2: Clerk's access to all Parish online accounts accomplished 24 August 2023. The Clerk has managed to set-up the payments listed below.
- 13.3 External auditor notice that audit deadlines have not been met (possible proceedings) The Clerk has drafted a suitable, apologetic response, distributed to the Chair and Vice Chair for approval. It was agreed that this shall be sent **GD**.
- 13.4 Ref 12.6: Approval of the Parish Accounts summary 2022-23, prepared by former Clerk These were included as Appendix A in the 18th April 2023 meeting minutes, now shown in Appendix B. These have been reconciled against bank statements to 30th March 2023, verified by MK. Councillors therefore approved their acceptance, permitting them to be signed off by the Clerk and Chairman.
- 13.5 Sign-off of the AGAR 2022/23 Form 3 Accounting Statements by Chair & RFO Based upon the accounts summary 13.4 and Jose Rowling's (JR) explanation of variances, the parish council approved the Section 2 Accounting Statements by the Responsible Financial Officer and the Chairman GD & AW. As advised to JR by the internal auditor, these include all receipts and payments, including those of the two external projects (sections 6 and 7 above), hence the enormous one-off variances.
- 13.6 Sign-off of the AGAR 2022/23 Form 3 Annual Governance Statement by Clerk & RFO The RFO took Councillors through each section of the Governance Statement. It was agreed that section 9 is non-applicable since there are no (charitable) Trust Funds for which the parish council has the role of sole managing trustee.
- 13.7 Ref 5.5: Upload of final audit documents for viewing by the external auditor This can now be performed, given the approved forms above **GD**.
- 13.8 Draft Notice of Public Rights to view the Parish Council accounts 2022-23 **GD** The target dates are usually a minefield and cannot be met on this occasion. The Clerk has proposed some dates to the external auditor, allowing time for them to complete their checking and reporting
- 13.9 Draft response to External Auditor seeking dispensation for the delayed audit return See 13.3 above **GD**.

- 13.10 Consider the internal auditor's report for 2022-23. Carried forward to Nov meeting since insufficient printed copies were available **GD**.
- 13.11 Ref 12.12: Review Account balances and Q1 summary of income, expenditures, budget Carried forward to the next meeting, when it can include Q1 and Q2 which is more meaningful as half-year figures **GD**.
- 13.12 Ref 12: Parish Council receipt of excess fundraising from Kings Coronation £14 was kindly received to the Parish Council account on 17 Jul 2023 from SR+DJ.
- 13.13 Ref 12.9: Review Council's Risk Assessment and its Asset Register, add play equipment Carried forward **GD**.
- 13.14 Consider Parish Council options for gaining interest on reserves monies being held. Carried forward **GD**.
- 13.15 Ref 5.3: Development of a Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee **SR GD**
Carried forward until the Clerk has opportunity to draft a summary and for this to be discussed with the committee. A moving target at present **GD**.
- 13.16 Ref 12.11: Consideration of a Council policy for employment and training **GD**
Carried forward (see 13.17). Associated with 13.1 above; also an important aspect of bringing the whole parish council into a more professional approach with regards the ever-changing regulations.
- 13.17 Ref 12.8: Review Council Governance documents available on the web site:-
culworthparishcouncil.gov.uk/community/culworth-parish-council-18681/policies-etc/
Standing Orders; Codes of Conduct; Equality Statement;
Complaints Procedure; Burial Policy
These are now available to the public and councillors. It is best practice to review them in the Spring (May), upon the start of a new democratic year. It becomes an opportunity for new Councillors to know of their existence. This opportunity has passed for this year; new Financial Regulations are awaited.
- 13.18 Consider and approve the Parish Council payments listed below, proposed by SR, seconded by JMB and agreed by all Councillors present:-

Description / Power	Amount	VAT	Total
Wave water bill for 16 Feb to 15 May 2023, estimated for Pavilion, Banbury Lane OX17 2AX	£21.21	-	£21.21
Texprep invoices 26504 for village newsletters Aug 2023	£33.50	-	£33.50
Roger Smith mowing of burial ground 2-off 7 & 21 June 1-off mowing of football field on 7 th June 2-off strimming of burial ground 2 nd & 30 th June	£23.00 £57.00 £15.00	-	£133.00
Cartwright Landscapes mowing of Green & other areas 12, 26 June Mowing The Mound 8 June Mowing the cricket field perimeter 8 June. Invoice C44244	£133.50 £233.00 £99.00	£93.10	£558.60
Cartwright Landscapes mowing of Green & other areas 10, 24 July	£133.50	£26.70	£160.20
Parish Online mapping tool to 10 Aug 2024.	£40.00	£8.00	£48.00
Horne & Littlemore Structural Engineers preparation of drawings for Village Hall: Invoice INV-7685 by 30 Jul. CRICKET FIELD	£360.00	£72.00	£432.00
JPG MK Ltd Preparation of construction management plan, Hillfield Project: Inv 232/07/480. CRICKET FIELD	£600.00	£120.00	£720.00
Colin Styles Building Contractor 3 rd payment for works to car			

park: Inv 069T dated 12 Aug. CRICKET FIELD	£229.00	£45.80	£274.80
Colin Styles Building Contractor 4 th and final payment for works to car park: Inv 070T dated 12 Aug. CRICKET FIELD	£1,030.00	£206.00	£1,236.00
Empty Play Park Instant Access account **856 (accrued grants and donations, remaining) into Parish Current account **843 .			£26,859.44
Kompan sales invoice 247243: A 30% 3rd instalment for works at Culworth in June 2023 due 29 Jul 2023. PLAY PARK	£22,500	£4,500	£27,000.00
Gary Denby Parish Clerk gross remuneration and expenses (8 weeks) including home office expenses 13 Jul – 6 Sep) plus 33% of SLCC annual subscription	£456.32 £52.00 £50.00	-	£558.32
<i>Yu Energy Street lighting electricity charges 01 – 31 July 2023 (DD)</i>	<i>£58.94 £13.22</i>	<i>£2.95 £0.66</i>	<i>£75.77</i>
<i>Yu Energy Street lighting electricity charges 01 – 31 Aug 2023 (DD)</i>	<i>£58.02 £13.15</i>	<i>£2.90 £0.66</i>	<i>£74.73</i>

14. **Councillors' Comments**

- 14.1 MR reported upon weeds encroaching the footpath by the Red Lion pub. In past years, these would have been reduced by weed control spraying (requires dry, calm conditions), which may have been overlooked by the Clerk at that time. They should die-back in late Autumn. Better planning is required for next Spring **GD**.
- 14.2 A tree has fallen on the field adjacent to the cricket field, entangled in the wire boundary fencing. **SR** agreed to use his wire cutters to help extricate it, enabling its disposal.
15. Date of next meeting: **Wed 9th November 2023 in the village hall at 7.30pm**

Meeting closed at 9.25 pm

.....
Chairman

.....
Date

Culworth Parish Council Bye-laws

This play area is open for use only between the hours of 8am until 8pm or dusk.

The play area may not be used during a cricket match.

Dogs are not permitted within the play area.

The play equipment may only be used by children of under 14 years of age, who must be supervised at all times.

BBQ's are not permitted within the play area.

By order of
Culworth Parish Council 2023

APPENDIX B: PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS FOR 2022-23 BY JR

Culworth Parish Council

Receipts & Payments Account for the Year ended 31 March 2023

	<u>2021-22</u>		<u>2022-23</u>
Receipts			
	23,500	Precept	25,000
	331	Burials and Monuments	331
		Bank Interest	152
	6	Wayleave	5
		Sport England Grant	110,020
		Culworth Village Hall	14,000
		Culworth Cricket Club	6,000
		Culworth Community Park	656
	2,846	Community Infrastructure Levy	
	228	NCALC Asset Mapping	
	69	Culworth Hill Field Trust	
	1,356	VAT Recovered	16,428
	£ 28,336		£ 172,592
Payments			
	1,245	Street Lighting (inc Maintenance)	2,232
	1,153	Village Maintenance	880
	855	Burial Ground Maintenance	643
	746	Culworth Castle Maintenance	2,960
	695	Recreation Field Maintenance	599
	257	Cricket Field Maintenance	387
	600	Tree Surgeon	880
	1,165	Dog Fouling Bins & Maintenance	1,274
		Cricket Field Improvements	114,288
	638	Bus Shelter & Misc Repairs	213
	199	Salt Bins	
	185	Church Clock (Parish Councils Act 1957 1.2)	185
	519	Newsletters and Reports	400
	296	Website Fees	220
	6,473	Clerk's Salary	6,472
	1,224	Administration Expenses	897
		Hire of Hall	117
	72	Bank Charges	72
	594	Insurance	834
	407	NCALC, SLCC & ACRE Subscriptions	466
	1,517	Election	
	229	Training	282
	485	Audit	200
	1,358	VAT Recoverable	25,307
		Section 137 (max = £8.82 x 308 = £2,716.56)	
	17	Royal British Legion / War Memorial	20
	227	Queen's Jubilee	1,749
	244	Covid Lockdown Event	1,769
	100	Section 142 (Citizen's Advice Bureau)	100
	£ 21,256		£ 161,677
Summary			
	24,537	Balance brought forward from last year	31,617
	28,336	Add Receipts (above)	172,592
	52,873		204,209
	21,256	Less Payments (above)	161,677
	£ 31,617	Balance carried forward to next year	£ 42,532
Represented by:			
	31,617	Unity Bank - General Account	33,905
		Unity Bank - Cricket Field Account	7,971
		Unity Bank - Community Park Account	656
	£ 31,617		£ 42,532