



PARSON DROVE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Parson Drove Parish Council Meeting held on
**Wednesday 12th June 2024 at Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road,
Parson Drove**

Attended by Councillors: A Rouse (Chairman), G Booth (Vice-Chairman), P Spriggs, P Unwin, P Williams & Y Reader.

FDC Councillors: G Booth & D Cutler | CCC Councillor: S King

Members of the public: 4

Also Present: Sarah Bligh (Locum Clerk)

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7pm and took the opportunity to thank Cllr Booth & Cllr Spriggs for their hard work and service over many years as Chairman & Vice-Chairman respectfully. Cllr Rouse as the new Chairman pledged to try and uphold the standards set by Cllr Booth & Cllr Spriggs.

148/24. To agree apologies for absence

Apologies had been received and accepted from Cllr R Fowler and FDC Councillor M Humphrey.

149/24. To consider any requests by Councillors for dispensation.

The Chairman requested a dispensation for Agenda Item Number 175/24 due to being an employee of FACT.

Cllr Booth proposed to accept the request as The Chairman would not personally gain; this was agreed and granted by Councillors.

150/24. To receive Members Declarations of Interest

- Cllr Williams declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item 170/24 as a member of Parson Drove Street Pride.
- Cllr Rouse declared a pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda Item 175/24 as an employee of FACT.
- Cllr G Booth declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda Item Number 177/24 as he is a committee member of the Amenities 95 Management Committee.

151/24. Open Forum – Public participation. Agenda item time limited to 15 minutes.

To allow up to 3 minutes for each member of the public who wishes to address the Council.

- A member of Parson Drove Street Pride Group spoke in relation to Agenda Item 170/24 and outlined their plans for the Carved Log Community Event, explained the reasons for wishing to change the current War Memorial Plant Beds with the options being considered by them and asking for the Parish Council's opinion on the matter.
Ideas from the group consisted of a formal hedge, a similar approach to France with white chippings, plant roses around the railings as there is a remembrance rose developed in association with the War Graves Commission, or it could be left as it currently is.
- She also informed the Council that the moles were once again evident on the village green. – the Clerk to follow up.
- A member of the public elaborated on the reasons for their complaint regarding the trees on the village green, Agenda Item Number 168/24, emphasising the damage occurring to their private cars from falling conkers and branches. Damage to their property from over hanging branches and the inconvenience of falling leaves and bird droppings. They were of the view that the Parish Council had not maintained the trees for several years nor appreciating the problems they and other residents were encountering.
- Cllr Diane Cutler as the Co-Ordinator for the Parson Drove & Wisbech St Mary Ward Community Speedwatch (CSW) reported that CSW had held all day sessions in three villages so far, with Parson Drove scheduled at the end of June. Data recorded in Murrow has shown that less speeding occurred at their usual session times which is proof that raising awareness is working and holding sessions at different times of the day is recommended to raise the same level of awareness.
Cllr Cutler also reported that Wisbech Police support CSW by attending roadside sessions but expressed concern regarding the future of speed enforcement with their own speed guns, as there is confusion surrounding the provision of a new system. Darryl Preston the Police & Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough; during his election campaign pledged his support regarding speeding concerns, so a meeting will be arranged to be able to discuss the matter further and obtain clarification.

152/24. To agree the minutes of the Annual meeting dated 8th May 2024.

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting dated 8th May 2024 were agreed as a true record after a minor amendment to Page 1672, Item Number 130/24, and signed by the Chairman.

153/24. **Matters arising from previous minutes** not covered on the agenda (for information only)

Cllr Booth advised that he had recently attended a Panel Meeting for the Wrydecroft Wind Farm Community Grants scheme when it had been agreed in principle that the extra grant funding of £5,000 would be allocated to Parish Councils for them to administer small grants for the local community. This will now be recommended to the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation Board to be signed off. The application form that has been designed has been approved with the caveat that money is not given to animal charities.

154/24. **To receive the District Councillors Reports**

Cllr Booth reported that due to the General Election and associated purdah rules FDC committee meetings have been temporarily suspended until after the elections have taken place.

Cllr Cutler reported that she remains busy with residential issues and is encouraging parishioners to self-report issues using the online tools where possible.

155/24. **To receive the County Councillor Report**

Cllr King sent his report via email and raised the question of whether the laurel hedge in front of the footbridge from The Bank to Fen Road had been reduced in height? Cllr Spriggs confirmed that it was still growing taller. Cllr King agreed to follow up.

Cllr King requested some photographs showing the roadside verge issues at High Side, Murrow Bank and Silvers Lane as the LHO was struggling to locate the problem.

Cllr King reported that the Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council Cllr Lucy Nethsingha, who also sits on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority has agreed to attend a meeting at Newton in the Isle Village Hall to discuss accessibility to rural bus routes. This would be occurring on 9th July 2024 at 3:30pm.

Cllr King was happy to take any further questions or reports of Highways issues.

The Clerk reported that a response had now been received from CCC regarding the joint complaint with WSM Parish Council regarding pothole repairs not lasting and has circulated to Councillors for their perusal.

Cllr Spriggs reported that the traffic island at the Swan Bridge junction has broken fencing and a damaged signpost following an accident. The Clerk reported that this had been submitted to CCC via the online fault reporting tool and would forward the reference number to Cllr King to follow up. Cllr Spriggs elaborated that the island also has dropped kerb stones.

Cllr Spriggs expressed frustration that there have not been any improvements regarding the drainage on Fen Road with flooding still an issue due to excess rainfall. Cllr King confirmed that this issue is on LHO list to be investigated.

Cllr Spriggs also expressed frustration that the BT manhole on Fen Road had not been repaired properly. Cllr King agreed to seek a resolution of the matter with Open Reach.

Cllr Spriggs reported issues with Anglian Waters manholes rattling loose in their casing on Fen Road. Cllr Reader recommended that individual house holders contact Anglian Water to report them as this is not a matter for the Parish Council. The Clerk reported that she was happy to submit reports online to Anglian Water but would need to know the house numbers of where the manholes sit outside of.

The Chairman raised the question of whether the lining refresh of Swan Bridge junction had any update. Cllr King confirmed that he had passed the request on to the relevant officer. Cllr Booth submitted a report via CCC fault reporting tool during the meeting requesting the lining refresh at Swan Bridge junction.

156/24. **Highways Matters**

- a. To report any new street lighting issues – No items of discussion.
- b. For Councillors to note accepted quote from FDC for CCC streetlight near primary school adoption and upgrade including back shield at £746.14 (Exc VAT) - **Noted**
- c. Any other Highways Issues to be raised by Councillors. – No further issues reported under this item.

157/24. **Planning Applications** – Decision Updates: **Nil**

158/24. **Planning Applications** - For comment:

(a)	F/YR24/0386/TRCA	Works to 4x Lime trees within a Conservation Area at Southea Grange 33 Main Road Parson Drove Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4JA The Parish Council agreed to accept the recommendation of the tree officer.
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The Clerk reported notification of Planning Application F/YR23/0852/O (Land South Of 12 - 24 Ingham Hall Gardens Parson Drove Cambridgeshire Erect up to 9 x dwellings (outline application with matters committed in respect of

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access)) going to appeal and asked Councillors whether they wished to submit a response as the deadline for comments was prior to the July meeting. The Clerk was asked to reiterate the refusal recommendation previously submitted to FDC.

Cllr Rouse declared a personal interest in this matter due to living near to the proposed development and did not speak during the item.

159/24. **Planning Applications** - Planning Committee Complaint F/YR23/0555/O Erect 1 dwelling (outline with all matters reserved) at Land North of Longways 1 Back Road Murrow Cambridgeshire . The Clerk reported that the draft stage two complaint from the Parish Council was waiting approval before submission. Cllr Booth recommended a minor amendment to push the fact that there is a clear difference between the Planning Committee finely balancing and completely overriding policy with their personal opinion and that that this method of reaching a planning decision is wholly inappropriate. The Clerk will report to Council as soon as a response is received back from FDC.

160/24. **Finance Matters** - To receive the Internal Audit Report to 31 March 2024 and reappointment of Internal Auditors

Councillors were provided with a copy of the Internal Auditors Report prior to the meeting for discussion. There were 6 Action points which were discussed as follows:-

Action 1 The draft AGAR Section 2 Box 8 was completed incorrectly and did not balance with the Bank Reconciliation.

This error had arisen due to the late arrival of the final bank statement for the deposit account when another months Bank Interest should have been included in the AGAR figures. Although the Income figure on the draft AGAR had been amended to reflect this the same amendment had not been completed for the closing Bank Balance. The Clerk had now rectified this error on the AGAR for approval at Agenda Item Number 163/24.

Action 2 The Council should consider moving to direct payments through the Bank Account to reduce the risk of cheques being lost.

This was an exceptional year for cheques being lost but Councillors agreed that once the new Clerk/RFO had been appointed a new Bank Account would be opened with online banking being put in place.

Action 3 The Council did not make proper provision for the Exercise of Public Rights for the Financial Year 2022-2023 and cannot provide a positive affirmation for Assertion 4 Section One of the Annual Governance Statement for 2023-2024.

This was an error by the previous Clerk/RFO which was most unfortunate but would not be repeated again this year.

Action 4 The Council should consider reviewing and adopting the new Model Finance Regulations and reviewing them together with the Standing Orders.

Councillors were unhappy at this action being included in the Internal Auditors Report Action Points as the review of these Governance Documents were delayed as suggested by the Internal Auditor during prior discussions earlier in the year. The review and adoption of the model Finance Regulation and Standing orders will be completed in the next few months.

Action 5 All Financial information should be addressed to the Clerk, Ideally sent to a PO Box rather than a variety of addresses.

This action was a repeat from the 2022-2023 Internal Auditors report and as previously advised to the Internal Auditors this would not be actioned until a permanent Clerk/RFO had been appointed when all financial correspondence will be addressed to the new Clerk/RFO. A PO Box is not an option available due to the small size of the Council.

Action 6 The Council should consider developing an Investment Policy in order to spread the risk and maximise interest earning opportunities of its cash funds.

This recommendation had already been considered by the Locum Clerk/RFO and once the permanent Clerk/RFO was in post would be addressed after considering the high amount actually owed to Cambridgeshire County Council for the PFHI projects and Fenland District Council for the Street Lighting, maintenance, energy and outstanding upgrades.

The Parish Council agreed to the reappointment of Auditing Solutions for the Internal Audit 2024/25.

161/24. **Finance Matters** - Approval of end of year accounts following the completion of Internal Audit
The Accounts presented by the Clerk were approved and signed by the Chairman.

162/24. **Finance Matters** - To complete and approve Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 2023/2024
The Annual Governance Statement was completed and approved by Councillors.

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163/24. **Finance Matters** - To approve the completed Section 2 Accounting Statements for 2023/2024
Section 2 Accounting Statements for 2023/2024 were approved by Councillors.

164/24. **Finance Matters** - To agree the outstanding payments of the Council:

Item	Description	Total Amount	Power to Spend	
(a)	Locum Clerks May Salary	£452.07	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(b)	HMRC – Month 3 Deductions	£113.00	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(c)	Locum Clerk May Expenses	£30.00	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(d)	Wisbech St Mary PC – Postage Stamps Reimbursement	£20.50	LG Act 1972 S111	Agreed
(e)	Wisbech Electrical Ltd – Cage Emergency Light	£106.76	LG Act 1972 S133	Agreed
(f)	CAPALC – Planning Training – A Rouse	£180.00	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(g)	Iceni Tree Care Ltd – Ash Tree Felling	£900.00	Open Spaces Act 1906 S9,10	Agreed

165/24. **Finance Matters** – To ratify payments made:

(a)	EE May Telephone Bill (Direct Debit)	£24.60	LG Act 1972 S111	Agreed
(b)	E-on – The Cage May Energy (Direct Debit)	£20.23	Parish Councils Act 1957 S3	Agreed
(c)	Fenland District Council – Cage Business Rates	£499.00	LG Act 1972 S133	Agreed
(d)	Iceni Tree Care Ltd – Silver Birch Felling	£750.00	Open Spaces Act 1906 S9,10	Agreed
(e)	EE Telephone Bill APRIL CORRECTION	£24.60	LG Act 1972 S111	Agreed
(f)	E-on – The Cage Energy APRIL (Direct Debit)	£0.49	Parish Councils Act 1957 S3	Agreed

The Council resolved to authorise the expenditure for the month of May/June and ratified the payments already made totalling £3098.45. (This figure includes the difference between the EE telephone bills that was corrected.) The Clerk requested that two more invoices be approved for payment that had arrived too late for the agenda. An invoice from Auditing Solutions for the Internal Audit 2023/2024 at a cost of £426.00 and the invoice from Iceni Tree Care for the 2024 Tree Inspection at a cost of £1080.00. These items were approved for payment by Council and the Clerk to add them to July's agenda for ratification.

166/24. **Finance Matters** – Grant Applications – **Nil** There were no items for discussion.

167/24. For Councillors to receive and discuss the Tree Inspection Report from Iceni Tree Care Ltd

A tree report for the Village Green, Pond at Main Road and Seadyke Pit had been received with the following works recommended.

a) Village Green

Cllr Reader summarised that four Trees numbered 4, 7, 11 and 12 requiring the urgent removal of deadwood. An urgent removal of a large broken branch on tree number 29 as well as an urgent removal of a dead tree number 46. There were also 13 advisory actions where trees were requiring a Crown raise and 6 trees requiring the removal of the epicormic growth.

Cllr Reader agreed to contact T A Blackamore Ltd., regarding the removal of the epicormic growth as this was normally completed by him annually when cutting the village green grass.

Councillors agreed to obtain a quotation for the urgent work identified on the village green and as this was general maintenance for the removal of dead wood and broken branches planning permission from FDC would not be required with the exception of the felling of the dead Cherry tree number 46 as although this was unlikely to have a TPO due to its age it was within a Conservation Area so presumably would require Planning Permission.

Cllr Reader proposed that Planning Permission be obtained for the crown reduction of Trees numbered 2, 3, 30, 36, 37, 52 and 55 in the first instance as this would attend to the trees along the Bank next to residents' houses addressing some of the complaints being received. The remaining 6 advisory crown reductions were along the Bank Main Road away from the houses and could be dealt with as phase 2 due to budget restraints for this year. Councillors agreed to this proposal. Clerk to obtain quotations and submit the necessary planning applications.

b) Pond Main Road

Cllr Reader summarised from the report that only one tree, a Willow Number 89 required urgent work to remove damaged limb cavities and be repollarded. There was also one advisory for Willow Tree Number 69 advising this be repollarded due to the BT Lines. Councillors resolved to action the work for these two trees. Clerk to obtain quotations and obtain Planning Permission.

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c) Seadyke Pit

Cllr Reader summarised that there were no urgent works required at this site on the report; but two advisory comprising of the removal of two dead trees, Cherry Tree number 125 and Ash tree number 130. Councillors resolved to have these two trees felled but, in the meantime, erect signage advising that this was a Private Wildlife Area, prohibiting entry.

The Clerk to obtain a quote to remove the two dead trees and enquire whether the trees have TPO's with FDC.

168/24. For Councillors to receive and discuss complaint received regarding trees on the Village Green

The resident had covered their concerns during Public Participation.

Cllr Booth advised that the dead wood was removed from the trees on a regular basis following regular checks and maintenance.

The Clerk advised that other than general maintenance involving the removal of deadwood or broken branches all other major work had to be approved by FDC Planning Department as the trees were subject to TPO's which can take some time.

The Street Pride Group used to trim the low branches reducing the canopy of the trees, which was permitted subject to being within reach from a standing position. However, they had not been able to complete this more recently due to the problems encountered in disposing of the cuttings.

169/24. For Councillors to receive correspondence from Ron Bailey (Parliamentary Adviser to Lord Foster and Electrical Safety First) - Safety of Lithium ion Batteries and e-bikes and scooters - **Noted**

170/24. For Councillors to receive and discuss emailed correspondence from Parson Drove Street Pride

(a) Replacement Carved Log Community Event

This event is planned for Friday 5th July at 2.00pm when the funder and local dignitaries will be invited to attend together with members of the community to officially record the installation of the new log.

Refreshments will be served from the Cage. If the refurbished Village Sign has been completed this could also feature in the event. The Clerk advised that although the work was progressing, she could not guarantee that it will be completed by the 5th July.

(b) Jubilee Seating Replacement/Repair

The wooden seating on the Jubilee feature is rotten and requires replacing. As this was originally built and installed by apprentices from the College of West Anglia under the supervision of Roger Reader, whilst employed at the College and officially presented to the Parish Council by the College Principal; Cllr Booth suggested contacting the College to see if the apprentices could undertake the restoration for the Council.

(c) War Memorial Plant Beds

The Street Pride Group felt that a more organised flower bed at the War Memorial would be more appropriate. They were considering 3 options for improvements; one option was to completely clear all the flower beds and install white stone chippings making the War Memorial more visible and access to the railings easier for repainting. Another option was to install a small box hedge all around the War Memorial and the third option was to install just rose bushes making the beds more uniform in appearance. Councillors discussed the three options being suggested and generally felt that the hedge would take a lot to maintain to keep it neat and tidy and were not generally in favour of this suggestion. Cllr Williams preferred the option of White stone chippings as this would require little or no maintenance and this option was supported by Cllr Spriggs. Cllr Booth preferred the Rose Bushes option as this would allow for the existing Memorial Rose Bush to be retained but would also like to see the Red Poppies retained. Cllr Reader agreed with Cllr Booth and advised that the Rose Bushes could be pruned in early Spring therefore clearing the railings for repainting immediately after pruning.

171/24. For Councillors to consider Permissive Walkway Hedge Cutting Quote from Tawny Owl Tree & Gardening Services for £2880.00 (No VAT)

The Clerk advised that she had now received another quotation from T A Blackamore Ltd for £960 +VAT Councillors agreed to accept the quotation from T A Blackamore.

172/24. For Councillors to consider options for Village Enhancements from Wrydecroft Windfarm Grant Award

(a) Village Green Planters

The Clerk had been unable to obtain hard copies of catalogues other than one from Amberol as most Companies now only provided catalogues online. Options were viewed online and after much discussion it

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was agreed to order from Amberol - 4 rectangular planters for the area outside Costcutters Shop to prevent vehicles cutting across the village green. As the original grant application had indicated that we wished to purchase 10 planters it was also agreed to purchase 2 extra rectangle planters for the Village Hall and 2 square planters for the gate entrance at St Johns Church making a total of 8 planters costing £3074.00 Exc VAT (according to their website, pending official quotes being received and confirmation of delivery costs)

(b) **Village Benches**

The grant application was for 2 benches, one at Back Road Murrow near the public walkway and the other at the Lancaster Memorial site. Councillors viewed the options online and agreed to purchase a bench the same as those already installed in Murrow by Wisbech St Mary Parish Council at a cost of £640 (Exc VAT) From KBS Depot Ltd. The Clerk to request a quote for the concrete base and installation as well as supply and delivery of the bench and will follow this up with Councillors via email. As the size of the bench required and the exact location for the one at the Lancaster Memorial site had not been determined this was deferred to the next meeting once all information was available.

(c) **Village Green Flagpole**

The Clerk advised that she had a Flagpole Policy in place for Wisbech St Mary Parish Council as there was certain protocol that needed to be followed. She had a quotation from Harrison's Flagpoles; the same Company used by Wisbech St Mary Parish Council for an 8m Fibreglass flagpole with internal roping and hinged base plate at £870 (Exc VAT) and assumed that the Flags required would also be the same. Cllr Booth stated that there was little point in proceeding with this project if no-one was prepared to be the designated person responsible for erecting the Flags as and when appropriate. Councillors suggested contacting the Street Pride to see if anyone was prepared to take on this role and if some-one agreed to be the responsible person for the Flagpole this could then be ordered. The Clerk to follow up.

173/24. For Councillors to note RoSPA inspections booking at a cost of £490.00 (Exc VAT). Information **noted** by Councillors.

174/24. For Councillors to consider Fire Risk Assessment Quotes and note the amended Fire Regulations.

The Clerk had obtained three quotations for a Fire Risks Assessment for the Cage

Swift Fire & Safety - £195 (Exc VAT)

Cambs Fire Safety Ltd - £349 (No VAT)

Jackson Fire & Security Solutions - £295 (Exc VAT)

Councillors resolved to accept the quotation from Swift Fire & Safety at a cost of £195 (Exc VAT). The Clerk to follow up and book the fire risk assessment appointment.

175/24. For Councillors to note successful Wrydecroft Windfarm Grant Award of £7265.00 for the FACT Shuttlebus and decide on next steps.

In view of the time, it was agreed by Councillors to defer this matter until the next meeting. However, it was agreed that contact should be made by the Chairman with FACT to obtain their suggestions on the next steps to progress the project.

176/24. The Cage Maintenance – Update

The Clerk advised that despite numerous attempts to contact the contractors to arrange for the work to be completed this was proving difficult. Councillors suggested contacting a more senior member of the Company to resolve this.

177/24. To receive the Amenities 95 Management Committee Report

Cllr Booth advised that he did not attend the last Committee Meeting on the 25th May but was not aware of any issues that required reporting to the Parish Council.

178/24. To receive the Police Report and Crime Statistics

The Clerk provided Councillors with the following information for the Parish

Crime statistics from reported crime during March 2024

High Side 3 x Public Order Offence

High Side 2 x Violence & Sexual Offences

High Side 1 x Anti-Social Behaviour

John Peck Close 1 x Anti-Social Behaviour

Murrow Bank 2 x Criminal Damage & Arson

Murrow Bank 1 x Vehicle Crime

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Crime Statistics from reported crime during April 2024

Seadyke Bank 2 x Drugs Offence

Newlands Road 1 x Burglary

The Bank 1 x Burglary

179/24. Staffing Matters

(a) Recruitment of Clerk

Cllr Booth advised that the interviews for the two candidates had been arranged for Monday 17th June

180/24. To collate agenda items for the next meeting

- Fact Shuttle Bus project
- Bench at Lancaster Memorial Site
- Arrange date for annual Inspection of Riverside Garden Allotments and Fen Allotments

181/24. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 10th July 2024

7:00pm

Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road, Parson Drove

Meeting closed at 9:59pm