



PARSON DROVE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Parson Drove Parish Council Meeting held on
**Wednesday 8th October 2025 at Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road,
Parson Drove**

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

FDC Councillors: G Booth

Members of the public: 0

Also Present: Sarah Bligh (Locum Clerk)

269/25. To agree apologies for absence

Apologies of absence were received and accepted from Cllr Fowler, FDC Cllrs Cutler & Humphrey and CCC Cllr Osborn

270/25. To consider any requests by Councillors for dispensation

- Cllr Booth submitted a request for a dispensation under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 to enable discussion on item 287/25(a) – The review of allotment rents.
- Cllr Spriggs submitted a request for a dispensation under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 to enable discussion on item 287/25(a) – The review of allotment rents.
- It was noted that Cllrs Booth & Spriggs due to being current allotment tenants sought permission to be allowed to address the meeting, remain in the room and hear the discussions.
- The request for dispensation was unanimously approved by Council.

271/25. To receive Members Declarations of Interest

- Cllr Reader declared a prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 287/25(a) due to family members being current allotment tenants.
- Cllr Spriggs declared a prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 287/25(a) due to being a current allotment tenant.
- Cllr Booth declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 281/25(c) due to being the local representative for the RBL Poppy Appeal.
- Cllr Booth declared a prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 287/25(a) due to being a current allotment tenant.
- Cllr Booth declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 290/25 due to being a committee member of the Amenities 95 Management Committee

272/25. **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

- Cllr Diane Cutler as the Co-Ordinator for the Parson Drove & Wisbech St Mary Ward Community Speedwatch (CSW) submitted a report which stated that the Wisbech Neighbourhood Policing Team is working well with CSW in Parson Drove, and enforcement is ongoing.

273/25. **To agree the minutes of the meeting** dated 10th September 2025.

The minutes of the meeting dated 10th September 2025, and the confidential minutes dated 10th September 2025 were both agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

274/25. **Matters arising from previous minutes** not covered on the agenda (for information only)

The Chairman requested an amendment be noted from the minutes of Wednesday 13th August 2025 on bullet point two of the Chairmans Report. The correct statement was that although some councillors had raised concerns, the Parish Council as a public body did not object to the parcel boxes outside the village shop. It was understood that a resident had complained to FDC, and the FDC Conservation Officer had sought to have them removed. Cllr Spriggs confirmed that the Parish Council were mainly concerned as to whether they needed planning permission. This amendment to the approved minutes was agreed by Councillors.

The Locum Clerk reported that contact had been made with FDC Assets Team to obtain a quote for a new streetlight outside 65 Fen Road; contact had also been made with CCC Highways into obtaining an invoice for the PFHI at Murrow Bank and Fen Road outstanding from 2021, both matters will be followed up.

275/25. To receive the Chairman's Report

- The Chairman reported that he had attended the Chairman of FDC Civic Reception representing the Parish Council.

- The Chairman also attended a Street Pride meeting and the large shrubs that surround the Cage were recommended to be moved away from the sides by the company that recently repointed the brickwork. The group are aiming to remove the shrubs completely and replace with low lying plants.
- The Chairman further reported that he had received more quotes for the village noticeboard but felt this would be prudent to leave until a grant can be applied for due to the high costs. Following further discussion, it was decided that the locum Clerk apply to Wrydecroft Windfarm for £6000 before the deadline of 1st February 2026. It was also noted that the grant of £6000 for the MVAS/SID speed cameras was pending whilst the monitoring report for the village enhancement grant is outstanding. The locum Clerk reported that the monitoring report was high on her priority list but was currently waiting for information from a community group that benefitted from the grant.
- The Chairman reported that he was meeting with Cllr Fowler regarding the hedge cutting between Swan Bridge and the foot bridge along Murrow Bank to see if the larger shrubs could be removed which would allow for better future maintenance.
- The Chairman also reported that he had compiled his next submission for the Parish Post magazine which was due out around Christmas.

276/25. To receive the District Councillors Reports

- Cllr Booth reported that he had attended FDC Full Council meeting on 15th September 2025 and had raised a question regarding the awaited new Local Plan; with the portfolio holder for Planning responding that there is currently a 6.6 year land supply, and a full statement will be released at the December meeting on whether the new Local Plan will be released before the local government reorganisation. Cllr Booth expressed frustration that the newly completed Gypsy and Travellers Housing Assessment has been filed in with all the documents relating to the new Local Plan and Parish and Town Councils need to be made aware of the document and encouraged FDC to undertake proper engagement.
- Cllr Booth further reported that an Extraordinary Council Meeting had been arranged for 7th November 2025 to discuss the local government reorganisation, and a new fleet of refuse lorries had been approved for purchase which will incorporate collection of the new food caddy waste.
- Cllr Cutler submitted a report which stated that she had been focussing on reviving the FDC Community Partnership engagement within the rural villages, with the recently held sessions being well attended. The “Coffee with a Coppa” events are proving successful with the next one to take place in Parson Drove at the Village Hall on Tuesday 21st October 10-11am and in Murrow at the Methodist Chapel on Thursday 30th October 2-3pm.
- Cllr Cutler also reported that discussions are still ongoing regarding the local government reorganisation, with the seven councils in Cambridgeshire all potentially submitting a different preference, which will be collated and submitted to government by 28th November 2025.

277/25. To receive the County Councillor Report – No discussion took place under this item.

278/25. Highways Matters

- a) To report any new street lighting issues -

The Chairman reported that the light deflector from the Streetlight outside 19 Main Road formally known as “Snips” had blown off and needed to be replaced, the Locum Clerk to follow this up.

- b) Any Highways Issues to be raised by Councillors

Cllr Spriggs expressed concern that Long Drove from the Old Railway Crossing to Turf End Bridge has become uneven and is breaking up; with the poor road surface creating a camber effect due to sinking at the sides. Cllr Booth advised that this issue had already been reported on the Highways system on the 9th/10th September.

The Chairman raised concerns regarding access to the farms on Fen Road during the road closure to improve the drainage. Cllr Reader also expressed concern that residents have been unable to access their properties during the closure and have had to drive the three-mile diversion to get home. The Clerk to follow up and seek an update from Highways regarding the traffic management and clarification on closure hours according to the TTRO permit.

Cllr Williams reported that an access to a farm at Church End (Opposite Manor Farm) has broken up and is affecting the Main Road. Cllr Booth reported this on the highways fault reporting tool during the meeting.

279/25. Planning Applications – Decision Updates: **Noted**

(a)	F/YR25/0434/E	Replacement of windows at St Marks Methodist Church 39 Main Road Parson Drove Cambridgeshire	Granted 31/07/25
(b)	F/YR25/0511/TRTPO	Felling of 1no Beech tree covered by TPO 02/1976 at Oakleigh 81 Main Road Parson Drove Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4LA	Granted 28/08/25

(c)	F/YR25/0572/E	Erect part two-storey part single-storey rear extension, involving demolition of existing conservatory at Thistle Cottage 234 Main Road Church End Parson Drove Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4LF	Granted 25/09/25
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280/25. Planning Applications

- (a) For comment: **Nil**
- (b) To discuss possible Planning Enforcement issue – Seadyke Bank
Cllr Booth reported that he followed up this matter with Planning Enforcement and had received an update that this is being investigated. Planning Enforcement are attending the site and the next step will be the service of a Planning Contravention Notice on the owner and occupier of the land. Cllr Spriggs requested that the Parish Council submit a FOI request to ask what council tax the parish travellers sites pay. Cllr Booth raised concern that this may not be answered due to GDPR, but the locum Clerk agreed to attempt to submit the question.
- (c) To receive update on TPO Planning Applications for the Village Green Trees
The Locum Clerk reported that she had submitted two planning applications for various trees on the village green, which had been confirmed as received by FDC Planning. The Locum Clerk also reported that the willows at the village pond are still outstanding and will submit a planning application for these.

281/25. Finance Matters

- (a) To receive the Finance & Budget Report for 2025/2026 to date.
The bank reconciliation of 31st August 2025 balanced at £102,418.32 which was between the Santander Current Account of £44,817.09, the Santander Savings Account of £15,229.77 and the Unity Trust Account of £42,371.46. The report was agreed to and signed off by Cllr Pam Williams and unanimously agreed by Councillors.
The Locum Clerk reported that Santander have advised that they intend to start charging a monthly account fee on the Current Account of £4.99 per month from 1st October 2025. This was noted by Councillors.
- (b) To consider the External Auditors report for the Financial Year ending 31st March 2025
The Locum clerk reported that following queries from PKF Littlejohn the certificate had been received with a minor note stating that “The smaller authority has not confirmed the employment status of the Locum Clerk”; this was noted by Councillors. The required information for the conclusion of the 2024/25 audit had been added to the website and the parish noticeboard on 30th September 2025.
- (c) To approve the ordering of the Remembrance Day Wreaths
Cllr Williams requested that a wreath is ordered for the Lancaster Bomber Memorial as well as one for the War Memorial. The ordering of two wreaths was unanimously approved by Councillors.
- (d) To discuss the contribution for the Parish Post Magazine
The Chairman expressed concern that because articles from Parson Drove contribute largely to the magazine, whether a higher financial contribution should be considered. Cllr Booth surmised that only once a full year of WSM Parish Council producing the magazine would it be known as to whether the finances have balanced between advertising revenue and expenditure.
Cllr Reader proposed that the matter be deferred until the end of year figures for the magazine are known. The Locum Clerk agreed to liaise with WSM Clerk for details once they become available.

282/25. Finance Matters - To agree the outstanding payments of the Council:

Item	Description	Total Amount	Power to Spend	
(a)	S Phillips September Pay	£529.76	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(b)	S Phillips September Expenses – includes Working from Home Allowance	£30.00	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(c)	HMRC Outstanding NI Contributions from 2025/26	£152.21	LG Act 1972 S112	Deferred
(d)	Locum Clerks September Pay	£605.63	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(e)	Locum Clerks September Expenses – includes Working from Home Allowance	£80.26	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(f)	PKF Littlejohn LLP – External Audit 2024/25	£378.00	Accounts & Audit Regulations 1996 S11996/590	Agreed
(g)	GBSG – Maintenance Contract Alarm at Cage	£109.69	LG Act 1972 S133	Agreed
(h)	Open Spaces Society - Membership	£45.00	LG Act 1972 S111	Agreed

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283/25. **Finance Matters** – To ratify payments made:

(a)	Tesco Mobile (Direct Debit)	£8.50	LG Act 1972 S111	Approved
(b)	E-on – The Cage September Energy (Direct Debit)	£18.02	Parish Councils Act 1957 S3	Approved
(c)	Bank charges – Unity Bank (Standing Order)	£6.00	LG Act 1972 S111	Approved
(d)	HMRC –Months 6 & 7 Tax (Missed off agenda)	£92.80	LG Act 1972 S112	Approved
(e)	S Phillips August Pay (Correction from agenda)	£529.76	LG Act 1972 S112	Approved

The Locum Clerk reported on item 282/25(c) that due to errors in the payroll ranging from 2024/25 to date, the employer's contribution of National Insurance had never been paid to HMRC, however according to the PAYE account on the Government Gateway only approximately £48.00 was owed. The Locum Clerk requested that this payment be deferred until further checks and calculations could be made and will report at the following meeting.

Cllr Booth requested clarification on item (e) that the Locum Clerk had set up to pay for Microsoft 365 monthly and not annually. The Locum Clerk confirmed that this can be cancelled at any time, and the decision was made purely due to her own available finances. The Locum Clerk agreed to obtain a quote from Tamar IT for them to supply Microsoft 365 directly to the Parish Council to stop this being a cost that the Clerk had to claim back.

The Locum Clerk requested that an additional invoice for the service of the Cage Clock from Smiths of Derby for £345.60 (Inc VAT) be paid, which was agreed to by Councillors.

Following all discussions, the Council **resolved** to **authorise** the expenditure for the month of September and **ratified** the payments already made, the payments would be paid by cheque from the Santander Account until the bank mandate has been updated by Unity Trust. The agreed invoices were checked and signed off by the Cllrs Booth and Spriggs. The previous months invoices were also signed off and approved which were missing in September due to the absence of the Clerk.

284/25. **Finance Matters – Grant Applications**

(a) Section 137 Applications – **Nil**

(b) Wrydecroft Small Grants Programme - **Nil**

The Locum Clerk requested information on how the funding gets replenished by Wrydecroft once it has been exhausted. Cllr Booth to follow this up and ask at the next Wrydecroft meeting. The Locum Clerk will also approach Cambridgeshire Community Foundation for advice.

285/25. **Website Maintenance** – To consider quote received from Tamar IT for £419.00 (Exc VAT) for website upgrade to be WCAG 2.2 AA Accessibility Compliant

Cllr Booth proposed that the quote be approved as this is a required element for all Parish Council websites which can be randomly checked by the external auditors. The was unanimously agreed by Councillors.

286/25. **Correspondence**

(a) To discuss email received regarding the potential felling of trees on Seadyke Pit by Vegetation Managements Services Ltd on behalf of UK Power Networks.

Following discussion, Cllr Booth recommended that due to safety concerns, the trees be felled as requested. This was agreed by Councillors.

(b) To discuss email received regarding leaning tree to the front of Jubilee Cottage, Station Road.

The Locum Clerk reported that she had been and investigated the tree along with Cllr Reader and agreed that the tree has a significant lean and two large branches overhang the driveway of Jubilee Cottage. Following further discussion, it was agreed that a planning application be submitted for the two large branches to be removed.

287/25. **Allotments**

(a) To review rents for the Riverside Garden Allotments and the Fen Allotments

The Locum Clerk reported that the figures from the previous year were £35.00 for a Garden Allotment, with a half plot being £17.50. The Fen Allotments were £85.00 per acre plot unless an individual occupied more than two, and that was then increased to £140.00 per acre and allowed for commercial use. Following discussion, Cllr Williams proposed to make no increase to the rents due for the year ending 31st October 2026, this was seconded by Cllr Unwin and unanimously agreed by all Councillors allowed to vote on this item.

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(b) Update regarding new tenants

Cllr Spriggs recommended that due to the new tenant on Garden Allotment 7 taking on a tidy plot, the charges will be in force immediately; however, because the new tenants of Garden Allotments 9 and 22 were taking on plots that needed a lot of tidying up, charges will be waived until YE 31st October 2026, this was approved by Councillors. Cllr Spriggs also reported that there was an interested resident from Wisbech St Mary for the half plot 23 which is currently vacant. The Locum Clerk acknowledged that she was in receipt of signed tenancy agreements from all three of the new tenants.

288/25. Assets

(a) To receive an update on the village sign

The Locum Clerk reported that she had been in touch with the lady that painted the village sign and forwarded her apologies that the paint was peeling. The advice offered by her was to try and use a car lacquer or varnish to preserve it. Cllr Spriggs offered to provide a solution using 'Polyvine' and will apply the product as soon as the weather allows.

(b) To discuss outstanding maintenance actions resulting from Asset Inspection.

The Locum Clerk requested help with what items were still outstanding from the Asset Inspection. These were understood to be:

(1) Two wooden posts broken off from the village green – *Cllr Spriggs to follow up; a cost of £50.00 per post was estimated and the spending on this item was approved by Councillors.*

(2) The Cage sign 'Parson Drove' needing repainting – *Liaise with 'Friends of the Cage'*

(3) The Swan Area – *The Chairman reported that this matter has been followed up and resolved.*

(4) The War Memorial bench needing a repaint – *Deferred until Spring*

(5) All village seats and bins needing a clean – *Locum Clerk to obtain quote from WSM Cleansing Contractor*

(6) Best Kept Village sign needing repainting – *Cllr Spriggs to follow up.*

(7) War Memorial railings need repainting – *Deferred until Spring*

(8) Samuel Peeps Information Sign needs repainting – *Liaise with 'Friends of the Cage' - deferred until Spring*

289/25. The Cage Maintenance

(a) Alarm Service

The Locum Clerk reported that this was completed on 30th September 2025 and was found to be functioning correctly.

(b) Clock Service

The Locum Clerk reported that this was completed on 1st October 2025 and was also found to be functioning correctly.

(c) Guttering Quotes

The Chairman reported that he had obtained some quotes for full replacement in primed cast iron that could then be painted to match the existing guttering. The best cost would be approximately £600.00 (Inc VAT) for the required amount of half round guttering plus all brackets and connections. Cllr Spriggs had previously submitted a quote for fitting the guttering for £250.00 (No VAT) and would also be happy to paint the guttering before fitting, this would mean adding the purchase of the paint to the existing quote. Cllr Reader reported that there was £7,600.00 left in the reserves for the Cage and based on that information Cllr Booth proposed that the purchase of guttering as well as fitting is approved. This was agreed by Councillors. Cllr Spriggs recommended having the guttering delivered directly to his yard and will liaise directly with the Chairman to have this arranged.

290/25. To receive the Amenities 95 Management Committee Report

Cllr Booth reported that the recent committee meeting was postponed due to illness, and there won't be another one for a few weeks. The installation of fences across the car park are to stop cars parking there purely to congregate and is aiming to stop any anti-social behaviour. The up-and-coming events put on by the committee will be a Halloween event on Friday 31st October 2025, Quiz Night on Saturday 1st November 2025 and Sausage Supper on Saturday 22nd November 2025.

291/25. To collate agenda items for the next meeting

- The Chairman – To discuss and consider noticeboard quotes with the preferred option being the Icarus noticeboard.
- Cllr Booth – Wrydecroft MVAS Application & Wrydecroft Noticeboard Application.
- The Locum Clerk – 2026 Meeting Dates.

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292/25. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 12th November 2025

7.00pm

Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road, Parson Drove

293/25. Staffing Matters

To agree to entering a closed session under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to discuss a Staffing Matter.

Members were asked to consider a resolution for Council to exclude members of the public and press from the meeting pursuant to section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 due to the sensitive nature of the business to be transacted under this item. This was proposed by Cllr Booth, seconded by Cllr Unwin and agreed by Council. The members of the public present were duly asked to leave at 8:50pm.