



PARSON DROVE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Parson Drove Parish Council Meeting held on
**Wednesday 12th November 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 & R Fowler

FDC Councillors: G Booth & D Cutler | CCC Councillor: A Osborn

Members of the public: 1

Also Present: Sarah Bligh (Locum Clerk)

294/25. **To agree apologies for absence** – None received

295/25. **To consider any requests by Councillors for dispensation** – None received

296/25. **To receive Members Declarations of Interest**

- Cllr Williams declared a prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 311/25(c) due to being the grant applicant for Emmanuel Church PCC
- Cllr Booth declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 309/25(k) due to being the local representative for the RBL Poppy Appeal
- Cllr Booth declared a prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 314/25 due to being a current allotment tenant.
- Cllr Booth declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 317/25 due to being a committee member of the Amenities 95 Management Committee

297/25. **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) reported that Police enforcement in Parson Drove is being carried out during CSW sessions and by the Police independently.
- Cllr Diane Cutler expressed delight that the LHI scheme submitted by CSW to install a 30mph speed limit through residential Church End has been successful, which will make their ongoing CSW sessions much easier.

298/25. **To agree the minutes (and confidential minutes) of the meeting** dated 8th October 2025

The minutes of the meeting dated 8th October 2025, and the confidential minutes dated 8th October 2025 were both agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

299/25. **Matters arising from previous minutes** not covered on the agenda (for information only)

The Locum Clerk reported that the application for a grant from Wrydecroft Windfarm to acquire additional MVAS/SIDs in the village has been approved in principle, conditional upon collaboration among three Parish Councils. Parson Drove, Wisbech St Mary, and Sutton St Edmunds Parish Councils have each submitted applications for similar equipment, but with significantly varying costs. Cllr Booth noted that these differences are primarily due to Parson Drove not including costs for the purchase and installation of poles as they were not needed, unlike the other two Councils. The Cambridgeshire Community Foundation has enquired if the three clerks would be willing to work together to achieve the most cost-effective outcome. Details regarding a potential joint grant amount or the total number of MVAS/SIDs required are yet to be determined. The Locum Clerk will provide further information as it becomes available.

300/25. **Presentation from Lisa Hill – Cambridgeshire ACRE.** Agenda item time limited to 15 minutes.

Lisa Hill introduced herself and explained that Cambridgeshire ACREs mission is to achieve fair, equal, health and wellbeing outcomes for people (of all ages) living in areas where access to services can be more difficult.

The Cambridgeshire Community Hub network has already been successfully set up in 12 areas around Fenland which are all community led. They aim to provide a friendly atmosphere with tea, coffee and refreshments as well as provide help and advice with forms or applications. It can also be a meeting place to help with rural isolation.

Lisa explained that they would like to set up a group or connect with an existing group in the Parson Drove area.

Cllr Booth stated that the Parson Drove Coffee Mornings already running would be the best way to achieve the desired outcome and explained that Cllr Diane Cutler as the secretary for Amenities '95 and a volunteer at the Coffee Mornings

would be the best person to liaise with. The Locum Clerk agreed to forward Cllr Cutlers details to Lisa following the meeting.

The Chairman thanked Lisa for attending the Parish Council meeting and praised her on the work she does helping to set up these much-needed community hubs.

301/25. To receive the Chairman's Report

- The Chairman reported that he had met with Cllr Spriggs and a representative from North Level IDB to discuss the Permissive Walkway. The entrance and exit of the walkway were the main reasons for meeting on site, to make sure both are achieved to a safe standard. The Chairman also reported that he has made enquiries into hiring a brush cutter to clear the path properly.
- The Chairman reported that himself and other members of Parson Drove Street Pride have started to clear ivy from various utility poles that surround the village pond, as it was starting to become intrusive. Whilst on site they also cleared some shrubs and self-sown saplings to enable a better view of the pond from the road.
- The Chairman reported that he had received complaints from two residents of Main Road regarding light intrusion into their properties from a parish streetlight and conversations with FDC (who arrange the maintenance of the parish streetlighting) were ongoing to find an adequate solution.
- The Chairman reported that he had spoken at length with the Locum Clerk to discuss numerous issues and was pleased that these lines of communication are open and available.

302/25. To receive the District Councillors Reports

- Cllr Cutler reported on Fenland District Council's (FDC) recent extraordinary meeting regarding local government reorganisation. Councillors chose Option D, which groups Fenland with rural South Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire, rather than Peterborough. While the seven councils involved have differing priorities and most likely would not agree on one option, they have decided to submit a single submission to Government, signed by all participating councils.
- Cllr Booth expressed frustration regarding the local government reorganisation talks and explained that the lack of agreement among councils was as expected and predicts government intervention. He cited Surrey's example, where disagreement led to a compromise imposed by the government that satisfied no one. While he supports reorganisation in principle, Cllr Booth noted the process is flawed and unlikely to please all parties.

303/25. To receive the County Councillor Report

- Cllr Osborn reported that Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) had given its support to Option A for the local government reorganisation. This option would result in Fenland being grouped together with Peterborough and Huntingdonshire. However, during the vote, not all councillors agreed.
- Cllr Osborn updated the Council on a connectivity programme aiming to bring high-speed broadband to the Roman Bank & Peckover division, apart from Tydd St Giles, which he is currently investigating.
- In relation to highways, Cllr Osborn highlighted that numerous road closures are underway across Fenland, affecting not only Parson Drove but the wider area as well, which he apologised for but stated that these were all necessary.
- Regarding the closure on Barton Road in Wisbech, Cllr Osborn stated that between 75% and 80% of the rat run repairs have been completed, except for Gadd's Lane in Leverington and several smaller areas that still require attention. The schedule for reopening Barton Road remains on track and may even be slightly ahead of the original planned deadline.
- Cllr Osborn expressed frustration that the repairs to Clough Bridge are being delayed again, even though funding is available.

304/25. Highways Matters

- a) To report any new street lighting issues
The Chairman reported that the streetlight on Ingham Hall Gardens beside 30 Main Road is being obstructed due to being surrounded by an overgrown conifer. Cllr Booth suggested for the Locum Clerk to contact CCC Enforcement as this streetlight belongs to CCC and not the Parish Council.
- b) To report any Highways Issues to be raised by Councillors
Cllr Fowler reported pothole issues on Marshalls Bank near the Clough Cross junction and requested an update on the resurfacing of Silvers Lane. Cllr Reader reported that the Parish Council had been informed that money had been allocated to the repairs of Silvers Lane, but no further updates on timescales had been received. The Locum Clerk to follow up. Cllr Booth reported that the pothole at Clough Cross Farm was reported online on 24th August and works have been ordered as of 17th October.
Cllr Unwin reported that High Side towards Gorefield is in a terrible state and the road surface is subsiding; which Cllr Booth reported online during the meeting.
Cllr Spriggs reported that the road surface is also subsiding and breaking up on the approach to Clough

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Bridge along the Bank.

Cllr Unwin reported that the road surface at Church End outside Manor Farm is also breaking up.

- c) To note the outcome of the 2025/26 financial year Local Highway Improvement (LHI) Applications
The Locum Clerk reported that both schemes to lower speed limits in the village were successful. The extension of the current 30mph limit on Main Road to include new developments ending at Sealeys Lane; and the introduction of a 30mph limit through the residential part of Church End, with associated speed roundels and dragons' teeth road markings. Cllr Reader enquired how much financial contribution was offered on both schemes. The Locum Clerk reported that the Main Road extension was £2,500 and the Church End scheme was £3,500.
- d) To consider the 2026/27 Local Highways Improvement (LHI) Application.
Cllr Booth suggested that Councillors consider possible schemes and inform the Locum Clerk for them to be debated and voted on at the December meeting.
Cllr Spriggs expressed frustration that Swan Bridge junction is still the biggest issue being left unresolved. Cllr Booth highlighted that there is never enough funding available through an LHI application to achieve the improvements required. The Locum Clerk suggested enquiring how to get Swan Bridge onto the Transport Investment Plan (TIP) and will follow this matter up.
Cllr Spriggs suggested closing the slip road at the Swan Bridge junction as a possible LHI consideration, so exiting the village would not be allowed only incoming traffic from the Bank.
- e) To consider CCC Winter Gritting Scheme 2025/26 – Request for volunteers.
Cllr Booth suggested the Locum Clerk forward the information to the school for the attention of their caretaker.
Cllr Spriggs requested that another Grit Bin be installed near the footbridge at Swan Bridge. The Locum Clerk to ask for a quote from CCC, and request refills to existing grit bins.
- f) To discuss Fen Road Drainage Improvements – Road Closure and issues raised
Cllr Booth expressed concern that whilst Fen Road is closed, signs have been installed that both Clough Bridge and the A47 are due to be closed, which in his opinion will cause chaos for residents.
Cllr Fowler expressed frustration that Fen Road is being closed every night for the sake of a shallow trench; and has been for three weeks. Cllr Fowler also highlighted that residents have received a letter explaining that Fen Road will be open overnight whilst the A47 is closed.
Cllr Spriggs raised concerns about family members having to drop children at the Long Drove end due to the Fen Road closure, noting that children were soaked by rain after walking through to the Swan Bridge end.
Cllr Spriggs requested a meeting be arranged between Cllrs Rouse, Spriggs, Fowler and CCC Cllr Osborn with Highways to discuss the ongoing situation. The Locum Clerk to arrange the meeting.
- g) To discuss and consider Proposed 40mph speed limit at Bellamy's Bridge junction
The Locum Clerk reported that the reduction in speed limit is being fully funded by CCC. Cllr Booth enquired whether the implementation of the lower speed limit would result in the scheme being removed off the TIP. The Locum Clerk to follow this up.
Following further discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council support the proposed 40mph speed limit change to Bellamy's Bridge junction.

305/25. Planning Applications – Decision Updates: Nil

306/25. Planning Applications – For Comment:

(a)	E/YR25/0771/TRCA	Works to 1x Holly Tree within a conservation area at Southea Grange 33 Main Road Parson Drove Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4JA Councillors resolved to recommend approval subject to tree officer recommendation.	Applicant: Mr Piers Andrews Agent: Sam Johnson Landscapes
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307/25. **Planning Applications** - To receive update on TPO Planning Applications for the Village Green Trees
The Locum Clerk reported that all the applications for tree works have now been validated, including the willows at the Pond with a consideration date of the end of November. Quotes for the works have already been requested from three local companies.

308/25. Finance Matters

- (a) To receive the Finance & Budget Report for 2025/2026 to date.
The bank reconciliation of 30th September 2025 balanced at £103,737.77 which was between the Santander

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Current Account of £54,834.57, the Santander Savings Account of £15,242.29 and the Unity Trust Account of £35,854.35; with £2,193.44 of unrepresented payments. The report was agreed to and signed off by Cllr Pam Williams and unanimously agreed by Councillors.

The Locum Clerk reported that she had resubmitted the VAT126 reclaim for YE 31st March 2025 as this still had not been received.

- (b) To discuss the contribution for the Parish Post Magazine based on YE figures.

The Locum Clerk reported that WSM Parish Clerk had forwarded the figures which highlighted that WSM PC had a nett loss of £1,388.16 from this financial year and an estimated loss of £1,726.95 for the next financial year. Cllr Booth reported that WSMPC are considering raising the advertising costs or increasing the number of advertisers to meet the shortfall, but this will be decided upon nearer the end of the financial year. The Locum Clerk recommended deferring the decision on a financial contribution until next month when the draft budget for 2026/27 will be discussed. This was agreed by Councillors.

- (c) To note virement of £1000 from Wrydecroft Village Enhancement budget into Community Projects budget for Parish Post contribution due to accounting error. The Locum Clerk reported that following this virement £1000 was left in the Community Projects budget for the remainder of this financial year. This was agreed and noted by Councillors

309/25. Finance Matters - To agree the outstanding payments of the Council:

Item	Description	Total Amount	Power to Spend	
(a)	Locum Clerks October Pay - Inc 20 Extra Hours	£955.03	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(b)	Locum Clerks October Expenses – includes Working from Home Allowance	£38.49	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(c)	S Phillips – Outstanding Pay for Months 1 - 4	£171.72	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(d)	HMRC Tax & NI for Month 8	£80.70	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(e)	James Pest Control – Moles on Village Green	£65.00	Open Spaces Act 1906 SS9 -10	Agreed
(f)	FACT Shuttlebus – September	£356.00	LG & Rating Act 1997 S26	Agreed
(g)	DJ Rowell – Roadside Hedge Cutting	£660.00	Highways Act 1980 SS43,50	Agreed
(h)	Adrian Rouse – Cage Guttering Reimbursement	£460.04	LG Act 1972 S133	Agreed
(i)	Adrian Rouse – HMRC Overdue Payment Reimbursement	£73.12	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(j)	E-on The Cage October Energy (Direct Debit)	£31.31	Parish Councils Act 1957 S3	Agreed
(k)	RBL Poppy Appeal – 2 Remembrance Wreaths	£57.00	LG Act 1972 S137	Agreed

310/25. Finance Matters – To ratify payments made:

(a)	Tesco Mobile (Direct Debit)	£9.50	LG Act 1972 S111	Approved
(b)	E-on – The Cage September Energy (Direct Debit)	£19.65	Parish Councils Act 1957 S3	Approved
(c)	Bank charges – Unity Bank (Standing Order)	£6.00	LG Act 1972 S111	Approved
(d)	Smiths of Derby – Cage Clock Annual Service	£345.60	Parish Council Act 1957 S2	Approved
(e)	Information Commissioner’s Office – Renewal D/D	£47.00	LG Act 1972 S111	Approved

The Locum Clerk reported on item 309/25(c) that due to errors in payroll calculation for the previous clerk in months 1-4, this had resulted in a underpayment of £42.93 per month; this amount was outstanding and duly needed paying.

The Locum Clerk requested that an additional invoice for the FACT shuttlebus for the month of October for £295.46 (No VAT) be paid, which was agreed to by Councillors.

Following all discussions, the Council **resolved** to **authorise** the expenditure for the month of October and **ratified** the payments already made, the outstanding payments would be paid by BACS from the Unity Trust bank account now that the mandate has been updated. The agreed invoices were checked and signed off by Cllrs Booth and Unwin.

The Locum Clerk reported on item 310/25(a) that the Tesco Mobile account would have to remain in the previous Clerks name until the end of the current contract, however the address has been updated to match the address of the bank account that the direct debit comes out from. This was noted by Councillors.

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311/25. Finance Matters – Grant Applications

(a) Section 137 Applications -

(1) East Anglian Air Ambulance for £500.00 towards various medical supplies

Cllr Reader reported that £414.50 was left in the S137 budget following the recent payments for wreaths. Cllr Fowler proposed that a grant of £100.00 was awarded, this was seconded by Cllr Spriggs and unanimously agreed by Council.

(b) Wrydecroft Small Grants Programme – Nil

(c) To consider Emmanuel Church PCC Graveyard Grant for £850.00 - LG Act 1972 S214

Councillors considered the funds available in the grant budgets and Cllr Reader proposed a virement of £100 from S137 budget which would increase the Churchyard Grant budget to £850. Following this virement the full amount of £850 was awarded. Proposed by Cllr Reader, seconded by Cllr Booth and agreed by Council.

312/25. IT Maintenance – To consider quote received from Tamar IT for

(a) Microsoft Office 365 Licence at £9.72 (Exc VAT) per month

The Locum Clerk reported that although this is slightly higher than her current expenses, direct payment via Parish Council Direct Debit is more professional than having the clerk claim reimbursement. Cllr Booth proposed to approve the quote, this was agreed by Council.

(b) Microsoft Office 365 setup and .gov.uk email forwarding setup at £65.00 (Exc VAT)

The Locum Clerk reported that in addition to establishing the Microsoft 365 system, this was a quote for Tamar to set up auto forwarding all email traffic to a new .gov.uk email address which is now a required element under assertion 10 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). Cllr Booth acknowledged this compliance requirement and proposed to approve the quote. This was agreed by Council.

313/25. Correspondence

(a) To discuss email received from Parson Drove Pre-School regarding a sustainability project within the village.

The Locum Clerk reported a request from the Pre-School for children to participate in village litter picking and create 'Do not litter' posters. Cllr Booth noted a similar initiative in the past, where book tokens were awarded for the best poster, and councillors agreed to repeat this. Parson Drove Street Pride will be involved to provide litter pickers, and Cllr Booth recommended that representatives from both the Parish Council and Street Pride will judge the competition. The Locum Clerk to follow up and reply to the Pre-School.

314/25. Allotments

(a) Update regarding invoicing and tenants

The Locum Clerk reported that the invoicing for the YE 31st October 2025 has been sent out and most have already been settled.

Cllr Spriggs reported that the tenant from allotment 7 would like to take on the vacant allotment 8a and he had shown a resident from Guyhirn the vacant allotment 23, who was very keen and enquired about adding a polytunnel onto the plot.

The Locum Clerk reported that there are now two people on the waiting list a resident from Thorney Toll and a resident from Parson Drove.

Cllr Spriggs kindly offered the resident from Parson Drove a small patch on his allotment (free of charge) whilst she was on the waiting list. The Locum Clerk agreed to put the resident in touch with Cllr Spriggs.

315/25. Assets & Maintenance

(a) To receive an update on the village sign

The Chairman reported that the sign is deteriorating rapidly due to the paint flaking off, in his opinion it would be made worse by adding a varnish and felt this should be avoided, and he expressed frustration that this has occurred after a year.

Cllr Fowler reported that he had a contact that was already looking to refurbish the Cage sign and would ask for a quote to repaint the village sign.

(b) To consider quote received from A&R Groundskeeping for the cleaning of Parson Drove bins and benches for £265 (No VAT)

The Locum Clerk reported that the quote was for cleaning the outer casing of 16 bins and 7 benches that were flagged up as dirty on the asset inspection. Cllr Booth proposed that the quote is approved as a one off but not undertaken until the springtime. Cllr Reader offered to show the Locum Clerk where the 7 benches

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are nearer the time, so exact location could be given to A&R Groundskeeping. The quote was seconded by Cllr Spriggs and agreed by Council.

- (c) To consider quote received from DJ Rowell for Grass Verge cutting 2-3 cuts per year at £400 (Exc VAT) per cut. Cllr Reader expressed uncertainty about which areas the quote included and asked for further investigation before the current grass cutting contract ends. Cllr Fowler volunteered to enquire with DJ Rowell to clarify which specific areas his quote covers. The Locum Clerk suggested postponing consideration of the quote until it's time to renew the grass cutting contract.
- (d) To note outcome from Great Crested Newt eDNA survey on Village Pond
The Locum Clerk reported that the outcome of the eDNA survey conducted on the Village Pond indicated a positive result for the presence of Great Crested Newts. Cllr Booth suggested informing both Street Pride and the Pre-School of these findings, as they may have an interest. The Locum Clerk to follow up on this recommendation.
- (e) To consider quotes for the village Noticeboard with the preferred option being the Icarus model.
The Chairman reported that he had been liaising with Noticeboards Online to get further quotes for different sizes. Following discussion regarding all the community groups that would want to add posters to the public information side, the 16 x A4 sheets double door (8 sheets of A4 paper on each side) double sided noticeboard with key entry was considered the best option at a cost of £4,932.64 (Exc VAT)
It would have Parson Drove Public Notices on one side, with Parson Drove Information on the other side and the Parson Drove shield logo can be added at extra cost. The noticeboard is to be mounted on two black posts with a magnetic back board and has a life expectancy of 25 years. Installation into hard ground is an extra £895.00 and delivery would also be extra.
Cllr Booth expressed concern that Planning Permission may be needed due to the increase of size and it being in a Conservation Area. The Locum Clerk agreed to enquire with FDC Planning.
The Chairman recommended that the noticeboard is managed by the Clerk and the Chairman to monitor and remove any expired information or posters.
The Locum Clerk recommended meeting with the Chairman to collate the correct information together for the grant application to Wrydecroft before the deadline of February 2026.
- (f) To note outcome from meeting with North Level IDB regarding the Permissive Walkway.
The Chairman reported that he and Cllr Spriggs met with North Level Internal Drainage Board (NLIDB) on 15th October to discuss the Permissive Walkway. Key points included installing a sign stating the walkway must close for one month each year, improving entry points at the wooden footbridge end (potentially by removing part of the hedge and adding steps), and possibly using two surplus kissing gates provided by NLIDB at each end. Bark chippings can be added to prevent weeds once the walkway is established. The Chairman advised dogs should be kept on leads due to the open drain and that the sign should note walkers are responsible for their own safety. NLIDB expressed their support and the Chairman hopes that the project can be completed in the Spring.

316/25. **The Cage Maintenance**

- (a) To receive an update regarding replacement guttering
The Chairman provided an update on the replacement guttering, stating that it had been successfully delivered. Cllr Spriggs confirmed that three coats of paint have already been applied. He also raised a concern about the brackets, noting they are galvanised; he suggested installing them as they are and allowing them to weather naturally for a year before painting. Cllr Spriggs mentioned he may need assistance shortening two sections to ensure a proper fit and plans to contact Tam Engineering for help. This could result in an additional cost being included in the quote for painting and fitting. Councillors acknowledged this progress and the possible extra expense.

317/25. **To receive the Amenities 95 Management Committee Report**

FDC Cllr Cutler (as Secretary of Amenities '95) reported that the bookings are steady; the children's Halloween party went well and had a good attendance, and organisation for the children's Christmas party is in progress.

318/25. **To collate agenda items for the next meeting**

Cllr Reader – Review and amendments of Financial Regulations & Standing Orders

The Locum Clerk – IT Policy (Assertion 10 Regulations)

Cllr Williams – Restoration of the Information Board at the Cage

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319/25. To agree 2026 Parish Council proposed Dates, Times & Locations – Agreed and Noted

Date	Time	Location
Wednesday 14th January 2026	7:00pm	Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road, Parson Drove
Wednesday 28th January 2026	7:00pm	The Cage, Village Green, Parson Drove
Wednesday 11th February 2026	7:00pm	Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road, Parson Drove
Wednesday 11th March 2026	7:00pm	Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road, Parson Drove
Wednesday 8th April 2026	7:00pm	Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road, Parson Drove
Wednesday 13th May 2026	7:00pm	Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road, Parson Drove
Wednesday 10th June 2026	7:00pm	Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road, Parson Drove
Wednesday 8th July 2026	7:00pm	Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road, Parson Drove
Wednesday 12th August 2026	7:00pm	Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road, Parson Drove
Wednesday 9th September 2026	7:00pm	Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road, Parson Drove
Wednesday 14th October 2026	7:00pm	Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road, Parson Drove
Wednesday 11th November 2026	7:00pm	Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road, Parson Drove
Wednesday 9th December 2026	7:00pm	Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road, Parson Drove

320/25. Date of Next Meeting - Noted

Wednesday 10th December 2025 7:00pm Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road, Parson Drove

321/25. Staffing Matters

- (a) 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 Fowler and agreed by Council. The members of the public present were duly asked to leave at 9:10pm.

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