



PARSON DROVE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Parson Drove Parish Council Meeting held on **Wednesday 8th July 2026 at Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road, Parson Drove**

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

FDC Councillors: G Booth & D Cutler

Members of the Public: 2

Also Present: Sarah Bligh (Parish Clerk)

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Paul Unwin and opened at 7pm. Cllr Booth attended the meeting from 8pm.

158/26. To agree apologies for absence

Apologies of absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Reader and Fowler, FDC Cllr Humphrey and CCC Cllr Tirrell.

159/26. To consider any requests by Councillors for dispensation

- Cllr Spriggs submitted a request for a dispensation under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 to enable discussion on item 173/26(a)
- It was noted that Cllr Spriggs due to being one of the contractors quoting for the Permissive Walkway work 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.

160/26. To receive Members Declarations of Interest

- Cllr Spriggs declared a pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 173/26(a) as a contractor quoting for works to the permissive walkway.

161/26. 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.

- FDC Cllr Diane Cutler, in her capacity as Community Speedwatch (CSW) Co-ordinator, thanked the Parish Council for acquiring the three MVAS/SIDs for Parson Drove. The devices are now in her possession and will be erected on the poles. It was noted that the clamps required to attach the devices were not included in the package; these have now been ordered. CSW will arrange for the devices to be installed and brought into operation. No roadside sessions are planned for July, as the kit is being used for the Guyhirn project and due to the expected heatwave. Sessions are expected to resume in August.
- FDC Cllr Diane Cutler, in her capacity as Chairman of Murrow Street Pride, reported that the Armed Forces Day Fete had gone very well for its first year. A committee meeting is scheduled for 16th July 2026 to review what worked well and identify areas for improvement. Cllr Cutler expressed hope that the event would be repeated next year and welcomed feedback to help improve any future event.
- A resident addressed the Parish Council to raise concerns about the variation of condition application listed under agenda item 168/26(a).

162/26. To agree the minutes (and confidential minutes) of the meeting dated 10th June 2026.

The Council resolved including any amendments to accept as a true record, the minutes of the meetings. These were duly signed by the Chairman.

163/26. Matters arising from previous minutes not covered on the agenda (for information only)

- The Clerk reported that Cllr Swannell's Register of Interest forms had been completed and submitted to FDC.
- The Clerk further reported that there was no update regarding the overlap between the planning application condition and the Parish Council's LHI scheme to extend the 30mph speed limit on Main Road. Swann Edwards had been emailed, and a follow-up telephone call had been made to confirm receipt.

164/26. To receive the District Councillors Reports

- Cllr Cutler reported that the next Fenland District Council (FDC) Full Council meeting would take place on Monday 13th July 2026, at which she hoped to receive an update on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

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- It was reported that the next Police Community Engagement event would take place at Parson Drove Village Hall on Tuesday 14th July 2026. FDC would also be in attendance, providing residents with an opportunity to raise wider areas of concern.
- Cllr Cutler also reported that FDC had issued its official report on the public consultation regarding play equipment in Murrow. The consultation received a high number of responses, with just under 200 respondents in favour of the proposed improvements and only a small number opposed. A significant number of comments were also received, which were generally positive. FDC is now collating the survey data ahead of the next Cabinet meeting, where final decisions will be made.

165/26. **To receive the County Councillor Report** - No discussion took place under this item other than noting that Mr Chris Tirrell won the By-Election for the Roman Bank & Peckover division.

166/26. **Highways Matters**

The Clerk introduced discussion regarding the siting of the new MVAS/SIDs. It was noted that three new devices had been acquired, with four existing pole locations available. FDC Cllr Cutler advised that the Fen Road pole currently held the older battery-powered MVAS and that, due to the poor battery life and the need for regular charging, the device was often non-operational for extended periods. Cllr Spriggs expressed concern that this was the only pole located within a 30mph zone near Swan Bridge, an area affected by speeding and accidents. Members noted that, as the other three poles were located in 40mph zones, it may be preferable to retain the existing Fen Road device in situ, as reconfiguring that device to 40mph was difficult.

Following further discussion, Cllr Spriggs offered to work with Cllr Cutler to establish an arrangement for him to charge the Fen Road device, given his close proximity to the pole. It was agreed that an item be added to the next agenda to consider sourcing a fourth solar-powered device, enabling all four locations to be served by new equipment.

(a) To report any new street lighting issues - *No discussion took place under this item*

(b) To discuss response from FDC regarding Springfield Road Streetlights

Following a brief discussion, it was agreed that the matter be deferred to the next meeting, as the meeting was only just quorate and the issue was considered contentious. Cllr Spriggs requested that the Portfolio Holder for Streetlighting Assets be invited to attend the next meeting. The Clerk was asked to follow up.

(b) To report any Highways Issues to be raised by Councillors

- Cllr Unwin noted that works had commenced on Silvers Lane.
- Cllr Williams reported that works at Clough Bridge were not yet complete, as the north-west corner plinth had fallen into the water and had not yet been retrieved by divers.
- Cllr Spriggs reported that, on the Parson Drove side, the bridge repairs were showing a crack extending down to the base.
- Members considered that attendance by a CCC Officer on site at Clough Bridge would be the most appropriate way to help progress a satisfactory resolution.
- Cllr Spriggs raised concern regarding the poor condition of the footpath outside the village shop and stated that repairs were required. The Clerk reported that the Highways Maintenance Officer had advised that all footways in the village were scheduled for repair works and slurry sealing in the autumn.
- Cllr Spriggs also reported potholes along the Bank towards Clough Bridge. The Clerk agreed to check the online reporting system and, if the defects had not already been recorded, to report them.
- Cllr Spriggs further reported that the hedge at the front of the BT telephone exchange building was overgrown and that the footpath was impassable. The Clerk was asked to report the matter to CBRE Services.

(c) To consider 2026/2027 LHI Scheme – Swan Bridge One Way feasibility report and contribution amount
The Clerk reported that the Feasibility Report appeared positive. However, as the total budget required was estimated at £29,236.19, the Parish Council's contribution was being flagged as red, as the original committed amount was £2,500. The Clerk recommended increasing the Parish Council's contribution to £2,923.62, representing 10% of the total cost, to improve the scheme's position. Members agreed the recommendation, and it was resolved that £423.62 be transferred from unallocated cash reserves to the LHI funding reserve.

167/26. **Planning Applications** – Decision Updates: **Noted**

(a)	F/YR26/0360/TRCA	Works to 2 x European Lime trees and 1 x Wild Cherry tree within a conservation area at Land North of Springfield Road Parson Drove Cambridgeshire	GRANTED
(b)	F/YR26/0307/F	Erect a conservatory to the rear of existing dwelling at April Cottage 28 Main Road Parson Drove Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4JA	GRANTED

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168/26. **Planning Applications** – For Comment:

(a)	F/YR26/0468/VOC	Variation of conditions 1 (materials), 4 (boundary treatments) and 5 (list of approved drawings) of planning permission F/YR24/0536/VOC (Variation of conditions 2 (materials), 5 (boundary treatments) and 6 (list of approved drawings) relating to planning permission F/YR17/1092/F (Erection of a 3-bed dwelling including the demolition of the existing Church Hall)) - design changes at Building Land Northwest Of Southea Parish Church 37 Main Road Parson Drove Cambridgeshire The Parish Council recommended refusal to safeguard the privacy and residential amenity of neighbouring properties by preventing overlooking into adjacent private amenity space. Members agreed that the proposed variation would result in an unacceptable degree of overlooking into neighbouring gardens and private outdoor spaces, leading to a harmful loss of privacy and enjoyment for neighbouring residents.
(b)	F/YR26/0474/F	Conversion of existing barn to create additional living accommodation, and erection of a single-storey rear extension to existing dwelling (retrospective) at Yucca House 301 Main Road Church End Parson Drove Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4LF
(c)	F/YR26/0475/LB	Internal and external works to a listed building to enable the conversion of existing barn to create additional living accommodation, and erection of a single-storey rear extension to existing dwelling at Yucca House 301 Main Road Church End Parson Drove Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4LF The Parish Council considered both Yucca House applications and considered it particularly regrettable that the works appeared to have been undertaken prior to obtaining the necessary planning permission and listed building consent. Members were of the view that the proposal has the potential to cause further harm to the character, appearance and historic significance of the listed building which has already had works completed to date that impact on the fabric of the building. In view of those concerns, the Parish Council recommended that Fenland District Council refuses planning permission and any associated listed building consent unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the works preserve the significance of the listed building, safeguard its historic fabric and receives full support of the FDC Conservation Officer.

169/26. **Finance Matters**

- (a) To receive the Finance & Budget Report for 2026/2027 to date.
The bank reconciliation of 30th June 2026 balanced at £85,899.50 which was between the Santander Current Account of £2,609.61, the Santander Savings Account of £15,339.12 and the Unity Trust Account of £67,940.68 with £10.09 of unrepresented receipts. The Clerk drew attention to the income of £5,329.00 which was the payment from FDC for Concurrent Functions. The Clerk reported on the budget position and noted that the Insurance and General Administration budget heading had exceeded its allocation. This was due to the purchase of the clerk's laptop along with the unexpected increase in the insurance renewal premium. The Wrydecroft MVAS 2026 reserve had also exceeded its allocation; this was attributable solely to VAT, which will be reclaimed at the end of the financial year. The Clerk provided a quarterly update on the expected VAT refund, confirming that, following the first quarter of 2026/27, £2,373.44 was owed back to the Parish Council. Cllr Spriggs asked whether VAT could be reclaimed quarterly. The Clerk confirmed that this was possible but advised that it would involve additional administrative work. Cllr Booth stated that given the Council's healthy reserves, this was not considered necessary at this time. The report was agreed to and signed off by Cllr Pam Williams and unanimously agreed by Councillors.
- (b) To agree to add Cllr Swannell as an authorised signatory on the Unity Trust Bank
- (c) To agree to add Cllr Swannell as an authorised signatory and complete the CCLA PSDF Application
Following a brief discussion, Cllr Booth proposed that items (b) and (c) be approved in Cllr Swannell's absence, as she had advised the Clerk that she was willing to act as a third signatory on the Parish Council's bank accounts. The Clerk reported that all necessary information had been completed on both applications. The applications would now require signatures from Cllr Booth and Cllr Unwin before being passed to Cllr Swannell for her signature.

170/26. **Finance Matters** - To agree the outstanding payments of the Council:

Item	Description	Total Amount	Power to Spend	
(a)	Clerks June Salary	£952.59	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(b)	Clerks June Expenses – Working from Home Allowance	£30.00	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed

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(c)	HMRC Tax & NI for Month 4	£84.48	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(d)	NEST Pensions for Month 4 (D/D)	£62.12	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(e)	Eon Next –Energy for the Cage (D/D)	£18.82	Parish Councils Act 1957 S3	Agreed
(f)	Santander Acc Fees – June	£4.99	LG Act 1972 S111	Agreed
(g)	Unity Trust Acc Fees – June	£7.00	LG Act 1972 S111	Agreed
(h)	James Pest Control – Mole on Village Green	£65.00	Open Spaces Act 1906 SS9 -10	Agreed
(i)	GBSG Ltd – Cage Alarm Maintenance	£115.18	LG Act 1972 S133	Agreed
(j)	CAPALC – CiLCA Training	£450.00	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(k)	Viking Direct – Office Supplies	£164.19	LG Act 1972 S111	Agreed

171/26. Finance Matters – To note payments made:

(a)	Tesco Mobile (Direct Debit)	£9.50	LG Act 1972 S111	Approved
(b)	Tamar IT – Microsoft 365 (Direct Debit)	£11.38	LG Act 1972 S111	Approved
(c)	Tamar IT – SentinelOne (Direct Debit)	£4.74	LG Act 1972 S111	Approved
(d)	The Open Spaces Society – Annual Subscription	£45.00	LG Act 1972 S111	Approved

The Council approved authorisation for expenditure covering the months of June & July. In addition, it formally noted all payments that had previously been made during this period.

The Clerk requested approval for payment of two additional invoices: James Pest Control, in respect of rabbit control at the allotments, in the sum of £50.00 with no VAT; and Award Associates, in respect of the structural report on the Cage, in the sum of £1,127.26 including VAT. It was noted that the expenditure for both items had previously been agreed at an earlier meeting. This was agreed to by Councillors.

172/26. Finance Matters – Grant Applications

(a) Section 137 Applications - Nil

(b) Wrydecroft Small Grants Programme

I. Repair Café £600 – Public Liability Insurance & PAT Tester Calibration

Following discussion, the Council resolved not to award the grant due to governance and financial concerns. These included the absence of a formal constitution, no evidence of a dedicated community bank account, insufficient supporting evidence for the proposed public liability insurance costs, the fact that the Parish Council is unable to make grant payments to an individual's or other third party's bank account, and concern relating to the number of beneficiaries. Members noted that public funds should only be awarded where appropriate governance, financial arrangements, and supporting information are in place. The group was encouraged to address these matters and submit a further application in due course.

173/26. Assets & Maintenance

(a) To receive an update on the Permissive Walkway

The Clerk reported that she had met on site with Fishlock Groundworks and HB Groundworks, who had provided a combined quotation for the proposed permissive walkway works.

The proposed works included creating access openings at both ends of the route, installing tractor tyres as steps, using supplied road planings to build up the bank, removing hedging where required, fitting kissing gates with associated post and rail fencing, installing signposts and signs, clearing vegetation and overhanging branches, re-levelling the ground where necessary, laying weed-control membrane and bark chippings, and installing life rings along the route.

It was noted that the tractor tyres, road planings, kissing gates, and life rings would be supplied by the Parish Council. The quotation allowed for 114 cubic metres of bark chippings, with any additional bark required charged at £410 per load. The total quotation received for creating the permissive walkway from Swan Bridge to the wooden pedestrian bridge alongside Murrow Bank was £16,890.00 excluding VAT.

Cllr Spriggs advised that his quotation had increased by £6,600.00 to include a two-metre-wide membrane and the supply and laying of wood chippings. The original quotation of £2,750.00 had also increased by £637.00 to reflect additional vegetation works, material costs, and the installation of lifebuoys, bringing the revised total quotation to £9,987.00.

Cllr Booth recommended that, as two quotations had now been obtained, the Parish Council should apply to Wrydecroft for a grant towards completing the long-standing project. The Clerk queried the amount to be requested, noting that the quotation appeared to exceed the amount she believed could be applied for.

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Members advised that an application for £12,000 should be submitted, as larger amounts had previously been approved where sufficient evidence was provided. The Clerk to follow up.

(b) To receive an update on Tree Works

The Clerk reported that DM Landscapes had been due to commence the tree health report on 25th June 2026; however, this was postponed due to the extreme heatwave and rescheduled for Tuesday 14th July 2026. While in the village, they would also inspect the Ash tree at the pond, which overhangs 70 Main Road, to assess access requirements.

(c) To receive an update on the Community Orchard

The Clerk reported that she had received a telephone enquiry from a new resident, who had recently retired and had seen the advertisement in the Parish Post magazine. The Clerk explained that the community orchard was a new project for the Parish Council, following its return from the Parson Drove Street Pride group. The resident was asked to visit the orchard at the allotments to consider the work involved and to contact the Clerk again if he remained interested. It was noted that the resident could assist in establishing a new community group to help develop and maintain the orchard.

Cllr Spriggs raised a concern regarding one of the garden allotments. The Clerk advised that the matter would be considered during the allotment inspection scheduled for the following week.

(d) To receive an update on the BT Kiosk Project

The Clerk reported that BT had confirmed electricity would continue to be supplied and funded by them for at least seven years. Should BT wish to remove the service after that period, they would contact the Parish Council. The signed hard copy contract had been received by BT. However, due to engineers being busy, the telephone remained in situ. It was noted that several attempts had been made to obtain an estimated cost for the required electrical works, and this would continue to be pursued. The project was reported to be progressing. Suppliers had been contacted regarding the defibrillator and refurbishment of the BT kiosk, and the Council was nearing the stage at which a grant application could be submitted to Wrydecroft. Cllr Booth recommended that the article on the BT kiosk for the Parish Post should state that the project was at a very early stage, in order to manage residents' expectations. The Clerk to follow up.

174/26. The Cage Maintenance

The Clerk reported that the structural engineer had provided a preliminary report following his initial investigation of the Cage. The report advised that both trusses should be exposed by removing approximately 30cm of plasterboard on either side to allow further inspection and advice. Cllr Spriggs volunteered to make enquiries regarding the removal of the plasterboard and its replacement following the inspection. It was noted that the works would not take place until after the Cage had been open to visitors during the summer period, up to mid-September. Cllr Spriggs was asked to submit a formal quotation for the works, including the recommended woodworm treatment to the clock tower. It was noted that a detailed drawing of the recommended ceiling works had not been included with the report. The Clerk would request that this be provided for consideration at the August meeting.

175/26. To receive the Amenities 95 Management Committee Report

Cllr Booth declared a personal interest in respect of this agenda item due to being a committee member of the Amenities 95 Management Committee.

Cllr Booth reported that the Committee meeting had been held on Saturday 4th July 2026. It was reported that the dugouts on the field were being replaced, with the Football Club managing the works. The Committee discussed arrangements for the forthcoming Parson Drove Car Show, due to take place in two weeks' time. It was noted that the proposal for permanent fencing had been placed on hold indefinitely.

176/26. To collate agenda items for the next meeting

The Clerk – 4th Solar Powered MVAS/SID

Cllr Williams – FDC Portfolio Holder to attend regarding Springfield Road Streetlights

177/26. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 19th August 2026

7:00pm

Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road, Parson Drove

The meeting was closed at 9:00pm

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