PARSON DROVE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Parson Drove Parish Council Meeting held on
Wednesday 14th October 2026 at **Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road, Parson Drove**

Attended by Councillors: G Booth (Chairman), P Unwin (Vice-Chairman), P Spriggs, P Williams, R Fowler & Y Reader
FDC Councillors: G Booth & D Cutler
Members of the Public: 2
Also Present: Sarah Bligh (Parish Clerk)

220/26. **To agree apologies for absence**
Apologies of absence were received and accepted from FDC Cllr Humphrey.

221/26. **To consider any requests by Councillors for dispensation**

- Cllr Booth submitted a request for a full dispensation under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 to enable discussion on item 239/26(b) – The review of allotment rents.
- Cllr Spriggs submitted a request for a full dispensation under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 to enable discussion on item 239/26(b) – 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, hear the discussions and vote on the item.
- The request for dispensation was unanimously approved by Council.

222/26**. To receive Members Declarations of Interest**

- Cllr Reader declared a pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 239/26(b) due to family members being current allotment tenants.
- Cllr Spriggs declared a pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 239/26(b) due to being a current allotment tenant.
- Cllr Booth declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 231/26(c) due to being the local representative for the RBL Poppy Appeal.
- Cllr Booth declared a pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 239/26(b) due to being a current allotment tenant.
- Cllr Booth declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 241/26 due to being a committee member of the Amenities 95 Management Committee.

223/26. **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 reported that

- **Wrydecroft monitoring report**: the monitoring data had been collected using a Constabulary device positioned beyond the Council's new speed monitors. This enabled CSW to assess whether the monitors had reduced vehicle speeds. The data indicated a positive effect.
- **Fourth SID purchase and funding:** the Police and Crime Commissioner's grant scheme was intended for volunteer groups rather than public authorities. She offered to send the Clerk the relevant link and advised that the application should identify Community Speedwatch as the volunteer group, with the Parish Council facilitating the application. The Clerk agreed to prepare an application.
- **Further monitoring and potential additional SID**: further data would be available at the end of October. She suggested that the Elan City twin-pack purchase offer for monitors might be worth considering and indicated that she had a possible location in mind for a fifth SID.

Cllr Spriggs offered to assist with charging the battery for the old Fen Road monitor so that it could be used while enquiries about a new device continued.

224/26. **To agree the minutes of the meeting** dated 19th August 2026 & 16th September 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.

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225/26. **Matters arising from previous minutes** not covered on the agenda (for information only)

- The Clerk reported that she had sought advice from the local badger group regarding a suspected sett at the permissive walkway site. A response was awaited.
- The Clerk confirmed that, following her illness, she had withdrawn from her role with Gedney Hill Parish Council to focus on her work for Parson Drove Parish Council.
- The Clerk sought confirmation of the approval of the quotation from Mortons Blasting for £2,000 (Exc VAT). Following her absence, she had noted from the minutes that the Council had approved the quotation but was unaware whether any contact had been made with the company. The Clerk to contact Mortons Blasting to confirm approval of the quotation.

226/26. **To receive the District Councillors Reports**

- FDC Cllr Booth reported that the next District Council meeting was expected to consider the constitution in light of changes to planning rules.
- FDC Cllr Cutler reported that no further update had been received on Local Government Reorganisation.
- FDC Cllr Booth reported that he had followed up with the District Council on numerous occasions regarding the lack of progress on enforcement matters. Following Cllr Spriggs' request for an update, Cllr Booth agreed to chase the matter again.
- The Clerk's proposed list of addresses for the outstanding Freedom of Information request for the amount of Council Tax paid by residents on traveller sites was confirmed by Cllr Reader as correct. The Clerk to submit the request to FDC.

227/26. **To receive the County Councillor Report**

No report had been received.

228/26**. Highways Matters**

(a) To report any new street lighting issues
Cllr Fowler asked whether there were any updates on the new streetlight on Fen Road. The Clerk reported that the column was awaiting connection to the electricity supply by UKPN and advised that connection could take up to a year. The lantern would be fitted only after the column had been connected to the electricity supply, to avoid calls reporting that the streetlight was not working before connection.

(b) To receive the 2026/2027 Capital Highway Maintenance Programme
The Council noted the highway schemes identified for Parson Drove within the Cambridgeshire County Council Capital Highway Maintenance Programme 2026/27. These include Phase 2 drainage improvements on Fen Road (£150,000), bridge repair works at Clough Cross Sluice on The Bank (£40,000), slurry seal treatment to the footway on Main Road, and preparatory works for future surface dressing on The Bank.

(c) To discuss the resurfacing extent of Silvers Lane deferred from September meeting.
The Council agreed that a formal complaint should be submitted regarding the recent resurfacing works, as the completed works appeared to cover only approximately three-quarters of the road length, whereas the Cambridgeshire County Council Capital Maintenance Programme 2025/26 had indicated that the full length would be resurfaced. The Chairman and Clerk had already raised the matter with Local Highways Improvement (LHI) officers and would pursue the complaint through the appropriate stages if necessary.

(d) To note the outcome of the 2026/27 Local Highway Improvement (LHI) Application
The Clerk reported that two Parson Drove applications were considered for the 2026/27 funding programmes. Unfortunately, neither scheme scored highly enough to fall above the funding threshold and therefore neither was selected for funding.
The Parson Drove 20mph scheme outside the school was ranked 53rd and did not secure funding through the 20mph initiative. The Parson Drove Parish Council proposal for improvements at Swan Bridge Junction was ranked 5th in the Fenland Complex LHI category, but funding was only available for the top three schemes.
The Clerk reported that unsuccessful LHI schemes are automatically referred for consideration through the Transport Investment Programme (TIP). It was noted that commissioning an Options Report could help progress the improvements required at Swan Bridge Junction by identifying potential solutions and funding opportunities. The Chairman recommended that this be considered when future LHI applications are discussed.

(e) To report any Highways Issues to be raised by Councillors
Cllr Fowler reported concerns regarding the traffic management arrangements associated with the Fen Road closure for Anglian Water's water main works. It was noted that the arrangements had caused difficulties for

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residents, emergency service vehicles and agricultural traffic. Members agreed that the Council should contact Anglian Water to request improvements to communication with residents and better access arrangements for affected road users.
Cllr Spriggs reported a significant pothole on the westbound carriageway of Main Road, near property number 200 and close to the junction with Silvers Lane. The Clerk agreed to check whether the defect had already been logged on the highways reporting system and, if not, to report it to CCC.
Cllr Fowler raised concerns regarding the road closure and diversion signage at Swan Bridge, commenting that the current arrangements are confusing and could increase the risk of a road traffic collision. The Clerk advised that the issue had also been highlighted on social media and reported by BBC Cambridgeshire.
Cllr Spriggs additionally raised concerns regarding abandoned traffic management tripods and signage left on the village green. Members noted the concerns and agreed that they should be brought to the attention of the relevant authorities.
Cllr Spriggs reported ongoing concerns regarding the condition of Long Drove, noting continued incidents of highway damage and vehicle-related issues. It was agreed that the matter should be reported again to the Highways Maintenance Officer for further investigation and action.
Cllr Williams enquired as to when the Local Highways Improvement (LHI) meeting for Church End would be taking place. The Chairman reported that the meeting had taken place earlier that day and that both the Church End and Sealey's Lane LHI schemes would now proceed to the design stage before being returned to the Parish Council for consideration and approval.
The Clerk also reported that the application for four dwellings on Main Road, situated behind the four new houses near Silvers Lane, had been approved by the Planning Committee contrary to the officer recommendation for refusal. It was agreed that communications should be reopened with the developer regarding the securing of the developer's contribution towards the LHI scheme.

(f) To discuss the potential purchase and funding options for a fourth Solar SID device.
The Chairman referenced the report from FDC Cllr Cutler, highlighting that the Parish Council could facilitate an application to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) but was not eligible to apply directly. Community Speedwatch would therefore be the applicant.
The Clerk supported this proposal and recommended seeking funding for two SIDs to take advantage of the twin-pack offer. The siting of a potential fifth SID would be discussed at a future meeting if funding were obtained. This approach was supported by Members and the Clerk to liaise with CSW to complete the application.

229/26. **Planning Applications** – Decision Updates: **Noted**

(a)	F/YR26/0595/F	Erect 1 x dwelling involving the demolition of existing buildings within a conservation area at Parson Drove Post Office 7 The Bank Parson Drove Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4JD	REFUSED

230/26. **Planning Applications** – For Comment:

(a)	F/YR26/0680/F	Erect 1 x dwelling with detached double garage involving the demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings at Land North of Danlyn Long Drove Parson Drove Cambridgeshire. **The Parish Council raised no objection to this application and therefore recommended approval. Councillors considered that one dwelling would represent a planning gain and improve the existing developed site.**

231/26. **Finance Matters**

(a) To receive the Finance & Budget Report for 2026/2027 to date.
The bank reconciliation of 31st August 2026 balanced at £74,519.06 which was between the Santander Current Account of £2,599.63, the Santander Savings Account of £15,359.64 and the Unity Trust Account of £56,559.79. The Clerk drew attention to the income of £687.31 which was the payment from Cambridgeshire County Council for the Grass Verge grant.
The bank reconciliation of 30th September 2026 balanced at £84,600.11 which was between the Santander Current Account of £2,594.64, the Santander Savings Account of £15,370.08 and the Unity Trust Account of £66,633.09 with £11.80 of unpresented receipts and £9.50 of unpresented payments. The Clerk drew attention to the income of the final precept instalment of £11,588.00.
The Clerk reported that the budget was stable and that funds were being consolidated into Unity Trust to simplify banking and reduce reliance on Santander. A transfer cheque for £17,850.00 was prepared, leaving a small balance in Santander pending the transfer of a remaining direct debit for the Information

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Commissioners Office. Work to complete the paperwork for a further signatory and to consider placing funds in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund remained outstanding.

(b) To consider the re-appointment of Auditing Solutions for 2026/27 Internal Audit based on Clerks update and complete the Letter of Engagement.
Following the Clerk's discussion with the owner, the Council agreed to retain Auditing Solutions for the 2026/27 internal audit, with assurance that the owner would oversee the Council's audit. The Council agreed to undertake a tender exercise for the following year, allowing time to compare providers and fees.

(c) To approve the ordering of the Remembrance Day Wreaths
The order was formally approved. The price was expected to be around £30 each, subject to confirmation of the invoice. Cllr Richard Fowler agreed to lay the Parish Council wreath at the service. The Lancaster wreath would be offered to Bill as in previous years.

232/26. **Finance Matters -** To agree the outstanding payments of the Council:

Item	Description	Total Amount	Power to Spend	
(a)	Clerks September Salary – Sick Pay	£982.89	LG Act 1972 S112	**Agreed**
(b)	Clerks September Expenses – Working from Home Allowance	£30.00	LG Act 1972 S112	**Agreed**
(c)	HMRC Tax & NI for Month 7	£89.32	LG Act 1972 S112	**Agreed**
(d)	NEST Pensions for Month 7 (D/D)	£66.48	LG Act 1972 S112	**Agreed**
(e)	Eon Next –Energy for the Cage (D/D)	£18.41	LG Act 1972 S133	**Agreed**
(f)	Santander Acc Fees – September	£4.99	LG Act 1972 S111	**Agreed**
(g)	Unity Trust Acc Fees – September	£7.00	LG Act 1972 S111	**Agreed**
(h)	SLCC Membership - Clerk	£200.00	LG Act 1972 S143	**Agreed**
(i)	DM Landscapes & Tree – Tree Report & Works	£3630.00	Open Spaces Act 1906 SS9-10	**Agreed**
(j)	Peter Spriggs - Bench Maintenance	£520.00	Open Spaces Act 1906 SS9-10	**Agreed**

233/26. **Finance Matters** – To note payments made:

(a)	Tesco Mobile (Direct Debit)	£9.50	LG Act 1972 S111	**Approved**
(b)	Tamar IT – September Microsoft 365 (Direct Debit)	£14.36	LG Act 1972 S111	**Approved**
(c)	Tamar IT – September SentinalOne (Direct Debit)	£5.99	LG Act 1972 S111	**Approved**

234/26**. Finance Matters – Grant Applications**

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

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

235/26. To consider proposal from Parson Drove Street Pride for developments to the Village Green.
Street Pride representatives described difficulties maintaining the existing concrete planters because of their condition, watering requirements, volunteer capacity and lack of convenient water access. They proposed removing 12 concrete planters, salvaging plants where possible, filling the resulting holes and creating a larger, modern, drought-tolerant planted bed with recycled-plastic edging. The Council was supportive in principle and agreed that the proposal should be developed further with Street Pride. Any changes should be coordinated with measures to prevent vehicles parking on or driving across the Village Green; additional posts/bollards may be needed. The group would develop a more detailed proposal before removal or replacement works began. The Clerk advised the Street Pride representatives that the Parish Council's community-grant scheme facilitated on behalf of Wrydecroft Wind Farm may offer up to £1,000 towards the project.

236/26. To consider the use of the Village Green for CCC to hold a Dr. Bike maintenance session on 1st December 2026.
The Council approved the use of the Village Green for a free Dr Bike maintenance session organised by Cambridgeshire County Council on 1 December 2026. The Clerk would request the final version of the poster before publicising the event.

237/26. To discuss potential encroachment of Cadent Gas Line on Sealeys Lane.
The Council agreed that the Clerk should contact Cadent to raise concerns about potential development close to the gas pipeline and ask it to check the position. The Clerk would also contact Fenland District Council's enforcement team to raise the concern about possible unauthorised development near the line.

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238/26. To discuss and compile consultation response for **Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Survey**
The survey deadline had been extended to 18 October. The Council agreed that the Clerk and Cllr Yvonne Reader would work together promptly to prepare a response, with Cllr Reader assisting the Clerk to review the survey. The Chairman noted that issues could also be reported through the online tool during the year.

239/26**. Allotments**

(a) For Councillors to consider joining the National Allotment Society
The Council decided not to join at present, noting the £85 fee and that much of the relevant advice could be accessed through existing CAPALC/NALC arrangements. Membership could be reconsidered if a specific allotment project arose.

(b) For Councillors to review the annual allotment rents for the YE 31st October 2026
The Council agreed to leave allotment rents unchanged for the year to 31 October 2026.
Councillors also discussed correspondence sent to three tenants regarding cultivation. The Clerk reported that one tenant had expressed distress at the receipt of her letter and indicated that she wished to vacate her plot. Members acknowledged that she had undertaken some work. The Clerk would respond sensitively, acknowledge the work undertaken and offer the option of continuing the tenancy if she wished; otherwise, the Council would accept her decision to leave. The existing process for the other tenancy cases would continue, with the next step to be considered after 31 October 2026.

240/26. **Assets & Maintenance**

(a) To receive an update on the Permissive Walkway
The Clerk reported that she had applied to the National Lottery Awards for All for £5,000 because the £12,000 Wrydecroft application would not cover the full project cost. A decision could take up to 16 weeks.

(b) To receive an update on the BT Kiosk
The Clerk reported that ownership of the kiosk had transferred to the Parish Council for the nominal sum of £1 and that the kiosk had been added to the Council's asset register. BT had confirmed that all equipment had been removed. The Council agreed to await the outcome of the £4,000 Wrydecroft grant application before progressing with refurbishment works. The Clerk was asked to review the insurance arrangements and clarify with the insurer whether the kiosk and any installed defibrillator would need to be specifically listed on the policy. The Council noted that BT would continue to fund the electricity supply for a minimum of seven years and would contact the Parish Council should the electricity supply be disconnected.

(c) To receive an update on Tree Works
The Clerk reported difficulties with DM Landscapes & Tree, including a dispute over the scope of the work and the absence of the expected PICUS report. The Council agreed to draw a line under the matter and not use the contractor again. The Clerk proposed creating a panel/matrix of approved tree contractors based on recommendations received from other councils. Members supported exploring a panel of approved contractors, while keeping tree surveys separate from contractors carrying out the work. The Chairman and Cllr Reader offered to help the Clerk revise the approach email. The Clerk would seek a quotation from David Wheatley for the previously approved work near the pond. The Clerk reported that the three tree applications referred to at the September meeting had been validated; the Clerk and Cllr Reader would prioritise the remaining tree work by urgency.

(d) To receive an update on the Community Orchard
The Clerk reported that there was no substantive update pending the allotment position. The Clerk had drafted an email to the school/PTA to establish whether they would be interested in participating in the community orchard and would send it.

(e) To discuss and arrange the works to the Cage roof for further structural inspection.
Members queried the extent of opening-up work shown on the structural engineer's drawing, which appeared broader than the small inspection opening they had understood was required. The Clerk would contact the engineer to clarify the required extent, then inform Cllr Peter Spriggs so quotations could be obtained. Cllr Unwin queried whether any necessary conservation/planning implications would need to be understood before substantial work proceeded.

241/26. **To receive the Amenities 95 Management Committee Report**
The Chairman reported that a public meeting was planned for 21 November 2026 to allow residents to comment on a proposal by the football club to install a large modular building/clubhouse on the recreation field to help meet FA requirements. Two possible locations had been discussed. No decision had been made. Further matters included access to utilities, security, ownership of the building on Amenities land and the need for legal advice; the club would

be expected to meet relevant costs. The public would be invited to give views before the committee or relevant bodies reached a decision.
Planned events include a Sausage Supper on 24th October 2026, Children's Halloween Event on 31st October 2026 and Children's Christmas Event on 13th December 2026.

242/26. **To collate agenda items for the next meeting**
The Clerk asked that no unnecessary additional workload be added while she continued to catch up following illness. Cllr Reader agreed that the Policy reviews could largely wait.

243/26. **To agree 2027 Parish Council proposed Dates, Times & Locations**

Day	Date	Time	Location
Wednesday	January 13th 2027	7pm – 10pm (Max)	Parson Drove Village Hall
Wednesday	January 27th 2027- Precept	7pm – 10pm (Max)	Parson Drove Village Hall
Wednesday	February 10th 2027	7pm – 10pm (Max)	Parson Drove Village Hall
Wednesday	March 10th 2027	7pm – 10pm (Max)	Parson Drove Village Hall
Wednesday	April 14th 2027	7pm – 10pm (Max)	Parson Drove Village Hall
Wednesday	May 12th 2027	7pm – 10pm (Max)	Parson Drove Village Hall
Wednesday	June 9th 2027	7pm – 10pm (Max)	Parson Drove Village Hall
Wednesday	July 14th 2027	7pm – 10pm (Max)	Parson Drove Village Hall
Wednesday	August 11th 2027	7pm – 10pm (Max)	Parson Drove Village Hall
Wednesday	September 8th 2027	7pm – 10pm (Max)	Parson Drove Village Hall
Wednesday	October 13th 2027	7pm – 10pm (Max)	Parson Drove Village Hall
Wednesday	November 10th 2027	7pm – 10pm (Max)	Parson Drove Village Hall
Wednesday	December 8th 2027	7pm – 10pm (Max)	Parson Drove Village Hall

The Council considered the proposed meeting schedule. To allow sufficient time following the May 2027 elections for councillors to take office and for the Clerk to issue the necessary paperwork, the May meeting was moved from 12 May to 19 May 2027. The June meeting was moved from 9 June to 16 June 2027 to provide a more practical gap between meetings. The remaining proposed dates were accepted in principle, subject to booking the Village Hall and updating the website and Parish Post.

244/26. **Date of Next Meeting**
Wednesday 11th November 2026 7:00pm Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road, Parson Drove

The meeting was closed at 9:00pm

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