



PARSON DROVE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Parson Drove Parish Council Meeting held on **Wednesday 19th August 2026 at Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road, Parson Drove**

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

FDC Councillors: G Booth & D Cutler | CCC Councillor: C Tirrell

Members of the Public: 1

Also Present: Sarah Bligh (Parish Clerk) and Garry Edwards (FDC)

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Paul Unwin and opened at 7pm. Cllr Booth attended the meeting from 7:50pm.

178/26. To agree apologies for absence

Apologies of absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Swannell and Fowler & FDC Cllr Humphrey.

179/26. To consider any requests by Councillors for dispensation – None Received

180/26. To receive Members Declarations of Interest

Cllr Unwin declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 186/26(b) noting that Garry Edwards is an acquaintance and friend.

181/26. 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 the three newly installed Speed Indicator Signs (SIDs) were operational, with the solar panels positioned to maximise efficiency from the sun. CSW will hold roadside monitoring sessions during September at the SID locations to collect data for the Parish Council's monitoring report to Wrydecroft Wind Farm.

182/26. To agree the minutes of the meeting dated 8th July 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.

183/26. Matters arising from previous minutes not covered on the agenda (for information only)

The Clerk reported that some items referred to in the July minutes had been deferred to the September meeting, including matters relating to the funding/purchase of a fourth SID unit and other remedial measures arising from the Asset & Allotment Inspections to allow the August meeting to be as concise as possible.

184/26. To receive the District Councillors Reports

- Cllr Cutler reported that the decision and announcement regarding Local Government Reorganisation had been delayed and was now expected in October.
- Cllr Cutler also reported that Police community engagement events are now being held in all villages within the Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary Ward. The Fenland District Council Safety Partnership Team is attending where possible.
- It was noted that public meetings can only be held where permission has been granted by those responsible for the premises. Despite Cllr Cutler's efforts, some villages have been unable to host events due to limited access to community halls. Events will therefore be held in Guyhirn and Wisbech St Mary, where suitable business premises have been made available.

185/26. To receive the County Councillor Report

- Cllr Tirrell introduced himself to the Council.
- He provided updates concerning the Long Drove crossroads roadworks and the MVV incinerator community funding scheme, which includes a major fund together with a monthly award of £1000.
- Cllr Tirrell offered to assist the Parish Council with highways matters falling within his remit.

186/26. Highways Matters

(a) To report any new street lighting issues

Garry Edwards (FDC) reported that the new streetlight column on Fen Road had been installed and that the Council was awaiting the UKPN connection. The lantern would be fitted and the column commissioned once

--

the electrical connection had been completed. It was noted that permits and permissions had contributed to the delay.

- (b) To welcome FDC Engineering Manager Garry Edwards and discuss response from FDC regarding Springfield Road Streetlights

The Vice-Chairman welcomed Garry Edwards to Parson Drove Parish Council and thanked him for attending. Mr Edwards provided background information on the four Springfield Road streetlights, which were understood to have been installed when the council houses were built around the 1960s. These houses were later transferred to Roddons when Fenland District Council sold its council housing stock. It was noted that limited information was available regarding the transfer of the streetlights. Cambridgeshire County Council's 2007 inventory recorded all four lights, FPC1–FPC4, as parish assets. Two columns, dating from 1985 and 2005, may require replacement in the near future, while the remaining two columns, replaced in 2016, were reported to be in good condition. Structural and electrical testing had been completed, and all four lights were fitted with LED lanterns. Fenland District Council offered to fund the replacement of the two older columns in order to reach an adoption agreement before responsibility for the lights transferred to the Parish Council.

Cllr Reader asked why the streetlights on Newlands Road and Riverside Gardens had been transferred to Roddons, but the Springfield Road lights had not. Mr Edwards advised that this was most likely because the Newlands Road and Riverside Gardens lights met the relevant British Standards at the time, whereas the Springfield Road lights did not.

Following discussion, it was resolved that the Parish Council would adopt the four Springfield Road streetlights, subject to Fenland District Council replacing the two older columns before formal transfer. The Clerk is to progress the adoption paperwork with Mr Edwards.

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

Cllr Spriggs expressed concern that approximately 25% of Silvers Lane had not been resurfaced. Cllr Reader agreed to check the Cambridgeshire County Council website to confirm the completion date for the scheme under the Capital Maintenance Programme. Members noted their frustration that no communication had been received by the Parish Council regarding the works, despite the Clerk having made enquiries on the Council's behalf. It was agreed that, if there had been a delay or a decision to complete only part of the road, the Parish Council should have been informed. CCC Cllr Tirrell is to be copied into all correspondence to assist with progressing the matter.

Cllr Spriggs reported that a vehicle had left the carriageway on Long Drove due to remaining edge damage to the road, although the Highways Maintenance Officer had advised that all repairs had been completed. He also reported a second incident in which a vehicle left the road and entered a field after clearing the dyke. Members noted that there had been numerous complaints regarding HGVs using the narrow rural lanes to access the digester plant on Cants Drove, which may have contributed to the edge damage on Long Drove. The Clerk is to send a comprehensive email to Amanda Hill, Highways Maintenance Officer, copying in relevant Highways Officers and CCC Cllr Tirrell for support.

187/26. Planning Applications – Decision Updates: **Noted**

(a)	F/YR26/0355/VOC	Variation of condition 2 (list of approved drawings) of planning approval F/YR21/0600/RM (Reserved Matters application relating to detailed matters of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale pursuant to appeal decision APP/D0515/W/18/3202467 (F/YR17/1148/O) to erect 4 x dwellings (2-storey 4-bed) and the formation of a new access) - amended design to Plot 3 only at Land North Of 135 Front Road Murrow Cambridgeshire	GRANTED
(b)	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 change at Building Land Northwest Of Southea Parish Church 37 Main Road Parson Drove Cambridgeshire	GRANTED

188/26. Planning Applications – For Comment:

(a)	F/YR26/0595/E	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 The Parish Council raised no objection, subject to a Construction Management Plan or suitable planning conditions to ensure all deliveries, materials storage and contractor parking remain on site, with no use of the Village Green for parking or construction activity.
-----	-------------------------------	--

--

(b)	F/YR26/3112/COND	Details reserved by Conditions 09 (Energy Assessment) and 12 (Levels) of planning permission F/YR19/0971/O (Erect up to 5 dwellings (outline application with matters committed in respect of access)) - for Plot 5 only at Land East Of The Silverings 114 Main Road Parson Drove Cambridgeshire The Parish Council noted that supporting documentation for the application was not available on the planning portal at the time of consideration. In the absence of this information, councillors were unable to properly assess the proposal and agreed not to make a substantive comment at this time.
-----	----------------------------------	---

189/26. Planning Matters

- (a) To consider response from Swann Edwards Architects Ltd regarding duplication of proposal to extend 30mph to Sealeys Lane (Condition of Planning Application F/YR26/0112/O - Land to the East of 114 Main Road Parson Drove Cambridgeshire) with the Parish Councils LHI Scheme.

The Clerk read the response received from the applicant's agent regarding the potential duplication between the planning application and the Parish Council's Local Highways Initiative (LHI) submission for the proposed 30mph extension. The applicant was not prepared to commit to a financial contribution until the planning application had been determined. Should planning permission be granted, the applicant would discuss a contribution with the Parish Council to avoid duplication and would consider joint delivery of the works. The response was noted, and it was agreed that the LHI submission would proceed as planned. If planning permission is granted, the Parish Council will re-engage with the applicant to negotiate a contribution and/or joint delivery of the works.

190/26. Finance Matters

- (a) To receive the Finance & Budget Report for 2026/2027 to date.

The bank reconciliation of 31st July 2026 balanced at £81,355.80 which was between the Santander Current Account of £2,604.62, the Santander Savings Account of £15,349.21 and the Unity Trust Account of £63,401.97. The Clerk drew attention to the income of £6,145.00 which was the grant payment from Cambridgeshire Community Foundation for the new noticeboard. The Clerk advised members that the noticeboard pro-forma had been settled under agenda item 192/26g, enabling the bespoke noticeboard to be manufactured.

- (b) To consider the External Auditors report for the Financial Year ending 31st March 2026

The Clerk reported that, due to a minor clerical error in Box 11 of the Accounting Statements section of the AGAR, the External Auditor had issued an "except for" matter. The Auditor stated that the AGAR had not been accurately completed before submission for review, as the smaller authority had confirmed that it was not a sole managing trustee and that the response to Section 2, Box 11 should have been "Yes". Members noted that no other matters had been reported. The Clerk advised that the required audit papers would be published on the website and noticeboard in accordance with the Council's statutory duties following conclusion of the audit.

Cllr Booth thanked the Clerk for her hard work and expressed the Council's appreciation.

191/26. Finance Matters - To agree the outstanding payments of the Council:

Item	Description	Total Amount	Power to Spend	
(a)	Clerks July Salary	£952.59	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(b)	Clerks July Expenses – Working from Home Allowance	£30.00	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(c)	HMRC Tax & NI for Month 5	£84.48	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(d)	NEST Pensions for Month 5 (D/D)	£62.12	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(e)	Eon Next –Energy for the Cage (D/D)	£18.98	LG Act 1972 S133	Agreed
(f)	Santander Acc Fees – July	£4.99	LG Act 1972 S111	Agreed
(g)	Unity Trust Acc Fees – July	£7.00	LG Act 1972 S111	Agreed
(h)	PKF Littlejohn LLP – External Audit Fees	£378.00	Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014, Part 2	Agreed
(i)	FDC – Streetlighting Charge 25/26	£5360.70	Parish Councils Act 1957 S3	Agreed

192/26. Finance Matters – To note payments made:

(a)	Tesco Mobile (Direct Debit)	£9.50	LG Act 1972 S111	Approved
(b)	Tamar IT – July Microsoft 365 (Direct Debit)	£11.38	LG Act 1972 S111	Approved

--

(c)	Tamar IT – July SentinelOne (Direct Debit)	£4.74	LG Act 1972 S111	Approved
(d)	James Pest Control – Rabbits on Allotments	£50.00	Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 S26 (1)	Approved
(e)	Award Associates – Cage Structural Report	£1127.26	LG Act 1972 S133	Approved
(f)	Diane Cutler – Reimbursement SID clamps/locks	£157.45	Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 S72	Approved
(g)	Noticeboards Online – New Parish Noticeboard	£7374.00	LG Act 1972 S232	Approved

The Council approved the schedule of expenditure for July and August and noted payments already made during the period. The Clerk sought approval for an additional payment of £180.00, with no VAT, to R J Vasey Builders for emergency repairs to the manhole behind the Cage. The repair had been identified during the asset inspection as presenting an immediate risk to the public. Members approved the payment.

193/26. Finance Matters – Grant Applications

(a) Section 137 Applications - Nil

(b) Wrydecroft Small Grants Programme:

i) Amenities '95 £430.00 – Hedge Cutting & Tree Maintenance of Playing Field

Following discussion, the grant application was approved for £430.00. The Clerk to process the payment.

194/26. Parson Drove Post Office – To discuss move proposal and compile consultation response.

The Vice-Chairman introduced the item and reported that, subject to consultation, the Post Office proposed relocating its Parson Drove branch to the convenience store.

Cllr Booth supported retaining Post Office services in the village. Members discussed the potential effect of the relocation on parking:

- Cllr Reader raised concerns about possible parking issues.
- Cllr Unwin considered that the relocation could reduce the number of vehicles parking along The Bank.
- Cllr Spriggs noted that school traffic, rather than the shop, was the principal cause of parking problems in the area.

Members also discussed how the relocation might operate in practice:

- Cllr Unwin noted that adopting the shop's opening hours could spread customer visits more evenly throughout the day.
- Cllr Booth observed that the parking area beside the shop was not being used to its full capacity.
- Cllr Spriggs hoped that parking restrictions would be introduced in the lay-by if the current LHI application was successful.

The Parish Council supported retaining Post Office services in the village and agreed in principle to the proposed relocation. The Council requested confirmation of the proposed accessibility arrangements, service hours and parking provision. The Clerk was instructed to submit the Parish Council's response to the consultation.

195/26. Assets & Maintenance

(a) To receive an update on the Permissive Walkway

The Clerk reported that an application for £12,000 had been submitted to the Wrydecroft Wind Farm Community Fund. Additional funding sources were being explored, including Unity Trust, French Farm, the National Lottery, MVV and CCF as the project remained dependent on securing sufficient funding.

Cllr Booth expressed concern that the MVV Community Fund's five-kilometre eligibility radius included Wisbech St Mary but excluded Parson Drove. Cllr Booth recommended submitting a general application to CCF, enabling CCF to identify any suitable available funds.

The Clerk suggested including wildflowers along the route to strengthen the project's biodiversity benefits.

Cllr Spriggs raised concerns about a badger sett on the proposed route and noted that any works would need to avoid disturbing protected wildlife. The Clerk was asked to continue investigating funding opportunities and to consult with landowners and the relevant environmental bodies with regards to the badgers.

(b) To receive an update on Tree Works

The Clerk reported that DM Landscapes had advised that a further site visit was required before the tree health report could be finalised.

Cllr Reader requested that the report be available for the September meeting and expressed concern about the delay, the time required to obtain planning permission, the risk of nesting birds causing further delays in spring, and the condition of the trees following the exceptionally dry summer.

The Clerk was instructed to contact DM Landscapes to emphasise the urgency of completing the report and to circulate it to councillors upon receipt.

--

(c) To receive an update on the Community Orchard

The Clerk reported that the parishioner who had expressed an interest in the community orchard had withdrawn due to the extent of the work required to make it operational and productive. The Clerk recommended including an article about the orchard in the winter edition of the Parish Post to encourage interest in establishing or joining a community initiative. Cllr Reader expressed concern that the condition of the plot would continue to deteriorate if it remained unmaintained. Cllr Booth suggested appointing a suitably qualified person to undertake the necessary work on the trees, noting the importance of retaining the orchard as a community asset. Cllr Spriggs expressed disappointment that the community orchard had not become established despite having been in place for several years. Cllr Unwin recommended contacting the school again to establish whether pupils would be interested in participating and learning how sustained effort could result in a productive harvest. The Clerk to follow up and contact the school.

(d) To consider remedial works following Asset Inspection:

- i) John Eley Quote for Metal Sign Restoration at £240 (Exc VAT) each
 - ii) John Eley Quote to repaint and sign write The Cage "Parson Drove" sign at an approximate cost of £500 (Exc VAT) - If there are any repairs needed to the wood the cost will increase.
- Cllrs Reader and Spriggs expressed concern that the quoted cost of £240 for the 'Visitor Centre' sign near The Cage was excessive. They considered the same cost acceptable for the 'Best Kept Village' sign. Cllr Booth recommended that the 'Visitor Centre' sign be removed and stored inside The Cage temporarily. Councillors agreed to proceed with the works and repainting of The Cage 'Parson Drove' sign, noting that the work had been required for some time and that sufficient funds were available in The Cage restoration reserve. It was agreed that the Clerk would approve works to the 'Best Kept Village' sign at a cost of £240 (Exc VAT), and the repainting and repair of the 'Parson Drove' sign at a cost of £500 (Exc VAT). Councillors noted and agreed that any necessary repairs to the timber would incur an additional cost.

196/26. To collate agenda items for the next meeting

Cllr Booth – Wreathes for Remembrance Sunday

Cllr Reader – Garden & Allotment Rents

Cllr Spriggs – Parking on the Village Green adjacent to the Swan Inn

Cllr Williams – Cadent Gas Line encroachment on Sealeys Lane

Clerk – Asset Inspection remedial works

Clerk – Purchase of fourth MVAS/SID

Cllr Spriggs – Hedge overgrown at height outside BT Telephone Exchange

Cllr Reader – Outstanding Policy Reviews

Cllr Spriggs – Hedgerow along Murrow Bank

197/26. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 9th September 2026

7:00pm

Parson Drove Village Hall, Main Road, Parson Drove

198/26. 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 Reader and agreed by Council. The members of the public present were duly asked to leave at 8:45pm.

- (a) Update from Clerk

For the purposes of the public minutes, the Clerk advised the Council that she had accepted a role with Gedney Hill Parish Council and outlined her intended working hours and arrangements concerning time off in lieu (TOIL). The Clerk confirmed her continued commitment to Parson Drove Parish Council during the transition period. Councillors offered their support and agreed that the Clerk's Parson Drove workload and hours would be reviewed in the future as required.

The meeting was closed at 9:00pm

--