Croughton Parish Council
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CROUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Croughton Village Hall

Monday 12th October 2026 at 7:30pm

MINUTES

Present:
Councillor Steven Caldwell (Chair)
Councillor Vee Griffiths
Councillor Graham Judd

In attendance: Alan Youel (Clerk/RFO)

The meeting opened at 19:30

26/171	Welcome announcement from the Chair.
26/172	To receive and approve apologies for absence. Cllr Zoe Greenfield, Cllr Susan Relf **Resolved:** To approve apologies from Cllr Zoe Greenfield & Cllr Susan Relf
26/173	To receive and approve for signature the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 14th September 2026. **Resolved:** To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 14th September 2026.
26/174	To note any matters arising not included on this agenda, for report only (clerk's report). **1. Poppy Wreath** The Clerk sought members' views on the annual Poppy wreath donation and advised that Shirley Goldsby may have previously assisted with arrangements. Members confirmed that the usual protocol was for the Council to purchase and the Chair to lay the wreath, although an ex-councillor had undertaken this last year. **Resolved:** To purchase a Poppy wreath, with the remaining balance of the £50 allocation donated to the Royal British Legion. **Action**: The Clerk to contact Shirley Goldsby to arrange the wreath purchase. The Chair to liaise with the ex-councillor regarding availability to lay the wreath this year. **2. Restore Datashred** The Clerk updated members on further correspondence with Restore Datashred and advised that a credit note had been received.

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	3. NCALC Training The Clerk advised members of upcoming NCALC training opportunities: • Northamptonshire Prepared Workshop • Basics of Allotments Cllr Griffiths expressed interest in the Northamptonshire Prepared Workshop, and the Clerk expressed interest in the Basics of Allotments training. **4. Defibrillator Locations** The Chair updated members on the defibrillator group's request for assistance in identifying suitable locations, including whether the Co-op could be approached. The Clerk advised that the cabinets may require a power supply. The group is to provide details of the proposed equipment and available funds to the Council. The Council would be responsible for ongoing consumables. The Chair is to confirm the location requirements, and a further update is awaited from the group. **Action**: The Clerk to contact the Co-op, subject to further clarification of the requirements. **5. Equilore Fundraiser** The Clerk advised that a request had been received to promote the Equilore fundraiser on the Parish Council website and Facebook page. Members agreed that these channels should primarily be used for Council business and suggested that Croughton Chat would be a more appropriate platform. **6. Memorial Application** The Clerk updated members on a memorial application for which further information was being sought, as the details received were incomplete. An invoice would be issued once the necessary information had been confirmed. The Clerk advised that he would bring forward recommendation to review the cemetery regulations and fees.
26/175	To receive members' Declarations of Interest under the Council's Code of Conduct related to business on the agenda. *(Members should disclose any interests in the business to be discussed and are reminded that the disclosure of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is required, and that the member should withdraw from the meeting room during the transaction of that item of business).* *None declared*
26/176	**Public participation session:** *No members of public present*
26/177	**Financial matters:** Balance of accounts as of 30th September: Community Account £8,325.09 Premium Savings Account £156,693.95 Total £165,019.04 **Bank Reconciliation – September 2026** Members noted that the bank statements available at the time of reconciliation were not up to date. The Clerk explained that access to the Council's bank accounts remained unavailable due to outstanding mandate changes.

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The Clerk explained the Premium Savings Account balance shown in the balance of accounts table differed from the balance on the Premium Savings Account statement because the statement was dated 22 September rather than 30 September. Consequently, internal account transfers were not reflected in the Premium Savings Account statement at the time of reconciliation. Members noted the explanation and confirmed they were satisfied.

1. To approve the Bank Reconciliation for September 2026 (see separate document).

Resolved: The September 2026 Bank Reconciliation was approved, subject to the concerns raised regarding the currency of the bank statements and the Clerk's lack of bank access. The Clerk will re-present the September bank reconciliation at the next meeting.

2. To ratify and approve payments and payments due:

Description	Reference	Payee	VAT	Total
Water (Allotments)	DD	Wave	£0.00	£45.00
Water (Cemetery)	DD	Wave	£0.00	£9.00
Clerk Salary Mth 6 (NEW CLERK)	BACS	A Youel	£0.00	£757.41
Clerk Salary (Tax, Employer NIC, Mth 6)	DD	HMRC	£0.00	£270.90
Phone	Debit card	Vonage	£1.71	£10.25
Mobile phone SIM	Debit card	Smarty	£0.00	£6.00
Broadband	DD	Gigaclear	£7.88	£47.30
Newsletter Printing	BACS	Texprep (28092)	£0.00	£64.20
TOTAL			**£9.59**	**£1,210.06**

Resolved: To ratify and approve payments listed above totalling £1,210.06

3. To note receipts for September 2026:
Members noted Cemetery fees of £77.00 received as per bank reconciliation not shown on agenda.

Description	Reference	Payee	VAT	Total
Precept (2nd half)	CC	WNC Payments		£25,719.50
Cemetery Fees	CC	Plot 906		£77.00
TOTAL				**£25,796.50**

Resolved: To note receipts listed above totalling £25,796.50

4. Transfer

Resolved: To note transfer from community account to savings account **£20,000**

5. Financial Review Q2

The Clerk presented the Q2 financial review. Members discussed variances between actual expenditure and the approved budget.

Resolved: To receive and note financial statements & expenditure against budget to 30th September.

6. Accounting Software

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	The Clerk outlined options for specialist accounting software to support the Council's financial management and transparency. Members noted the potential benefits, including reducing human error, improving budgeting and project management, managing loan repayments and assisting with completion of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). The cost to the Council was acknowledged, with Clerk advising that the benefits may outweigh the expense. **Resolved**: That the Clerk bring forward a proposal for suitable accounting software for the Council's consideration.
26/178	**Budget Setting 2027-28** The Clerk presented the budget review and asked members to consider the first draft budget and potential precept demand for 2027/28. **Resolved:** The Clerk to circulate the budget spreadsheet to members for consideration at the next meeting. Members discussed the possibility of the Parish Council providing a Christmas tree for the village, following recent discussions with residents and previous Council discussions. The Residents' Committee is making arrangements for Christmas 2026. Members suggested including a new budget line for Christmas decorations in the 2027/28 budget. The Chair noted that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts still required suitable allocation. Members also discussed the anticipated return of responsibility for the Allotment Pocket Park from the Village Hall to the Parish Council, which may require a significant budget allocation. The Chair emphasised the need to clarify the responsibilities and associated costs before accepting the transfer. Cllr Griffiths suggested inviting the Village Hall Committee to a future meeting to discuss the matter further.
26/179	**Planning Applications currently relevant to Croughton:** No new Planning Applications at the time of publication of the agenda.
26/180	**Croughton Cemetery – Family-Only Interment** The Clerk updated members on a request for a family-only ashes interment on 30 October 2026, without the involvement of a funeral director. The Clerk advised that the Cemetery Policy states that "The Funeral Director will arrange for the relevant grave to be dug" and that "The time arranged for the burial service is the time when the funeral cortege should be at the cemetery." Members considered whether an exception could be permitted, as the policy does not specifically provide for an interment without a funeral director. Insurance liability was discussed. The Clerk confirmed that the Council had previously agreed to the ashes interment being the second interment in the same plot, following the initial burial. **Resolved:** The ashes interment may proceed without funeral director involvement as an exception, subject to the grave digger accepting responsibility for the relevant insurance liability. Otherwise, a funeral director will be required. **Resolved:** The cemetery regulations be reviewed at the next meeting to consider whether amendments are required.

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26/181	**Little Brook Ward Meeting** The Chair provided a brief update on the Little Brook Ward Meeting. Members noted that the meeting notes had already been circulated.
26/182	**Allotment Wall Rebuilding Project** The Chair provided an update on the project, including confirmation of the Public Works Loan Board borrowing approval and the proposed next steps. Members discussed the need to obtain a revised quotation and confirm the contractor's availability. The Council also needs to understand the loan drawdown process and coordinate this with the anticipated start date of the works. Members considered whether commencing in spring would be more suitable in view of weather conditions and the potential for cost-effective delivery and completion. **Resolved**: That the Parish Council notes the borrowing approval and considers the timing of the loan drawdown, taking account of current interest rates and the affordability and sustainability of repayments. The contractor is to be contacted to obtain a revised quotation, confirm availability and establish a suitable start date, so that the timing of the loan drawdown can be aligned with the planned commencement of the works.
26/183	**Traffic Working Group** No update
26/184	**Allotment Working Group** Cllr Griffiths provided an update from the Allotment Working Group meeting held on 24 September. The WhatsApp group was reported to be working well. The Working Group is investigating plots that are in disrepair and will consider action regarding uncared-for plots in the spring. The tap on Plot 14 is to be investigated, and the possibility of creating an orchard on Plot 14 was discussed. The group requested an update on the allotment wall repairs and the potential impact on plots. The allotment rules are under review, with proposed revisions to be brought to the Council. Discussion on the access track was deferred until the wall repairs are completed. Members also noted reports of thefts from plots and that the Parish Council should not strim ragwort. The next Working Group meeting is planned for the end of November. The Clerk updated members on a resident's request to convert part of the allotments into car parking to help alleviate parking problems in the village. The Chair noted concerns regarding access, the role of the highway's authority and restrictions under the allotment regulations. **Resolved**: That the Clerk advises the resident that, while the Council is sympathetic to the village's parking difficulties, converting part of the allotments into car parking is considered impractical and is not supported by the current allotment regulations.
26/185	**ACORN Community Fund – Croughton and Evenley Parishes** The Chair provided an update following discussions with the Chair of Evenley Parish Council regarding the proposed ACORN Community Fund, providing £20,000 per annum for 25 years. Members considered Croughton's representation on the community committee, potential projects for funding and coordination with Evenley Parish. **Resolved**: That the Parish Council supports appropriate Croughton representation on the ACORN Community Fund committee, invites ACORN representatives to a future Council meeting to present the

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	scheme and explain its governance arrangements, and asks Councillors to identify potential projects and funding priorities for Croughton in coordination with Evenley Parish.
26/186	**Bus Shelter** Members considered a resident's request to maintain the bus shelter by repainting or re-varnishing it. **Resolved**: That Croughton Parish Council authorises the repainting or re-varnishing of the bus shelter using like-for-like materials, subject to confirmation of the proposed work and timings, any necessary permissions, and confirmation that the proposed work is acceptable to the Conservation Officer.
26/187	**Consultations** The Clerk updated members on a publicity request received from Phoenix Secure Transport. **Resolved**: That the Parish Council will not publicise the request through its own channels but will direct Phoenix Secure Transport to the village newsletter and community Facebook page.
26/188	**To receive items to be included in the next agenda** • Renovation of bench at bottom of Middle Lane

The meeting closed at 21:25

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