

West Dereham Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 4th September 2025, at 7.00pm, in the West Dereham Village Hall.

Councillors Present: Cllrs Nick Drew (Chair), Andy Challen, Stuart Glover, Keith Gore, Ann King and Mark Norton.

Public present: 5 members of the public

Clerk: Samantha Bromley

1. Apologies for Absence.

None.

2. Declarations of interest.

2.1. No declaration of any pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests were received.

2.2. No requests for dispensations were received.

3. Minutes.

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting dated Thursday 17th July 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair.

4. Updates of items not elsewhere on the agenda.

4.1. The Council has preordered 1 poppy wreath which can be collected from October 2025. Payments can no longer be received via bank transfer.

4.2. The tire swing which was hanging from a tree on Parish Council land has been cut down and removed.

4.3. The Internal Audit passed with no concerns. The Council received 4 recommendations for 2025/26 which will be implemented by the Clerk.

5. Open Forum for Public Participation.

5.1. Borough Councillor Peter Hodson was not present.

5.2. County Councillor Brian Long was not present.

5.3. The Police were not present.

5.4. To receive comments from members of the public:

5.4.1. A member of the public raised concerns about activity on land off Ryston Road. It was noted that a caravan has appeared on the site and residents expressed concern that materials and use of the land may not be agricultural. It was reported that an official notice relating to animal welfare had been pinned to a post. The Council were unable to confirm this. Further concerns were raised about the welfare of animals on the land, including the adequacy of food and water provision. Councillors commented that they were not satisfied with the responses received to date from the relevant authorities regarding ongoing concerns related to the use of this land. - Clerk to review the Council's records to compare what has been applied for with current activities, take advice on appropriate escalation routes and contact relevant bodies such as the RSPCA, DEFRA and other appropriate animal welfare organisations as necessary.

6. Reports.

- 6.1. To receive a data report from the SAM2. CARRIED FORWARD.
- 6.2. The following issues were reported on during August's weekly playground inspections:
 - 6.2.1. The top of 1 screw on the corner of the perimeter fence (behind toddler swing unit) has cracked. Screw still secure, not sharp and doesn't need any immediate attention but something to keep an eye on.
 - 6.2.2. One bolt near one of the gates was rattling (lower fixture) grass cleared and tightened by hand.
 - 6.2.3. Top sun cover on large multiplay area has a loose screw. Attempt made to tighten but needs two tools. No hazard. – Cllr N. Drew to tighten.

7. Playground Working Group – Fundraising Support and Clarification.

- 7.1. It was noted that it was believed an annual fundraising event had previously been agreed, and for the Council to encourage the Working Group to consider holding an event this year (for example, bingo or a children's Halloween party). It was noted that the Council would approach the West Dereham Village Hall Committee to enquire about the possibility of free or reduced hall hire. It was noted that further clarification was required regarding previous arrangements – Clerk to confirm and invite the Working Group to a meeting.
- 7.2. It was noted that the Council is to review previous decisions made and discuss arrangements for ensuring long-term funding for the maintenance and eventual replacement of the playground equipment.

8. Playground.

To receive a report on the following:

- 8.1. Zip wire tension tightening – *carried forward*
- 8.2. Zip ties supplied – *completed*.
- 8.3. Concrete pad quote – *carried forward*
- 8.4. Top dressing under Multiplay – Side Climber – *carried forward*
- 8.5. Sign cost for MUGA (single end) – *carried forward*
- 8.6. Caloo maintenance schedule, in particular for Cableway – Seated – *carried forward*

9. Trees.

- 9.1. Trees will be inspected monthly by the ground maintenance contractor as part of his regular duties and reported to the Council monthly, unless any urgent risks are identified, in which case they will be reported immediately. Trees identified as a risk will be added to the risk register and acted on accordingly.
- 9.2. To RESOLVE to AGREE a cost to replace the millennium tree on the allotments and AGREE where the replacement shall be planted. CARRIED FORWARD – Cllr N. Drew to chase the ground maintenance contractor for cost and location suggestions.

10. Farm Tenancy.

- 10.1. One sealed bid was received for the Farm Tenancy. The Council AGREED to accept the tender for the amount of £3,200 per annum, proposed Cllr N. Drew, seconded Cllr A. King.
- 10.2. To confirm Cruso & Wilkin's fee to prepare the tenancy documents. CARRIED FORWARD.

11. Cemetery.

To discuss and agree the following:

- 11.1. Actions on the Cemetery Project Plan (GANTT chart)
 - 2: The church has been contacted to request a financial contribution towards the cost of grass cutting in the church cemetery.

- 3: A map has been created, with a few details still to be fact-checked, and now includes headstone safety information.
 - 4 & 5: Issues have been identified and consultation with councillors and those previously involved in cemetery management will take place to confirm any missing information.
 - 6: Completed
 - 8: Clerk to confirm whether this is now in place.
 - 9: Clerk to confirm whether this is now in place.
 - 10: Clerk to confirm whether this is now in place.
- 11.2. Cllr A. King reported on guidance and good practice relating to the management of unsafe or unstable memorials. She referred to the ICCM Cemetery Service Review (Aug 2022) and Management of Memorials (2019) documents, highlighting the definition of a dangerous memorial, inspection and legal requirements and safe working practices. She also drew attention to the Department for Constitutional Affairs' Guide for Burial Ground Managers (2009) and the Ministry of Justice guidance Managing the Safety of Burial Ground Memorials (2009/2014), noting the importance of proportionate inspections, appropriate signage and clear communication with families. Examples of good communication, including notices used by other parish councils, were also shared for reference. The Council AGREED the following procedure: unsafe headstones will be plotted; grave owners/next of kin will be contacted where known; decisions on mitigation will be made jointly with grave owners/next of kin; and headstones will be monitored for further issues. Notices will be placed to warn the public and subtle markers will identify headstones of concern.
- Cllr A. Challen to update WDPC Risk Management Risk 5, Cllr A. King to prepare a sign for the cemetery entrance, Chair to obtain markers and Clerk to publish an online notice and update the cemetery risk assessment.
- 11.3. How to deal with potentially unsafe headstones (ICCM 2022 report) – discussed under item 11.2.
- 11.4. Any working required for hazard management for the public in the cemetery, relating to potentially unsafe headstones. – discussed under item 11.2.
- 11.5. Response from Diocese in relation to questions regarding consecration, grass and rabbit hole.
- 11.5.1. It was reported that there is no statutory requirement to consecrate cemetery land; however, if consecration is undertaken, a sufficient portion must remain unconsecrated and any consecrated area must be clearly marked. The Council noted that four pegs have been placed to indicate the approximate extent of existing consecrated ground and that the necessary information regarding process and costs is now available. A decision on whether to consecrate additional land was deferred.
- 11.5.2. It was reported that there are no statutory requirements for the number of grass cuts or minimum grass length in cemeteries. Burial authorities are required to keep cemeteries in good order but have discretion as to how this is achieved. The Council noted this information.
- 11.5.3. It was reported that there is no specific statutory guidance on rabbit activity within cemeteries. However, the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 requires cemeteries to be kept in good order and repair. Options include authorising the grounds maintenance contractor to fill in rabbit holes, either generally or specifically along public pathways. The Council noted that signage could also be considered, for example, temporary notices warning of rabbit holes, to demonstrate duty of care to visitors. The Council noted this; however, it was also noted that rabbit burrows are currently present in the church cemetery only and not in the West Dereham Parish Council cemetery, and as such this responsibility would fall with the Diocese.
- 11.6. It was noted that the church has been contacted to request a financial contribution towards the cost of grass cutting in the church cemetery.

12. Glazewing.

It was AGREED for the Chair to open a dialogue with Glazewing within the next couple of weeks and to review all recent correspondence.

13. Planning Matters.

13.1. To consider a consultee response to planning applications received from King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council:

13.1.1. 25/01196/F - HOUSEHOLDER -Erection of outbuilding with integrated solar panels in the roof – Homefields, Basil Road, West Dereham, Norfolk, PE33 9RP. SUPPORT subject to consideration being given to minimising any impact on local wildlife, ensuring the colours and materials used are sympathetic and blend with the surrounding environment and that any external lighting is in accordance with the Dark Skies policy, as raised in their neighbour's representation.

13.2. To consider consultee response to any other application received from King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council after the publication of the agenda: None.

<https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/mynearest?layer=planning&c=1>

13.3. To receive notifications of decisions made by King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council:

13.3.1. 24/01769/F - Relocation of existing access; Change of use of the land for the stationing of 10 Gypsy / Traveller plots, each containing one static home and touring caravan. Associated hard and soft landscaping and ecological enhancements. - Land East Side Station Road West Dereham Norfolk. REFUSED. The Council noted they will continue to monitor case the applicant exercises their right of appeal against the refusal.

14. Finance.

14.1. It was noted that the balance of the Unity Trust Banking account is £24,146.56.

14.2. It was noted that the following payments were made in July 2025:

Payee	Description	Net	Vat	Gross	Method
Staffing	Salary/HMRC/Pension/WFHA	£1157.94	£0.00	£1157.94	BACS
ECS Computers	Subscription	£8.50	£1.70	£10.20	DD
PJ home and gardens	Grass Cutting & Bramble Removal	£648.00	£0.00	£648.00	BACS

14.3. It was noted that the NJC 2025/26 pay agreement, effective from 1 April 2025, has been agreed and implemented. The clerk's back pay, totalling £112.32 and reflecting Spinal Column Point 22, has been calculated in line with the agreement and will be included in September's pay.

14.4. It was RESOLVED to AGREE the following payments, proposed Cllr A. King, seconded Cllr A. Drew:

Payee	Description	Net	Vat	Gross	Method
Staffing	Salary/HMRC/Pension/WFHA	£1196.55	£0.00	£1196.55	BACS
ECS Computers	Subscription	£8.50	£1.70	£10.20	DD
NALC	Website Hosting Fee	£70.00	£14.00	£84.00	BACS

NALC	Annual Subscription	£170.30	£0.00	£170.30	BACS
Village Hall	Hall Hire – May 24 to July 25	£280.00	£0.00	£280.00	BACS
Scribe	Annual Subscription	£345.60	£69.12	£414.72	BACS

15. Administration.

- 15.1. To note that the Parish Council mobile is no longer working and to consider a replacement. CARRIED FORWARD.
- 15.2. The Clerk noted that the Council's current plan (1× Exchange Online Plan 1 at £5.50 per month) would be replaced with 1× Microsoft 365 Business Standard at £13.95 per month. The Council would continue to pay for 1× 365 Tenant & Exchange Support at £3.00 per month, resulting in a new total monthly payment of £16.95 + VAT – Clerk to review the budget to identify where the necessary funds are available.
- 15.3. To review the following complaints:
- 15.3.1. The laurel hedge on the junction of Hilgay Road and Basil Road has been trimmed but continues to cause an obstruction to the view. Cllr A. King had contacted the Highways Officer but received no response. The Council agreed to follow up again and request a response by the end of the month.
- 15.3.2. Issues regarding the footpath on the bend of Church Road/Station Road was discussed. Cllr K. Gore reported that he has spoken with the Highways Officer about this but will readdress the issue with him at the weekend. It was noted that this has been included in the WDPC Risk Register as Risk 10. The action includes contacting the responsible authority to raise this as a risk for them to resolve.

16. Correspondence.

- 16.1. Borough Council: Beat Your Bills - Autumn/Winter. Noted. CARRIED FORWARD.
- 16.2. Borough Council: Warm Homes: Local Grant (WH:LG). Noted. – Clerk to add to Website and noticeboards.

17. Members' Matters.

- 17.1. It was noted that the sign for Brooks Lane is covered in brambles – Cllr A. King to check.
- 17.2. It was noted that a pop-up campsite has appeared on Station Road. The number of pitches offered suggests it should be registered with the local authority. The Council agreed to investigate further and include it as an agenda item for the next meeting.

18. Items for the next meeting.

- 18.1. Albanwise – to discuss and AGREE any action.

The Chair paused the Standing Orders to continue the meeting past 2 hours.

- 18.2. Outstanding Action List – discuss and agree priority on outstanding matters.
- 18.3. Bus Shelter – to receive a report on signage and an update on the application for £1k under Bus Shelter Grant Scheme.

19. Next meeting of the council.

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Thursday 2nd October 2025 at 7:00pm in the West Dereham Village Hall.

IT WAS RESOLVED TO AGREE, UNDER THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960, THAT THE PRESS AND PUBLIC BE EXCLUDED FROM THE FOLLOWING ITEMS DUE TO THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS.

20. Staffing.

It was discussed and AGREED to put arrangements in place for covering the Clerk's duties during her maternity leave, beginning Thursday 1st January 2026. The role will be advertised on the following basis:

- 10–12 hours per week
- Salary at SCP 22
- £10 monthly working from home allowance
- Local Government Pension Scheme if the budget allows. – Clerk to explore pension costs.
- Travel expenses paid at £0.45 per mile (excluding scheduled monthly meetings)
- Contract to begin on 1st January 2026

Meeting Closed at: 9:17pm