



BENWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Benwick Parish Council Meeting on Monday 12 May 2025 at Benwick Village Hall

Meeting opened: 19:30

Present Cllrs M Chapman (Chair), S Lowry (Vice Chair), J Ablewhite, B Taylor, R Few, R Emmitt, L Keppel-Spoor. Clerk A Barnes. 3 members of the public.

001/25-26 – Election of Chairperson

Cllr Keppel-Spoor proposed, Cllr Emmitt seconded and it was AGREED that Cllr Chapman be re-elected as Chairperson. Declaration of Acceptance of Office was signed.

002/25-26 – Election of Vice Chairperson

Cllr Ablewhite proposed, Cllr Keppel-Spoor seconded and it was AGREED that Cllr Lowry be re-elected as Vice Chairperson. Declaration of Acceptance of Office was signed.

003/25-26 – Apologies for Absence

None received.

004/25-26 – Declarations of Interest

Cllr Lowry declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Community Lounge (Item 020/25-26).

Cllr Ablewhite declared a non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to the Village Hall (Item 012/25-26j).

005/25-26 – Working Parties and Representatives

The Council discussed the need for working parties for the coming year.

Cllr Chapman proposed a group for the allotments, this was AGREED. Cllrs Chapman, Lowry, and Keppel-Spoor will be on this group.

006/25-26 – Banking Arrangements

Cllr Ablewhite proposed, Cllr Keppel-Spoor seconded and it was AGREED that the bank signatories remain as Cllrs Chapman, Lowry, Keppel-Spoor, and Few.

007/25-26 – Internal Auditor

Cllr Chapman proposed and it was AGREED to defer internal audit review and appointment of the internal auditor for 2026/27 to the June agenda as the audit is scheduled for 15 May.

008/25-26 – Public Participation

Public time opened at 19:42

A resident raised disappointment over no parish council organised event to mark VE Day.

Cllr Chapman explained that this had been discussed previously by the council and it was agreed that given the event fell mid-week and no residents had expressed significant interest, it would not be appropriate to allocate funds. The view was taken that the council's limited budget should be focused on events and activities of wider benefit to the community.

Concerns were raised over the maintenance of the cemetery. Cllr Chapman acknowledged this and noted that a new contractor has now started. The Clerk will speak with the contractor to ensure they understand expectations. Cllr Chapman apologised if any graves and memorial stones were not looking as they should.

A resident reported that a tree is obstructing the footpath between the two bridges. The Clerk will report this to CCC Highways.

Public time closed at 19:52

009/25-26 – Confirmation of Minutes

Cllr Ablewhite proposed, Cllr Taylor seconded and it was AGREED to approve and sign the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7 April 2025.

010/25-26 – County & District Councillors Reports

No reports received. Cllr Fisher (CCC) to be invited to the next meeting.

011/25-26 – Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The Clerk briefed the Council on changes to the NALC model documents.

Cllr Chapman proposed and it was AGREED to adopt both the updated Standing Orders and the Financial Regulations.

012/25-26 – Review of Contractual Arrangements

Cllr Chapman proposed and it was AGREED to approve the following arrangements:

Verge contract with Cambridgeshire County Council to continue for 2026/27.

Verges, and Cemetery / Pound maintenance contracts continue under current 3-year terms.

Memberships of SLCC, CAPALC (including NALC and DPO Scheme), ACRE, ICCM, and ICO fees to be renewed in 2026/27.

Electricity supply with Npower: Clerk to continue investigating unmetered supply options. Cllr

Ablewhite suggested exploring metering for streetlights.

Village Hall to remain the meeting venue for 2026/27.

Cable Test to continue ad hoc streetlight maintenance for 2026/27.

Website and email hosting remain on current 1-year contract to be reviewed at point of renewal.

013/25-26 – Review of Inventory of Land and Other Assets

Cllr Chapman proposed and it was AGREED to next review the asset register in March 2026.

014/25-26 – Arrangements for Insurance Cover

Cllr Chapman proposed and it was AGREED that no changes are required to insurance cover for 2025/26 (year 2 of 3-year term).

015/25-26 – Annual Policy Reviews (Standing Orders Requirement)

Cllr Chapman proposed and it was AGREED to review the listed policies as per the schedule proposed by the Clerk:

Email Contact Privacy Policy – June 2025

Privacy Notice – June 2025

Information & Data Protection Policy – January 2026

Freedom of Information Policy – June 2025

Policy on Filming or Recording Meetings – June 2025

Media Policy – June 2025

Complaints Policy – July 2025

Disciplinary & Grievance Policy – July 2025

Clerk's Contract & Employment Procedures – September 2025

016/25-26 – Annual Review of Other Council Policies

Cllr Chapman proposed and it was AGREED to review the following on the Clerk's recommended schedule:

Safeguarding Policy – June 2025

Expenses Policy – July 2025

Equality Policy – September 2025

Retention & Disposal Policy – January 2026

Memorial Safety Policy – July 2025

Website Accessibility Statement – June 2025

Donation Awarding Policy – September 2025

Financial & General Risk Assessment – April 2026

Code of Conduct for Members. The council reviewed this document. Cllr Chapman propose and it was AGREED for the council to adopt.

Clerk to check completion of Code of Conduct training and arrange any needed.

017/25-26 – Expenditure under Section 137 of LGA 1972

Cllr Chapman proposed and it was AGREED to use S137 to purchase a poppy wreath during 2025/26.

018/25-26 – Future Meetings

Cllr Chapman proposed and it was AGREED to hold future meetings on the proposed dates (below), excluding August when no meeting will be held.

Monday 2 June 2025

Monday 1 December 2025

Monday 7 July 2025

Monday 5 January 2026

~~Monday 4 August 2025~~

Monday 2 February 2026

Monday 1 September 2025

Monday 2 March 2026

Monday 6 October 2025

Monday 13 April 2026

Monday 3 November 2025

Monday 11 May 2026

019/25-26 – Action Log

Councillors and the Clerk reviewed progress against actions assigned to them on the action log.

Updates are detailed under relevant agenda items.

Cllr Chapman proposed and it was AGREED to sign the War Memorial Commission grant paperwork and appoint the contractor for the condition survey.

020/25-26 – Community Lounge

Cllr Lowry reported reduced food surplus to the Community Fridge.

The Community Lounge Family Fun Day will take place on Saturday 17 May, from 13:00–16:00.

021/25-26 – Highways Matters

Cllr Ablewhite reported the MVAS unit on Lilyholt Road is installed but too early to extract data.

Three volunteers have joined the Community Speedwatch group.

Clerk confirmed CCC Highways are considering funding the Lilyholt Road survey directly due to the LHI bid scoring too low.

022/25-26 – Defibrillators

Cllr Taylor reported the final defibrillator unit will be installed along the fence line of Cricketers Way on Whittlesey Road.

023/25-26 – Cemetery and September Gardens

Cllr Chapman proposed and it was AGREED to:

Increase September Gardens allotment charge to £16 per plot for 2026/27.

Clerk to investigate Town Grounds charge of £65 for 2026/27 and report in June.

Increase cremation plot fee to £100.

Waive all burial fees for children aged 5 and under, and include a clause for discretionary waivers by Council agreement.

Full burial policy to be reviewed in July, but all fee changes take immediate effect.

024/25-26 – Clerk's Report and Requests

The Clerk's report for April 2025 was noted. Cllr Chapman proposed and it was AGREED for data no longer required to be securely disposed of using at a cost of £5 per 10-12kg bag.

Cllr Chapman proposed and it was AGREED that the Clerk contact the March Museum regarding the village clock and the mechanism be gifted to someone who would like it as it is uneconomical to repair. Cllr Ablewhite proposed, Cllr Chapman seconded and it was AGREED that the clock face is requested to be returned to the village.

025/25-26 – Income & Expenditure

Cllr Chapman proposed and it was AGREED for the following accounts to be approved for payment.

Cllr Lowry abstained from voting on the Community Lounge payments.

Zurich Insurance Renewal (Year 2 of 3) - £1,070.67

HHA Grounds Maintenance Ltd Cemetery Maintenance (Apr 2024 carry-over) - £2.00

Clerk's Salary & Expenses (Apr 2025) - £665.08

Community Lounge Reimbursement (Apr 2025) - £73.61

Community Lounge Advance May 2025 - £100.00

Total Expenditure Approved: £1,911.36

Cllr Chapman proposed and it was AGREED to approve the April 2025 bank reconciliation. The Clerk's report on the April 2025 bank balances and reconciliation statement can be found at Appendix 1.

026/25-26 – Correspondence

The following items were noted:

NALC Chief Executive Bulletins

Resident contact (1 May 2025)

Practitioner Guide 2025

Cambs Police County Lines Training

Npower P434 directive

CCVS Bulletin

CCC Highways TTRO 25-884

027/25-26 – Planning

No planning applications were reviewed.

028/25-26 – Biodiversity and Habitat Initiatives

No new actions or updates.

029/25-26 – Clerk's Appraisal

Cllr Chapman proposed and it was AGREED to schedule the Clerk's annual appraisal in the November 2025 meeting.

030/25-26 – Agenda Items / Next Meeting

The next Parish Council meeting will take place on Monday 2 June 2025.

Items for the agenda should be submitted to the Clerk by Friday 23 May 2025.

Meeting closed: 21:10



Appendix 1

Bank Reconciliation		Financial Year ending 31 March 2026	
Benwick Parish Council			
Prepared by Abbey Barnes (Clerk & RFO)			
Date	07/05/2025		
Approved by		Chair	
Date	12/05/2025		
Balance per bank statements at end	30/04/2025	£	£
Current Account (Santander)		2,313.29	
Current Account (Lloyds)		15,500.00	
Cambridge and Counties Bank		44,770.18	
			62,583.47
Less: Unpresented Cheques			
Cheque Number	amount		
	622952	481.57	
	622953	105.00	
			586.57
Add: Any unbanked cash in transit			0.00
Net bank balances end 28/05/2024			61,996.90
The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book, as follows:-			
Opening Balance (01 April 2025)		54,357.37	
Add: Receipts to date		10,034.98	
Less: Payments to date		2,397.45	
Closing Balance		61,994.90	

Earmarked Reserves:

Community Lounge	£1,643.65	excluded from EM totals	
Verge Planting	£100.00		
Cemetery Extension	£3,324.40		
Street Lighting	£9,426.58		
The Pound	£1,000.00		
Village Sign	£0.00		
War Memorial	£5,500.00		
Mooring	£4,000.00		
Allotments	£700.00		
General Reserve	£37,943.92		
		EM TOTAL	£24,050.98