BENWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 5 October 2026 at Benwick Village Hall

Meeting opened: 19:30

Present: Cllrs M Chapman, L Keppel-Spoor, R Few, R Emmitt and R Taylor.
Clerk: Mrs A Blackhurst and RFO: Mrs A Barnes.

083/26-27 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Sean Lowry and Cllr Jason Ablewhite.

084/26-27 Declarations of Interest

None declared.

085/26-27 Public Participation

Public time opened at 19:35.

A resident raised concerns regarding a number of overgrown hedges and vegetation around the village. These included the hedge along the High Street from Chapel Gardens, the path alongside the Old Vicarage, the path at the top of Nene Parade by the cemetery and the hedge on the corner of Cricketers Way which is overgrowing the footpath.

The resident also raised concerns regarding the overgrown vegetation along the river path and the area of the High Street near the cemetery.

The willow tree near the footbridge on Nene Parade was also reported as requiring attention.

Concerns were raised regarding the condition of Ramsey Road following recent works. Cllr Chapman advised that temporary repairs had been undertaken and that more substantial works are expected to be carried out in the new year.

Cllr Taylor reported that complaints had previously been made to the District and County Councils regarding an overgrown hedge on Doddington Road. The resident had since cut the hedge back.

Public time closed at 19:44.

086/26-27 Confirmation of Minutes

Cllr Chapman proposed, and it was AGREED, to approve and sign the minutes of the meetings held on Monday 7 September 2026 and Monday 6 July 2026.

087/26-27 County & District Councillors' Reports

No reports were received.

088A/26-27 Action Log

The action log was reviewed.

Cllr Chapman reported that he had chased for a quotation for works to the War Memorial. There had been difficulty finding a suitable contractor, as the work requires a professional stone mason. Cllr Chapman will continue to seek a suitable contractor.

Cllr Chapman asked the Clerk to establish whether three quotations are required for the work.

088B/26-27 Burnthouse Small Grants Programme

An update was provided on the Burnthouse Small Grants Programme.

All successful applicants have provided their bank details and payments are expected to be received by Friday 9 October 2026. Clerk to ask for feedback in 6 months time.

Cllr Chapman suggested that any remaining funds could potentially be used towards dog fouling signs.

089/26-27 Highways Matters

No further Highways matters were raised for consideration.

090/26-27 Cemetery, September Gardens and The Pound

a) Memorial safety testing

The Council discussed memorial safety testing.

It was also suggested that Fenland Stoneworks be asked to attend the cemetery to undertake topple testing to identify any unstable memorials. The possibility of placing a sign to advise visitors where a gravestone has been laid down was also discussed.

Cllr Chapman proposed that the testing be undertaken by a third party. This was AGREED.

b) Sizing of slabs on cremation site

The Council discussed the sizing of slabs on the cremation plots on the left-hand side of the cemetery.

It was noted that some of the slabs are oversized for the intended plot size and would only allow for two rows.

It was AGREED that the existing oversized slabs in the first three vertical rows would remain in place, with smaller slabs being used for the remaining rows.

091/26-27 Income & Expenditure

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

Pre-authorised by Council:
- N Power – Electricity consumption 01/08/26–31/08/26 (direct debit): £124.08

Authorised for payment:
- Clerk's salary and expenses (September 2026): £545.37
- RFO salary and expenses (September 2026): £567.41
- ID Verde – Cemetery maintenance (September 2026): £273.00
- Village Hall – Burnthouse Grant: £783.00
- Benwick Street Pride – Burnthouse Grant: £399.00
- Benwick School – Burnthouse Grant: £500.00
- Christmas Lights – Burnthouse Grant: £500.00
- Ladies Club – Burnthouse Grant: £500.00
- Jigsaw Swap – Burnthouse Grant: £150.00

Subtotal to authorise for payment: £4,217.78

Total expenditure authorised: £4,341.86

The Clerk reported that the remaining precept money from Fenland District Council had been received during September 2026.

The September 2026 bank reconciliation can be found at Appendix 1.

The Q2 budget review was considered and no actions were required.

092/26-27 Correspondence

Clerk to get information on this year's gritting scheme.

093/26-27 Planning

The Council considered planning application F/YR26/0679/F relating to alterations to the existing dwelling at Ubuntu, 6 Nene Parade, Benwick, including conversion of the existing garage to an annexe, insertion of balconies, alterations to doors and windows, and the erection of a detached garage and sunroom involving demolition of existing outbuildings.

Cllr Chapman proposed that the Council had no planning-related comments and had no objections to the proposed development. This was AGREED.

094/26-27 Biodiversity and Habitat Initiatives

No biodiversity or habitat initiatives were raised for consideration at this meeting.

095/26-27 Agenda Items/Next Meeting

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 2 November 2026.

Agenda items should be submitted to the Clerk by Friday 23 October 2026.

Meeting closed: 20:18

Appendix 1

Bank Reconciliation					**Financial Year ending 31 March 2027**
Benwick Parish Council					
Prepared by Abbey Barnes (Clerk & RFO)					
Date	02/10/2026				
Approved by		Chair			
Date	05/10/2026				
Balance per bank statements at end	**30/09/2026**		**£**		**£**
Current Account (Lloyds)			22,456.21		
Cambridge and Counties Bank			44,770.18		
					67,226.39
Less: Unpresented Cheques					
Cheque Number	amount				
					0.00
Add: Any unbanked cash in transit					
					0.00
Net bank balances end					**67,226.39**
The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book, as follows:-					
Opening Balance (01 April 2026)			56,624.58		
Add: Receipts to date			21,091.44		
Less: Payments to date			10,489.63		
Closing Balance			**67,226.39**		

Earmarked Reserves:

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	**£4,720.00**	**EM TOTAL**	**£23,176.22**
Mooring	**£3,905.24**		
Allotments	**£700.00**		
General Reserve	**£67,226.39**		