

**Minutes of No Man's Heath & District
Parish Council Meeting
held at Cholmondeley Coronation Hall
at 7.00 pm on Thursday 14th May 2026**

PRESENT

Chairman: Cllr David Lithgow Smith
Cllr James Crossland Cllr Kathryn Collings Cllr Peter Guildford
Cllr Fran Lithgow Smith Cllr Michael Voisey
Clerk - Mrs Ruth Shackleton

Members of the Public and Parish – Seven members of the public attended the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr Tim Harrop (personal reason); Cllr David Pegram (personal reason); Cllr Stephen Roberts (personal reason).

Cllr Trevor Parker has stood down as a Parish Councillor. The Council recorded a formal vote of thanks in recognition of his many years of service, particularly for his significant contribution to planning matters and the Neighbourhood Plan.

Proposed by Cllr D Lithgow Smith and seconded by Cllr Crossland.

Cllr Higgle has stood down as Parish Councillor; CWaC have been advised and the casual vacancy notice has been posted.

2. CHAIRMAN 2026 - 27

Resolved - that Cllr D Lithgow Smith be elected Chairman for 2026 – 27

Cllr D Lithgow Smith signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Proposed by Cllr Guildford and seconded by Cllr Voisey.

3. VICE CHAIRMAN 2026 - 27

Resolved – that Cllr Crossland be elected Vice Chairman for 2026 – 27.

Cllr Crossland signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Proposed by Cllr D Lithgow Smith and seconded by Cllr F Lithgow Smith.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Resident Mr Tony Day formally thanked Cllr Parker for his years of service and also commended the Parish Council for its professionalism and resilience during recent challenging times. Mr Day further expressed his thanks to the Council for the donation made to the Malpas Community Minibus.
- A request was made for the hedgerows along the A41 to be cut back, as they are obstructing the sign to NMH for traffic travelling from Chester towards Whitchurch. This is to be reported to Highways.

6. MINUTES

RESOLVED:- that the minutes for the Parish Council meeting that was held on Thursday 5th March 2026 (previously circulated) be accepted as a true and proper record.

Proposed by Cllr Guildford and seconded by Cllr Crossland.

7. INTERNAL PROCEDURES

RESOLVED:- that Council agreed to the following:-

- Adoption of the Code of Conduct
- Adoption of the Standing Orders
- Adoption of the Financial Regulations.
- Adoption of the Risk Assessment

Proposed by Cllr Guildford and seconded by Cllr F Lithgow Smith.

RESOLVED:- that Council agreed to the following:-

- Confirmation of the appointment of Ruth Shackleton as the Responsible Financial Officer.

Proposed by Cllr Guildford and seconded by Cllr F Lithgow Smith.

Councillors were reminded of their duty to inform the Clerk of any changes to their Registration of Interests.

8. CHAIRMANS REPORT AND ANNUAL REPORT

The Council accepted the Chairman's Report and agreed that it should be published on the website, Facebook, Council noticeboards and in My Village News, with the Clerk and Chairman authorised to approve the associated costs.

9. REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS

Malpas Joint Burial Committee:- Cllr D Lithgow Smith advised there were no updates.

Bickerton Joint Burial Committee:- Cllr D Lithgow Smith advised there were no updates.

10. SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

10.1 Malpas Joint Burial Committee – David Lithgow Smith and James Crossland

10.2 Bickerton Burial Committee – David Lithgow Smith

10.3 Community Land Trust – Stephen Roberts

10.4 Planning– All (all councillors to be notified of applications with information regarding whether applications are in conformity to the neighbourhood plan)

10.5 Neighbourhood Plan – tba at the July meeting

10.6 Police Liaison – Tim Harrop

10.7 Highways - Tim Harrop

10.8 Public Rights of Way – Fran Lithgow Smith

10.9 Littlers Croft Co-ordinators – Kathryn Collings

10.10 Events Working Group - Kathryn Collings

10.11 Planters and Village Appearance - Mr Tony Day

10.12 Community Resilience:- Stephen Roberts

10.13 Defibrillator Guardian:- David Lithgow Smith

Proposed by Cllr Guildford and seconded by Cllr Crossland.

11. ACCOUNTS AND PAYMENTS

11.1 Accounts:-

RESOLVED:- that the Council approve the accounts as previously circulated.

Proposed by Cllr

Guildford and seconded by Cllr Collings.

11.2 Online Banking:-

The Clerk is in the process of setting up online banking.

11.3 Payments:-

Chq No	Payee	Amount
686	Running Costs / Backdated Pay	£ 233.45
687	HMRC Quarter 2	£ 411.60
688	Coronation Hall – room hire	£ 30.00
689	GRANT:- Malpas Community Minibus	£ 500.00
690	Morren Accountancy – internal audit	£ 150.00
691	Clear Councils – insurance	£ 498.70
692	CHALC - annual subs / training	£ 467.70
693	Reimburse R Shackleton – CWaC Licence fee	£ 21.00
694	Barlows Electrical – install defib at Edge Village Hall	£ 198.00
695	Reimburse D Lithgow Smith cost for bolts	£ 112.14
	Signs of the Times	tbc
685	Defib Shop (paid) defib and cabinet	£2,766.00

- 11.4 Receipts:-
None received
- 11.5 Bank Account:-
Reconciled balance of the Current Bank Account as at 30th April 2026:- £19,127.63
Balance of the Deposit Bank Account as at 30th April 2026:- £ 7,896.14
(CIL / NHB funds available - £14,157.18; Events Working Group ringfenced funds - £1,434.80; Parish Council fund available - £11,431.79.
RESOLVED:- that the Council accept the above payments and accounts as circulated.
Proposed by Cllr F Lithgow Smith and seconded by Cllr Crossland.
12. **AUDIT FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2025 - 2026**
- 12.1 To approve the Fixed Asset register as circulated:-
RESOLVED:- that the Council approve the Fixed Asset register as circulated.
Proposed by Cllr Crossland and seconded by Cllr Guildford.
- 12.2 To approve the Annual Governance Statement:-
RESOLVED:- that the Council approve the Annual Governance Statement as circulated. Assertion 10 on the AGAR has been marked as "No", as the Parish Council is currently in the process of setting up a new website and Clerk's email address ending in .gov.uk. This is expected to be completed within the next couple of months, subject to provider timescales and draft approvals.
Proposed by Cllr Crossland and seconded by Cllr Guildford.
- 12.3 To approve the year end accounts, explanation of variances and audit summary for year ended 31st March 2025:-
RESOLVED:- that the Council approve the year end accounts, explanation of variances and audit summary for year ended 31st March 2026.
Proposed by Cllr Crossland and seconded by Cllr Guildford.
- 12.4 To approve the Statement of Accounts and Annual Return for year ended 31st March 2025:-
RESOLVED:- that the Council approve the Statement of Accounts and Annual Return for year ended 31st March 2026.
Proposed by Cllr Crossland and seconded by Cllr Guildford.
- 12.5 Internal Audit:- to receive report and agree any actions required:-
The Internal Audit has been completed; there were no issues arising.
13. **WEBSITE AND EMAIL ADDRESSES**
The Council discussed various ways of improving communication with residents, including holding regular surgeries and setting up a WhatsApp messaging group.
RESOLVED:- that the Council carry out the following actions:-
- Set up a council email address ending .gov.uk
 - Secure a website domain ending .gov.uk
 - Update the Data Protection Policy
 - Prepare and publish a Publication Scheme
 - Prepare and publish an Accessibility Statement
 - Continue compliance with Transparency Code requirements (financial information already published)
 - It was resolved to instruct Then Media to set up a new website at a cost of £342.00 plus VAT. Site content and email administration will be managed by the Council, including the uploading of Council files, with Then Media providing assistance with the more technical aspects of the website pages. Website build, hosting and email services will be provided by Then Media.
 - The Clerk is to advise the current providers, UK City Images, to continue providing services until the new website is fully operational and to invoice accordingly.
- Proposed by Cllr Crossland and seconded by Cllr Voisey.**

14. PLANNING

14.1 Planning Register:-

The Council noted the planning register and the observations as previously circulated.

14.2 Planning Infrastructure:-

The Council discussed holding an Extraordinary Parish Meeting in September to discuss Planning Infrastructure matters. The Clerk is to contact the Head of Planning regarding availability in order to arrange a suitable date.

15. POLICE CLUSTER MEETING

The Clerk is in the process of making arrangements for the next Police Cluster meeting.

16. HIGHWAYS

The Clerk is in the process of making arrangements for highways update meeting with CWaC.

Concerns were raised regarding the lack of responses from Highways to faults reported to CWaC. It was agreed that the Council is to write to the Head of Highways to express these concerns.

The Clerk is to respond the resident who has written to the Council about concerns on the A49 at Bickley.

17. KISSING GATES

Cllr F Lithgow Smith provided the following update:-

All footpaths in the parish have now been walked and stiles surveyed, with a full register compiled including locations, photos and landowner details (supported by CWaC Footpaths Officer information where available).

The next phase will involve contacting remaining landowners to progress gate installations. Cholmondeley Estate will receive further gates in July and continue installation, with completion expected by December 2026; 9 of 22 gates on their land are already installed.

On the No Man's Heath to Sandstone Trail route, all but one stile have now been replaced with gates. The Landowner of the section of the Sandstone Trail below Robber Hill has created a wetland environment, thereby improving drainage on the Sandstone Trail and, with the agreement of the Parish Council and CW&C, has implemented a permissive path bypassing a previously boggy section pending it's formal adoption as a registered PROW.

Signs recognising the Parish Council's work with support from United Utilities and landowners are being installed on the new gates.

RESOLVED:- The Council agreed arrangements for managing the budget and placing orders for the installation of kissing gates between Council meetings, in accordance with the agreed budget. The Clerk is authorised to place orders with the installers of the gates as instructed by Cllr F Lithgow Smith.

Proposed by Cllr Crossland and seconded by Cllr Guildford.

18. EDGE NOTICEBOARD

The Clerk is in the process of obtaining quotes to carry out repairs; it may be a cheaper option for the Council to consider purchasing a new aluminium noticeboard.

19. SUMMER FETE

Cllr Collings provided the following update:-

Arrangements for the summer Fete and Party in the Park are progressing, with full permission now received from CWaC following completion of the required paperwork.

Organisation has taken longer than anticipated due to increased administrative requirements. Appreciation was noted for assistance in progressing matters with CWaC. Initial feedback from stakeholders has been positive.

Flyer and ticket production costs have been reviewed, with in-house printing identified as a more cost-effective option.

A band has been provisionally booked for the evening event at a cost of £600.00, which will also include DJ / music provision during intervals. This cost will be met from Ward Cllr funding which has already been awarded, with thanks recorded for support from Ward Cllr Rachel Williams.

Tickets will be placed on sale for the evening event.

Funding has also been secured from the Co-op towards the inflatable hire for the daytime activities.

It was agreed that the organisers may incur minor associated costs (including flyers, tickets, bunting and cups), with reimbursement on receipt submission. All costs are to be met from the events budget, with any income generated to be ring-fenced for future events.

Councillors were asked to assist where possible, given the scale of the event.

There will be a Council tent at the event to enable updates to residents on the work of the Council.

20. LITTLERS CROFT

Cllr Collings provided the following update:-

A recent meeting was held with CWaC regarding potential new equipment for the play area, which was very positive.

CWaC are supportive of the Parish applying for funding for outdoor gym equipment for the park and have provided examples for consideration. Installation by external contractors would be permitted, provided they meet all relevant council regulations. It was also confirmed that equipment could be installed on tarmac rather than the more expensive sports play surfacing.

The condition of any new provision is that the Council would take ownership of any newly installed equipment as Parish assets (excluding existing equipment). CWaC would therefore not be responsible for future repairs or replacements, and the Council would not be required to contribute additional funds to CWaC for this purpose.

Following the summer fete, work will begin to explore available funding opportunities.

21. DEFIBRILLATORS

Cllr D Lithgow Smith provided the following report:-

Community Public Access Defibrillators (CPADs) are now formally established across the Parish, with five units currently maintained by the Parish Council.

These are located at Edge Village Hall (including a new housing unit installed on 7 May), No Man's Heath BT building (relocated from The Wheatsheaf), No Man's Heath Post Office, Bickley Coronation Hall, and Hampton Telephone Box.

Additional CPAD access is available to Larkton residents at Bickerton Village Hall and Bickerton Scout Hut, ensuring comprehensive coverage across the NMH&D Parish area.

The CPADs will be clearly labelled accordingly.

An application has been made to the Members' Budget to fund the No Man's Heath defibrillator.

It is anticipated that the current WebNos (CHT) maintenance contract may be discontinued, as it is considered more cost-effective and efficient for the Council to directly replace pads and batteries, with appropriate annual budgeting in place.

22. CLERK'S REPORT

Nothing further to report

23. CORRESPONDENCE

A list of correspondence received was previously circulated.

Signed Dated

Scheduled Parish Council Meetings

Dates for 2026 meetings:-

Thursday 3rd September 2026

Thursday 12th November 2026

Chairman's Annual Report

The economic climate continues to limit council budgets in Cheshire West and Chester which makes it hard for your Parish Council to persuade CW&C Council to complete 'discretionary' work in the Parish. The Parish Council has, however, been successful in raising the priority of some work and has also deployed its own resources to improve facilities in the area. These are highlighted below.

The Parish is the largest civil Parish in south west Cheshire extending from Larkton in the north to Tushingham in the south, and from Tilston in the west to the country boundary in the east. Although No Mans Heath village accommodates most of the population of the Parish a priority this year has been to improve facilities in Larkton, Edge, Hampton and Bickley.

This year we have completed or progressed action in a number of important areas, including:

Littlers Croft: *(led by Cllr Collings)* The Parish Council recently arranged the installation of much improved playground facilities at a cost of £42,000. The main games area is now being regularly mown to a satisfactory standard and the goal posts have been equipped with nets.

We are now planning the installation of outdoor gym equipment to further improve the facilities. We have obtained approval from CW&C (who own the site) and compiled a draft proposal and the next step will be to secure funding for those elements which the Council cannot fund.

Village Events: *(led by Cllr Collings)* working party, including both Parish Councillors and local residents, organised the ever popular Christmas event last December and this year hopes to organise a village fete in the summer and, of course, another Christmas event.

Accessible Footpaths: *(led by Cllr Fran Lithgow Smith)* your Parish Council is intending to eliminate all stiles on footpaths in the Parish to improve access to the local countryside. Stiles will be replaced by suitable gates – in most cases kissing gates.

All footpaths have been surveyed and all stiles and other obstacles identified and many stiles have already been replaced.

The Sandstone Trail is already stile free. The footpath from No Mans Heath (starting opposite the Wheatsheaf) to the Sandstone Trail below Robber Hill is almost complete, and the boggy section eliminated, with the kind assistance of Mr Simon Midwood. This route continues via Hetherson Green to the A49 at Bickley Moss and will be completed imminently with the help of the Cholmondeley Estate.



Some footpaths in Larkton are complete with footpaths in the north west corner of Edge next on the priority list.

Thanks are also due to United Utilities who have donated £10,000 to the project in recognition of the disturbance caused by the renovation of the Vyrnwy Aqueduct recently.

Public Access Defibrillators (CPADs)

The Parish Council maintains five CPADs which are available 24 hrs every day. These are at No Mans Heath Post Office, No Mans Heath BT building (opposite the Wheatsheaf), Hampton Telephone box (by the railway bridge), Bickley Coronation Hall and a new one at Edge Village Hall installed in May 26 and fully funded by the Parish Council (illustrated).



Larkton residents also have access to CPADs at Bickerton Village Hall and Bickerton Scout Hut on Goldford Lane.

Highways: *(led by Cllr Harrop)* your Council shares the concern of residents regarding the state of the roads in our area. Our Highways Steering Group continually presses CW&C to resolve our priority improvements and repairs

This is evidenced by the reconstruction of the No Mans Heath mini roundabouts sooner than planned, and the accompanying installation of Village entry signs organised by Cllr Collings.

Pot holes are also being repaired although not as quickly as we would like. The most effective way to get potholes repaired is for all residents to report potholes via the CW&C Report It on line process at <https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/contact-us/report-it> It is likely that more reports produces faster responses.

The Speed Watch initiative, run by the Parish Council, monitors speed in the area in order to direct Police effort to best effect. Any resident willing and able to help with this for a few hours from time to time would be very welcome.

Leading on 'Highways' for the Council is a demanding and frustrating task and our special thanks are due to Cllr Harrop for performing this role.

Planters: funded by the Parish Council, these have been installed and maintained at key sites around the local area; we are grateful to Tony Day and his team of volunteers for this.

Police Liaison: *(led by Cllr Harrop)* following a meeting with the Chief Constable and PCC last year a regular 'cluster meeting' is held between the local police and parish council representatives to review and resolve local issues; these are proving to be very useful and productive

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The Parish Council continues to be grateful to the "invisible" residents who support neighbours, friends, and the whole community. In particular those who keep our streets, green spaces and main roads clean through their individual efforts. When you see them please thank them from all of us.

We do rely on all residents to report issues such as potholes, road faults, fly tipping, litter, lack of grass cutting etc to Cheshire West & Chester Council as soon as they occur. When they are not rectified in a reasonable time the Parish Council can then take up the problem with CW&C. The easiest and most effective way to make reports is via the "Report It" page on the Cheshire West and Chester Council website home page.

David Lithgow Smith, Chairman