

## **A meeting of Croydon Parish Council meeting was held on Wednesday 18 June 2025 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.**

**Apologies:** None

**Present:** Mr Barnes, Mrs Sole, Mr Buchanan, Ms Newland, Mr Sole, Mr Wenman, no members of public and the Clerk.

**Minutes:** of the May meeting were agreed and signed.

**Declarations of Interest and Members' Interests updates:** There were no declarations of interest and councillors who were not present at the May meeting checked their Members' Interest forms, and there were no alterations required.

### **Matters Arising and Village Issues**

**Community reports:** Planning for the Strolling Fayre to be held between the church and Reading Room on 13 July is continuing. The event will open at 12 noon and run until 4.00pm. Donations of cakes, raffle prizes and gifts for Hook-a-Bag will be very welcome. If anyone would like to help on the day please contact either Jackie or Di, whose contact details are available from the church magazine.

**Notice board:** The notice board is functional but has to be treated with care. The most environmentally friendly option seems to be a recycled plastic board from Greenbarnes. The most suitable board would cost £1722-94 + VAT - delivery would be free. The clerk explained that it may be sensible to postpone purchase of a replacement board until after the costs of the prospective clerk have been ascertained. Councillors agreed, so this purchase has been deferred until a later date. There may be some suitable fixing posts available locally, and Mr Buchanan has offered to prune the tree that is currently pushing the old notice board forwards.

**Woodland Trust - trees:** It is not known if the offer of saplings from the Woodland Trust was taken up by the tree wardens.

**Public speaking/disruptive behaviour at meetings:** The clerk has made the agreed amendments to the original proposed policy, for council approval. After a short discussion it was agreed to accept the policy as presented to the meeting. Proposed Mrs Sole, seconded Ms Newland. All in favour. The policy will be added to the website in due course.

**Defibrillator:** Clerk received notification from The Circuit (via the East of England Ambulance service) that the defibrillator had been taken from its cabinet, and was asked to check that it had been returned and it did not need new pads. A councillor reported that the defibrillator had indeed been removed but thankfully, had been replaced without the need to be used.

**Coffee with a Cop:** It has been arranged for our local PCSO to visit the Café in the Reading Room from 2.30 - 4.30pm on Wednesday 25th June. He has visited once before and is very approachable and helpful. His attendance will, however, be subject to operational requirements.

**Archives:** The clerk is preparing paperwork for archiving. This is taking some time as there is a lot of it. Clerk told councillors about some very old letters she had discovered and asked councillors if they should be shown to the village history gentleman before they are archived. The letters date back to the late 1800s. Council agreed that this would be a good idea and the clerk will contact him.

**Potential clerk:** The clerk met with the potential clerk last week. The information received on the lady was that "she will do it right", and it was clear from our conversation that she really will. This will inevitably cost a lot more money than previously.

She is requesting the following:-

- that Council obtains a gov.uk email address
- moves to digital banking

These would need to be done before she would take over. She is happy to do these things but would need to be paid on an ad hoc basis for the time taken until she has a proper contract. She is paid by her other councils through a payroll company, which she could set up for Croydon.

Future considerations are that:-

- Council joins CAPALC,
- uses LGS to audit the books.
- transfers the website to aubergine (she is already trained in its use).  
<https://www.aubergine262.com/accessible-websites-for-parish-town-councils/>
- possible laptop purchase or share existing with another council

It is up to Council if they would like to purchase a laptop for her, but as she is a clerk to other councils, it may be possible to share one she already has. She has a SLCC membership already, through another council. There are other things that she would like to instigate, but this will be done gradually. I have informed her that as lot of what she is suggesting has not been precepted for, although the budget can be rearranged if necessary. She would like to attend the August meeting to meet councillors. She would definitely be an asset to council.

Council discussed these proposals at length and asked the clerk to contact the lady and arrange for the gov.uk email address with the domain name "croydonparishcouncil.gov.uk" to be set up, as well as the new banking signatories with Barclays. Council is happy to pay her for any work she does before a contract has been set up. Clerk will send the Chairman's current email address to her so she may liaise directly with him regarding the bank signatories.

**Council vacancy update:** The clerk was informed on Friday 13th June that no election has been requested and therefore the advertisement for candidates wishing to stand for co-option may be posted. The co-option cannot be made at the June meeting because the co-option was not an agenda item. Items cannot be voted on unless they have been publicised on the agenda, and five clear working days' notice have to be given for the meeting agenda to be publicised. The co-option (subject to any candidates) will take place at the July meeting.

## **Correspondence**

**Electoral Register:** This was circulated to councillors.

**Public Rights of Way engagement:** Advance notice of this was given in Cambridgeshire Matters.

**CPRE - survey:** Circulated to councillors for their completion.

**Public Rights of Way Hierarchy Engagement:** The Public Rights of Way (PROW) Hierarchy is a system of ranking the PROW so that they can be considered when prioritising maintenance activities on the most important routes. When completed, the PROW Hierarchy will form the final piece of the Council's 'Active Travel Hierarchy'. The Active Travel Hierarchy is a county-wide network. It prioritises the most valuable routes for non-motorised travel, focusing on routes used by walkers, cyclists, and those using mobility aids, to access destinations such as places of employment or education, or local facilities and services.

The County Council is now in the final stages of developing the PROW Hierarchy and is seeking your input into which PROW are most valued by this community. All Parish Councils and County Councillors, as well as to local rights of way user groups and the Local Access Forum have been contacted to ask for feedback on the PROW that are most important to them.

A map of the footpaths was attached and the clerk had also found a 2004 A1 size map of the parish in her papers. She was asked to obtain two current copies from the County Council.

Do you have any ideas on which are the most important public rights of way in the parish? Do let council know please. The Chairman is going to contact a villager to see if they are able to help with this.

**Local Highway Improvements Panel Day:** The South Cambridgeshire Local Highway Improvement Panel meeting for Complex applications will be assessing the LHI applications on Friday 11th July 2025. The panel meeting will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams. In no-one is available to attend, a 500 word summary can be read to the meeting. Croydon's "slot" is at 10.00am on 11 July.

**Local Area Energy Plan:** The Cambridgeshire local authorities are developing a Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) for the area. This will help ensure that the right energy infrastructure is in place to support Cambridgeshire's transition to a low carbon place to live, work and thrive.

The LAEP will set out the energy infrastructure requirements for current and future growth across the County, and how it can deliver this growth in the lowest carbon way. The Plan will be used to ensure Cambridgeshire's businesses, communities, and organisations have a voice in influencing energy infrastructure investment in our area.

If you have any questions or want to find out more, please feel free to contact the LAEP stakeholder engagement team at CAG Consultants on [CambsLAEP@cagconsult.co.uk](mailto:CambsLAEP@cagconsult.co.uk)

Info and links to the survey and to sign up for the webinars, is on their LAEP site:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/LAEP>

Council discussed this briefly and felt that there are no community groups in the village, although businesses may be interested and may complete the survey.

## **Circulated to Councillors:-**

- Summary of Planning Applications
- Reported highways sign
- Cambridgeshire Matters

Parish E-bulletin  
Adoption of Pampisford Neighbourhood Plan  
ACRE newsletters  
Cambs and Peterborough NHS newsletter  
TMC Road works and events  
East-West Rail - survey

### **Any subsequent receipts**

The following were received after the agenda was circulated:-

**Weekly Food Waste Collections:** New weekly food waste collections to start next year  
After 31st March 2026 local councils will begin to offer weekly food waste collections to households. As part of this drive to educate residents about the new service CCC is running a project to recruit volunteers from across the five district councils, (East Cambridgeshire, Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire, Fenland and Huntingdonshire) which will start soon.

**Sign up** to become a food waste volunteer! If you would like to volunteer for this, please contact the clerk, who will send the details to you.

**Summer HAF programme:** Children in receipt of income-related free school meals can access a fully funded place at a HAF holiday scheme for 64 hours. Recently arrived refugee families and families struggling financially are also eligible. Further information can be found here [Cambridgeshire Holiday Activities and Food \(HAF\) Programme | Cambridgeshire County Council](#) and here [HAF Provider Directory | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

The poster and information will be placed onto the notice board.

**PC Drop-In with Liz Watts:** South Cambridge District Council is hosting two virtual drop-in sessions with Liz Watts, Chief Executive, over the next few weeks on Local Government Reorganisation, Update and Launch of Consultation. One session was on 17 June at 6pm, the other will be on 23 June at 6pm. These sessions will allow Parish Councillors to receive update and ask questions in relation to the reorganisation process and the launch of the consultation.

This information was circulated to councillors as requested by SCDC.

### **Finance**

**Bank statement:** The VAT refund of £250-61 has been received and two of the cheques from the May meeting have been presented. The balance at the end of May was £11305.59

**Audit Regulations** - discuss effectiveness of the system of internal control and consider the findings

**Effectiveness of internal control:** There are usually three councillors who are signatories to both the current account and NS&I account, and any two of them may sign to authorise a payment/withdrawal. All invoices and bank statements are presented at meetings and the Clerk is not a signatory on any of the accounts. Croydon Parish Council does not handle cash and all payments are made by cheque. Any miscellaneous expenditure is made by the Clerk, recorded in a notebook and claimed annually in May. Councillors resolved that this is a sufficient form of internal control.

Council went on to deliberate and action the following:-

- i) approve the Annual Governance Statement by resolution  
Proposed Mrs Sole, seconded, Mr Wenman. All in favour.  
The Chairman signed the Annual Governance Statement.
- ii) consider and approve the accounting statements by resolution  
These were considered and approved. Proposed Mr Wenman, seconded Mr Sole. All in favour.
- iii) ensure that the Chairman and Clerk signed and dated the accounting statements  
Council ensured this was done in the meeting. Proposed Mr Barnes, seconded Mrs Sole.  
All in favour.
- iv) Council agreed that the financial position at the end of March 2023 would enable the Exemption Certificate to be signed.  
Council checked the records and agreed that the Certificate of Exemption should be signed.  
Proposed Mr Wenman, seconded Ms Newland. All in favour.

The Certificate of Exemption will be sent to the external auditor, along with the change of Chairman, and notification of the upcoming change of clerk. The mandatory documentation will be posted onto both the notice board and the village website, as required by law.

**Financial amendments:** Each year the clerk has been preparing a crib sheet to enable councillors to ascertain the amount required for the precept. She has been doing this for about 14 years, but recently

discovered some of the figures were incorrect, and has no idea for how long this has been the case. She has amended this and hopes it is correct now. The error was only in figures and not in money.

**Confirmation of Bank and NSI signatories:** The clerk has obtained a Change of Signatories paper from N S & I. The current signatories all signed this and the clerk will send it off. As Council will be changing to digital banking if the potential clerk agrees to take over, the change of banking signatories has been deferred until she has been in touch with, and discussed the next steps with the Chairman.

**Payments:**

The following invoices were presented for payment - internal auditor invoice £75-00 and Reading Room rental for the café - £72-00. Payment of these was proposed by Mr Wenman and seconded by Mr Sole. All were in favour and clerk prepared the cheques for signature. The Reading Room rental cheque was taken to be delivered by a councillor and the internal auditor's payment will be delivered next week.

**District Councillor's Report for The Mordens Ward SCDC - June 2025**

**Local Government Reorganisation consultation**

Local Government Reorganisation is the biggest change to local government in a generation. Rather than separate county, city and district councils, services like bin collections, roads, education and social care will all be under the umbrella of one unitary council. Although I am supportive of streamlining services to save money and help residents access services more simply, I am concerned that the government's proposed size for these unitary councils (with populations of 500,000 people) threaten to lose the local democratic representation that we hold so dear.

I am continuing to meet with officers to ensure we have the information we need to get the best outcome for residents, with the best possible services and the best possible representation by your local councillors.

Whatever your views on Local Government Reorganisation, it's really important that you have your say in the consultation, which can be accessed online via the council's webpage or by collecting a hard copy from the council office or libraries. While Local Government Reorganisation may seem distant from day to day life, council services that are performed in the background – such as collecting your bins, allocating school places and maintaining the roads – affect us all. That's why I'm encouraging everybody to fill in the survey and have your say to ensure your voice is heard.

The consultation closes on 20 July 2025 at midnight.

If you have any questions or concerns about this, please do get in touch and I will help you the best I can.

**4-day week update at Employment and Staffing Committee**

From the meeting I attended on Employment and Staffing Committee, I have been left very concerned about the quality of the data that we are relying upon to monitor staff and wellbeing as a whole and in relation to the 4-day week. The meeting started with us being told that an error had been created in the data that had been previously displayed to us in relation to members of staff having second jobs, and that the figure was lower than had previously been reported.

When I challenged how this error had occurred, given that the data had been reported some time ago, the officers of the council and the independent data firm responsible for drafting the report gave two conflicting reasons as to why the error had come about.

I have flagged how important it is that the data we have when making decisions, especially when it comes to the 4-day week, is reliable, robust and truthful. Given the previous issues of "independent" reports being edited to suit, and now this, I have pushed for even more scrutiny of these reports and raised my concern that the administration has now decided to take staff and wellbeing reporting out of scrutiny and refer it to a governance committee.

The council's operations need to be fully scrutinised by the appropriate committees, and I feel this move should not be celebrated and we should be concerned. With the help of the chair and vice chair of scrutiny, I have managed to ensure that the 4-day week documents will come to scrutiny, but this is only a few days before full council which is an inadequate amount of time before councillors will be required to make a decision.

I am very concerned that after years of this going on, we finally get a vote based on a report that has been rushed through. This is not only lacklustre, it is completely inadequate circumstances to make informed decisions.

### **Period poverty campaign returns**

It's really pleasing to see the council is re-running its period poverty campaign, which first began last year after I submitted a motion to council calling for action. Last year, the council helped distribute 407 packs of free, sustainable period products including reusable pads, period pants and menstrual cups to help those in need.

Whilst it is fantastic to celebrate the success of this campaign, it does highlight the sad reality in which some women and girls are living. I hope that this has helped make people's lives better – we are here for you.

The 2025 campaign will be launched in the autumn, but in the meantime if you need any assistance or have any concerns, please do get in touch.

### **Pothole Patrols**

Staying on the topic of roads, many of you will have seen I am continuing to run regular pothole patrols in our area to ensure we get our roads fixed as soon as possible. Please do visit the reporting page on my website and follow the link to report potholes near you to the County Council, or please do get in touch and I can report it for you.

From my own reporting, I have already received countless emails confirming repairs will be done – so this is working. Together, we can work to get our roads fixed as I truly believe we in rural areas deserve as much investment in our roads as busier roads get in the City.

### **£100,000 Allotment Improvement Grant**

It is pleasing to see the council is supporting local communities' growing projects with the £100,000 Allotment Improvement Grant fund. The grant is still open for applications and I would encourage anyone involved in an allotment to take a look at the council's webpage for more information. The grant can be used to improve water access, install pest control measures or improve facilities.

Please do feel free to get in touch if you would like any further information or assistance and I will help in any way I can.

### **Grants for community groups and parish councils**

If you are from a local community group or parish council, I am encouraging you to make the most of the council's available grant schemes. The GrantGrabber service helps you search for available grants – all in one place.

For further information on receiving a grant for a community project from the council, please visit the grants webpage.

Thank you for reading my report. If I can be of any assistance, please do get in touch.

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**Items for next agenda:** None put forward.

**Next meeting:** Wednesday 16 July 2025 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm

As there was no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 8.46pm.

Signed .....

Date .....