

Minutes of the Meeting of Comberbach Parish Council held on Tuesday 13 January 2026

Present

Councillors:

Jill Johnston (Chairman in the Chair)

Bill Briggs

Sandy Cameron

Richard Chandler

John Darwin

John Ryder

Denise French (Clerk)

Stephen Penwill (RFO)

CWAC Councillor Lynn Gibbon

The Meeting started at 6.30pm.

Public Open Forum

There were no members of the public present.

1. Apologies for Absence

Councillor McDermott submitted an apology due to illness.

2. To receive Members' Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 2 December 2025

(26/01) RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 2 December 2025 be approved as a correct record.

4. Progress Reports and Updates

4.1 Resilience Plan – the council considered the latest version of the Parish Council's draft Resilience Plan, which had been updated with some of the contact details. The Clerk had sought advice from the Joint Emergency Planning Team (JEPT) for advice on the contents of the Resilience Box and the Memorial Hall had agreed to store the box. Members would check the contact details of their section of the plan as requested by the Clerk. It was agreed to consider the Resilience Plan further at the next meeting.

4.2 Pickleball – this was deferred to the next meeting.

4.3 Parish Council vacancy – the Clerk updated that Cheshire West and Chester Council had confirmed that an election had not been requested and the parish council could arrange to co-opt. Members agreed to advertise the vacancy on the website and noticeboards. CWAC Councillor Gibbon would share a template short questionnaire for candidates.

4.4 Land in the ownership of the parish council – the Clerk had been in contact with the solicitors. It was agreed that Councillors Cameron and Ryder would attend with the Clerk to progress the land registration as they had greater knowledge of the land ownership.

5. Cheshire West and Chester Councillors update

CWAC Councillor Gibbon had sent the written Marbury Ward update which the Clerk had circulated.

There was a meeting about planning matters for all the Marbury Ward local councils and each parish council could nominate two representatives.

The financial settlement from HM Government had been received by CWAC. The budget process was underway and the Conservative Group was considering various options.

The Police and Crime Commissioner was consulting about whether residents would support retaining the full amount of PCSOs which would mean an additional cost on the Police element of the precept. The PCC role was to be abolished by HM Government when the current term of office ended in 2028.

There was still funding within the Marbury Ward Councillors budget. The Clerk referred to the item on the agenda relating to a black box traffic survey in Comberbach and on the boundary with Antrobus, it had been suggested that an application be made to the Ward Councillors.

The petition to CWAC about the uneven pedestrian surface in Northwich town centre had been referred to the relevant scrutiny committee and Cllr Gibbon would attend to speak about the matter including the number of incidents and the lack of a joined up approach.

It was noted that there had still not been any feedback from the Locality meeting held in October.

6. Parish Council Budget and Precept

The council considered:

- (a) draft minutes of Finance Committee held on 6 January.
- (b) the Q3 Budget report.

- (c) the 2025/26 forecast.
- (d) the proposed Parish Council budget 2026/27 and guidance notes for Members.
- (e) examples of the precept amount based on different scenarios.

The Finance Committee had recommended approval of the draft budget. Members noted that no major projects had been included in the budget for 2026 – 27 but the larger play unit at the Recreation Area would be considered for replacement in 2027 – 28. The Finance Committee had recommended a 4% increase on the precept amount. This meant an increase of £1.75 for a Band D property.

(26/02) RESOLVED: that

- (a) The draft minutes of Finance Committee be noted.
- (b) The Quarter 3 budget report be noted.
- (c) The Parish Council budget 2026/27 as submitted be approved.
- (d) The precept amount of £29,254 be submitted to Cheshire West and Chester Council.

7. Recreation Area and Pump Track

7.1 The Clerk had contacted seven companies seeking quotes for the replacement for the infant multi-play unit. There had been 4 quotes submitted by the deadline, one company had confirmed they were not submitting a quote. The Clerk would contact the two companies who she had not received a quote from to confirm they had not submitted anything by the deadline. The quotes would be considered at a Special Meeting of the Parish Council on Tuesday 20 January.

7.2 There had been no reports from recent play area inspections.

7.3 The manufacturer of the swing set had now addressed the issue raised by Rospa about the distance between the basket swing and the supporting post. The Rospa Inspector had also suggested that bird spikes be installed on the top beam and these would now be installed using zip ties.

(26/03) RESOLVED: that:

- (a) The quotes for the replacement infant play unit be considered at the Special Meeting on 20 January 2026.
- (b) The repair works by Massey and Harris be noted.

8. Highways and Streetscene

8.1 The Clerk had received an email from a local resident raising various issues of concern about highways including lack of pedestrian crossings, narrow and sloping footpaths, speeding, volume of traffic. Members discussed the issues raised but

noted that the parish council had limited powers to take any action as CWAC was the highways authority. The parish council raised issues with the appropriate bodies and had taken a proactive approach through joint funding of the Speed Indicator Device for which data was reviewed at meetings; the council was also exploring a speed survey on Gibb Hill; councillors had also held meetings on site with CWAC Highways officers in relation to various highways matters. It was also noted that the parish council had helped to organise a community speedwatch scheme in the past. It was agreed that the Clerk would respond to the resident as discussed above and send a snapshot of the SID data.

8.2 The Clerk had contacted CWAC Highways in September to request they undertake further speed monitoring on Gibb Hill but they had advised they no longer carried out traffic surveys in house and funding would need to be provided by the Parish Council or via the CWAC Members. The Clerk had sought information from CWAC Highways about the likely cost of a speed survey and approached Antrobus Parish Council to see if they would be willing to contribute; Antrobus PC would be considering the issue at their meeting the following week. Members supported progressing the traffic survey and that two monitors should be installed on Gibb Hill by the junction with Crow Nest Lane and on Marbury Road by the junction with The Moss. Members supported an approach to CWAC Members for funding.

8.3 Members discussed issues with CWAC highways noting that there had been a number of concerns raised at the Locality Meeting in October 2025 for which feedback was still awaited. Members noted issues with blocked gulleys which did not appear to be emptied in accordance with the schedule. Councillors agreed to report any issues they spotted. Gulley emptying would be included on the next agenda. Members requested the Clerk raise the concerns with the CWAC Locality Ambassadors and Chief Executive.

There had been issues in December with litter bins not being emptied in accordance with the schedule which had resulted in litter blowing across footpaths etc. The litter bin emptying now appeared to be back on schedule. Members had been advised about a Streetcare drop in session at which this could be raised.

Members discussed whether the parish council could fund grit bins. The Clerk agreed to seek advice from CWAC.

(26/04) RESOLVED: that

- (a) The Clerk contact the resident as discussed at the meeting.
- (b) The Clerk confirm with CWAC that the parish council would like to progress a traffic survey with two monitors located on Gibb Hill and Marbury Road and would like an application to the CWAC Marbury Ward Members to be progressed to seek support; this information will also be shared with the Clerk of Antrobus PC.

- (c) The Clerk contact the CWAC Locality Ambassadors and Chief Executive about the highways issues discussed at the meeting.
- (d) The topic of gully emptying be included on the next agenda.
- (e) The Clerk contact CWAC Highways about the possibility of the parish council funding grit bins.

9. Accounts and financial matters

9.1 The accounts for 30 December 2025 were listed in Appendix 1.

9.2 The list of payments was in Appendix 2.

(26/05) RESOLVED: that:

- (a) The accounts in Appendix 1 with a balance of £64,456.69 including £37,000 in reserves be noted.
- (b) The list of payments in Appendix 2 be approved.

10. Issues and Projects

10.1 Members considered the car park surface and possible drainage solutions. It was agreed to put down a temporary surface dressing pending consideration of a longer term solution.

10.2 Members considered opportunities to improve the environment in the village. It was noted that there were few areas where benches or planters could be located. The Clerk had received a quote for 10 hanging baskets including planting and watering. Members noted that funding had not been included in the budget for any planting and decided not to progress this at the moment but to keep under review.

10.3 The Christmas concert had taken place on Saturday 13 December and had been well attended. Members agreed to make it an annual event and the Clerk would check availability for the band and hall for Saturday 5 or 12 December 2026. Members also agreed to consider a summer event at the next meeting.

10.4 Members had received a letter from the Assistant Chief Constable about the plans to reduce the number of PCSOs in Cheshire. As noted earlier in the meeting, the Police and Crime Commissioner was consulting on the option to retain the full number of PCSOs subject to a small increase in the precept. The survey would be included on the parish council website. Members would consider invited the local constable to a meeting once the results of the PCSO proposals were known.

Members also discussed issues with parking opposite a junction which PCSO Wiggins would highlight in the newsletter. It was also noted that parking on pavements could be reported.

(26/06) RESOLVED: that

(a) A temporary solution be approved for the car park surface at a cost up to £200. The longer term solution be considered at the next meeting.

(b) The quote for hanging baskets is not progressed at the moment but the item be kept under review.

(c) The Clerk contact Barnton Silver Band and the Memorial Hall regarding availability in December for another Christmas concert.

(d) A possible summer event be discussed at the next meeting.

(e) The response from the Assistant Chief Constable is noted.

11. Planning

11.1 Planning decisions were listed in Appendix 3.

11.2 There were no enforcement matters.

(26/07) RESOLVED: that the planning update be noted.

12. Correspondence

The list of correspondence had been circulated.

(25/67) RESOLVED: that the correspondence be noted.

13. Representative Reports

- Comberbach Memorial Hall Management Committee – Councillor McDermott had informed the Chairman that she had no updates.
- Police Liaison – the updates from the PCSO had been circulated.
- School Liaison – Councillor McDermott had informed the Chairman that she had no updates.

14. Future Meeting Dates

The Clerk had circulated a proposed list of meeting dates.

(26/08) RESOLVED: that the following dates be approved:

All Tuesdays commencing at 6.30pm:

19 May 2026; 14 July 2026; 15 September 2026; 24 November 2026;

19 January 2027; 16 March 2027.

15. Exclusion of Public and Press – Part 2

None

The Meeting closed at 8.52pm.

The next ordinary meeting of Comberbach Parish Council will be on Tuesday 10 March 2026 at 6.30pm.

Signed
Chairman

Appendix 1 Accounts for 30 December 2025

	Current a/c	Savings a/c	Total
Santander	£27,170.66	£22,219.84	£49,390.50
Unity Trust	£33.40	£15,032.79	£15,066.19
Total	£27,204.06	£37,252.63	£64,456.69

Appendix 2 Payments

Item	Amount	Power
Shane ross - Inv 25-03, general maintenance	£650.00	LGA 1972 s 111
Cllr Ryder – Bird spikes, sandbags	£155.55	LGA 1972 s 111

Pre-Authorised Payments

Item	Amount	Power
DD – Babble, MS Office license Nov 25	£23.50	LGA 1972 s 111
DD – Tesco Mobile, Nov 25	£7.95	LGA 1972 s 111
DD – Tesco Mobile, Dec 25	£7.95	LGA 1972 s 111
DD – Unity Trust account fee Nov 25	£6.00	LGA 1972 s 111
DD – Unity Trust account fee Dec 25	£6.00	LGA 1972 s 111

Appendix 3 Recent planning decisions by CW&C

APPLICATION DETAILS	DATE OF VALIDATION	CURRENT POSITION
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21/05070/OUT - Outline planning permission for a mixed use development of up to 1,550 units of residential dwellings including affordable housing (subject to viability); specialist accommodation for older people including residential care home; local centre and active ground floor uses comprising up to 600 sqm of flexible floorspace for retail (including small convenience food store); up to 275 sqm of health, nursery and community; up to 7,700 sqm of employment space; up to 950 sqm of cafe, restaurant, takeaway and public house floorspace; up to a 2,250sqm (up to 2FE) primary school with associated playing fields (Use Class F1(a)); and associated road infrastructure, landscaping (including Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems), public realm and amenity space (all matters reserved except for vehicular access), land at Winnington Works	Wed 22 Dec 2021	Awaiting decision
21/01937/S73, Single storey side and rear extension and creation of first floor (Variation of conditions 2 (approved plans) and 3 (materials) of planning permission 19/01832/FUL), 31 Senna Lane	Fri 30 Apr 2021	Awaiting decision
25/01163/FUL - Demolition of existing dwelling, erection of new dwelling, 27 Senna Lane	20 May 2025	Awaiting decision
25/03364/FUL - Demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings, including removal of the mobile home, and the erection of a replacement dwelling - Brookside Farm		Awaiting decision