

Minutes of the Meeting of Comberbach Parish Council held on Tuesday 10 March 2026

Present

Councillors:

Jill Johnston (Chairman in the Chair)

Bill Briggs

Sandy Cameron

Richard Chandler

John Darwin

Val McDermott

John Ryder

Jenny Washburn

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

None

2. Casual Vacancy

Jenny Washburn had put herself forward for the casual vacancy and had sent in some information prior to the meeting which had been circulated to all councillors.

(26/11) RESOLVED: that Jenny Washburn be co-opted onto the Parish Council and the Declaration of Acceptance of Office was duly signed in the presence of the Clerk.

3. To receive Members' Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

4. Minutes of the Meetings of the Parish Council held on 13 and 20 January 2026

(26/12) RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Meetings of the Parish Council held on 13 and 20 January 2026 be approved as a correct record.

5. Progress Reports and Updates

5.1 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 outlined suggested items that were recommended for inclusion in the Resilience Box which would be stored in the Memorial Hall, Councillor Cameron would undertake research and bring back suggestions to the next meeting. It was agreed there also needed to be a note of items stored in the Storage Unit and key holders' details. The Clerk would update the Plan and submit it to the Joint Emergency Planning Team; the items for the Resilience Box would be considered at the next meeting.

5.2 Pickleball – there had been interest in installing a pickleball court in the Memorial Hall following advertising in the newsletter. Councillor McDermott agreed to liaise with the group of people who were interested and suggest they organise a meeting with an open invitation to assess if anyone would be willing to take on organising provision of a court in the Memorial Hall. The item would be removed from future agendas.

5.3 Registering parish council land – Councillors Cameron and Ryder and the Clerk had attended at Chambers Fletcher solicitors to progress the registration of the parish council's land. The solicitor had confirmed the areas of land that were owned by the parish council and that the next step was to obtain a valuation for the land. Councillor Cameron updated that he had made contact with a valuer.

(26/13) RESOLVED: that the Clerk be authorised to progress the valuation of the parish council's land in consultation with Councillor Cameron.

6. Cheshire West and Chester Councillors update

(a) CWAC Councillor Gibbon had sent the written Marbury Ward update which the Clerk had circulated. She highlighted the following points:

The Ward Councillors were working with council officers to ensure that facilities provided at Marbury Park that supported officers and volunteers were maintained to a better standard.

Work had been undertaken to clear a blocked drain on Cogshall Lane; the Clerk would contact the farmer to request help in keeping the area around the drain clear of debris to reduce the risk of further blockages.

She had objected to the Peak Cluster proposals due to disruption and increased traffic and alongside other infrastructure projects such as HyNet. She updated that the HyNet project was currently paused while consideration was given to the siting.

The Ward Councillors had submitted comments on the National Planning Policy Framework consultation.

Changing Lives Together were to run the community bus service which was called Plus Bus; the eligibility criteria included: Over 80s; Disability Living Allowance/PIP/

Attendance Allowance; Health-related public transport barriers; lack of local transport provision.

Devolution was progressing and an interim Chief Executive had been appointed, along with a S151 Officer and senior Legal Officer. There were monthly meetings of the Shadow Board.

Councillor Gibbon was a member of the Fire Authority and had undertaken fire checks with Firefighters to some local businesses; the Fire Service also undertook fire checks free of charge to residents.

She asked the parish council to promote the importance of having a house name or number clearly visible from the roadside to help with emergency services and deliveries; the Chairman said this could be included in her next update for the newsletter.

She suggested the parish council look at making its land an Asset of Community Value which could help with funding bids.

There was an Annual Report outlining S106 funding and CiL funding.

A new round of funding would open on 1 April for the Marbury Ward Councillors budget. The Ward Councillors would be focusing on items that had a positive impact on a wider area and were also looking at grid mats which prevented damage to grass verges due to vehicle parking.

The Ward update included information about the approved CWAC budget.

(b) Councillor Gibbon had written to the CWAC Chief Executive following the meeting with the Locality Ambassadors held on 29 October 2025 for which no feedback or minutes had been circulated. Councillor Gibbon explained that the Chief Executive had responded that feedback had been submitted to specific councils that had raised issues. Members did not think this was satisfactory as there were a number of issues that had been discussed that were relevant to many attendees. It was also noted that there had been no feedback following the meeting about planning and enforcement held on 4 February.

(26/14) RESOLVED: that the Clerk write to the Leader of CWAC regarding the lack of feedback including minutes or actions, to local councils who attended the meetings with the Locality Ambassadors and the Planning/Enforcement meeting.

(c) The council considered the response to the National Planning Policy Framework consultation from the Marbury Ward Councillors; it was noted that the deadline was 11.59pm on 10 March (today).

(26/15) RESOLVED: that the Clerk respond to the consultation endorsing the views of the Ward Councillors.

(d) Members considered the gully cleaning schedule. Councillor Ryder had highlighted three specific grids that were identified as 'not operational' in 2024, but it

was not clear from CWAC website whether they had been cleaned in 2025. Members also noted that the Cheshire East website had much clearer information about gully cleaning.

Councillor Gibbon agreed to meet Councillor Darwin for a site visit on Cogshall Lane to assess the state of the various gullies. She encouraged Members to report any blocked grids on the CWAC website.

(26/16) RESOLVED: that the Clerk contact the CWAC Head of Highways in relation to the 3 specific gullies discussed asking when they were cleaned in 2025 and the current status and the ongoing cleaning schedule for those grids.

7. Recreation Area and Pump Track

7.1 The contract to replace the infant multi-play unit had been awarded to Kompan. The Chairman would contact the company regarding a potential start date. The RFO explained that Spacehive had sought an impact report, but it was agreed that this would be provided once the new unit had been installed.

7.2 There had been two reports from recent play area inspections. One issue raised was that gaps were appearing in the wet pour surface on the junior area. It was agreed to purchase wet pour granules to enable a repair. It was also agreed to purchase gravel to spread where needed.

7.3 The council considered a post installation inspection once the new multi play unit had been installed. A quote had been received from Playsafety which could be carried out alongside the annual inspection of the other equipment. Members approved this quote.

(26/17) RESOLVED: that:

(a) The current position with the infant multi play unit be noted and the Chairman will seek an installation date.

(b) The purchase of wet pour granules and gravel be approved.

(c) The quote from Playsafety for £420 plus VAT for the post installation inspection of the new multi play unit plus the regular annual inspection of equipment, is approved.

8. Highways and Streetscene

8.1 The council considered the Speed Indicator Device which had now been repaired following vandalism when in Anderton. It was agreed that Anderton would use the SID for the remainder of March and it would be installed in Comberbach in April. The Clerk had received a request from a local resident that it be installed on Cogshall Lane by the vicinity of Shrubbery Cottage where the speed limit was 30mph. Members noted that the SID had to be chained to an object such as a lamppost and

there was no suitable place on that part of Cogshall Lane. It was agreed to site the SID on Cogshall Lane where the speed limit reduced from 30mph to 20mph.

8.2 The council was advised that the speed survey had now taken place and results were awaited. It was agreed to have an update on the next agenda.

8.3 The council considered whether to progress the provision of grit bins to be provided and fully funded by the parish council. The Clerk had sought advice from CWAC Highways who did not support adding further grit bins on the network noting that there were over 200 grit bins in the Winsford and Northwich area alone; if funded by the parish council Highways was in favour of them being off the adopted highway to avoid refill queries. Members agreed to request a grit bin on Cogshall Lane that would be fully funded by the parish council.

8.4 Members noted that some fingerpost signs were pointing in the wrong direction but could not be moved manually. It was agreed to ask CWAC to check the posts in Comberbach.

(26/18) RESOLVED: that

- (a) The SID be sited on Cogshall Lane in April at the point where the speed limit reduces from 30mph to 20mph and the Clerk will notify the resident.
- (b) The speed survey results be discussed at the next meeting.
- (c) The Clerk contact CWAC Highways to discuss provision of a grit bin located by the chevron sign on Cogshall Lane and that the parish council will fully fund the bin and all refilling required.
- (d) The Clerk contact CWAC requesting that they check the fingerpost signs in Comberbach and ensure they point in the right direction.

9. Accounts and financial matters

9.1 The accounts for 28 February 2026 were listed in Appendix 1. The current account included the funding received via Spacehive which was for the replacement infant play unit.

9.2 The list of payments was in Appendix 2. The RFO explained that the subscription to Scribe who provided the financial package, had increased, but he felt the service was good and suitable for the parish council's needs.

9.3 The Asset Register was considered and approved.

(26/19) RESOLVED: that:

- (a) The accounts in Appendix 1 with a balance of £62,099.27 including £37,000 in reserves be noted.

(b) The list of payments in Appendix 2 be approved.

(c) The Asset Register be approved.

10. Issues and Projects

10.1 Members considered the car park surface. The parish council had previously agreed to put down gravel to help with drainage and this had improved the surface.

10.2 The Barnton Silver Band were available for a Christmas concert on Saturday 12 December and this date was approved.

10.3 Members discussed holding a summer event. It was noted that there were no significant national events during the year. It was also noted that the village held a summer fete and that The Spinner and Bergamot was considering holding a festival. It was agreed not to organise a parish council event in the summer.

10.4 The council received the letter from the Assistant Chief Constable that confirmed that PCSO numbers were to be reduced from 87 to 57 with PC Dan Vinton the contact for the Marbury Ward. It was agreed to invite PC Vinton to the May or July meeting.

10.5 Members discussed the Great British Spring Clean taking place from 13 – 29 March. Councillor McDermott had spoken to the primary school and pupils were going to litterpick the vicinity of the school. She agreed to obtain equipment and attend at the Memorial Hall car park on Sunday 22 March from 9.30am – 10.30am for anyone who wished to borrow equipment and hold their own litterpick. This would be advertised on social media.

10.6 Members discussed funding another Christmas Tree on the junction of The Avenue and Budworth Lane. CWAC Highways had advised that a licence would be required but the application would likely be considered favourably provided it did not block visibility. If the council wished to plant a living tree, then advice from the Tree Officers would be needed. Members discussed whether a Christmas event could be held with a carol concert; Councillor Washburn agreed to undertake research and the matter would be discussed further at the next meeting.

(26/20) RESOLVED: that

(a) The improvements to the car park surface be noted.

(b) The arrangements for the Christmas Concert on Saturday 12 December be noted.

(c) A summer event is not arranged.

(d) The PCSO arrangements be noted and PC Vinton be invited to the next meeting or July meeting.

(e) The Great British Spring Clean be supported as agreed with equipment offered to residents to arrange their own litterpick for collection on Sunday 22 March.

(f) The Christmas Tree be considered at the next meeting.

11. Planning

11.1 Planning decisions were listed in Appendix 3.

11.2 There were no enforcement matters.

(26/21) RESOLVED: that the planning update be noted.

12. Correspondence

The list of correspondence had been circulated.

(26/22) RESOLVED: that the correspondence be noted.

13. Representative Reports

- Comberbach Memorial Hall Management Committee – no updates.
- Police Liaison – the updates from the PCSO had been circulated.
- School Liaison – no additional updates.
- Fete Committee – the Fete would take place on Saturday 27 June.
- Bowling Club – no update.

14. Exclusion of Public and Press – Part 2

(26/23) RESOLVED: That in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business due to the confidential nature of the matters to be discussed.

15. Recreation Area Inspections

(26/24) RESOLVED: that the quote and SLA from Northwich Town Council for three inspections a year be approved.

16. Provision of payroll services to the parish council

(26/25) RESOLVED: that the parish council engages DM Payroll Services for the provision of payroll from April 2026.

The Meeting closed at 9.05pm.

The next meeting of Comberbach Parish Council will be the Annual Meeting on Tuesday 19 May 2026 at 6.30pm, the Annual Parish Meeting will take place beforehand at 6.00pm on Tuesday 19 May 2026.

Signed
Chairman

Appendix 1 Accounts for 28 February 2026

	Current a/c	Savings a/c	Total
Santander	£24,745.67	£22,219.84	£46,965.51
Unity Trust	£21.40	£15,112.36	£15,133.76
Total	£24,767.07	£37,332.20	£62,099.27

Appendix 2 Payments

Item	Amount	Power
Shane Ross - Inv JW, wetpour jetwashing	£400.00	LGA 1972 s 111
Northwich Town Council - Inv 9143, Insp Jan 26	£72.00	LGA 1972 s 111
Northwich Town Council - Inv 8915, Insp Oct 25	£72.00	LGA 1972 s 111
Starboard Systems (Scribe) - Inv 16132, 26/27 fee	£532.80	LGA 1972 s 111
Cheshire Community Action membership 2026-7	£22.00	LGA 1972 s 111
CPRE subscription	£60.00	LGA 1972 s 111

Pre-Authorised Payments

Item	Amount	Power
PAP2516 - Synchroprint Inv 8463, Jan CVN	£199.40	LGA 1972 s 111
PAP2517 - Cllr Chandler, limestone chippings	£125.00	LGA 1972 s 111
PAP2518 - Cllr Johnston, Concert refreshments	£151.75	LGA 1972 s 111
PAP2519 - Cllr Ryder, cable ties for spikes	£7.99	LGA 1972 s 111
DD – Babble, MS Office license Dec 25	£23.50	LGA 1972 s 111
DD – Babble, MS Office license Jan 25	£23.50	LGA 1972 s 111
DD – Babble, MS Office license Feb 25	£23.50	LGA 1972 s 111
DD – Tesco Mobile, Jan 26	£7.95	LGA 1972 s 111
DD – Tesco Mobile, Feb 26	£7.95	LGA 1972 s 111
DD – Unity Trust account fee Jan 26	£6.00	LGA 1972 s 111
DD – Unity Trust account fee Feb 26	£6.00	LGA 1972 s 111

Appendix 3 Recent planning decisions by CW&C

APPLICATION DETAILS	DATE OF VALIDATION	CURRENT POSITION
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
26/00058/TPO – various tree works, 1 Bracken Way		Awaiting decision

26/00124/TPO – tree works, 28 Mather Drive		Awaiting decision
26/00127 – tree works, Mulberry House		Awaiting decision

DRAFT