

Minutes of the Special Meeting of Comberbach Parish Council held on Monday 15 June 2026

Present

Councillors:

Jill Johnston (Chairman in the Chair)

Sandy Cameron

Richard Chandler

John Darwin

Val McDermott

John Ryder

Denise French (Clerk)

The Meeting started at 7.30pm.

Public Open Forum

There were two members of the public present. They addressed the council about the planning application under discussion.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and approved from Councillors Bill Briggs (family reasons) and Jenny Washburn (family reasons).

CWAC Councillors Lynn Gibbon and Phil Marshall had also submitted apologies.

2. To receive Members' Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. Planning application – land adjacent to Shubbery Cottage

The council considered an outline planning application for residential development for up to 9 Units (all matters reserved except for access) on land adjacent to Shubbery Cottage, Cogshall Lane, Comberbach.

Members carefully considered the application and focused on the following issues:

- Impact on the Green Belt – Members were firmly of the view that because the application site is in the Green Belt, any development on this site is inappropriate. The provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), paragraph 154 apply – “154. Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the following exceptions applies ...” Members did not consider that there were any applicable exceptions; the proposed development does not indicate the provision of limited affordable housing (it states ‘market housing’) and the land has not been previously developed. The NPPF states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban

sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the location of the site at the edge of the village meant that any development would result in a spatial and visual loss of openness.

The CWAC adopted Local Plan (Part 2) puts Comberbach outside the Northwich Settlement Area and includes reference to maintaining the green belt area surrounding Northwich:

“4.5 Northwich settlement area is defined as the town of Northwich and adjacent settlements of Anderton, Barnton, Davenham, Hartford, Lostock Gralam. Lower Marston, Lower Wincham, Rudheath and Weaverham

4.6 The Green Belt around Northwich will be maintained and the character and individuality of the settlements that form the wider built up area of Northwich safeguarded.”

- ‘Grey belt’ - Members do not consider the ‘grey belt’ policy applicable to this application; the definition of grey belt being land that is either previously developed or does not strongly contribute to the key purposes of the Green Belt, such as preventing urban sprawl or safeguarding the countryside. The application site has not been previously developed being formerly used as a caravan site with no permanent hardstanding; the location of the site at the edge of the village needs to remain undeveloped as outlined in the above point and to safeguard the character of the village and prevent ribbon development.
- Precedent - approval of this application would set a precedent for further development and erosion of the Green Belt.
- Scale – the proposed scale of the development is excessive for the site and village.
- Highways impact – the proposal would be detrimental to highway safety. Cogshall Lane is a narrow road with significant on street parking; the proposal would increase traffic volumes on an already busy road, particularly during school times and when there are road closures on nearby roads when Comberbach becomes a ‘rat run’. The visibility and access points off Cogshall Lane are poor including the gymkhana which is opposite the site. The road is unsuitable for construction traffic.
- Flooding risk – the part of Cogshall Lane opposite the site, is vulnerable to flooding and the undeveloped land helps with floodwater absorption; any additional development could increase flood risk on Cogshall Lane.
- Impact on existing trees and hedgerows – the proposed development would be detrimental to the existing trees and hedgerows which contribute to the overall enhancement of the area.

- Existing planning permissions – there are a number of planning approvals in the locality that have not been developed which suggests there is no unmet need for further housing.

(26/40) RESOLVED: that

(a) the parish council objects to planning application 26/01476/OUT - outline Application for Residential Development for up to 9 Units (all matters reserved except for access) Land At Shrubbery Cottage, Comberbach on the following grounds as detailed above:

- detrimental impact on the Green Belt
- the 'grey belt' policy does not apply to this application
- precedent
- scale of the proposal
- highways grounds
- flooding
- impact on existing trees and hedgerows
- reference to existing planning permissions not implemented.

(b) The CWAC Ward Councillors be informed of the parish council's objections to the application.

The Meeting closed at 8.15pm.

The next meeting of Comberbach Parish Council will be held on 14 July 2026 at 6.30pm.

Signed
Chairman

