

Little Comberton Parish Council

2026/16

Annual Meeting of the Parish Council - Minutes Wednesday 13th May 2026, 7.30pm Village Hall

Parish Councillors Present: N Jamieson, C Rabbette, D Smaylen, D Smithson & N Smithson.
County Cllr A Hardman

Clerk/RFO: Nicola Harding

In attendance: One parishioner

1. Apologies

Received from District Cllr B. Hardman & Cllr Schmitz.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

3. Election of Chairman

Cllr N Smithson proposed to nominate Cllr Jamieson as chairman, seconded by Cllr D. Smithson, unanimously supported by all Cllrs. Cllr Jamieson agreed to continue in the role and the Chairman's declaration of office was duly signed.

4. Election of Vice-Chairman

Due to existing work responsibilities of remaining Cllrs, it was agreed that Cllrs would continue to share the role of vice-chairman in the future absence of the chairman, as required.

5. Parishioner's Comments

PRoW: Further to a parishioner's enquiry received regarding the status of the footpath at the rear of Pool Close, it was noted that the Parish Council had received an update from WCC's Countryside Team, confirming that the historical application for a Definitive Map Modification Order of the footpath was submitted in 2004, and remains on a waiting list of applications for investigation and review.

Road sweeping: Attention was drawn to some rubbish which was discarded in a nearby hedge at the recent attendance by the road sweeping contractor. It was agreed to report this to WDC's Environmental Team.

Action: Clerk.

Further requests had been received for updates regarding PRoW and Highways, as reported under items 8b & 8c.

6. Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 8th April 2026

Proposed Cllr N Smithson, seconded Cllr Smaylen, all in favour to approve the minutes as a true record.

7. Progress reports from Parish Activities:

a. Lengthsman: Clearance of verge grips and gullies had been undertaken, in addition to weed spraying, verge clearance, checks/cleaning of the VAS & a fly tipping report.

b. Highways: A temporary road closure was noted near to the village hall – notification of the closure had not been received, therefore this may have been an emergency call out. The Council had been informed by a parishioner that the white line painting was still incomplete near to the Rectory. It was agreed that a Cllr would investigate this further.

Action: Cllr Jamieson.

Attention was drawn to a recent incident involving injury to a passing cyclist, following a collision with a pot hole outside the village hall. It was agreed to send photographs of the pot hole and forward to Severn Trent, as the road has subsided since their repairs undertaken. Another hole has also emerged at the T junction at Wick Road, which was also agreed to be reported.

Actions: Cllr Jamieson.

Grass-cutting of the village verges has been undertaken by WCC

c. Footpaths/PRoW: Attention had been drawn to the reinstatement and positioning of PRoW #501. It was agreed to raise this with the parish footpath warden who directly liaises on the Council's behalf with the Public Right of Way Team at WCC.

Action: Cllr Jamieson/Footpath Warden.

Double Hedges - the Council agreed to liaise with WDC Enforcement Team for their advice, following reports of widening of the bridleway and a track built. It was noted that some bridleways are open to vehicular access, but this would be clarified in terms of potential permitted development by WDC.

Action: Cllr Jamieson to provide a W3W reference for the Clerk to report to WDC.

The Council's proposal for a potential permissive footpath was revisited. Following consultation with the residents, the majority would not welcome the proposal. It was agreed that these were legitimate concerns raised and that the idea would be discarded.
Action: Cllr D Smithson to provide an update to all residents of the Council's decision; Clerk to forward a letter of thanks to the land agent of the adjacent field.

d. Trees/Verges: A Cllr noted that they have a small chestnut tree which may be suitable for planting in one of the gaps recently created along Wick Road. A quote for a replacement tree & planting on the corner of Orchard Drive was shared and Cllrs agreed to defer this until the Autumn.

Actions: Cllr Rabbette to provide updates to the tree warden regarding a donated tree, Clerk to liaise with tree surgeon regarding quotation obtained.

e. Water testing: As reported at the Annual Parish Meeting, a parish Cllr continues to volunteer at key designated village areas and Mary Brook – results show an increase in electrical conductivity yet falling rates in nitrate and phosphate rates. It was noted that little rainfall has resulted in reduced run-off from fields into the brook. Testing will continue alongside Great Comberton volunteers and an expert consulted to analyse the data and identify any trends.

f. Data & Digital compliance: It was agreed to hold a separate, informal meeting for Cllrs to set up their council emails and to discuss next steps regarding the Parish Council website transition, IT & Data Protection policies to be adopted & future training.
Action: Cllrs to confirm a date proposed for 3 June 2026 for formal consideration at the June meeting.

g. Airband: The Clerk had received a response from MP Harriet Baldwin, who after several attempts to make contact with Airband regarding removal of the redundant infrastructure at Endon Hill, has received no response. MP Baldwin continues to pursue this issue on the Parish's behalf and will escalate with Ofcom, if necessary.

Action: Continue to monitor.

h. Sewers: Nothing new to report at present.

8. To note model Calc standing orders and approved financial regulations

These were noted. The Council also continues to follow the principles outlined in their financial risk management policy, as adopted in September 2025.

Action: Ongoing.

9. To note the Code of Conduct

Cllrs had been circulated a copy of the approved code of conduct as a reminder of its contents and this was noted for information. Proposed Cllr Smaylen, seconded Cllr Rabbette, all in favour to note the model documents and their contents.

10. To consider and appoint Councillor roles: The following roles were agreed:

Lengthsman/Village communications/Footpath Warden liaison: Cllr Jamieson

Police & Village Hall Committee liaison: Cllr N Smithson

Quarterly bank reconciliations & council email/website: Cllr D Smithson

Online payment authorisations & Sports & Social committee liaison: Cllr Rabbette

Water testing: Cllr Smaylen

Planning feedback: Cllr Schmitz

11. District and County Councillor's reports

- **County Cllr report:** Cllr Hardman provided a copy of his annual report ahead of the meeting, which was summarised with those present. It was also confirmed that additional footpath reconstruction works are scheduled for completion in this financial year, opposite the footpath completed last year. It was confirmed that conservation kerbs would be used to replace the kerbing where cobbles have been displaced, to ensure greater anchorage.
Cllrs requested if notification can be forwarded once a date for these works has been approved.
- **District Cllr report:** A report had been forwarded to the Clerk for circulation ahead of the meeting, which was summarised. Cllrs raised a query regarding recent changes submitted to application W/26/00423/FUL, Land At Os 9643 4319, Little Comberton. It was confirmed that now the revised SWDP is in place, policy numbers have changed and parts of the application would therefore need to be redrafted to correct the policies. Subsequent to the meeting, WDC confirmed that the application has been refused.

12. Planning

- **W/26/00423/FUL: Land At OS 9643 4319 Little Comberton:** Erection of four dwellings (Use Class 3) with associated access arrangements from Pershore Road, landscaping, drainage and associated infrastructure: comments of objection were submitted on 24 April 2026 and subsequent to the meeting, the Council was notified that the application has been refused.
- **Land known as Porters Butts, opposite Great Comberton turning:** Land for sale following refusal of application W/25/00495/GPDQ - prior approval for the proposed change of use of an Agricultural Buildings to 2 no. dwelling houses. A discussion ensued regarding the potential for illegal development of local land parcels in parishes. Cllrs were advised to remain alert and to inform the District/County Cllr in such an instance.

A query was raised regarding typical timeframe of works for properties with listed building status, once planning permission has been granted. Cllrs agreed that this could be clarified with WDC Heritage department.

Action: Cllr Jamieson.

13. Finance

a) Current Balances at 1st May 2026	
Treasurer's Account:	£16,120.57
TOTAL	£16,120.57
b) Payments to report since the April meeting:	
Salary April 2026	£439.40
Salary May 2026	£439.40
Expenses: April & May 2026	£24.00
Lloyds service charges	£4.25
LCVHT: March 2026 hall hire	£26.00
Payments to be made after the meeting:	
Lengthsman: April work-plan	£190.00
Internal auditor: 2025/26 accounts	£120.00
Swarco: VAS repair	£471.22
Worcs CALC subs 26/27	£269.30
LCVHT: April 2026 hall hire	£13.00
Expenses: Printing	£21.09
TOTAL	£1,084.61
Income received:	
Precept (i) 2026/27	£4,100.00
Council Tax Support Grant (i) 2026/27	£162.00
TOTAL	£4,262.00

The Clerk drew attention to an additional payment to be confirmed after the meeting for the annual parish insurance premium. Once the information was received, it was agreed the Clerk would forward confirmation of the invoice, which was approved in principal under the relevant budget heading and would be formally reported at the June meeting.

Action: Clerk.

Proposed Cllr Jamieson, seconded Cllr Smaylen, all in favour to accept the payments presented.

The Clerk drew attention to the timings of the new website requirement, given that the WCC My Parish service will be withdrawn on 1st September.

Action: Agree timeframes at the informal IT evening, for formal discussion and approval at the June meeting.

c) To approve and sign the Certificate of Exemption for the year ended 31/3/2026

The Clerk informed the meeting of the council's qualifying criteria to certify itself exempt from a limited assurance review, as a smaller authority with neither a gross income or gross expenditure at £25,000 or less for the 2025/26 financial year. The Certificate was signed by the Chairman, to be forwarded to the external auditors for information. *Action: Clerk to submit to external auditor, no later than 30th June 2026.*

d) Audited accounts & Annual Return: 31st March 2026 – internal audit report:

The Clerk shared details of the internal audit conducted in May 2026. No significant areas of weakness or concern had been identified & the Annual Governance statements had been checked for accuracy.

(i) Proposal to approve and sign Section 1: Annual governance statement – Cllrs had received documentation in advance of the meeting to check the assertions in the governance statement. All Cllrs were in favour to approve each statement and the document was duly signed by the Chairman & Clerk.

(ii) Proposal to approve and sign Section 2: Accounting statements - Accounting statements for the 2025/26 financial year had been prepared by the clerk and forwarded to Cllrs for their information. The statement had been checked and verified by the internal auditor and was signed by the Chairman as accurate.

Proposed Cllr Jamieson, seconded Cllr Smaylen, all in favour to accept the Annual Governance and Return statements.

e) To approve the period of public rights to inspect the financial records of the Council, to commence on 3/6/26-14/7/26.

Notice and details to be published online on 1st June and published on the main noticeboard.

Action: Clerk/Cllr Rabbette.

Action: Clerk to publish all relevant accounting documents before 1st July 2026 on a publicly available website as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015 and the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.

14. Correspondence

No new correspondence had been received in addition to that circulated ahead of the meeting.

15. Councillor's reports and items for future agenda

Cllrs agreed to meet informally to discuss next steps in Data & Digital compliance and to set up the new Cllr emails.

A suggestion was also noted regarding future consideration of parishioner's comments which are received in between meetings, to ensure they are formally recognised and feedback provided following Council discussion.

It was agreed to consider this following on from the parishioner's comments item on future agendas.

Action: Clerk – agenda circulation.

16. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 10th June 2025 at 7.30 pm

Cllr Smaylen offered his apologies in advance of the next meeting.

Signed

Date.....

Chairman