Dunchurch Parish Council
Dunchurch Community Library
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Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on Monday 14th April 2025 at Dunchurch Community Library commencing at 7pm

Councillors Present: Cllr Marsh (Chair), Cllr Grogan, Cllr Martin, Cllr Warren, Cllr Sly and Cllr Vaughan.

Staff Present: Becky Maoudis (Clerk & RFO)

Seventeen members of the public were in attendance.

A member of the public, representing *Action for Dunchurch*, addressed the meeting. They explained that the group was established to ensure the impacts of the Local Plan are fully considered and justified. They urged the Parish Council to formally object to the housing proposals in Rugby Borough Council's *Preferred Options* document. Additionally, they suggested that the safeguarded area adjacent to Cawston Spinney should be allocated for residential development rather than for warehouses.

A member of the public raised their objections to planning application R25/0225, relating to 18 Boughton Close, Dunchurch, which proposes a change of use of a residential garage to a facility offering cosmetic medical services. The individual requested that the Parish Council submit a formal written objection to the application.

Another member of the public echoed concerns regarding the same application (R25/0225), particularly in relation to the appropriateness of such a business operating within a residential area.

A further member of the public queried Minute Reference 24.205 in the draft minutes of the meeting held on 10th March 2025. The comment was noted, and the minutes were amended accordingly prior to being signed.

A question was also raised regarding whether Dunchurch Parish Council has a Neighbourhood Plan. In response, Cllr Marsh confirmed that the Parish Council does not currently have one. He explained that while there had been previous attempts to develop a plan, the process requires significant volunteer involvement, which had not materialised.

24.214 Apologies

Apologies received from Cllr Price and Cllr Coomber.

Resolved: To accept apologies.

24.215 Co-Option of Councillor

There are currently two vacancies on the Parish Council. If no election is called, the Council will be able to proceed with co-options after 7th May 2025.

24.216 Declarations of Interests and Dispensations

None.

24.217 Approval of the Minutes of the Dunchurch Parish Council Ordinary Meeting from 10th March 2025

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the Dunchurch Parish Council Ordinary Meeting from 10th March 2025, subject to one amendment, and duly signed by Cllr Marsh (Minute Ref: 24.205).

24.218 Reports from Rugby Borough Councillor and Warwickshire County Councillor

Cllr Simpson-Vince reported that the current diversion for the A45 junction roadworks directs traffic up to the Avon Mill roundabout, then back down through Rugby to the Southam Road. She advised that she would speak with Warwickshire County Councillor Keeling to explore whether a more suitable alternative diversion route can be implemented.

She also informed the meeting that, from April 2026, Rugby Borough Council will be required to collect food waste from all households. While the exact process is still under review, she noted that preparations are underway, including the imminent delivery of approximately 70,000 food caddies, with considerations ongoing for their storage.

Additionally, Cllr Simpson-Vince reported that electrical upgrades are taking place at Tanser Court. The next phases of improvement will include replacing the boiler, followed by roof refurbishment.

24.219 Clerks Report of Activities including any appropriate correspondence

The Clerk reported receipt of a list from Rugby Borough Council detailing 15 bins located on Parish land, for which Dunchurch Parish Council would be responsible for emptying costs. Upon review, it was noted that one of the bins is situated on The Square (owned by Warwickshire County Council) and six are located on The Heath (owned by Rugby Borough Council). The Clerk has queried these discrepancies and has also requested clarification on the proposed frequency of emptying. A response is awaited.

24.220 Planning update

<u>New planning applications</u>

Application No: R25/0225

Description: Change of use of residential garage to be used as cosmetic medical services

Proposal at: 18 Boughton Close, Dunchurch
The Parish Council raised no objections to the planning application but did raise concerns that the proposed change of use may potentially breach existing covenants associated with the property or the wider development.

Application No: R25/0251
Description: Change of use from agriculture to dog exercising
Proposal at: Land at Halfway Lane, Dunchurch
The Parish Council raised no objections to the planning application. However, the Council recommended that, should permission be granted, a condition be included to limit the opening hours so they more closely align with regular working hours. This measure would help to minimise potential disturbance to neighbouring residents.

Application No: R25/0297
Description: Demolition of two dwellings and garage and the erection of five new dwellings and associated development
Proposal at: Drayton House, Southam Road, Dunchurch
The Parish Council made no comment on this application.

Determined Applications
Application No: R25/0120
Description: Variation of condition 1 of R23/0273 (retention of children's playground, gatehouse and security barrier) for a further temporary period of 18 months.
Proposal at: Dunchurch Park Hotel, Dunchurch
Planning permission has been granted.

24.221 To report requests for information and FOI Requests
Nothing to report.

24.222 Speeding, dangerous driving and traffic in the parish
Cllr Martin requested that advisory 20mph signs be placed on lampposts to encourage reduced speeds through the village.
Resolved: Cllr Martin to investigate options for installing advisory 20mph signs.

24.223 VE Day Celebrations
Cllr Grogan updated the meeting on the planned celebrations for VE Day. Cllrs Grogan, Vaughan and Sly are working in collaboration with FODS, the WI, the Festival Group, and the Canadian Group to organise the events.
The celebrations will include a Beacon lighting ceremony on The Heath on Thursday 8th May, followed by a street party on Saturday 10th May from 1–5pm at The Square.
A flyer outlining the itinerary will be delivered to all households in the village.
Cllr Grogan expressed his thanks to Sue Protheroe for her valuable assistance with the event planning.

The Parish Council have funded all the flowers that FODS have agreed to plant in preparation for the celebrations.

24.224 Finance and administration

Balance brought forward from 28th February 2025		**£ 275,873.19**
Payments to 31st March 2025		
HMRC	PAYE & NI	£ 762.79
Darren Styles	February hours & expenses	£ 738.40
FODS	Magazine publications	£ 200.00
John Fenwick Wilson	Milk for library January	£ 24.72
John Fenwick Wilson	Milk for library February	£ 19.57
Rebecca Maoudis	February expenses	£ 55.74
WCC	Emergency lighting service	£ 110.63
WCC	Automatic door service	£ 170.15
Amazon	Stationery	£ 32.96
BT	Phone & broadband	£ 52.63
Ionos	Email hosting	£ 18.00
Gamma	Library telephone	£ 35.42
Waterplus	Water charges	£ 41.18
Barby Nursery	VE Day planting	£ 1,695.00
Visibly Clear Services	Cleaning service – March	£ 156.00
Amberol	4 x War Memorial pots	£ 199.80
Rebecca Maoudis	March salary	[redacted]
Pam Camilleri	March salary	[redacted]
		£ 6310.76
Income:		
	CCLA	£ 280.24
	Library fines and donations	£ 145.74
	Library hire	£ 120.00
		£ 545.98
Balance		**£ 270,108.41**
Cooperative Bank		£ 40,108.41
CCLA		£ 80,000.00
Scottish Widows		£ 65,000.00
Skipton		£ 85,000.00
		£ 270,108.41
Payments to be authorised:		
WCC	The Heath, install 5m column	£ 2,031.22
WCC	Waring Way, install LED lantern	£ 559.67

Rebecca Maoudis	March expenses	£ 127.49
Pam Camilleri	March expenses	£ 30.41
Darren Styles	March hours and expenses	£ 820.39
Canva	Annual subscription	£ 100.00
Ian Grogan	Brass memorial plaque	£ 29.99
John Fenwick Wilson	Milk for library	£ 26.78
RBC	Play rangers 7/11/24-19/12/24	£ 415.80
Direct365	PAT testing	£ 102.00
Matthew Vaughan	VE Day expenses	£ 1024.75
EdgeIT	Finance annual fee	£ 652.80
Moore	External audit review & additional fee	£ 3,396.00
Vincent Deery	Piper for VE Day celebration	£ 350.00
WALC	Annual subscription	£ 1,032.60
Vistaprint	Stamp cards	£ 31.49
Rosie Pickering	Author Visit	£ 25.00
First responders	VE Day cover donation	£ 200
City Fire	Emergency light repair	£ 480.00
Infinity electrical	Churchyard lights	£ 3,175.09
Total Energies	UMS street lighting	£ 16,320.28
WCC	M&E automatic doors	£ 139.68
WCC	M&E automatic doors	£ 139.21
WCC	Rewire repair works	£ 605.29
WCC	M&E H&C water service	£ 96.67

a) The invoices and payments were noted.
b) The payments to be authorised were reviewed.
   Resolved: To authorise payments.
c) The finance report was reviewed and noted.
d) The Clerk reported that a quote has been requested from Warwickshire County Council for the repair of the lamppost located on Stocks Green, The Square. A response is still awaited.
e) To consider and agree the Warwickshire County Council quotation for carrying out the maintenance to the streetlights for financial year 2025/26 at a cost of £2.48+VAT per SOX/MBF/LED lanterns and £12.74+VAT per Non-SOX/MBF/LED lanterns.
   Resolved: To accept the quote from Warwickshire County Council to carry out the maintenance to the streetlights for financial year 2025/26.
f) A quote has been received from Rugby Borough Council for the installation of the second noticeboard at a cost of £265+VAT.
   Resolved: To accept the quote from Rugby Borough Council for the installation of the noticeboard.
g) Total Energies has failed to update the Direct Debit for Dunchurch Parish Council's Unmetered Supply (UMS) following the consolidation of the MPANs into a single account. As a result, an outstanding balance of £16,320.28 has accrued, which will now be collected via Direct Debit.

Resolved: To note the update to the UMS account and the forthcoming Direct Debit payment.

h) To consider the purchase of children's furniture and storage boxes for the Dunchurch Library and Community Hub.
Resolved: To authorise the purchase of one children's table, four chairs, and four storage boxes at a total cost of £99.

i) The Council considered its eligibility to adopt the General Power of Competence, confirming that it meets the following criteria:
- The Parish Council has a qualified Clerk holding a recognised sector qualification (CiLCA).
- At the time of adoption, at least two-thirds of the Council members have been elected, not co-opted.

Resolved: That Dunchurch Parish Council adopts the General Power of Competence and agrees to review its eligibility annually at the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

j) The External Audit Report for the year ended 31 March 2024 was received and noted by the Council.
As part of the report, Dunchurch Parish Council was requested to discuss matters raised in the Internal Audit Report. A report addressing these matters was read out at the meeting by the Clerk and is attached as Appendix 1.

k) The Council agreed to undertake a full review of the Asset Register to ensure all assets are accurately recorded and maintained.
Resolved: To carry out a comprehensive review of the Asset Register**.**

l) Following recent changes to the model version of the Financial Regulations, the Council noted updates to points 5.6, 5.7, and 5.11 in response to the Procurement Act 2023 and the Procurement Regulations 2024.
Resolved: To adopt the amended Financial Regulations as outlined, incorporating the legislative changes to points 5.6, 5.7, and 5.11.

24.225 To agree a response to Rugby Borough Council's local plan preferred options consultation.

Cllr Simpson-Vince stated that she felt there was already sufficient warehousing in the area and that the safeguarded land at Cawston Spinney would be better suited for housing development.

A member of the public shared that she had met with the Leader of Rugby Borough Council and believed the land could also be used for housing.

Cllr Marsh noted that the Parish Council could not formally comment on the Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation until a meeting had taken place. Councillors unanimously agreed that the Parish Council should object to the proposed developments allocated within the consultation document.

The Clerk reported that five planning consultants had been approached to assist the Council in forming its response. Of those approached, two did not respond, one had no availability, one was representing another interested party, and Andrew Towlerton MRTPI confirmed his availability at a cost of £500, which includes one remote meeting. Any additional meetings would be charged at £50 each.

Cllr Marsh reminded the meeting that while the Parish Council is one voice, it is vital that residents also submit their own responses. The Clerk outlined the various ways in which responses can be submitted to Rugby Borough Council.
Action for Dunchurch are planning to set up a surgery in Dunchurch to assist residents in responding. The Parish Council offered the use of the library and its public computers free of charge to support this initiative.
Resolved: To instruct Andrew Towlerton MRTPI to respond to the Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation on behalf of Dunchurch Parish Council.

24.226 Update on the tree felling, Stocks Green, The Square

The Tree Officer at Rugby Borough Council has recommended that the remaining stump of the Swedish Whitebeam be removed and that two replacement trees be planted as a form of mitigation and site enhancement. The suggested species are a Sorbus aucuparia, which is from the same genus as the Swedish Whitebeam and offers a more upright growing form with minimal maintenance, attractive flowers, and berries for birds, and a Prunus 'Umineko', a very attractive flowering cherry tree that remains compact, grows upright, and also requires little maintenance.
Both trees will be double-staked, approximately 2 to 3 metres in height, and have a girth of 12/14 cm. The bases of the trees will be mulched to support healthy growth. Beechwood has agreed to undertake the work at no cost to the Parish Council. Planting is scheduled for Autumn 2025.
The clerk will confirm with the Tree Officer that the trees can be planted within twelve months.
Resolved: To agree the removal of the stump and replanting of the two new trees.

24.227 To consider the purchase and installation of an inclusive sign in Arkwright's Park

Cllr Martin proposed that the Parish Council agree to the installation of an inclusive sign, to be purchased from Widgit, at Arkwright Park. The sign boards are designed to celebrate the unique environment of a park or playground, while also supporting and empowering individuals with communication difficulties to engage more fully with the space.
Resolved: To approve the purchase and installation of an inclusive sign from Widgit at Arkwright Park at a cost of £350 + VAT.

24.228 To consider options for installing a digital screen in Dunchurch Library and Community Hub.

As part of the Parish Council's ongoing efforts to reduce paper usage, the Clerk explored options for installing a screen at the Dunchurch Library and Community Hub. Three quotes for both 65" and 75" screens were circulated to members in advance of the meeting for consideration.
Resolved: To purchase a 75" screen, wall bracket, and HDMI cable from Amazon at a total cost of £619.

24.229 To note the property listing of Flat 9, Tresham House, Guys Common, Dunchurch.

In accordance with the covenant, the Parish Council has noted the sale of Flat 9, Tresham House, Guys Common, Dunchurch and has displayed the required advertisement on the Parish Council noticeboard.

24.230 Private Session

Under Section 1, Sub-Section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was felt advisable in the public interest, if members of the public were present during the consideration of such business, there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information that the public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw. A resolution is required at the meeting for items to be discussed in Private Session.

Resolved: To exclude members of the public for the private session.

24.231 Staff Probation Review and actions

The Clerk reported that she had conducted the six-month probation review for the Community Hub Officer. Both the Clerk and the Community Hub Officer expressed satisfaction with the current role. The position was initially advertised at 6–8 hours per week, with the Parish Council previously agreeing to commence the role at six hours per week. It was noted that the Community Hub Officer is regularly working in excess of these hours.

The Clerk recommended that the contracted hours be increased to eight per week to reflect the actual workload.

Resolved: That the Community Hub Officer has successfully completed her six-month probation period and her employment is now confirmed as permanent. It was also agreed to increase the Community Hub Officer's contracted hours to eight per week.

The Clerk left the meeting for this item.

Cllr Marsh reported that he had recently undertaken a six-month probation review with the Clerk. Councillors expressed that they were satisfied with the Clerk's performance and were happy for her to continue in the role.

Resolved: That the Clerk has successfully completed her six-month probation period and her employment is now confirmed as permanent.

The meeting was called to a close at 8.36pm.

Date of the next Dunchurch Annual Parish Council Meeting: Monday 12th May 2025

The Council has now implemented the practice of including the total value of payments approved in each meeting within the minutes, in line with the auditor's recommendation for enhanced transparency.

In relation to the library cash float, this is now counted by a volunteer and verified by the Clerk/RFO, ensuring a clear and accountable process.

Agendas are now fully compliant with legal requirements, including signatures, and are published appropriately.

The Council confirms that there are currently no sub-committees in operation; therefore, the comment regarding sub-committee terms of reference is not applicable at this time.

The asset register is scheduled for review at the Parish Council meeting on 10th April 2025. An Asset Register Policy will be presented at the Annual Parish Council Meeting (APCM) in May 2025 and will be reviewed annually thereafter. Moving forward, physical checks of assets by Councillors will be documented.

Regarding land ownership, the Council acknowledges the recommendation to obtain proof of title for its parcels of land and will consider whether to proceed with registering these through the Land Registry.

The ICO registration fee and all payments are now consistently recorded within the finance section of the meeting minutes to ensure a complete and transparent financial record.

A revised Health and Safety Policy that includes sections on lone working and homeworking will be presented for adoption at the APCM in May 2025.

The Council has undertaken a review of its risk assessment, which is now scheduled to be presented at the APCM for formal adoption.

Looking ahead, the Council will move towards preparing a three-year budget forecast as part of its financial planning strategy.

Payroll continues to be managed by an external provider, with full oversight and control maintained by the Clerk/RFO. Employment contracts are in place and retained in Council records.

The Social Media Policy was reviewed and formally adopted in January 2025.

The position of Clerk has now been successfully filled, bringing increased administrative capacity and continuity to Council operations.

Finally, the Council remains eligible for the General Power of Competence. This has been included on the agenda for the 14th April 2025 meeting and will be reviewed and adopted annually as required.