

CROXTON PARISH COUNCIL

I hereby give notice that, as previously arranged, the Meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 23 July 2025 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

The Public and Press and County and District Councillors are invited to be present and Members of the Parish are welcome to attend and may speak under the Open Public Session item and make representation to the Council on items on the agenda during this section of the meeting

All members of the Council are hereby summoned to attend for the purpose of considering and resolving upon the business to be transacted at the meeting as set out hereunder

Ben Stoehr

Ben Stoehr, Locum Clerk
18/07/25

AGENDA

Public participation on agenda items and matters of mutual interest (includes reports from County and District Councillors and representation by members of the public)

1. Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

- 1.1. To receive written apologies for absence and reasons
- 1.2. To receive declarations of interests from councillors on items on the agenda
- 1.3. To receive and grant any written requests for dispensations

2. To consider any applications for co-option

3. To approve the minutes of the last meeting

4. To consider any matters arising from the last or a previous meeting including

- 4.1. (8.4) To consider any Internal Auditor's report received during the year

5. Finance, procedure & risk assessment

- 5.1. To approve any payments
- 5.2. To consider any urgent works required because of risk or health and safety.
- 5.3. to note any actions taken under delegated powers
- 5.4. To consider a donation to Croxton Village Hall

6. To consider any planning or tree works applications received*

- 6.1. Planning applications
 - 6.1.1. 25/02320/LBC – Westbury Farm, Westbury Farmhouse, Abbotsley Road – Repair and replacement of external joinery including external windows, external doors and front porch
- 6.2. SCDC Decision notices, appeals notices, enforcement notices and planning correspondence for information only
- 6.3. Tree works applications
 - 6.3.1. 25/0571/TTCA – 12 High Street – to note that no response was made. SCDC have previously requested that only objections need to be reported to them.
- 6.4. Procedure for applications between meetings

7. To consider any correspondence received

- 7.1. CAPALC – Introduction of the IT policy requirement as part of the Annual Governance Statement requirements – Assertion 10
- 7.2. CCC Public Rights of Way Hierarchy engagement – to consider proposed response (deadline 31 July)
- 7.3. CCC - Cambridgeshire Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) Survey (deadline 31 July)

8. To consider members' items and reports for information only unless otherwise stated

- 8.1. A428 Updates
- 8.2. East West Rail Updates
- 8.3. Solar Farm
- 8.4. To consider adding a "what's on" page and local business links to the website

9. Closure and dates of future meetings

*Due to the consultation deadlines on planning applications, the Parish Council will consider any applications received before the start of the meeting. Details of all applications can be found on the Greater Cambridgeshire Shared Planning Portal <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org>

Clerk report to Croxton Parish Council meeting on 23 July 2025

5. Planning

5.1 Planning applications received – to be considered

* NB Some planning applications may not be specifically listed on this agenda but may still be considered by the Parish Council due to the time constraints of making a recommendation to the District Council.

The planning portal for new applications can now be found at <https://applications.greatercambridgeplanning.org/>

The Parish Council's may choose its own wording to show whether it agrees with an application or not and can now both support/approve or object/ refuse etc parts of the same application

The Parish Council should include material planning reasons why the Council take this stance via its comments.

The Parish Council *does/does not** request that the application be referred to the District Council Planning Committee *(please delete)

Material planning reasons:

5.1.1 25/02320/LBC – Westbury Farm, Westbury Farmhouse, Abbotsley Road – Repair and replacement of external joinery including external windows, external doors and front porch

5.2 SCDC Decision notices, appeals notices, enforcement notices and planning correspondence for information only None at the time of writing.

5.3 Tree works applications

5.3.1 25/0571/TTCA – 12 High Street – to note that no response was made. SCDC have previously requested that only objections need to be reported to them.

5.4 Procedure for applications between meetings

The Parish Council will, where possible and reasonably practical, consider planning applications in a public meeting so that residents and the applicants have an opportunity to make representation to the Parish Council and to hear the debate and outcome on a planning application.

As the Parish Council meets infrequently and the consultation period for planning applications is 21 days (3 weeks) it is not always possible or practical to hold a meeting.

1. The Clerk will seek a time extension, to the next scheduled meeting, where it is reasonable that this can be accommodated by the Planning Authority. (e.g. a 6 week extension is unlikely to be successful). If no response is received from the Planning Officer within a reasonable timeframe (one week) it will be assumed the request is denied.
2. If the Chair, or other Councillors, believe a meeting is required to consider an application the Council's process for calling an extra-ordinary meeting should be followed (as defined in standing orders). When a meeting is lawfully called the Clerk's delegation will cease to apply.

3. The Parish Council may consider any current application at its meetings. Due to the agenda notice period it is possible that applications are received ahead of the meeting.

In such circumstances that the above are not possible or practical the decision will be delegated to the Clerk under the Local Government Act 1972 S101(1)a. The Parish Council is not able, under legislation, to delegate to individual Councillors.

1. The Clerk will circulate the application to Councillors asking for individual comments by a particular date (the date may be before the consultation deadline for a multitude of reasons e.g to accommodate other workload and leave). If a Councillor cannot supply comments by the set date a request for an extension will be considered and accommodated wherever possible.
2. Councillors should not discuss/debate the application outside the meeting. If discussion is required an extra-ordinary meeting should be called. Comments and a recommendation (support/object/no comment) should be returned directly to the Clerk.
3. The Clerk will form a response based on the consensus of responses received. The Clerk will endeavour to include all comments received into any response, except where there is a direct conflict in comments where the Clerk will use their best judgment to capture the majority view of the Council.
4. If a Councillor wishes to make amendment to their previously submitted comments the full response (including amendment) should be re-sent making it clear that the previous submission is to be discounted.
5. The Clerk is unable to contravene any decision or policy of the Parish Council.
6. Any response made using delegation will be reported to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

The Parish Council is a consultee on planning applications and responsibility for determining applications falls to the Local Planning Authority (Greater Cambs Shared Planning). All residents and Councillors (as members of the public) have the right to submit personal responses to the Planning Authority.

6. Correspondence

6.1 CAPALC – Introduction of the IT policy requirement as part of the Annual Governance Statement requirements – Assertion 10

CAPALC have sent out Webinar slides and a Webinar recording relating to Assertion 10 on the Introduction of the IT policy requirement as part of the Annual Governance Statement next year, together with an example IT policy.

They have stressed that the policy is a guide only and is not to be copied verbatim as it needs to reflect the Council's practices and policies. The example is to help Councils to

think about the kind of things that need to be considered for inclusion, and some aspects might need to be added.

CAPALC have also stressed that the contents of the documents must not be shared with any other person, business, organisation, Parish or Town Council.

The Webinar slides, Webinar recording and link as well as the example policy have been circulated to members direct.

6.2 CCC Public Rights of Way Hierarchy engagement – to consider proposed response

"I am writing to you from the Infrastructure and Project Delivery service at Cambridgeshire County Council. We are conducting an engagement exercise with key local stakeholders regarding our public rights of way, and we are inviting you to participate.

Introduction

Cambridgeshire County Council is your local highway authority. We are responsible for maintaining over 4,500km of roads within the County, and over 3,000km of public rights of way. This email is in relation to our proposal to introduce a 'Public Rights of Way Hierarchy'.

Public rights of way include:

Footpaths (open to use by people travelling on foot)

Bridleways (open to use by those on foot, riding a horse, or using a bicycle)

Restricted Byways (open to use by all of the above, but also non-motorised vehicles such as horse-drawn carriages)

Byways (open to use by all traffic including motor vehicles, but typically only maintained as soft, unsealed surfaces).

The Public Rights of Way (PROW) Hierarchy is a system of ranking our PROW so that we can consider prioritising maintenance activities on the most important routes. When completed, the PROW Hierarchy will form the final piece of the Council's 'Active Travel Hierarchy'. The Active Travel Hierarchy is a county-wide network. It prioritises the most valuable routes for non-motorised travel, focusing on routes used by walkers, cyclists, and those using mobility aids, to access destinations such as places of employment or education, or local facilities and services.

We are now in the final stages of developing the PROW Hierarchy and we are seeking your input into which PROW are most valued by your communities. We have written to all Parish Councils and County Councillors, as well as to local rights of way user groups and the Local Access Forum, to ask for feedback on the PROW that are most important to them.

What do we know already?

The Council carried out a public consultation on the principles of an Active Travel Hierarchy in the summer of 2024. This sought respondents' opinions on the criteria used to rank highways in the Hierarchy and the maintenance activities they felt to be most important for active travel routes. It also asked respondents about the specific routes that were important to them. We have used this feedback to finalise hierarchies for Walking and Wheeling (using mobility aids), and Cycling, which were adopted by the Council's Highways and Transport Committee in March 2025.

In relation to PROW, the maintenance criteria that was considered most important by respondents was the management of vegetation growth; this issue was raised by 52% of respondents. Other issues that were frequently raised included requests for accessibility and inclusivity enhancements, and ensuring adequate provision for horse riders. The feedback we received relating to PROW is summarised in sections nine and ten of this [appendix](#) to the report presented to the Highways and Transport Committee in March. You can see the full report [here](#).

We also received some location-specific feedback regarding which PROW were most important to respondents. Almost a quarter of these responses also raised concerns about factors that restricted use of PROW, such as obstructions, requirements to cross busy roads, or flooding.

The draft PROW Hierarchy

We have used the feedback gathered last year to support development of our PROW Hierarchy, combining it with pre-existing datasets such as promoted long-distance routes and strategic routes identified in the Council's Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan (LCWIP).

This has resulted in a draft Hierarchy that ranks PROW from A to D across the County, with A being the most important. You can view the draft PROW Hierarchy for the whole of the County on our digital mapping, [here](#), and we have also attached a PDF map of your parish/town to this email. Using the digital map, you will also be able to see the Walking and Wheeling Hierarchy, and Cycling Hierarchy, which were approved in 2025.

What do we want to learn now?

We are now looking to enhance the Hierarchy by seeking valuable input from stakeholders who have best knowledge of the County's PROW network.

We are keen that a PROW Hierarchy should reflect routes that are important for active travel purposes – eg, for accessing shops, services, workplaces or schools – but also those that are valued for leisure or recreational purposes.

As well as gathering your feedback, we would welcome your assistance in reaching out to key stakeholders within your communities who make use of the PROW network. This could include horse riding schools, or local walking or cycling groups that are active in your community.

If your parish council or group already provided feedback about which PROW were considered most important during the 2024 consultation, there is no need to respond again now – although of course we welcome any new information you may wish to provide.

What will we do with your feedback?

We will assess all feedback provided and, where appropriate, the routes that are considered most valuable to stakeholders will be prioritised in the Hierarchy. However, it will not be possible to prioritise all PROW, so we welcome feedback that recognises key routes within your communities. It is intended to develop a final PROW Hierarchy during the summer, for consideration by the Council's Highways and Transport Committee in October 2025.

How you can give feedback

We are asking respondents to complete the attached sheet to provide feedback. The sheet has been filtered to list the PROW in your local area, but you can easily adjust the settings to allow you to view PROW in different localities.

We would like to know (i) which routes you think are most valuable for different purposes, (ii) whether you recommend ranking any of your local PROW differently from what is in the draft Hierarchy, and (iii) whether the public's use of these routes is affected by maintenance-related issues.

To help you complete the form, you can view the PROW for your local area using the map attached to this email, or the [digital map](#) noted above.

To use the digital map, simply use the address search function in the top-right of the screen to find a location you want to focus on. You can then use the control settings on the right side of the screen to alter what data layers you can see on the map. You can click on the lines on the map to find PROW reference numbers, which will help you to complete our feedback sheet.

When you have completed your feedback, please return your results to assetdatastrategy@cambridgeshire.gov.uk. We request that all feedback is received by 31 July 2025.

Conclusion

If you are unable to complete the feedback form, don't worry. All the County's PROW network is being considered as part of the development of the Hierarchy, which will help to ensure that no community is overlooked.

If you require help or further information to enable you to respond, please write to assetdatastrategy@cambridgeshire.gov.uk and our team will support you.

Thank you for participating in this engagement exercise.

Sent on behalf of the Infrastructure and Project Delivery Service

Assetdatastrategy@cambridgeshire.gov.uk"

6.3 CCC - Cambridgeshire Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) Survey (deadline 31 July)

“Parish councils, community groups and businesses across Cambridgeshire are being invited to share their views to help influence energy infrastructure investment and shape the future of the local energy network.

The Cambridgeshire local authorities are developing a **Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP)** for our county. This plan will help ensure that the right energy infrastructure is in place to support Cambridgeshire’s transition to a low-carbon, sustainable place to live, work and thrive.

The LAEP will outline the energy needs for current and future growth in the county, and how this can be delivered in a sustainable way. It is also a key opportunity for Cambridgeshire’s communities, organisations, and businesses to have a voice in shaping future investment in energy infrastructure.

Have your say via our short survey

You can contribute to the Plan by completing a short survey [here](#) which should take no more than 15–20 minutes. The survey asks about your parish’s or community group’s:

- Current energy use
- Plans for future growth or development that could affect energy demand or supply
- Ambitions to reduce carbon emissions (e.g. energy efficiency, switching to low-carbon heating or vehicles, or generating renewable energy)
- Opportunities and challenges in achieving these goals

Your feedback will help ensure the LAEP reflects local priorities and plans.

Webinar recordings will also be available at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/LAEP.

The LAEP is being supported by technical expertise from Mott MacDonald and CAG Consultants.

The information you provide will be stored securely and only used to inform the LAEP – please see the privacy notice [Local Area Energy Planning Stakeholder Engagement Privacy Notice \(opens as PDF\)](#) for further details on how your information will be used.

Please help spread the word

We’re keen to hear from as many community groups, parish councils, and local organisations as possible. Please feel free to share this email and links with other organisations in your network. You can download a sharer pack of social media posts and graphics here: [Cambridgeshire Local Area Energy Planning sharer pack \(opens docs.google.com\)](#)

Any questions?

If you’d like to find out more or have any questions, please contact the LAEP stakeholder engagement team at CAG Consultants via: CambsLAEP@cagconsult.co.uk

Thank you for your time and support – your input into the survey will help ensure that the LAEP local needs and supports your future plans.

The deadline to complete the survey is **12 noon on Monday 14 July.** (Note – survey extended to 31 July)

Cambridgeshire County Council – Papworth and Swavesey Division

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Caxton and Papworth Ward

County and District Councillors' Monthly Report – July 2025

Local Government reorganisation

Proposals for new 'unitary' councils to replace our current county and district councils continue to be developed, and have been narrowed down to three options. All three divide Cambridgeshire & Peterborough into just two councils, as follows.

Option A

- East Cambridgeshire, Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire
- Huntingdonshire, Fenland and Peterborough

Option B

- Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire
- East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Fenland and Peterborough

Option C

- Huntingdonshire, Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire
- East Cambridgeshire, Fenland and Peterborough

The County Council will be supporting further work on Option A, while the District Council is leaning towards Option B. The existing Cambridgeshire & Peterborough councils must write to the Government by the end of November, with proposals for no more than three different options. Each council leader can support only one option. Final power rests with the Government, who may choose or amend any of the above proposals or even substitute them with a proposal of their own. The Government must consult on whatever it proposes.

Meanwhile, there is a survey for individual residents—not a consultation—which closes on 20 July. Please do have your say here:

<https://can-campaigns.co.uk/local-councils-in-cambridgeshire-and-peterborough-are-changing/>

Expiry of postal votes

Following a change to the law as part of the Elections Act, postal votes are no longer valid indefinitely. They now expire after a period of three years. Due to the timing of the reapplication legislation, around 15,000 South Cambridgeshire postal votes are due to expire at the end of January 2026. South Cambs' Elections Team will shortly start the process of contacting those residents whose postal vote will be expiring. In order to keep their postal vote in place, voters will have to make a fresh application. South Cambs may contact affected electors via email, post or text message to raise awareness of the changes and to ensure they have sufficient time to make a new application before next year's elections. Affected electors who do not make a fresh application will have their postal votes removed when they expire at the end of January 2026.

Remote Attendance and Proxy voting update

The government recently provided an update on the responses to their consultation on remote attendance and proxy voting at council meetings. Their executive summary is:

"The government is of the view that in-person authority meetings remain vital for local democracy, but that hybrid and remote attendance, and proxy voting, will enable local authorities in England to develop more modern, accessible, and flexible working practices. We have carefully considered arguments for and against remote attendance and proxy voting, and we plan to legislate to support permanent provision in relation to both policies, when parliamentary time allows.

On remote attendance, we plan to permit local authorities to develop their own locally appropriate policies, if they decide to hold remote meetings.

On proxy voting, we plan to require principal (unitary, upper and second-tier) councils to implement proxy voting schemes, to provide consistency for members who are absent when they become a new parent, or for serious or long-term illness. We plan for this requirement to apply to meetings of full council. For all other meetings, proxy voting may be used but will not be required, and substitute or pairing schemes may be more appropriate. We plan for other local authorities not listed above to be enabled but not required to implement proxy voting schemes, for any of their meetings, in the context of member absences for serious or long-term illness or becoming a new parent.

- We plan to work collaboratively with the sector to develop clear and supportive guidance in relation to both remote attendance and proxy voting policies."

CPCA Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) Growth Committee met last month at which the *Draft* Local Nature Recovery Strategy was approved. There will be a period of 8 weeks public consultation commencing 18 July. CPCA will be informing Parish and Town Councils of the consultation and publicising it to the public in July. Since the consultation runs through August when Parish councils are less active, you may like to share it with your communities and especially your environmental groups now. The link to the draft strategy is: <https://democracy.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AIId=1575>

South Cambs DC will be discussing the strategy at the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee, [CEAC](#) , at 2pm on 8th July 2025.

News from the County Council

Strategy Resources & Performance

End of year sees smaller overspend than predicted. The council ended 2024/25 with a revenue overspend of £4.45M. While no overspend would be preferred, it is less than predicted, and Cambridgeshire County Council remains in a healthier financial position than many other authorities. Cuts from national government are biting everywhere. Capital expenditure for the year was closer to plan than anticipated, a much improved position on previous years.

A new style report brings together a review of the council's performance across all of its services. The report can be found as the Appendix to Item 8 at <https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccclive/MeetingsCalendar/tabid/70/c/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/2314/Committee/71/SelectedTab/Default.aspx>

Adults & Health

A variety of contracts have been re-tendered for home adaptations, adult social care transport, drug and alcohol services, and adult weight management services. The committee also reviewed and endorsed a new Public Health Plan to 2030. Priorities identified in the strategy are obesity, particularly in children in deprived areas; mental health and wellbeing; smoking and preventable mortality; and health and work support initiatives.

Assets & Procurement

The council's Assets & Procurement Committee considered its first report on breaches of procurement policy or legislation, several of which date back more than five years. There were more breaches than originally expected, however none involved fraud, corruption or financial irregularities.

Under the Liberal Democrats, action is being taken to change organisational culture and ensure transparency in procurement. Corporate performance in this field is generally improving.

COSMIC

Adult learning services earn high praise from Ofsted. Learners and apprentices studying through the council's adult learning services thrive due to the warm, nurturing and inclusive learning environment and substantial new knowledge and skills they learn, says a recent Ofsted report. Cambridgeshire Skills offers education and training for adult learners in the county, the largest programmes of which are tailored learning, adult skills and family learning. Courses are run by sub-contractors and are offered online and in around 87 community venues across Cambridgeshire, including community centres, libraries and schools. The service works closely with the County Council's Learning and Development team to provide apprenticeship opportunities.

The Ofsted inspection of the two teams, which took place in late April and early May, found the overall effectiveness of the service to be Good. It judged the behaviour and attitude of learners to be Outstanding, with a rating of Good awarded in every other category.

Applications to the Household Support Fund (HSF) reopened in April. The Fund is provided by Government to support households experiencing immediate financial hardship and the rising cost of living. The Fund will run from Tuesday 1 April 2025 to Tuesday 31 March 2026. Eligible households can apply for one £110 voucher in this period. More information, including eligibility criteria and application form, can be found on our website. Please email

CommunityCV@cambridgeshire.gov.uk with any queries or go online:
www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities/support-with-the-cost-of-living/household-support-fund

Environment & Green Investment

The Government has announced it is stepping in to take over delivery of nine new reservoirs, including the Fens reservoir planned near Chatteris. The announcement indicates that this will ‘accelerate’ completion of the reservoir, though it gives no date, and it is not clear how much faster the Government could start water flowing than the currently advertised date of 2036.

An informal engagement survey is seeking the views of Cambridgeshire residents on the future of renewable energy, net zero, and energy in our county. The county council is keen to hear from parish councils, local businesses or community groups. To get involved, visit the Local Area Energy Plan webpage: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/climate-change-energy-and-environment/climate-change-action/low-carbon-energy/local-area-energy-planning

Cambridgeshire County Council has been ranked as one of the top-performing councils in the country for the action it has taken towards Net Zero. The Council achieved a score of 55 per cent in the Climate Action Scorecards published by Climate Emergency UK, placing it second among all comparable local authorities in England. The score marks an improvement of 11 per cent from 2023, making Cambridgeshire County Council ‘one of the most improved county councils’, according to Climate Emergency UK.

The Scorecard assesses more than 400 councils and combined authorities against a broad range of climate criteria, including transport, buildings and heating, biodiversity, planning, governance, waste, and community engagement.

Consultation on the new Local Nature Recovery Strategy is expected to open on 18 July. The document is detailed but very well put together and informative.

<https://naturalcambridgeshire.org.uk/>

Highways & Transport

Parish councils have been invited to help develop a public rights of way (PROW) hierarchy. The hierarchy will rank local rights of way by their importance to our communities. This includes gaining an understanding of routes that are important for utility journeys (such as accessing workplaces, schools or services), and for leisure and recreation.

A questionnaire has been sent to all parish councils for feedback on the rights of way used in our local areas. Parish councils are invited to contact local walking or cycling groups, or other local rights of way users, for their input. The questionnaire will close on Thursday 31 July.

Cambridgeshire County Council is currently rated Level 3 (out of 4, with 4 being the best) by Government for Active Travel Capability. Cambridgeshire is one of only six councils nationally to reach this level, and no councils have yet reached Level 4. This recognition makes it easier for the council to access grant funding to make even more improvements, and is something we can be proud of.

Guided Busway safety. Following the recent prosecution relating to three tragic deaths between 2015 and 2021, the council has agreed to fence its entire length, and remediate flooding at three key points.

There is unanimous agreement across the council about the unsatisfactory performance of National Highways in its improvement programme on the A14. The project left a very large number of unresolved issues in its wake, and the council is continuing to engage with National Highways to seek resolutions to these.

At least 3,300 Cambridgeshire residents are being asked for their views on the County Council's highways and transport services in the National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction survey. In this annual survey they will have the opportunity to comment on everything from the condition of roads and footpaths to public transport and the quality of cycling facilities. A questionnaire is being sent to a random sample of residents, followed by a reminder. Those who receive a copy are being encouraged to take part. They can do so either by post or online. Local and national results will be published in late-October 2025, and the council will use the feedback to manage and improve local services.

Cambridgeshire County Council holiday schemes

Children in receipt of benefits-related free school meals can access a fully funded place at participating holiday schemes for up to 64 hours in Cambridgeshire. The Summer HAF Programme will run from 24 July to 29 August 2025. Recently arrived refugee families and families struggling financially are also eligible. Further information can be found here:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities/support-with-the-cost-of-living/holiday-activities-and-food-programme>

Eligibility criteria:

- Families receiving income-related free school meals
- Families where FSM eligible and non-eligible children live in the same household
- Siblings of eligible children, aged 4, starting school in September 2025
- Families just managing financially (subject to referral from a professional)
- Recently arrived refugee families

News from the District Council

Cambourne Future Growth Plan

Now that it seems likely East West Rail and a Knapwell station will happen, work has begun to incorporate "North Cambourne" into the emerging local plan. Three workshops have taken places with local councillors and parish councils neighbouring Cambourne that will undoubtedly be impacted to a greater or lesser degree attending. Discussions are around 6 themes:

- A town centre
- Homes
- Jobs
- Recreation
- Connectivity
- Nature

South Cambs DC Cabinet feels strongly that an expanded Cambourne has to attract people from outside and to be a destination in its own right, not just meet its own needs. This resonates with planning officers who are ambitious for the town and see an opportunity to produce an exemplar development with a pivotal role in the future development of the region, rather than a place which is largely invisible to the rest of South Cambs.

The updated local plan is anticipated to be ready for review in the autumn.

Faster Planning Appeal Procedures

The government has announced [new regulations to streamline the planning appeals process](#). These changes aim to make planning processes faster and more efficient, benefitting councils, communities and developers. The new regulations will speed up planning appeal decisions, reducing delays and uncertainty over planning applications. The new process of written applications will only accept evidence put before the local planning authority during the application. This will help reduce additional bureaucracy, speeding up decision-making while keeping decisions locally based. The new regulations are expected to be implemented by the end of 2025. More details will be provided in updated guidance once the final draft of the regulations is received.

Awards for the Shared Planning Service

The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP) Service, a partnership between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council which serves as the Local Planning Authority for the Greater Cambridge area has been presented with two awards:

- Planning Authority of the Year – East of England at the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Awards for Planning Excellence. Among the GCSP's work highlighted was:
 - Youth Engagement Service (YES): A nationally recognised programme giving young people a voice in planning and design, recently winning the Thornton Education Trust's Social Value Award.
 - Biodiversity Net Gain Leadership: GCSP proactively secured over 200 hectares of habitat for biodiversity offsetting, ahead of national policy requirements. This project recently won the 'Planning for the Natural Environment Award' at the Planning Awards 2025.
 - Inclusive Planning: Through initiatives like the Cambridge Neighbourhoods Design Code, GCSP is tackling inequality and improving access to green spaces in some of the region's most deprived areas.

- Apprenticeship and Talent Development: A structured programme supporting future planners through hands-on experience and academic study, ensuring a strong pipeline of planning professionals.
- ‘Planning for the Natural Environment Award’ at the national Planning Awards 2025.

The award, presented on 11 June, celebrates the GCSP’s innovative approach to reversing biodiversity loss caused through development. The service triumphed over five other outstanding projects shortlisted in the category.

Back in 2022, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning’s Natural Environment Team recognised the imminent need to provide reliable solutions for developers to offset environmental damage through development. They updated the guidance in their Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in June 2022, which included the emerging Environment Act legislation changes requiring any new developments to improve nature in the area by at least 10%. The changes ensured new projects actively benefitted local wildlife and green spaces through the planning system.

With strong support from Council Members and Leaders, in 2023/24, GCSP took this further by enabling the creation of a network of new Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) habitat banks across the Greater Cambridge area. They worked in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council, The Wildlife Trust, Cambridge Past, Present and Future, and others, to identify sites where habitats could be created or enhanced. This leap of faith placed Greater Cambridge ahead of the curve nationally and positioned them as early adopters of BNG offsite initiatives.

Designated areas of land allow developers to offset the environmental impact of their projects in a way that benefits nature long-term. Instead of replacing lost biodiversity directly on the development site, which is often not possible, developers instead pay for the creation and maintenance of habitat elsewhere in the area. Each habitat bank must legally be monitored and managed over the next 30 years.

Peter Sandford and Chris Poulton

3 July 2025

Email: cllr.sandford@scambs.gov.uk (Peter) or Chris.Poulton@cambridgeshire.gov.uk (Chris)

Mobiles: 07985 425414 (Peter) or 07971 594037 (Chris)

**Minutes of the Annual meeting of Croxton Parish Council
Held on Wednesday 21 May 2025 in the Village Hall at 7.30 pm**

Present: Councillors: Cllr Paul Bayer, Cllr Gareth Lowson, Cllr Karl Parish, Cllr Linda Sach and Cllr Martin Sach.
In attendance: 2 members of the public County Cllr Mandy Smith, District Cllr Mark Howell, District Cllr Peter Sandford, and Mr Ben Stoeher (Locum Clerk).

1. To elect a Chairman and to receive the declaration of acceptance of office

RESOLVED to elect Cllr Bayer as Chairman. (Prop PB, 2nd KP, unanimous)

2. To elect a Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED to elect Cllr Lowson as Vice-Chairman. (Prop MS, 2nd KP, unanimous)

3. To appoint committees, working groups or any representatives on any other organisation or authority deemed necessary and conduct annual reviews of policies

RESOLVED that there should be no committees or working groups at present.

3.1 Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Risk Assessment and other policies review

RESOLVED to make amendments to grammar in section 5 of the Standing Orders and to add in various options in the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

RESOLVED that the following policies be updated for Croxton and adopted: Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Risk Management.

3.2 Assets, Land, Insurance policy and fidelity guarantee review

The asset register was reviewed.

The insurance policy was reviewed and noted that there should be no assets cover included.

RESOLVED to renew the policy for one year and that the Chairman should make the arrangements.

Public participation on agenda items and matters of mutual interest (includes reports from County and District Councillors and representation by members of the public)

No reports had been received from the County and District Councillors.

4. Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

4.1 To receive written apologies for absence and reasons

Apologies for absence had been received from County Cllr C Poulson, District Cllr Mark Howell, District Cllr Peter Sandford and J Burkett.

4.2 To receive declarations of interests from councillors on items on the agenda and to receive and grant any written requests for dispensations

None.

1.3 To receive and grant any written requests for dispensations

None.

5. To approve the minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 17 April 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record, after an amendment under item 3.2 to change "the majority" to "all" and "existing" to "new".

6. To consider any resolutions from the Annual Parish Meeting

None.

7. To consider any matters arising from the last or a previous meeting including

7.1 (7) To consider a resident's request for a defibrillator in the village

The resident reported and explained the options and the pros and cons. The cost of a defibrillator inside the Village Hall would be £1,474. The equipment would be registered

and volunteers would be able to access it. The cost of an external defibrillator would be £1,923.99.

It was noted that British Heart Foundation grant applications open in June.

RESOLVED to proceed with the internal option and a volunteer rota.

RESOLVED to approve costs up to £1474.00 but that the resident should apply for a grant to reduce the costs if possible.

RESOLVED to obtain permission from the Village Hall Committee.

8. Finance, procedure & risk assessment

8.1 To approve any payments

RESOLVED to reimburse Cllr Parish the sum of £20.00 for the purchase of a wreath.

8.2 To consider any urgent works required because of risk

None.

8.3 To consider the insurance policy renewal and whether any changes are needed

Taken earlier.

8.4 To consider any Internal Auditor's report received during the year

RESOLVED to note that the Internal Auditor's report was due to be received shortly.

8.5 To prepare and approve the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 of the Annual Return)

RESOLVED having considered the Annual Governance Statement, that all the questions be answered "Yes" except for question 9 which was not applicable, The Parish Council only took office in March and was not aware of any previous issues.

8.6 To consider and approve the Accounting Statements (Section 2 of the Annual Return)

The Accounting Statements were reviewed and approved.

8.7 To agree to declare exemption from External Audit

RESOLVED to declare exemption from External Audit.

9. To consider any correspondence received

None.

10. To consider any planning or tree works applications received

10.1 Planning applications

10.1.1 25/01657/FUL - Land At Cambridge Road - Installation and operation of a renewable energy generation and storage station comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays together with battery storage containers, inverter/transformer units, control house, substations, onsite grid connection equipment, storage containers, site access, access gates, internal access tracks, security measures, other ancillary infrastructure, landscaping and biodiversity enhancement

The Parish Council made the following comments:

The screening would only be effective after 15 years. The Parish Council would want assurances that any works to the road surface were fully re-established. A Health and Safety report on exposure is required. The Council would want battery storage site to be time limited to 35 years to fit in with the solar farm installation. There was no information about radio frequency interference in the application. Heavy vehicles would impact the road surfaces. "Beautification" in Toseland Road was not defined or detailed in the application.

RESOLVED that the Chairman should submit the response.

10.2 SCDC Decision notices, appeals notices, enforcement notices and planning correspondence for information only

None.

10.3 Tree works applications

None.

11. To consider members' items and reports for information only unless otherwise stated

- 11.1 To note that the Parish Council purchased a poppy wreath for VE Day
Noted – taken earlier.
- 11.2 A428 Legacy Funding – Footpath along A428
A meeting was required with the new County Councillor to discuss de-trunking options and plans.
RESOLVED that Cllr Bayer should take this forward and discuss the matter with the new County Councillor.
- 11.3 A428 updates
Cllr Bayer reported on recent closures and issues. He is reporting issues to Skanska. Consistency in approach is needed as there is currently a different process for each closure.
- 11.4 East West Rail Updates
RESOLVED to note that the project was ongoing and there was no update. A new consultation is due soon.
12. **Closure and dates of future meetings**
RESOLVED that the next meeting should be on 23 July at 7.30 pm.
There was no further business and the meeting closed at 9.42 pm.

SignedChairmandate.



Clerk's Compliance

Clerk's Compliance
113 Garden Walk
Royston, Herts
SG8 7JN

cfbiggs@me.com / 07769 253 264

27th June 2025

Parish Clerk
Croxtan Parish Council
By email

Dear Mr Stoehr,

Internal Audit for the Year Ending 24/25

I am writing to confirm that the internal audit for Croxtan Parish Council for the financial year ending 24/25 has now been completed.

The audit was carried out in accordance with the proper practices as set out in the Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England guidance. I have reviewed samples of the Council's financial records, systems of internal control, and relevant documentation.

As you have previously mentioned, due to the lack of documented information and evidence of alignment with proper practices before your joining the council, it is not possible to confirm whether any of the internal control objectives for the 24/25 period have been fully met.

However, it is worth noting that the controls which have been implemented recently seem well documented and do meet many of the requirements. I look forward to auditing these for the 25/26 FY should you wish to appoint me again.

Enclosed with this letter are:

- Completed AGAR Internal Audit report
- An invoice for the works undertaken

Should you require any further information or clarification regarding the audit or the points raised in the report, I would be happy to assist either by email/teams/phone.

Yours sincerely,

Cameron Biggs
Internal Auditor

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 Form 2

To be completed only by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other smaller authorities* where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less, that meet the qualifying criteria, and that wish to CERTIFY themselves as EXEMPT from a limited assurance review

Guidance notes on completing Form 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25

1. Every smaller authority in England where the higher of gross income **or** gross expenditure was £25,000 or less **must**, after the end of each financial year, complete Form 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices*, unless the authority:
 - a) does not meet the qualifying criteria for exemption; or
 - b) does not wish to certify itself as exempt
2. Smaller authorities where the higher of all gross annual income **or** gross annual expenditure **does not exceed** £25,000 and that meet the qualifying criteria as set out in the Certificate of Exemption **are able to declare themselves exempt** from sending the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor for a limited assurance review **provided** the authority **completes**:
 - a) The **Certificate of Exemption**, page 3 and returns a copy of it to the external auditor **either** by email **or** by post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2025**. Failure to do so will result in reminder letter(s) for which the Authority will be charged £40 +VAT for each letter; and
 - b) The **Annual Governance and Accountability Return (Form 2)** which is made up of:
 - c) **Annual Internal Audit Report (page 4)** must be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - d) **Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement (page 5)** must be completed and approved by the authority.
 - e) **Section 2 – Accounting Statements (page 6)** must be completed and approved by the authority. **NOTE: Authorities certifying themselves as exempt SHOULD NOT send the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor.**
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1 Annual Governance Statement **before** approving Section 2 Accounting Statements and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2025**.

Publication Requirements

Smaller authorities **must** publish various documents 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. These include:

- **Certificate of Exemption**, page 3
- **Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25**, page 4
- **Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25**, page 5
- **Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25**, page 6
- Analysis of variances
- Bank reconciliation
- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and other information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Limited Assurance Review

Any smaller authority may request a limited assurance review. If so, the authority should not certify itself as exempt or complete the Certificate of Exemption. Instead it should complete Form 3 of the AGAR 2024/25 and return it to the external auditor together with the supporting documentation requested by the external auditor. The cost to the authority for the review will be **£210 +VAT**.

Provided that the authority certifies itself as exempt, and completes and publishes the documents listed under 'Publication Requirements', there is no requirement for the authority to have a review.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Guidance notes on completing Form 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25, Sections 1 and 2

- An authority that wishes to declare itself exempt from the requirement for a limited assurance review must do so at a meeting of the authority after 31 March 2025. It should not submit its Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor. However, as part of a more proportionate regime, the authority **must** comply with the requirements of the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.
- The Certificate of Exemption must be returned to the external auditor no later than **30 June 2025**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT for each letter.
- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR and the Certificate of Exemption. Proper Practices are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty), and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness at the meeting at which it is signed off.
- You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- The authority must publish numerical and narrative explanations for significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 6**. Guidance is provided in the *Practitioners' Guide** which may assist.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2024) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2025).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish, on the authority website/webpage, the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2025**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes been completed?		
	Have the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights been published?		
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?		
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', is an explanation available for publication?		
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?		
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?		
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?		
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2025 been reconciled to Box 8?		
	Is an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 available, should a question be raised by a local elector and/or an interested party?		
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? (<i>Local Councils only</i>)		

***Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices**, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

Certificate of Exemption – AGAR 2024/25 Form 2

To be completed by smaller authorities where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure did not exceed £25,000 in the year of account ended 31 March 2025, and that wish to certify themselves as exempt from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015

There is no requirement to have a limited assurance review or to submit an Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor, **provided** that the authority has certified itself as exempt at a meeting of the authority after 31 March 2025 and a completed Certificate of Exemption is submitted no later than **30 June 2025** notifying the external auditor.

CROXTON PARISH COUNCIL

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

certifies that during the financial year 2024/25, the higher of the authority's total gross income for the year **or** total gross annual expenditure, for the year did not exceed **£25,000**

Total annual gross income for the authority 2024/25:

£4,530

ENTER AMOUNT £00,000

Total annual gross expenditure for the authority 2024/25:

£2,144

ENTER AMOUNT £00,000

There are certain circumstances in which an authority will be **unable to certify itself as exempt**, so that a limited assurance review will still be required. If an authority is **unable to confirm the statements below then it cannot certify itself as exempt** and it **must** submit the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return Form 3 to the external auditor to undertake a limited assurance review for which a fee of **£210 +VAT** will be payable.

By signing this **Certificate of Exemption** you are confirming that:

- The authority was in existence on 1st April 2021
- In relation to the preceding financial year (2023/24), the external auditor **has not**:
 - issued a public interest report in respect of the authority or any entity connected with it
 - made a statutory recommendation to the authority, relating to the authority or any entity connected with it
 - issued an advisory notice under paragraph 1(1) of Schedule 8 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 ("the Act"), and has not withdrawn the notice
 - commenced judicial review proceedings under section 31(1) of the Act
 - made an application under section 28(1) of the Act for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, and the application has not been withdrawn nor has the court refused to make the declaration
- The court has not declared an item of account unlawful after a person made an appeal under section 28(3) of the Act.

If the above statements apply and the authority neither received gross income, nor incurred gross expenditure, exceeding £25,000, then the Certificate of Exemption can be signed and a copy submitted to the external auditor **either** by email **or** by post (not both).

The Annual Internal Audit Report, Annual Governance Statement, Accounting Statements, an analysis of variances and the bank reconciliation plus the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 including the period for the exercise of public rights still need to be fully completed and, along with a copy of this certificate, published on the authority website/webpage* before 1 July 2025.

Signing this certificate confirms the authority will comply with the publication requirements.

Signed by the Responsible Financial Officer

Date

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

21/05/2025

I confirm that this Certificate of Exemption was approved by this authority on this date:

21/05/2025

Signed by Chair

Date

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

21/05/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

8.7

MINUTE REFERENCE

Generic email address of Authority

Telephone number

CLERK@CROXTON.ORG.UK

ENTER GENERIC EMAIL ADDRESS

01954 210241

NUMBER

*Published web address

ENTER PUBLIC WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

WWW.CROXTON-PC.GOV.UK

ONLY this Certificate of Exemption should be returned EITHER by email OR by post (not both) as soon as possible after certification to your external auditor, but no later than 30 June 2025. Reminder letters for late submission will incur a charge of £40 + VAT.

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

CROXTON PARISH COUNCIL

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

During the financial year ended 31 March 2025, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2024/25 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.		✓	
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.		✓	
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.		✓	
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.		✓	
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.		✓	
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			✓
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.		✓	
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.		✓	
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.		✓	
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.		✓	
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick "not covered")		✓	
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.		✓	
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).		✓	
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).		✓	

O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

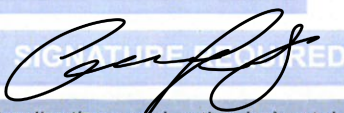
Date(s) internal audit undertaken

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

DD/MM/YYYY 27/06/2025 Y DD/MM/YYYY

EN CAMERON BIGGS RNAL AUDITOR

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

27/06/2025 Y

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

CROXTON PARISH COUNCIL
ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

	Agreed		
	Yes	No	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	☒	☐	<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	☒	☐	<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	☒	☐	<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	☒	☐	<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	☒	☐	<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	☒	☐	<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	☒	☐	<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	☒	☐	<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
	☐	☐	☒

*For any statement to which the response is 'no', an explanation must be published

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

21/05/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

8.5

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Information required by the Transparency Code (not part of the Annual Governance Statement)

The authority website/webpage is up to date and the information required by the Transparency Code has been published.

Yes ☒ No ☐

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

CROXTON PARISH COUNCIL

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	48,935	51,535	<i>Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.</i> <i>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.</i>
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	4,500	4,500	<i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>
3. (+) Total other receipts	0	30	<i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>
4. (-) Staff costs	0	0	<i>Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.</i>
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	<i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i>
6. (-) All other payments	1,900	2,144	<i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>
7. (=) Balances carried forward	51,535	53,921	<i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	51,535	53,921	<i>The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.</i>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	3201	3201	<i>The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.</i>
10. Total borrowings	0	0	<i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		<i>The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.</i>
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	<i>The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.</i>

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

20/05/2025

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

21/05/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

8.6

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

**CROXTON PARISH COUNCIL CASH BOOK RECONCILIATION
FY ENDING 31 MARCH 2025**

Reconciliation from cash book

B/F Bank & cash	£51,534.53	Payments (excl transfers)	£2,144.00
Receipts	£4,530.09	C/F	£53,920.62
	<u>56064.62</u>		<u>56064.62</u>
BALANCE B/F	£51,534.53	HSBC Current Account	2348.62
RECEIPTS (REC @ BANK)	£4,530.09	HSBC Savings Account	51572.00
PAYMENTS (REC @ BANK)	-£2,144.00	O/S @ BANK	£0.00
BALANCE AT BANK	£53,920.62	C/F	<u>£53,920.62</u>
RECEIPTS O/S @ BANK	£0.00		
PAYMENTS O/S @ BANK	£0.00		
TOTAL C/F	£53,920.62		


RFO
20/5/25

CROXTON PARISH COUNCIL			PAYMENTS FY2024/25												
Date	REF			TOTAL	VAT	NET	ADVERTISING	AGENCY SERVICES	VILLAGE HALL	ASSETS MAINTENANCE	BANK CHARGES	GENERAL ADMIN	SALARIES	S137 & GRANTS	RESERVES
		O/S AT BANK END FY 2025													
		SALARIES		0.00		0.00							0.00		
		TOTAL OUTSTANDING FY2025		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
		SALARIES	SEE CONFIDENTIAL CASHBOOK	0.00		0.00							0.00		
06-May-24	CHG	HSBC	Bank Charges	14.00		14.00					14				
15-May-24	BP	Croxton Village Hall		899.00		899.00			899.00						
15-May-24	BP	Zurich	Insurance Policy	214.00		214.00						214.00			
05-Jun-24	CHG	HSBC	Bank Charges	14.00		14.00					14				
06-Jul-24	CHG	HSBC	Bank Charges	14.00		14.00					14				
05-Aug-24	CHG	HSBC	Bank Charges	14.00		14.00					14				
05-Sep-24	CHG	HSBC	Bank Charges	14.00		14.00					14				
06-Oct-24	CHG	HSBC	Bank Charges	14.00		14.00					14				
30-Oct-24	BP	PKF Littlejohn	Audit Fees	96.00		96.00						96			
05-Nov-24	CHG	HSBC	Bank Charges	14.00		14.00					14				
06-Dec-24	CHG	HSBC	Bank Charges	14.00		14.00					14				
05-Jan-25	CHG	HSBC	Bank Charges	14.00		14.00					14				
05-Feb-25	CHG	HSBC	Bank Charges	14.00		14.00					14				
08-Mar-25	CHG	HSBC	Bank Charges	14.00		14.00					14				
13-Mar-25	BP	Croxton Village Hall	INV Jan-Dec2024	781.00		781.00			781						
				0.00		0.00									
		TOTAL PAYMENTS		2144.00	0.00	2144.00	0.00	0.00	1680.00	0.00		310.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
		O/S AT BANK													
		SALARIES		0.00		0.00							0.00		
		TOTAL O/S		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00


 RFO
 20/5/25

IRISH COUNCIL		RECEIPTS FY2024/25													RESERVES	
REF			GROSS	VAT REFUND	Net	AGENCY SERVICES	ALLOTMENTS & CRAFT	BURIAL GROUNDS	PRECEPT	GENERAL ADMIN & MISC.	INTEREST	RECREATION GROUND	SPECIAL PROJECTS	VILLAGE MAINTENANCE	WORBOYS GRAVE FUND - COIF	FLOODLIGHTS
	OUTSTANDING AT BANK FY2024															
	TOTAL		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	RECEIPTS FY2025															
CR	SCDC	Precept	4500.00		4500.00				4500							
INT	HSBC	Bank Interest	8.03		8.03						8.03					
INT	HSBC	Bank Interest	7.50		7.50						7.5					
INT	HSBC	Bank Interest	7.42		7.42						7.42					
INT	HSBC	Bank Interest	7.14		7.14						7.14					
	TOTAL		4530.09	0.00	4530.09	0.00	0.00	0.00	4500.00	0.00	30.09	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	OUTSTANDING AT BANK															
	TOTAL		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	TOTAL B/F & RECEIPTS		#REF!								720.02					


 RFO
 20/5/25



New IT Policy Mandate for Smaller Authorities

What You Need to Know

For parish & town clerks and those who administer websites for councils.

What we'll cover

- Why IT policies are now mandatory: Risks councils face without one
- Assertion 10 explained: What the new governance requirement means
- What goes in a good IT policy
- Common mistakes to avoid: Language, redundancy, unrealistic rules
- Next steps for councils: Templates, adoption process, training, and reviews

What's it all about?

2025 edition of the *Practitioners' Guide states:*

- It is now mandatory for smaller authorities to have an IT policy.
- Starting April 2025, all councils with an annual turnover under £25,000 must adopt a formal IT policy as part of their Annual Governance Statement—(Assertion 10: Digital and Data Compliance)

Assertion 10 - Digital and data compliance

(added to clarify data compliance, previously covered under Assertion 3)

Note: Assertion 10 will not appear on the **AGAR until 2025-26**

By then, the authority needs to have taken the following actions:

(1.47) Email management - Every authority must have a generic email account hosted on an **authority-owned domain**, for example:

clerk@abcparishcouncil.gov.uk or **clerk@abcparishcouncil.org.uk**

Not **abcparishclerk@gmail.com** or **abcparishclerk@outlook.com**

Why is that important?

- **The Council does not own those free platforms**
- **The data contained in it is not really yours**
- **The Council has no legal rights over it**
- **Getting access without the logins is impossible**
- **Creates a GDPR exposures**
- **No authenticity of message – anyone can set up a free email address!**

What is an IT policy?

A formal IT policy provides a simple, central document outlining how the Council's digital tools and information should be used and how they are managed securely and professionally.



(1.48) All smaller authorities (excluding parish meetings) must meet legal requirements for all existing websites regardless of what domain is being used.

(1.49) All websites must meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 AA and the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (where applicable).

(1.50) All websites must include published documentation as specified in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Transparency code for smaller authorities (where applicable).

(1.51) All smaller authorities, including parish meetings, must follow both the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018.

(1.52) All smaller authorities, including parish meetings, must process personal data with care and in line with the principles of data protection.

(1.53) The DPA 2018 supplements the GDPR and classifies an authority as both a Data Controller and a Data Processor.

(1.54) All smaller authorities (excl. parish meetings) must also have an IT policy.

This explains how everyone - clerks, members and other staff - should conduct authority business in a secure and legal way when using IT equipment and software.

This relates to the use of **authority-owned** and **personal equipment**.



(1.55) The authority needs to approve the annual governance statement by resolution of members of the authority meeting as a whole and in advance of the authority approving the accounting statements in Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

The Chair of the meeting and the Clerk need to sign and date the annual governance statement and enter a minute reference.

Why?

- As local authorities shift more of their operations online—emailing agendas, sharing sensitive documents, updating websites, and even engaging on social media—having clear digital protocols has become essential.
- Councils store and use people's data
- Without proper guidance, authorities risk being exposed from the following possibilities...

Areas of risk include:

- **Data leaks** from unsecured platforms (email, websites, shared files) or mishandled personal information.
- **Lost communications** when staff or councillors use personal accounts that are inaccessible when they leave (Gmail, Hotmail etc not owned by the Council).
- **Regulatory failures**, such as non-compliance with accessibility laws or mishandling Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.
- **Cybersecurity threats** including phishing, malware, or compromised devices & email accounts.

What goes in a good IT policy:

- **Scope and purpose**
- **Official email protocol**
- **Data protection, storage and GDPR compliance**
- **Website standards & accessibility (WCAG 2.2)**
- **Cybersecurity basics**
- **Social media use and boundaries**

Key Elements of an Effective Council IT Policy

Here's some of the things you should consider go into your policy, and why:

1. Purpose and Scope

Clearly define who the policy applies to:

- **Councillors**
- **Clerks**
- **Contractors**
- **Volunteers**

Example: “This policy covers all personnel using IT systems for council business, regardless of whether they are using council-owned or personal devices.”

Key Elements of an Effective Council IT Policy

2. Email Use Protocol

- Require the use of an official, generic council email (e.g. clerk@yourparishcouncil.gov.uk) for all correspondence on the council's own domain.
- Why? If communications are tied to personal emails (e.g. helen.parishclerk@gmail.com), you risk losing access to records and violating GDPR if staff change.
- Establish permanent, shared email addresses for continuity and compliance
- Prohibit email forwarding to private accounts
- Outline password requirements and access control (security measures)

Example: The council must own the domain name – having email and data stored on free platforms are not owned by the council and the data is not completely under your control.

Key Elements of an Effective Council IT Policy

3. Data Protection Responsibilities

- Reinforce the council's role as a Data Controller & Processor under GDPR.

Example: "No personal data should be stored unencrypted on personal devices or cloud platforms without council approval."

- Refer to the existing **Data Protection Policy** – if you don't have one, consider defining in the IT policy what data the council stores, what it does with it, how long it stores it and what the rights are for individuals – or create a separate policy

Example: The council will retain emails for a maximum of xx years, after which they will be deleted as part of an annual data clearance. Emails that relate to regulatory items that require the data to be kept longer will be stored securely in accordance with that requirement.

- Provide clear steps for how the council manages FOIs and subject access requests (SARs)

Key Elements of an Effective Council IT Policy

4. Website and Accessibility Standards

- Ensure the council defines its understanding of website rules and complies with WCAG 2.2 AA standards and publishes required content (minutes, AGAR, councillor information, etc.) according to Transparency requirements – the former being defined in the Accessibility Statement (as required since 2018)
- Real-world risk: A council failing to meet accessibility standards or omitting key documents risks breaching the Public Sector Website regulations or Transparency Code and face public challenges or audit issues.
- Assign a named individual to maintain the site (at least 2 admins)
- Schedule regular audits for accessibility and link functionality

Key Elements of an Effective Council IT Policy

5. Use of Council-Owned Devices

- Outline expectations for those using council equipment.
- Example: “Council laptops must not have software installed without prior consent.” or “The Council devices will not be used for non-Council business”
- Specify ownership of devices and procedures when roles end provide guidance on requesting tech support or reporting issues as well as the returning of hardware on exit.
- Example: device will be returned before leaving Post/Role with access codes

Key Elements of an Effective Council IT Policy

6. Cybersecurity Best Practices

- Require anti-virus protection, regular updates, and two-factor authentication where possible.

Example: A councillor opens a phishing email from a spoofed HMRC address, inadvertently installing malware.

E.g. Consider defining risks from Phishing and for links from emails not to be clicked.

- Train staff to recognise suspicious emails
- Ban password reuse across personal and council logins

Key Elements of an Effective Council IT Policy

7. Social Media and Communications

- Set boundaries around public communication on platforms like Facebook or local forums.

Example: “Only the clerk or chair is authorised to post on the council’s official social media pages.”

- Clarify who can post, respond, or moderate online content
- Define appropriate tone and messaging
- Consider preventing comments – outbound only – directing viewers to the official council website.

Key Elements of an Effective Council IT Policy

8. Training and Review Cycle

- Regular training ensures everyone understands their role in keeping the council secure.

Example: “Councillors and staff will complete annual refresher sessions on IT use and data protection.”

- Define who is responsible for reviewing and updating the policy
- Recommend annual reviews at a minimum

Key Elements of an Effective Council IT Policy

9. Common Pitfalls to Avoid

When drafting your IT policy, steer clear of the following:

- Overly technical language – Keep it accessible for all councillors.
- Redundancy – Don't replicate your Data Protection Policy; just link to it.
- Unrealistic rules – Avoid policies no one can reasonably follow (e.g. requiring weekly backups without the means to perform them).
- Laxity with personal accounts – Don't permit the use of private emails for council business.
- Follow the process – make sure that when people leave, the process of hardware and software access & control is followed.
- Ensure everyone understand theirs & the Council's responsibilities
- Consult an expert on making sure the technical scope is correct.
- DON'T JUST COPY SOMEONE ELSE'S POLICY!

Key Elements of an Effective Council IT Policy

10. Data Breaches and Risks

- Define the procedure and process the Council must follow (response times & actions) if it becomes aware of a data breach

Example: if an email account of the council's owned domain gets hacked by an unknown party – what are the actions and processes the council will follow, such as running a virus check on devices, changing passwords, ensuring 2factor authentication is enable, who to contact.

- Assess the risk points

Example: Understand where the councils stores data that may contain individual data –email accounts, computers, phones, a cloud storage service, website admin area – e.g does the website store data anywhere from forms submitted?

What to do next:

If you don't already have an IT policy in place:

- Use a template from your County Association, SLCC, or NALC as a starting point.
- Customise it to reflect your specific council setup and digital tools & processes.
- Adopt the policy formally at a council meeting and record the decision in the minutes.
- Ensure training so all members understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Annually review the policy – has anything changed (process or equipment) since the last review?



.gov.uk

It's the ultimate official domain for a Council.

- Elevated level of security
- Improves compliance
- Improves GDPR – and FOI & SAR situations
- Added benefits and security services
- More professional
- Improved authenticity of message.

Final Word

- This is more than a paperwork exercise.
- A well-considered IT policy protects your council's data, maintains legal compliance, and supports good digital governance.
- Now that it's a formal part of the Practitioners' Guide, it's not optional—it's essential.
- If you're unsure how to proceed, your internal auditor or your Association is a good place to begin.
- Better to be proactive now than face challenges down the line.

DRAFT

Parish Council Information Technology (IT) Policy of [insert parish council name]

Version 1.1 – Adopted on [Insert Date]

1. Purpose

This policy defines how Eaton Bray Parish Council manages its use of information technology, in line with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities (2015) and the 2025 edition of the Practitioners' Guide. It ensures the council's digital operations are transparent, secure, and compliant with data protection laws.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all **councillors, employees, volunteers, and contractors** who access or manage the council's IT resources, including but not limited to:

- Desktop and laptop computers, tablets, and smartphones
- Email and cloud-based systems
- Council website, social media, and digital publication tools
- Video conferencing and messaging platforms
- Personal devices used under Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) provisions

3. Governance and Oversight

IT Oversight: The Clerk is the designated Data Protection Officer (DPO) and IT Systems Administrator.

IT Sub-Committee: Oversees implementation, security, and compliance, meeting quarterly.

4. Data Protection & Security

All processing of personal data shall comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Privacy Policy: All data collection, processing, and subject rights are governed by the council's Privacy Policy, available on the council website. All users must familiarise themselves with it.

Access and Storage: Data is stored securely, with access granted only to authorised personnel based on necessity.

Retention: Personal data will be retained in accordance with the council's Data Retention Schedule and securely deleted when no longer needed. [NEED DATA RETENTION DATE INFO]

Security Controls:

- Password protection and multi-factor authentication where applicable
- Regular updates and anti-malware software
- Backups of essential data in secure locations

5. Use of Personal Devices (BYOD)

Authorised Use Only: Councillors and staff may use personal devices for council business only if explicitly authorised and subject to compliance with this policy.

Security Requirements: Devices must be protected by strong passwords, encryption (where possible), and up-to-date antivirus software.

Access to council data on personal devices must be controlled and subject to regular review.

Data Separation: Council data must be kept separate from personal data using dedicated apps or storage areas.

6. Use of Personal Email Addresses

Prohibited Practice: The use of personal email accounts for council business is strictly prohibited. All council correspondence must be conducted through official council-provided email addresses. Emails from council-owned domains must not be forwarded to personal email addresses.

Monitoring and Compliance: Any breaches will be investigated, and appropriate measures taken in line with the council's disciplinary or governance procedures.

Email Retention: All council emails will be stored in compliance with the GDPR and Freedom of Information requirements.

7. IT Infrastructure & Support

Asset Register: Maintained for all council-owned hardware and software.

Maintenance: All devices must be regularly updated and checked for compliance with this policy.

Training: Users will be given training on IT systems, cybersecurity, data handling, and transparency responsibilities.

8. Monitoring and Review

Annual Review: This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or requirement changes.

Audits: Periodic internal audits will check for compliance with security and transparency requirements.

9. Data Breach Process and Protocols

The Parish Council is committed to responding promptly and effectively to any data breaches to minimise risk and comply with UK GDPR requirements.

10. Definition of a Data Breach

A data breach is a security incident that results in the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data. Examples include:

- Loss or theft of devices containing personal data
- Unauthorised access to council email accounts or files
- Sending personal data to the wrong recipient
- Malware or ransomware attacks compromising council systems

10.1 Reporting a Breach

Immediate Notification: Any councillor, employee, or contractor who becomes aware of a data breach must report it immediately to the Clerk (Data Protection Officer).

Initial Response: The Clerk will assess the severity and scope of the breach and determine if mitigation steps are required (e.g., changing passwords, disabling access, enabling 2FA).

10.2 Investigation

A full investigation will be conducted by the Clerk or designated officer within 72 hours of the breach being discovered.

The breach will be logged, including:

- Date and time of breach
- Type and volume of data affected
- Cause and extent of the breach
- Actions taken to address the breach

10.3 Notification Requirements

If the breach is likely to result in a risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals, the council must notify the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) within 72 hours.

* If the breach poses a high risk to the individuals affected, those individuals must also be informed without undue delay, outlining:

- The nature of the breach
- Likely consequences
- Measures taken to mitigate the risk
- Contact information for further support

10.4 Remediation and Review

- The Clerk and IT Committee will ensure lessons are learned and policies, procedures, or training are updated as necessary.
- Technical fixes or security upgrades will be prioritised to prevent recurrence.
- Breach logs will be reviewed periodically to identify systemic issues.

11. Approval and Adoption

This policy was adopted by Eaton Bray Parish Council on [Insert Date] and will be reviewed annually or following a significant incident or legislative change.

Signed:

[Chair of the Parish Council] – [Date]

[Clerk to the Parish Council] – [Date]