

# Cawston Parish Council

Councillors: R Bishop, G Heaton, D Richards, P Harrison, K. Boxall,  
G. Shaw, U. Mistry.

**Members Present:** Cllr Rich Bishop (RB), Cllr Kate Boxall (KB), Cllr Paul Harrison (PH), Cllr Guy Heaton (GH). Cllr Dean Richards (DR)

**Public in Attendance:** None

**Press in Attendance:** None

**Principal Council Representatives:** None

**Officers in Attendance:** Helen Stewart (Parish Clerk & Minute taker)

**Clerk:** Helen Stewart, Cawston Community Hall, Scholars Drive, Rugby, CV22 7GU Email: [clerk@cawstonpc.org](mailto:clerk@cawstonpc.org)

**Apologies:** Cllr Graham Shaw (GS), Cllr Umesh Mistry (UM)

**Absent:** None

## **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF CAWSTON PARISH COUNCIL (210) held on TUESDAY 20<sup>th</sup> MAY 2025 at the Community Hall, Scholars Drive, Cawston, commencing at 6.30pm.**

### **C22-509      Election of the Chair**

**RESOLVED:** Cllr Bishop was elected by a majority as Chairman for 2025-26 following a proposal from Cllr Harrison which was seconded by Cllr Boxall. Votes in favour: 3 (KB PH RB) Cllr Richards voted against.

No other nominations were made.

### **C22-510      Election of the Vice-Chair**

**RESOLVED:** Cllr Boxall was elected by a majority as Vice-Chair for 2025-26 following a proposal from Cllr Bishop which was seconded by Cllr Harrison. Votes in favour: 3 (RB PH KB) Cllr Richards voted against.

No other nominations were made.

*Cllr Heaton arrived at this point in the meeting.*

### **C22-511      Apologies**

Noted from Cllr Shaw and Cllr Mistry.

### **C22-512      Declarations**

Each year Parish Councillors resubmit their signed Declarations of Interest and Code of Conduct documents. These were issued via email in advance of the meeting. All documents were completed and submitted to the Parish Clerk except for Cllr Richards who needs to submit both documents. Cllr Richards needs to update and submit his Declarations of Interests.

**ACTION:** Submit documentation to the Parish Clerk – DR & RB

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## **C22-513      Constitution Documents**

**RESOLVED:** The following documents were reviewed accepted unanimously following a proposal Cllr Bishop from which was seconded by Cllr Heaton.

Standing Orders  
Financial Regulations  
Scheme of Delegation to the Proper Officer  
Civility and Respect Pledge  
Risk Management Policy

## **C22-514      Groups and Committees**

**RESOLVED** unanimously to continue with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee and keep its Terms of Reference as is. This was proposed by Cllr Bishop and seconded by Cllr Harrison.  
Membership is noted as: Cllrs Boxall, Cllr Mistry and several members of the public.

**RESOLVED** unanimously to keep the Finance and HR Committee and its Terms of Reference. This was proposed by Cllr Bishop and seconded by Cllr Boxall.  
Membership is noted as: Cllrs Boxall, Shaw and Harrison.

## **C22-515      Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024-25**

- a. The report from the Internal Auditor was noted by members.
- b. **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept the Annual Governance Statements for 2024-25. This was proposed by Cllr Harrison and seconded by Cllr Bishop.
- c. **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept the Annual Accounting Statements for 2024-25. This was proposed by Cllr Bishop and seconded by Cllr Heaton.

## **C22-516      Future Meeting Dates**

The meeting schedule for the forthcoming year is set as:  
15<sup>th</sup> July 2025 7pm Cawston Community Hall  
16<sup>th</sup> September 2025 7pm Cawston Community Hall  
18<sup>th</sup> November 2025 7pm Cawston Community Hall  
20<sup>th</sup> January 2026 7pm Cawston Community Hall  
17<sup>th</sup> March 2026 7pm Cawston Community Hall

## **C22-517      Chairman's Report**

Cllr Bishop gave a report as Chairman of Cawston Parish Council for 2024-25.

Appendix A.

*Meeting ended 6.47pm*

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## **APPENDIX A – CHAIRMAN’S REPORT 2024-25 (AUTHOR CLLR RICH BISHOP)**

At the end of the Council year, it falls to the Chair to write an end of year report. This has been my second year as Chair of Cawston Parish Council but marks the end of the 6th year as a Parish Councillor.

A year ago, I commented that the 2023-24 year had been the toughest in my time as a Parish Councillor, and although I’m pleased to report things have got better - I’m also disappointed that so much time, effort and money has been wasted yet again this year through the continued unnecessary adversarial behaviour. But I do genuinely believe the end is in sight here, and so, rather than dwell on the low morale they have caused in the year gone by - instead I want to focus on the positives and look forward.

As a Parish Council we helped to arrange or facilitate more community events this year, than ever before. With food festivals taking place throughout the year, our Christmas event bringing the community together, and a reimagining of the Annual Parish Assembly - turning a statutory duty into a vibrant community focused event - bringing together people such as:

Our fantastic Neighbourhood Plan team, led by Kate, supported by our Clerk, and Umesh, with many members of the public Linzi, Andrew, Christel, and Clive also giving up their time to help.

Neighbourhood Watch and Speed Watch were there - led by Lisa Chamberlin with the Neighbourhood Watch regional team showing up to support her.

We also had the police in attendance to listen to residents' concerns around speeding and anti-social behaviour. Who have said they want to work with other Parish Councils to run similar events.

I know one Parish Councilor around this table asked, “what is the point of having a Parish Assembly?” - well, it’s a legal duty for one. But also, when we put our mind to it, and councillors come together to volunteer their time - we can achieve events like that.

And as we look to the year ahead - there’s even more planned - with a continuation of that programme, and with us celebrating 10 years of this Community Hall, with another community event. Bringing together the diverse range of users of this hall, so show off what happens in this treasured asset.

A quick look back again though, and I wanted to pay tribute to Sam Bestwick who after stepping back from this council in May 2023 through ill health, stepped back up when we needed her, and continued to provide support and continuity to this council, until she, understandably stepped back again. Last year, I was delighted to be able to celebrate Sam’s contributions, and we will award her with Freedom of the Parish in recognition of selfless service to Cawston - appropriately while we celebrate the 10-year anniversary of this Community Hall, which she helped to create. Thank you again Sam!

May also sees local elections - and this year was no different. I want to also pay tribute to Peter Butlin who retired from the County Council this year. Peter and I will both tell you that we haven’t always seen eye-to-eye - but I respect him fully for the professional way he conducted himself in his County Council role. He was known to put aside party politics when it came to issues of this Parish. He and I met and spoke many times outside of these meetings - and there was always mutual respect between us. His professionalism and decorum in these meetings, and beyond, will be something I will miss. I know he plans to take a holiday or two, and get a much overdue hip replacement now, before taking on his next adventure. I will say though he didn’t exactly leap at the chance when I pointed out

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there were vacant seats on the Parish Council if he fancied it - but that may have been his hip holding him back. Thank you Peter Butlin for your service to the Parish.

We now have a new County Councillor, Dean Richards.

One of my final requests as Chair for the previous year was to set a new standard of transparency and accountability in this Parish Council. We have followed the traditional path of only publishing minutes when they've been signed off and being scared to talk publicly about issues between meetings. With the blessing of whoever is Chair next, I have asked the Clerk to start providing more detail in the minutes, and publishing draft minutes of our meetings, as soon as they are ready. And that will start with this meeting now, and this review of the year. From now, I look forward to showing the people of Cawston what their Parish Councillors have actually been up to - the hours of volunteering they put in for this community, and what they have achieved with that.

And while we discuss the Clerk and her role - I would just like to take a moment to thank her for her unwavering support for this council and our community over the last year. Yet again, she has been tied up in more red tape, and had her time wasted on more odd behaviour - but has persevered through, and with our Caretaker Rachel, has kept this Council and this Hall functioning throughout another challenging year. Thank you.

As a Parish Council we have the chance to have an even more positive impact on our community - when we concentrate on positivity, rather than holding ourselves back with unnecessary adversarial political games... so I look forward to the positive year ahead.

Thank you!