

Poulton and Pulford Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

Held at Pulford Village Hall at 7.00 pm on Wednesday 26 August 2026

1. Attendance

Apologies received from Cllr Peter Hynes, Cllr Richard Fair and Cllr Ashley Murray. Those present were Cllr D Ewins (Chairman), Cllr K Board, Cllr. G Evans, Cllr M Fay, Cllr N Franklin. The Clerk attended remotely.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillors were reminded of the requirement to keep their registers of interests up to date and to declare any relevant personal or prejudicial interests. No interests were declared.

3. Suspension of Standing Orders / Public Participation

Standing Orders were suspended to allow public participation.

Michael Harrington outlined a proposal for a shorter, single-lap Pulford Fast 5K, provisionally on Friday 6 August 2027, in addition to the established 10K planned for 21 March 2027. The race would start from the Straight Mile / Old Lane junction in Poulton and proceed along the Straight Mile, then along Wrexham Road and finally down Old Lane. The Straight Mile would need to be closed from approximately 7.00-7.20 pm, Wrexham Road would remain open Chester-bound and Old Lane would be closed for about 30 minutes until about 8.00pm. Around 500 runners and about 200 cars were anticipated. Parking options, including approaches to local farmers to use their fields and possible use of the disused airfield subject to Eaton Estate consent, were discussed, together with use of the Village Hall as an admin base.

The Council expressed support in principle and the Chairman thanked Mr Harrington for the efficient organisation of previous events.

Mr Harrington also raised concerns about whether the planned Severn Trent ~~about~~ works along Old Lane might affect the upcoming Chester Marathon on October 10th this year.

Action: The Chairman will contact Cllr Richard Fair and ask him to help Mr Harrington in making contact with the relevant farmer.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting and the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 27 May 2026 were approved as true and accurate records and signed by the Chairman.

It was agreed that the next Parish Council meeting would be held on 4 November 2026.

5. Progress Reports on Issues Carried Forward

5.1 Hedges, pavements and roads

The Council remained concerned about the hedge at the corner of Dodleston Lane and the B5445 (the "Homer Hedge"). Previous work had not been completed because suitable mechanical equipment was unavailable. The hedge continues to overhang the pavement and requires substantial cutting back; removal of accumulated debris could recover approximately 300 mm of pavement. CWAC intervention was considered necessary.

Action: The Chairman will continue liaison with Ruth Tothill, CWAC Senior Tree Officer regarding the height of the hedge. Stuart Bateman may visit the landowner; the Clerk has supplied the relevant contact details.

Concern was expressed at the short notice provided by Severn Trent for the closure of Old Lane.

A blocked drain in Dodleston Lane had been marked for urgent work (reference HW 852783651).

No funding was currently available for the pavement between Pulford and Cuckoo's Nest, but Stuart Bateman would investigate possible funding later in the financial year.

The Council noted the lack of a response from Streetscene about cleaning and weed spraying of road margins and expected remaining defects on the newly resurfaced B5445 to be identified during the post-implementation inspection.

Action: The Clerk will submit a further request to Streetscene for weed spraying and cleaning of road margins.

The report of the Zoom meeting with Stuart Bateman of CWAC Highways on 20 August 2026 was noted. It also recorded concerns about private items on the highway outside 2 Pulford Court. The next Highways meeting was scheduled for 2 October 2026 at 11.00 am.

5.2 Grosvenor Pulford car parking

The Clerk had written to Planning concerning the slow progress of the overflow car park application. The Council

noted that the matter appeared to be moving forward, but considered the lengthy delay unacceptable and remained supportive of measures to alleviate parking problems at the hotel.

5.3 Activity at Woodfield Farm

It appeared that the owners had agreed to remove the camper van, horse trailer and car. Horses had not been present for some time. Following intervention by the local MP, Aphra Brandreth, CWAC action had begun to progress.

Action: The position, including the letterbox, will be checked.

6. Planning

The Council considered the current planning schedule and noted recent decisions. The position recorded at the meeting was as follows:

Reference	Proposal	Position
24/03015/FUL	Grosvenor Pulford Hotel - overflow car park (63 spaces)	Awaiting decision; Council remains supportive and concerned at delay. The recent ecological appraisal and biodiversity input assessment, including suggested mitigations, and the Parish Council's submitted objections were noted.
25/03552/FUL	Grosvenor Pulford Hotel - swimming-pool extension	Approved 1 July 2026.
25/03829/LDC	Brookside Farm House, Old Lane - use of land as garden	Approved 4 August 2026.
26/01342/FUL	The Gables, Straight Mile - roof light and pergola	Approved 29 June 2026.
26/01549/106	Chapel House Farm - discharge of section 106 agreement	Awaiting decision.
26/01472/LDC	Meadow View, Oldfield Farm Road - lawful occupation	Awaiting decision.
26/01804/DIS	Elmbury Farm - discharge of odour/manure/operational conditions	Awaiting decision; clarification required whether proposed equipment comprises air scrubbers or heat exchangers and whether obligations are met. Parish Council objection submitted.
26/01509/OUT	Wrexham Road - outline application for up to five dwellings	Awaiting decision; Parish Council objection submitted, including concern over access from farmland.

7. Neighbourhood Planning

Cllr Peter Hynes was unable to attend but had submitted three papers. His "Poulton and Pulford Parish Neighborhood Planning Approach V1.0" explained that a neighbourhood plan, once made, becomes part of the statutory development plan and can add meaningful local influence over planning decisions. It would need to focus on land use and development, be led formally by the Parish Council, and be shaped by community engagement and proportionate evidence.

The suggested approach was to establish early contact with CWAC, define the neighbourhood area, create a representative steering group, consult residents before drafting policies, develop an evidence base and vision, and then proceed through formal consultation, examination and referendum. The process could take approximately 24-27 months or longer, would require sustained volunteer effort and some professional support, and could involve significant cost.

Cllr Mosley said the work would be demanding but worthwhile because of the additional level of local protection it could provide. Working with neighbouring parishes, such as Eccleston and Dodleston, and learning from parishes with completed plans were suggested. Cllr Hynes had offered to lead the work. The Council agreed that the proposal merited serious and positive further investigation.

Action: The Chairman will contact Cllr Hynes to confirm that the Council wishes to investigate neighbourhood planning further. The chairman will also contact cllr Welna Bowden from Dodleston Parish Council who had previously contacted him about possibly working with Dodleston PC to produce a joint NP.

8. Pulford Church

The Council received an update on St Mary's Church. It was noted that the possibility of closure had been stated officially on 20 July, an extraordinary community meeting on 4 August had established the Friends of St Mary's Pulford, and the Friends held their first committee meeting on 20 August. There was strong public support for efforts to secure the church's future.

The Friends had agreed to explore charitable status, initially favouring a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, and to investigate every reasonable option for retaining the church, potentially through shared community use. A written strategy was required for submission to the PCC by 31 October. Work was also under way to clarify the church's legal status and ownership, obtain reliable financial information, secure written quotations for boiler and roof work, obtain the latest Quinquennial Inspection Report and clarify VAT and insurance implications. The reported annual income was £6,328 against costs of £13,452, potentially rising to £16,452 depending on allocation of parish share, and the Friends considered that a fuller breakdown was required before preparing a potential rescue plan. Their next meeting was scheduled for 17 September 2026 at 7.00 pm.

9. Finance, Governance and Accountability

9.1 Budget monitoring

The Responsible Financial Officer reported that the Council's finances remained sound. Cash balances at 22 August totalled £11,048: £6,223 in the HSBC current account, £4,767 in the HSBC deposit account and £58 in the Santander current account. Expected receipts were £16,498 and budgeted expenditure £7,072.94. The forecast year-end balance was £8,521.06, £1,763.06 above the opening estimate. Reduced mowing during the warm, dry summer was expected to produce an underspend against the community-field grass-cutting budget, subject to conditions during the remainder of the season.

The Council noted the RFO's report, bank balances totalling £11,048 and the current favourable budget forecast.

9.2 Public rights inspection period

Following the successful internal audit, the statutory public-rights inspection period had been publicised in accordance with regulations. The process was satisfactory and no requests were received from members of the public.

10. Correspondence for Information

10.1 Repeated critical correspondence

The Council noted the Clerk's handling of repeated critical correspondence and the advice obtained from appropriate agencies. Work had begun on a simple policy for handling vexatious behaviour. The Council endorsed the actions taken to date and agreed to monitor the situation.

10.2 St Mary's Church

Correspondence concerning the potential closure of St Mary's Church had been circulated and was considered under item 8.

10.3 Neighbourhood planning

The Chairman's correspondence with Dodleston Parish Council was considered under item 7.

10.4 Cllr Stephen Mosley

The Council noted correspondence with newly elected ward Cllr. Stephen Mosley, who had offered positive support and engagement. Cllr Mosley was present and was thanked personally.

10.5 Anti-parking notices

Advice from Community Liaison Police Officer Sarai Kilshaw on the positioning and design of anti-parking A-frame notices had already been discussed and circulated to councillors.

10.6 Stone bench on the Spinney

Correspondence concerning damage to and repair of the stone bench was noted. Callum West was thanked for his assistance.

10.7 Bus shelter near Church Bank

A request for a bus shelter on Wrexham Road near Church Bank was considered. It appeared that sufficient space might be available.

Action: The proposal will be added to the agenda for the next meeting with Stuart Bateman.

10.8 Pulford Fast 5K

This matter was considered during public participation under item 3.

11. Clerk's Reports and Queries

11.1 Police report and community liaison surgery

The Council noted the police report for 19 May to 12 August 2026. No burglary, antisocial behaviour or criminal damage had been reported; the majority of reports were road-related. A community liaison surgery had been held at 10.00 am on 11 August 2026. No members of the public attended, but the Clerk discussed speeding and inappropriate parking with the attending officer, who undertook to arrange more frequent local speed checks. Future

surgery dates would continue to be publicised.

11.2 Picnic in the Park

The Picnic in the Park is due to take place on Sunday 30 August 2026. Preparations are in place and volunteers will assist on the day. In the event of wet weather, the event will move into the Village Hall. A decision will be made at 2.00 pm on Saturday next.

12. Councillors' Reports and Risk Assessment

The routine risk-assessment reports were reviewed. The following matters were recorded:

Location	Responsibility	Report
Village Hall	Cllr D Ewins	No problem reported.
Church Bank	Cllr D Ewins	Motorcycle wheelies reported, making a mess of the gravel. The Chairman spent a couple of hours manually rectifying the situation
Community Park	J Ewins	A date is required for the hedge cut.
Village Hall defibrillator	Cllr D Ewins	Cabinet had been difficult to open; Chairman had addressed this. Defibrillator training planned for autumn.
Poulton defibrillator	Cllr Fay	No problem reported.
Pulford Notice Board	Cllr Franklin	No problem reported.
Cuckoo's Nest Notice Board	Kate Fairhurst	No problem reported.
Bus shelters	Cllr Board	As per agenda item 10.7

13. Future Agenda Items

Loose sets in Ivy Court will be raised with Stuart Bateman at the next Highways meeting.

14. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 4 November 2026 at 7.00 pm in Pulford Village Hall.

The meeting closed following completion of the business.