Poulton and Pulford Parish Council

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Wednesday 4th November 2026 at 7.00 pm in Pulford Village Hall.

1 Apologies and membership

Present: Cllrs David Ewins (Chairman), Peter Hynes, Keith Board, Nick Franklin, Richard Fair, Ashley Murray, Margaret Fay and Glenys Evans.

In attendance: Peter Gosmore, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. CWAC Cllr Stephen Mosley and 8 members of the public.

No apologies for absence were received.

2 Declarations of interest

Members noted the reminder to keep their registers of interests up to date. Cllr Fair declared an interest in the planning application at Chapel House Farm, with which he was involved.

3 Public participation

No matters were raised during public participation.

4 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 August 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Arising from the minutes, it was reported that Michael Harrington had permission to use a local farmer's field for the Elite 5K event on Friday 6 August 2027 at 7.15 pm.

5 Progress reports on issues carried forward

5.1 Highways pavements and hedges

Following a Zoom meeting with Stuart Bateman, concerns remained about lateral growth and debris at Mr Homer's hedge on the Dodleston Lane/B5445 corner, together with its height and nearby power lines. Mr Bateman was due to meet Mr Homer on 9 November to arrange hedge cutting.

Residents were encouraged to report the restricted Pulford–Cuckoo's Nest footway to CWAC directly via the *Report It* link on the CWAC website.

Dangerous loose paving in Ivy Court and Burganey Court remained outstanding and urgent attention was reiterated.

A possible shelter at the Wrexham-bound Pulford St Mary's bus stop had been reported to CWAC Transport department.

Fly-tipping at Pulford Court remained under review. The blocked Dodleston Lane gully had been cleared.

5.2 Old Lane and The Green

Severn Trent works continued in Old Lane. Reported road cracks had been assessed as insufficiently serious for action; similar defects affected other local roads.

5.3 Woodfield Farm Straight Mile

Following a site visit the Planning Officer had confirmed the presence of items in contravention to the 2020 enforcement notice. The owners have agreed to remove the camper van, horse trailer and car; however, recent drone footage confirms this has not yet happened – CWAC have been updated.

5.4 Poulton Wood and trees adjoining Old Lane

Grosvenor Estate had removed trees affected by ash dieback under its management licence, taking advantage of Severn Trent's road closure. Cllr Hynes considered the thinning heavy-

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handed. The Estate plan a phased approach to complete the agreed work with future replanting. The veteran roadside oaks are to be retained.

5.5 Community Park

The funded Park boundary hedge cut is planned for mid to late November.

5.6 Grosvenor Pulford Hotel overflow parking

Flooding concerns had reduced the proposed additional spaces from 63 to 34. Members hoped this would alleviate parking problems; the Council's position is recorded at item 6.1.

6 Planning matters

6.1 Grosvenor Pulford Hotel 24/03015/FUL

The revised application for overflow parking remained awaiting a decision. The Council had supported the original proposal and confirmed its support for the revised scheme providing 34 additional spaces.

6.2 Elmbury Farm egg production unit Discharge of Conditions - 26/01804/DIS

Members discussed the discharge of conditions relating to Odour, Manure management and Service deliveries. The published servicing arrangements restricted deliveries to 7.00 am–7.00 pm, with no night-time vehicles permitted.

Members raised ongoing concerns about heat exchangers being installed instead of the agreed air scrubbers and possible operation before conditions were discharged. Numerous complaints were reported, but livestock presence and equipment operation remained unclear. These concerns required clarification and were awaiting the final decision of CWAC Planning.

6.3 Residential development on Wrexham Road 26/01809/OUT

The Council had submitted a strong objection to the proposal for up to five dwellings on land either side of the egg production unit entrance. A decision was awaited.

6.4 Openreach pole outside Rosemary House 26/03269/DSM

Information on the proposed 9-metre pole at Cuckoo's Nest was limited, with no photomontage and apparent lack of consultation with affected residents. Cllr Mosley suggested it was likely just a telegraph pole. The Clerk would seek details and an extension to the response period.

7 Neighbourhood planning

Cllr Hynes proposed using technology, including AI-assisted questionnaires and analysis, to establish residents' priorities and interest in a neighbourhood plan, avoiding potentially substantial specialist costs. Material was intended for residents by the end of March 2027, with CWAC feedback informing further work.

Dodleston Parish Council had previously decided not to proceed with their own NP and ongoing attempts to pursue joint working were proving unfruitful, so a joint approach was not being pursued.

Cllr Murray supported trying to establish parish needs. Cllr Board suggested learning from comparable authorities; Cllr Mosley identified Christleton and Littleton, whose plan was nearing completion, as possible sources of help. Members thanked Cllr Hynes.

8 Future of St Mary's Church Pulford

8.1 Friends of St Mary's progress

The Friends' summary was received. Three meetings had led to a draft business plan looking at Complementary Dual Use of the church. Records were available on the Parish Council website.

8.2 Worship community use and liaison with the PCC

The Friends were exploring combined worship and community use. The Rector had invited a business case, but no offer of joint working had followed correspondence with Church representatives. The PCC meeting (for presentation of the business plan) had been postponed from November to January 2027.

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Cllr Murray reported that progress, including charitable arrangements and major grant applications, depended on Church cooperation, which had not been forthcoming. The Friends believed the PCC wished to close the church.

8.3 Buildings costs ownership and Estate correspondence

The quinquennial and Church Buildings Council reports had been obtained. Estimated annual income of £6,329 and costs of £16,872 left a £10,543 deficit. Indicative costs were £11,625 plus VAT for a boiler (more for a net zero option), £13,950 plus VAT for roof repairs and £16,560 maintenance over five years.

Cllr Murray was tracing the 1834 grant and 1883 conveyance to clarify ownership and any reverter clause. The Duke of Westminster required evidence of a clearer community proposal before considering further engagement, but his initial response was encouraging.

9 Finance governance and accountability

9.1 Responsible Financial Officer's report

Finances remained on track; satisfactory bank reconciliations and budget monitoring at 31 October had been circulated. The £250 Marathon donation was received. JDH Business Services was withdrawing as internal auditor; the Clerk awaited CHALC guidance on a replacement.

Resolved unanimously: the Clerk was authorised to approve routine councillor expenses reimbursements up to £200 per claim. The annual provision for ad hoc councillors' expenses was increased to £400. The arrangement concerned reasonable, evidenced purchases for Council business within the approved budget, supported by receipts and a clear Council purpose; reimbursements would be reported in the weekly bulletins and to Council.

9.2 Payments since the August meeting

Payments had been notified to councillors through the Clerk's weekly Saturday bulletins as they occurred.

9.3 Budget and precept for 2027 to 2028

The draft 2027/28 budget and proposed precept were approved for CWAC's December calculation sheet, subject to final ratification in February 2027. Cllr Fair noted limited flexibility; the Clerk considered the position manageable.

Potential churchyard maintenance costs and transfer of responsibility to CWAC were discussed. Timing and maintenance frequency remained uncertain; no transfer decision was made.

10 Correspondence for information and action

10.1 Egg production unit Wrexham Road

This matter was considered under item 6.2.

10.2 2 Pulford Court

Concerns about rats were discussed. Environmental Health was involved. The resident who had raised the matter was asked to keep the Council informed and provide photographs where possible.

10.3 Resuscitation training

Training would take place at Pulford Village Hall on Thursday 12 November 2026 at 7.00 pm. Members stressed the need for wide publicity.

11 Reports and other issues

11.1 Police and community safety

The police report for 13 August–31 October was noted: hotel burglary, gym-locker theft, public disorder at Pulford Court, a registration-plate offence and suspicious activity at The Green and Fairmeadow. No criminal damage was reported. Police welcomed concerns and speed-check suggestions.

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Members supported wider publicity for a resident's report of possible criminal behaviour in Burganey Court and Fairmeadow. The Chairman would circulate police surgery dates and suggested councillors take turns hosting; attendance remained low.

11.2 Defibrillators

The training arrangements were covered under item 10.3. No further equipment or cabinet-check update was recorded.

11.3 Remembrance service

Members were informed of arrangements for the service at the War Memorial on 11 November. As the Art Group would be using the main hall, refreshments would be served in the Lady Wilson Room.

11.4 Christmas tree and lighting

The Christmas event was planned for Sunday 29 November 2026 between 5.00 pm and 6.00 pm. Cllr Fair would assist with installing the tree at 10.30 am on Saturday 28 November. Hall decorating was planned for Thursday 26 November at 2.00 pm. A collection box would be provided for the Community Food Cupboard.

An allocation of £150 was agreed for refreshments and mulled wine.

11.5 Community events

Poor weather moved the 30 August picnic into the Hall, limiting profit. Accounts would be circulated at the following week's Park Committee meeting. The Elite 5K and Marathon donation are recorded at items 4 and 9.1.

11.6 Correspondence handling

No update was reported.

12 Councillors' reports and risk assessment

A notice stating that camper vans were not permitted on Church Bank was identified as required. No inspection dates or further risk-assessment findings were recorded in the meeting notes.

13 Future agenda items

No additional items were recorded.

14 Dates of next meetings

Wednesday 24 February 2027 – budget confirmation and election planning.
Wednesday 26 May 2027 – Annual General Meeting.

Signed as a correct record: _____ Chairman
Date: _____

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