

**UTKINTON AND COTEBROOK
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**
held at Cotebrook Village Hall on
Monday 12th May 2024 at 7pm



MINUTES

12.05.01	Election of Chair: Cllr Grant nominated Cllr Spencer to be Chairman for the next year, seconded by Cllr Kastenieniemi, motion carried by unanimous vote, Cllr Spencer duly elected as Chairman.
12.05.02	Election of Vice Chair: Cllr Stewart nominated Cllr Grant as Vice Chairman for the next year, seconded by Cllr Moore, motion carried by unanimous vote, Cllr Grant duly elected as Vice Chairman.
12.05.03	Public Open Forum: There were no members of the public present and no issues raised.
12.05.04	Present: Cllr Marian Atkinson, Cllr Matthew Grant, Cllr Andrew Needham, Cllr Sami Kastenieniemi, Cllr Stephen Moore, Cllr Graham Spencer, Cllr Graham Stewart, Cllr Caroline Stubbs, Cllr Ed Stubbs Apologies accepted: CWaC Cllr Charles Hardy In attendance: Kath Lloyd, Clerk
12.05.05	Declarations of Interest: No new declarations of interest.
12.05.06	Minutes of Parish Council meeting of 14th April 2025: Councillors approved the minutes of the previous council meeting, proposed by Cllr Grant and seconded by Cllr C. Stubbs.
12.05.07	Cheshire West & Chester Council Matters: Report from elected CWaC Councillor attached as Appendix 1.
12.05.08	Planning Applications: 12.05.08.1 There were no applications received. 12.05.08.2 There were no decisions received
12.05.09	Work Programme: The Council received updates on the following: 12.05.09.1 Northgate Steps update – referred to Item 14 Clerk’s Report Appendix 2 12.05.09.2 Community Fundraising – covered in Item 12.05.09.5 12.05.09.3 United Utilities response to letter – No response to date 12.05.09.4 Wildlife Project – Cllr Stubbs has visited Cotebrook Orchard and feels that there is scope there for a distinct project to enhance the appearance of the Orchard and the area around the phone box and stream. Cllr Stubbs and Cllr Spencer will meet and create an action plan. 12.05.09.5 Big Community Festival – Cllr Grant updated the Council on progress. Volunteers are needed to sell raffle tickets (Cllr Atkinson will circulate the rota) and set up and clear away on the day – 14 th June at Tirley Garth from 11.30am onwards or 7pm onwards for close down.
12.05.10	Statutory Policies: Cllr C Subbs proposed that the following be approved and adopted by the Parish Council, seconded by Cllr E. Stubbs and passed unanimously – Standing Orders; Financial Regulations; Code of Conduct and Financial Risk Assessment
12.05.11	Additional Policies: Cllr C Stubbs proposed that the following be adopted, seconded by Cllr E Stubbs and passed unanimously – Bullying and Harassment, Equality and Diversity, IT Policy, Communication Policy and Data Protection.
12.05.12	Community Grant Application Policy: Councillors agreed to adopt the revised Community Grant

	Application policy and process which had been circulated prior to the meeting.
12.05.13	<p>Working Party membership and review:</p> <p>12.05.13.1 Councillors approved the continuation of the Funding Working Party</p> <p>12.05.13.2 Councillors approved the membership of the Funding Working Party</p> <p>12.05.13.3 Councillors approved the amended Terms of References for the Working Party</p> <p>All documents had been received by Councillors by email prior to the meeting.</p>
12.05.14	<p>Finance Matters</p> <p>12.05.14.1 Councillors approved the accounts for payment and note accounts paid since 9th April 25 – see Appendix 2</p> <p>12.05.14.2 Councillors noted the bank balance and cash book at the end of May 2025</p>
12.05.15	<p>Councillor's reports and items for future agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Grant circulated a copy of the Remembrance Book created by St Johns' Church following the recent 150th Anniversary containing photographs funded by the Parish Council. • Cllr Atkinson reminded Councillors that she is waiting to plant new planters next to Cotebrook bus shelter – Cllr Spencer will purchase planters asap. • Cllr Needham asked that Councillors be mindful that the sandstone wall next to the new development on Northgate must be reinstated as per the planning application. • Cllr Atkinson noted that the large trees/hedge on the corner of Oulten Mill Lane will need cutting back very soon as they block drivers' views from the main road. Cllr Atkinson will monitor and report back to Clerk. • The Clerk reminded Councillors to let Cllr Spencer have any bottles for the tombola on 14th June.
12.05.16	<p>Date of future meetings</p> <p>See below</p>

At Cotebrook Village Hall, Stable Lane, Cotebrook CW6 0JJ	At Rose Farm Coffee House, John Street, Utkinton CW6 0LP
Monday 14 th July at 7pm	Monday 9 th June at 7pm
Monday 13 th October at 7pm	Monday 8 th September at 7pm
Monday 8 th December at 7pm	Monday 10 th November at 7pm
Monday 9 th February 2026	Monday 12 th January 2026 at 7pm

APPENDIX 1

Utkinton and Cotebrook Parish Council meeting.

Monday 12th May 2025

I regret that I am unable to attend the meeting of the Parish Council this evening.

I report as follows:

On Wednesday 16th May Kathy McArdle, Executive Director of Place and Growth at Cheshire West and Chester Council, spent the afternoon with me. Kathy has responsibility for a wide range of portfolios including the visitor economy and highways.

We started at the Cotebrook Shire Horse Centre before going to Oulton Park, the Hollies Farm Shop and Tarporley.

Kathy accepted that the state of the roads, particularly the A49 was unacceptable. She told me that additional funding would be going into highways maintenance and that the method and schedule of highways maintenance used by the contractors, Colas, would be amended.

I continue to press for better highways maintenance across the Tarporley Ward.

Vehicle speed continues to be a matter of concern to residents of Utkinton and Cotebrook. Both Rushton and Eaton Parish Councils have V.A.S. (vehicle activated signs) which not only seem to reduce vehicle speeds but also provide data on vehicle speeds.

There are three options:

V.A.S. (vehicle activated signs).

S.A.M. (smiley activated message).

S.L.R. (speed limit reminders).

Subject to approval from CWaC Highways, would the Utkinton and Cotebrook Parish be interested in using some of my Members Budget for signs such as those used by Little Budworth and also Rushton and Eaton Parishes?

Please give some thought to any 'projects' in the Parish you feel I might be able to help with.

Planning:

There is understandable concern regarding building developments across the rural areas of the Cheshire West and Chester Borough.

The Government has vastly increased the housing targets for Local Authorities across the country. In Cheshire West and Chester this has resulted in a more than doubling of the housing target resulting in the Council having far too few housing units approved. There is understandable concern that developers will offer to make up the shortfall but by developing the rural areas.

The best places for further development are, Ellesmere Port, Winsford, Northwich and Chester where there is good public transport provision and schools, shops, libraries, medical facilities, employment etc. However, developments in these locations are generally not profitable.

The next best locations are, Farndon, Tattenhall, Malpas, Kelsall, Tarvin, Tarporley etc. where there are some facilities, shops, schools etc. but limited public transport. These locations can be reasonably profitable for developers.

The least suitable locations are, Utkinton, Cotebrook, Rushton, Eaton, Huxley, Tiverton, Tilston etc. These areas have few, if any facilities. However, small developments in these areas tend to be highly profitable for developers. Albeit the housing is not low cost / affordable.

At present there is much speculation as to where the required developments will take place. Until there is a firm proposal I am advising any of the four Parish Councils to be wary of spending a lot of time objecting to development that has yet to be proposed. Should there be any development proposed in any Parish it is important that objections are made purely on grounds of planning law.

It is very important that each Parish has a 'wish list' such that if a development is imposed there are significant benefits for the community.

I hope the issues with United Utilities are soon sorted to the satisfaction of the Utkinton community. Although United Utilities are not part of the Cheshire West and Chester Council, please let me know if you wish me to do anything in finding a resolution.

Last week I strimmed the grass at the entrance to Big Field and on John Street opposite the Utkinton village hall. I raked and took away the cut grass. It does not look perfect but I hope residents feel it looks better than it was!

As always, please let me know if there is anything you feel I can help with

APPENDIX 2

CLERK'S REPORT 12th May 2025

1. ACCOUNTS FOR APPROVAL

NAME	DETAILS	VAT	TOTAL £
Kathryn Lloyd	Clerk's salary May 2025		374.40
Hiscox Insurance Company Limited	Annual Insurance premium (£653 in 2024)		665.27

2. Cashbook Reconciliation

Bank Reconciliation at 30th April 2025

Cash Book	Balance b/fwd	9,065.78
Plus	Receipts	15,400.75
Less	Payments	£1,218.43
		£23,128.10
Bank	Current a/c	£0.00
	Deposit a/c	£23,248.10
Less unrepresented cheques		
		£23,248.10

JUBILEE/CORONATION FUND

Bank Reconciliation at 31st March 2025

Cash Book	Balance b/fwd	£7,968.20
Plus	Receipts	£6,402.09
Less	Payments	£8,769.20
		£5,601.09

Northgate Steps update:

- At the Parish Council meeting in March 2025, the Council approved a quote for approx £3,500 for work planned at Northgate Steps in order to make the area passable by clearing the overgrowth and installing a boardwalk.
- The Clerk contacted CWaC who asked for a Permission to Work on the Highways licence and asked the Contractor to go ahead with the work. A payment of 50% was made in order for the fencing to be ordered and the work was scheduled for w/k starting 21st April 2025.
- On 9th April 2025, the Clerk was informed that the pathway had been cleared by the farmer and that the work by the contractor was no longer needed.
- The work was cancelled and the contractor has agreed to offset ongoing maintenance work against the money already paid.
- £400 towards the cost of the work carried out by the farmer was paid by bank transfer on 10th May 2025
- The Parish Council contractor will now maintain the Northgate Steps area on a monthly basis until the end of November.

To note:

- The Big Community Festival on Saturday 14th June needs volunteers to marshal the car parking, help with setting up and clearing away and on the front entrance. Parish Councillors are asked to commit as much time as they can.
- The Parish Council stall on Saturday 14th June will be a Bottle Tombola, kindly organised by Mrs Carol Spencer – again, volunteers are welcome and Councillors are asked to consider donating as many bottles as possible.