

Minutes of the Meeting of Broxton Parish Council on 12 June 2025 at 7.30pm at Broxton Village Hall

Present:

Cllr Vere Isham, Cllr Sarah Cousins, Cllr Adam Hume, Cllr Rachel Kesterton and Cllr David Van Haaren.

Kate Rixson (Clerk).

The meeting opened at 7.30 pm. The chair welcomed a member of the public, parish councillors and District Councillor Sutton.

25/06-1 Apologies for absence

Cllr Wendy Adams was unable to attend due to a longstanding commitment elsewhere. Cllr Tony Adams was incapacitated and unable to attend. The reasons for absence were accepted.

25/06-2 Declarations of interest in matters on the agenda

No declarations of interest were made.

25/06-3 Public open forum

The member of the public had no questions or comments for parish councillors at this stage and the chair exercised his discretion to allow public comments on items as they were reached on the agenda.

Cllr Sutton was asked whether the owner of the Prince of Wales pub had attended a recent meeting set up by the district council to offer support to pubs, or if the pub's situation had been mentioned. She advised that as far as she knew, he had not attended and the pub had not been discussed, but she had not been there so could not be certain. Cllr Sutton advised that grant-funding of up to £10,000 per grant was being made available to support pubs.

25/06-4 District and County Councillors' reports.

Cllr Sutton reported that the proposed Local Plan for Uttlesford was in the process of being examined by the Planning Inspectors and hearings had taken place this week. She was attending when feasible.

25/06-5 Consideration of action relating to the proposed sale of the Prince of Wales pub and car park

Item 7 on the agenda was brought forward to involve Cllr Sutton in the discussion.

It was noted by councillors that the pub site including the car park was being advertised with a guide price of £1,200,000.

Cllr Kesterton reported that she had spoken to the agents about the promotional material. As a result they had changed the advert to refer to a "public house – currently closed" instead of a "former public house", and were promoting "your chance to revive a beloved pub or reimagine it for modern hospitality". The agents had confirmed that more than one potential buyer had expressed interest in re-opening the pub.

The council discussed in detail whether a community bid for the pub would be possible, the pub and car park having been listed as an Asset of Community Value in November 2024. It was noted that this gave a right to bid but no right to buy, as the seller could choose another buyer even if the community made the highest bid. Councillors and the clerk had responded to social media questions to explain the effect of ACV status and the opportunity

it offered. The council concluded that if it had enough community support it would consider advising Uttlesford that a community group was interested in bidding. It was noted that there was some prospect of the pub re-opening after a commercial sale. A quick sale (which would be delayed or prevented by requesting an initial 6-week moratorium) could give a new owner the best prospect of reviving the pub. The longer it was closed, with the building continuing to deteriorate and trade going elsewhere, the harder it would be to renovate and re-build the business. The council decided not to request a 6-week moratorium unless it became clear before the deadline of 10 July 2025 that there was significant public support for a community bid coupled with offers of practical help with raising funds.

25/06-6 Approval of minutes of the previous Parish Council Meeting

The minutes of the annual parish council meeting on 8 May 2025 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the chair.

25/06-7 Reports received

25/06-7.1 Clerk's Report

This had been circulated and made available on the website so was taken as read. A copy is annexed to the hard copy of these minutes.

25/06-7.2 Financial Reports

Bank statements were reviewed by councillors in the meeting and would be checked against the cashbook by Cllr T Adams at the end of the quarter.

A bank reconciliation dated 31 May 2025 and a list of payments made since the last meeting had been circulated and made available on the website.

25/06-7.2.1 Bank balances and reconciliation between the cash books and bank statements on 31 May 2025.

Cash book records: £27,365.42

Income: 1 April 2025 to 31 May 2025: **£10,125.00**

Made up of first half of Precept £10,125

Spending: 1 April 2025 to 31 May 2025 (not including transfers between bank accounts): **£2,153.97**

Made up of £2,041.92 and £112.05 VAT. VAT is normally recoverable.

Reconciliation of cashbook with bank account:

- **Unity Current** account as per bank statement 31 May 2025: **£17,883.98**
- **Unity Current** account as per cash book 31 May 2025: **£17,883.98**. Bank statements match cashbook.
- **Unity Deposit** account as per bank statement and cashbook at 31 May 2025: **£9,481.44** (no transactions since 30 April 2025). Interest had been paid in June.
- **Available funds (current plus deposit account balances less any unprocessed transactions), £27,365.42**. This includes £19,394.39 reserves brought forward from 2024-25.

25/06-7.2.2 Payments made since last meeting and those due before the next meeting

A list of payments made and due (contractual, statutory and previously approved), including salary of £652.85 paid in May and £371.64 due in June, had been circulated and was tabled.

25/06-7.3 Planning update

A schedule of outstanding and decided planning applications and progress on enforcement matters had been circulated and put on the website. This was taken as read.

25/06-7.4 Footpaths and highways issues

The council noted that the dangerous potholes at Broadwater Bridge on the B1051 had not been repaired. Cllr Kesterton provided details of the broken bridge mentioned at the last meeting. **Action: Clerk**

25/06-7.5 Reports from councillors

No reports were made.

25/06-8 Response to Pledgdon Green Conservation Area consultation

Councillors reviewed the conservation assessment carried out by Place Services on the instructions of Uttlesford District Council, which recommended the creation of the CA for the area immediately around Pledgdon green. The limited size of the area and the effect on local residents was also considered. It was decided to support the creation of a conservation area as proposed, on the grounds that it would preserve the character of the countryside and protect local heritage. **Action: Clerk**

25/06-9 Decisions

25/06-9.1 Consideration and approval of internal audit and Annual Governance and Accounting Return 2024-25

25/06-9.1.1 The internal audit report (page 4 of the return and narrative comments) was received and noted. Action points were noted and it was agreed to progress these. **Action: Clerk.**

25/06-9.1.2 The Annual Governance Statement (page 5/Section 1 of the return) was completed with affirmative answers and the chair and clerk signed, as authorised.

25/06-9.1.3 The Accounting Statements (page 6/Section 2 of the return) which had been certified by the clerk as RFO on 11 June 2025 were reviewed and agreed. The chair signed as authorised.

25/06-9.1.4 The Certificate of Exemption from external review (page 3 of the return) was reviewed and approved. The clerk and chair signed as authorised and to confirm the council would comply with the publication requirements. It was noted that the certificate would be sent to the external auditors. **Action: Clerk**

25/06-9.1.5 The council approved a period of 30 working days, including the first 10 working days of July, during which electors and other interested persons may exercise their rights of access to the accounting records. The period would run from Monday 30 June to Friday 8 August 2025 and the notice would be dated 29 June 2025. **Action: Clerk**

25/06-9.1.6 The council noted the changes in spending and income between 2023-24 and 2024-25 and confirmed the reasons given were correct. It reviewed the asset register which was valued at £27,995 under the principles set out in the JPAG guidance, and approved the valuation policy.

25/06-9.2 Payments were approved as follows:

A list had been circulated and was tabled, with copy invoices.

The following payments were approved:

25/06-9.2. 1 £4.59 including VAT to the clerk to reimburse an online card payment to Mythic Beasts Ltd, to increase storage space for the website and emails. An increased annual charge of approximately £51 from 22 August 2025 was approved.

25/06-9.2.2 £1,319.05 insurance premium due to Clear Insurance was ratified for 1 June 2025 to 31 May 2026. The final invoice had not yet been issued and would be provided when received. **Action: Clerk**

25/06-9.2.3 £150 plus £30 VAT for grass-cutting in May 2025.

25/06-9.3 New planning matters

The council considered the following new applications:

UTT/25/1352/HHF – Mitsu, 3 Browns End Rd – to demolish front bay window and garage, construct front, side and rear extensions – and

UTT/25/1427/LB – Cherry Green Farm, Cherry Green – listed building consent to remove and replace render, repair timber framing and insulate.

Following discussion the council had no objections or comments to make on either application.

The airport owner's application to increase passenger numbers to 51 million per annum (25/1542) had been notified informally to the council on 10 June 2025 and comments were due by 21 July 2025. This would be considered at the next council meeting. **Action: Clerk**

25/06-10 Matters to note and/or for future consideration

The clerk noted that the general waste bin at Church End (owned/emptied by the parish council) needed cleaning of algae, along with the adjacent bench. Cllr Kesterton proposed a rota for this task and would look into suitable methods as there is no nearby water supply.

It was noted that hedge-trimming and weed treatment would be needed at the Village Hall. Enquiries would be made. **Action: Clerk**

25/06-11 Date of next meeting Thursday 10 July 2025 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.25 pm.