

**Minutes of the 827th meeting of Toft Parish Council
Held on Monday 7 July 2025 in The People's Hall, Toft at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillors: M Yeadon (Chairman), A Coghlan, E Darbyshire, B Harris, G Harrison, E Miles and S Tebbit.

In attendance: 9 members of the public and Mrs A Griffiths (Minutes Secretary, LGS Services)

Public participation on agenda items and matters of mutual interest (includes reports from County and District Councillors and representation by members of the public)

A resident reported that the cycleway/footpath from Toft to Comberton was overgrown with brambles and vegetation and was very narrow with no room to pass. He expressed concerns about safety for children cycling to school and people with pushchairs, and requested that the vegetation be cut back. The Parish Council was asked to press the County Council for news about the proposals for improvements to the footpath.

Cllr Darbyshire explained the process for reporting issues to CCC Highways online. She will send the resident the link and ask for a Teams meeting with the Highways Supervisor to discuss this matter.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council would raise the issue with the County Councillor and seek his support for improvements to be made.

1. Apologies for absence and declaration of interests

1.1 To approve written apologies and reasons for absence
None.

1.2 To receive declarations of interests from councillors on items on the agenda
None.

1.3 To receive written requests for dispensations and to grant any dispensations
None.

2. To approve the minutes of the last meeting on 9 June 2025

RESOLVED that the minutes of 9 June 2025 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman. (Prop MY, 2nd EM, unanimous)

3. To consider any matters arising from the last or a previous meeting including

On a proposition by the Chairman, the order of business was varied to take item 3.7 next and the meeting was suspended to enable residents present to express their views.

3.7 (7.4 of 12.5.25) Musical play equipment – to consider residents' comments and the way forward

The Chairman thanked residents for taking the trouble to respond to the consultation and reported on the comments received. Of the fourteen responses received, eleven had supported retaining the musical equipment and three had supported removal.

Cllr Yeadon read out examples of comments on both sides and summarised that residents were gaining pleasure from the musical equipment, and some who lived nearby were happy with it, but it was disturbing to the more local residents.

The meeting was suspended to enable the residents present to express their views. The following points were made:

- Playgrounds were noisy places with children shouting and laughing, as part of their development as they learn through play. The equipment was not used very regularly or for a long time and more intrusive sounds than this were present in the countryside.
- The musical equipment gave children an opportunity to do something different and was an attraction for older children.
- A resident stated that the sound could reach 109 dB next to the equipment when used, and 59dB in nearby gardens, which would be over the legal limit for a public place.

- Another resident queried whether the equipment could be sold if the sound level was illegal.
- Can anything be done to minimise the noise? The Chairman replied that so far some of the hammers had been removed. Signage could be erected but children might not abide by this. A resident suggested that a note could be placed in the newsletter asking that the equipment not be used after say 6-7 pm.
- A resident asked if the equipment could be moved to Comberton recreation ground, or replaced with something new. It was felt there was nowhere else suitable in Toft to site it.
- The suggestion of erecting a barrier around the equipment to reduce the sound was put forward. If this did not solve the problem it would be necessary to obtain an independent assessment of the dB levels.
- The Chairman asked the complainant whether they were still willing to cover the costs of removal, which could be approximately £300, if the Parish Council decided on removal. The resident confirmed that they would be willing to do so.
- A resident reported that a group of motorcycles had been parked outside the Recreation Ground on several occasions at 10.30pm at night.

The Chairman re-opened the meeting and outlined two options for consideration:

Proposal 1:

"We remove the equipment assuming that we can find a new location for it. Probably Comberton is preferred although the Parish Council would look for other locations if not. If we cannot find an alternative venue we would not move it and it would be at no cost to the Parish Council."

Proposal 2:

"We retain the equipment. We would continue to look at low cost ways of reducing the noise disturbance, including signage and installing softer hammers and a barrier. We would agree to review the situation again in 9 months. If a resident takes legal action or involves the the District Council then we may need to discuss again."

Members were asked to vote on each proposal in turn.

Proposal 1 – 3 in favour.

Proposal 2 – 4 in favour.

RESOLVED to retain the equipment and look at ways to reduce the noise and review the situation again in 9 months' time.

3.1 (4.2) Finding Fitness – update on responses received from residents

Cllr Tebbit reported that she had left messages for the company and would keep trying to contact them.

3.2 (4.3) Replacement bins – to consider quotation from SCDC if received and to consider arrangements for removal of two bins

RESOLVED to accept the quotation from SCDC to supply and install three replacement bins for a total cost of £1,253.25 plus VAT, noting that the bin next to the bus shelter on Comberton Road is County owned.

RESOLVED to ask SCDC if they can arrange for that bin also to be replaced by a closed Topsy bin, and to ask them to remove the open bins outside 10 Comberton Road and outside 59 High Street. (Prop MY, 2nd EM, unanimous)

3.3 (4.4) Street light survey – to consider maps/locations

RESOLVED to defer this item to the September meeting.

3.4 (4.7) Tree survey – to consider quotations for the required works if received

RESOLVED to defer this item to the next meeting as quotations were still awaited.

3.5 (5.1) Request for second bin at the Birdlings – to note response from management company

RESOLVED to note the response from the Birdlings management company that they will discuss this with the Birdlings grounds maintenance team.

- 3.6 (9.0.11) Dogs running loose in sheep field – to consider wording for signage
RESOLVED that Cllr Darbyshire will draft suitable wording and circulate it to members and to CCC for guidance.

- 3.7 (7.4 of 12.5.25) Musical play equipment – to consider residents' comments and the way forward
Taken earlier.

4. To consider correspondence received since the last meeting requiring the Council's attention

- 4.1 CAPALC – Introduction of the IT policy requirement as part of the Annual Governance Statement requirements – Assertion 10
RESOLVED to defer this item to the next meeting and that the Chairman will discuss this with the Clerk.

- 4.2 SCDC – Launch of public engagement for Local Government Reorganisation in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (deadline 20 July)
RESOLVED that the Parish Council does not intend to respond but individuals may respond should they so wish.

5. Finance, Procedure and risk assessment and use of delegated powers

- 5.1 To consider the finance report and approve the payment of any bills
RESOLVED to receive the financial report and check the invoices and bank statements before the payments were approved, plus Madingley Mulch (Bark) £212.80 and Broxap (Slide) £900.00. (Prop MY, 2nd EM, unanimous)
RESOLVED to approve the expenses payment of up to £30.00 between meetings to Cllr Yeadon (RoSPA repairs), subject to submission of the receipt. (Prop EM, 2nd ST, carried with 6 in favour and 1 abstention)

RESOLVED that Cllrs Yeadon and Harrison will spread the bark.

Salaries		£186.52
B Stoehr	VE80 flag	£72.20
LGS Services	Admin support	£521.06
MD Landscapes	Grass cutting	£525.00
Toft People's Hall	Room Hire	£15.00

- 5.2 To receive play inspection reports and consider any work required
Cllr Yeadon reported that he had adjusted the goal nets, tidied up the fence, and repaired the gate and catch. The replacement slide was being delivered tomorrow and will be installed by Cllr Yeadon.

A resident had reported that a group of youths on motorbikes had been seen near the Recreation Ground late at night on a number of occasions, making a noise.

RESOLVED to write to Comberton Parish Council to ask whether they had experienced similar problems and if so, what action they had taken and whether it was successful. This will be considered again at the next meeting.

The xylophone play equipment had become loose in the ground.

RESOLVED that Cllrs Yeadon and Harrison will take a look.

- 5.3 To consider any matter which is urgent because of risk or health and safety and relates to Council property

RESOLVED to note that Cllr Tebbit had carried out a check of the defibrillator, but had been unable to see the expiry dates of the pads, and would take another look.

RESOLVED that Cllr Tebbit should register her contact details with the appropriate parties.

RESOLVED that Cllr Tebbit should arrange a defibrillator training session, to take place in January.

6. To consider any Planning or Tree works applications or related items received

- 6.1 Planning applications received – to be considered
- 6.1.1 25/02047/CLUED – Bennell Farm, West Street, Comberton – Certificate of lawfulness under S191 to confirm the implementation of the planning permission granted by Appeal Decision ref APP/W0530/W/21/3286850 (LPA ref 20/01992/FUL)
RESOLVED to note that this was a renewal of the planning permission which had previously been approved and that the Parish Council has no further comments.
- 6.1.2 25/00193/FUL – Land North of the B1046, Toft – Change of use of land and the siting of 5 glamping pods
RESOLVED to seek a time extension from SCDC to enable the Parish Council to consider the application at its next meeting on 1 September, but if an extension is not granted, that the application be considered between meetings using the Council's policy.
- 6.2 Planning applications for which a response has been made between meetings using delegated powers – to be noted
None.
- 6.3 SCDC planning decision notices and appeal notifications and applications for information only
- 6.3.1 25/01743/S73 – Land rear of 6 Hardwick Road – S73 to vary condition 2 (Approved plans) of planning permission 21/01919/FUL (Part demolition of industrial building and conversion of remaining into a detached private dwelling and associated works) for changes to fenestration and changes to eaves and ridge heights – Permission granted by SCDC.
- 6.4 Tree works applications
None.
- 7. Members items and reports for information only unless otherwise stated**
- 7.1 Village Maintenance
Cllr Miles reported that several large canvas bags of sand and grit had been lying on the CCC verge opposite the bus stop for a long time.
RESOLVED that Cllr Darbyshire should report this on the CCC website.
The "Dogs on leads" signs for the allotments have been received and will be installed by Cllr Yeadon.
- 7.2 Highways
Cllr Darbyshire will try to contact the Highways Officer to discuss outstanding items, including overhanging hedges on the B1046, the poor condition of the road surface at the bottom of School Lane, wires tangled in a hedge on Brookside, and a fallen sign on the corner of Hardwick Road and Comberton Road. The hedge on the corner of Hardwick Road and Comberton Road has been trimmed and potholes in Church Lane and Brookside have been repaired.
- 7.3 Toft People's Hall
Nothing to report.
- 7.4 Footpaths
Nothing to report.
- 7.5 Defibrillator report
The defibrillator had been checked.
- 7.6 Birdlings liaison
Nothing to report.
- 7.7 Lot Meadow
Nothing to report.
- 7.8 Hedgehog Awareness Day report - to consider how to spend the money made
Cllr Miles reported that the Hedgehog Awareness Day had been successful and had raised over £300, leaving about £270 after payment for the venue.

RESOLVED that Cllr Miles should discuss with the Hedgehog Hospital organiser how the proceeds should be spent. The purchase of wildlife cameras or feeding stations was suggested as a possibility. Residents should contact the Hedgehog Hospital if they are interested in having a hedgehog released in their gardens.

7.9 VJ Day Celebration

The Chairman reported that he had not received any information about proposed commemorations and it would not be possible to light the beacon on this occasion due to holidays.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council would support holding a commemorative event if it received information about arrangements.

7.10 Improving communication with the Birdlings

It was suggested that a notice be placed on Facebook that residents of the Birdlings can join the Social Club at Toft for £1.00 for life and receive a weekly email update about events if requested.

RESOLVED that Cllr Darbyshire will look into how the email system can be organised. A general notice board for the Birdlings will be an agenda item for the next meeting.

7.11 Volunteer work from Stratagem

Cllr Yeadon reported that Stratagem had indicated their willingness to clean signage and the work would take place on 22-23 July.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council should send a letter of thanks after the work was complete.

8. Closure of meeting

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

SignedChairmandate.