

**Minutes of the 839th meeting of Toft Parish Council
Held on Monday 7 September 2026 in The People's Hall, Toft at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillors: M Yeadon (Chairman), A Coghlan, E Darbyshire, W Howling, P McCarthy and E Miles.

In attendance: 2 members of the public, including a representative of the Plymouth Brethren, District Cllr C Hubbard plus 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 representative of the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church outlined the background to their recent purchase of the former Methodist Church building. It was expected that two weekly services would be held at first, on Sunday mornings and Monday evenings. He explained that it was customary for the Church to demarcate the boundaries of its property, typically by planting a hedge or putting up a fence around the Church premises. They were planning to do this and possibly move the entrance from the front to the back of the building, along with the car parking, to allow more privacy for the congregation. Some internal alterations might also be carried out.

The Church member explained that they were conscious that a hedge or fence would restrict access by the public to the War Memorial and Remembrance services. He asked the Parish Council for its views on the possibility of moving the Memorial, suggesting that their architects could work with the village to find a mutually agreeable solution. The Chairman asked the group to send a written proposal outlining their wishes, which the Parish Council would consider. Members expressed a preference for a hedge rather than a fence, to promote biodiversity.

Asked whether the group would be open to some community use of the space, the Church member indicated that the premises would probably only be used for their own services. However, they would be open to a team of their members contributing to the community by carrying out work such as litter picking and sign cleaning.

A resident reported that the weeds at the Snicket had been trimmed but the privet hedge at the High Street end was overhanging the path, making it difficult to pass. There was also a large concrete block lying on the path near the first junction at the School Lane end, which the resident suggested could be moved into the car park. This matter will be discussed later in the meeting.

District Cllr Hubbard reported on:

- The Unitary Authority plans were currently on hold.
- Residents had raised the need for a pedestrian crossing. Cllr Hubbard suggested that a crossing near the former Methodist Church might be a safe location, particularly if the 20 mph limit was granted.

A resident observed that the work in School Lane did not appear to have been carried out, but the road closure sign was still in place. Cllr Darbyshire explained that some work was being carried out near Pinfold Well Lane, and she would contact Highways to find out what had been done. She reported that she had discussed a pedestrian crossing with the Highways Officer a couple of years ago and he had concluded that there was no suitable place for a zebra crossing in Toft, due to the parked cars in the High Street and the proximity to the bend. She undertook to raise this with Highways again but the Council's view was that a location north of the Church building would be too close to the blind bend.

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 6 July 2026

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 6 July 2026 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman, after replacing the first paragraph of the Open Session with the following text: (Prop ED, 2nd MY, unanimous)

"A resident asked about Speed Watch operating in the village. Cllr Yeadon outlined the Parish Council's concerns about speeding and that a new Speed Watch group has been set up, has just begun operating, and will be reporting results to the Police. The Parish Council would like the Police to visit to monitor speeding in Toft, but Cllr Darbyshire explained that the Police require a Speed Watch group to be operating and the Police must receive a significant amount of data before considering a visit to monitor the speed of vehicles through Toft. Speed Watch data may help to support another application for a 20 mph limit throughout the village, and it was hoped that Toft would eventually be successful with this."

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

3.1 (3.1) To co-opt to fill any vacancies resulting from insufficient candidates at election and to make arrangements for any remaining vacancies to be filled

RESOLVED, having considered his application, to co-opt Paul McCarthy as a member of the Parish Council. (Prop MY, 2nd EM, unanimous)

Cllr McCarthy signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office before taking his seat.

3.2 (Open) Shared use path between Toft and Comberton – update and report on meeting

Cllr Miles reported on a successful meeting with Thomas Tolliday of CCC. The hedgerow appeared to have been cut back but the surface was still a concern. There was debris on the path and it was only suitable for single file walking for part of the way. The CCC Officer had said that they would be doing siding out of the path and scraping it back as far as possible to restore its original width. Cllr Darbyshire undertook to follow this up. A letter had also been sent by CCC to neighbouring residents asking them to trim back their hedges within two weeks, but had not allowed sufficient time, as the letter had taken almost two weeks to arrive.

3.3 (3.4) Finding Fitness climbing wall proposal – update

Cllr Miles reported that the application had been submitted to the National Lottery Community Fund but the outcome was not expected until mid-November.

3.4 (3.5) To consider the RoSPA report and quotations received

RESOLVED given that only two items were in need of work, and had been identified as low risk in the RoSPA report, that Cllr Yeadon should carry out the repairs and purchase and fit new bearings for the rocking swing and new bolts for the rocking ladybird.

3.5 (3.6) To consider the purchase of a new bench for the Drift, and potential location

RESOLVED to purchase a new bench from Cyan and to locate it on the eastern side of the Drift where there is a large gap in the hedge. (Prop EM, 2nd ED, unanimous)

RESOLVED that Cllr Miles should take a look at a bench in Brookside, which was in poor condition, and report back.

3.6 (3.6) To confirm the purchase of "Pick up after your dog" signs

RESOLVED to confirm the purchase of twelve "Pick up after your dog" signs by Cllr Miles at a cost of £47.88. (Prop EM, 2nd MY, unanimous)

3.7 (3.6) Refurbishment of benches and map signs – to consider any quotations received

RESOLVED, given that the quotations received were quite high, to seek additional quotations and to delegate to the Chairman to confirm acceptance of the best price. (Prop MY, 2nd EM, unanimous)

On a proposition by the Chairman, the order of business was varied to take item 7.10 next.

7.10 Removal/damage of two Parish Council map information boards

Cllr Miles reported that the header of the map sign by the Green had fallen off and the map sign in Brookside had been pulled up and left in the trees.

RESOLVED that Cllr Yeadon should take a look at the sign by the Green and retrieve the sign in Brookside.

3.8 (3.7) Website and emails update

RESOLVED that Cllr Darbyshire and Cllr Howling should try following the links to the instructions and guidance provided by Parish Online for transferring their emails to the new email addresses.

RESOLVED to wait until the migration of all the content to the new website had been completed before deleting material from the old website. It was noted that Parish Online offered a tidying up service for £25.00.

RESOLVED to seek guidance from the Clerk about what needed to be done next, and to ask him to update the current webmaster. The Council sought clarification about Admin access to the website including logins and who would update the website, which needed to be populated.

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

4.1 SCDC – Expiry of ACV listing for Toft Shop

RESOLVED noting the listing expires in September 2027 to consider this again in six months' time.

4.2 SCDC – Proposed submission Greater Cambridge Local Plan final consultation (deadline 25 September)

RESOLVED, noting that there were no proposals in the area, not to make a response, but that members can respond individually if they wished.

4.3 CCC – Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals & Waste Local Plan review – Scoping consultation and Call for Sites (deadline 12 October)

RESOLVED that the Parish Council make no response.

4.4 Resident request for funding for improvements to Jubilee Green

RESOLVED to approve expenditure of up to £60.00 for the purchase of wild daffodil bulbs and wild primroses to be planted near the hedge at the Jubilee Green. Cllr Yeadon will inform the resident.

RESOLVED to ensure that the grass cutters are including the area in the grass cutting schedule as a cut is now needed.

4.5 Cambridgeshire ACRE – Parish and Town Survey 2026

RESOLVED to note the survey and that the Clerk should complete it online.

4.6 Cambridgeshire ACRE – Invitation to Annual General Meeting 2026 and Impact Report

RESOLVED to note that Cllr Darbyshire had registered to attend.

4.7 CCC - Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan survey

RESOLVED, having considered and agreed the questionnaire responses, that Cllr Miles should submit the response online.

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. (Prop MY, 2nd EM, unanimous)

SCDC	Uncontested election cost	£105.00
Toft People's Hall	Room hire	£20.00
Toft People's Hall	Room hire	£20.00
MD Landscapes	Grass cutting	£577.50
E Miles	Expenses dog signs	£47.88
Clerks Compliance	Internal Audit fee	£120.00

5.2 To receive play inspection reports and consider any work required

Nothing further to add.

- 5.3 To consider any matter which is urgent because of risk or health and safety and relates to Council property
RESOLVED that low hanging brambles on the Church Drift path, which had not been cut will be reported to CCC by Cllr Miles.
- 6. To consider any Planning or Tree works applications or related items received**
- 6.1 Planning applications received – to be considered
- 6.1.1 26/02650/S73 – Land rear of 6 Hardwick Road – S73 to vary condition 8 (Verification report) of planning permission 21/01919/FUL (Part demolition of industrial building and conversion of remaining into a detached private dwelling and associated works) to amend the wording of the condition to omit the wording “prior to occupation”.
RESOLVED to make no comments.
- 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 26/01600/HFUL – 5 Cannors Close – Single storey side extension including alterations to fenestration – 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
The new picnic benches for Lot Meadow are being delivered shortly.
- 7.2 Highways
Cllr Darbyshire reported that pothole repair was up to date and the pavement repairs on the western side of the High Street by the former Methodist Church had been completed, as had the Beldams Close flooding work. A puddle from recent rain had drained quickly but Cllr Darbyshire will continue to monitor this when it rains.
- 7.3 Toft People’s Hall
Internal renovations had been carried out with just a few outstanding points.
- 7.4 Footpaths
It was noted that there had been no change to the overgrown vegetation on Footpath K6. A letter had been sent to Kingston Parish Council.
RESOLVED that Cllr Yeadon should take a look at the junction of footpaths T2 and T19 where brambles had become more overgrown and made the path very narrow.
- 7.5 Defibrillator report
It was noted that a new battery had been ordered but that the order now needed to be resubmitted online via a website called Webnos. Cllr Darbyshire will create an online account.
RESOLVED that Cllr McCarthy should take on responsibility for the defibrillator and liaise with the Community Heartbeat Trust. Cllr Darbyshire will phone Webnos to update them and redirect the contact details, and will meet Cllr McCarthy at the defibrillator site to show him the equipment.
RESOLVED that Cllr McCarthy should arrange defibrillator and CPR training for January.
- 7.6 Birdlings liaison
Cllr Coghlan reported that a resident had asked for another zebra crossing at the Co-op, as a large number of pupils from the Village College crossed there. It was felt unlikely that this would be approved by CCC as it would be so close to the existing crossing.
RESOLVED that Cllr Darbyshire should make enquiries with CCC but to suggest to the resident that it might be beneficial if they were to write to Comberton Village College to raise the matter themselves.

7.7 East West Rail

There were no new developments. It was noted that the organisers of the EWR meetings were looking for another Parish Council to take over.

7.8 Disaster Management Plan and Compilation of a Risk Management and Emergency Plan

Cllr Miles reported that she had written to Pippa Heylings MP and was considering writing to emergency groups about compiling a plan. She will introduce Cllr Howling as he is leading the project.

Cllr Howling outlined his initial ideas for a plan, which included: wildfire risks, their prediction and effects, such as tree branch drop; Bourn Brook; shared green spaces; flooding and storms.

He suggested setting up a communications network and reaching out to neighbouring villages to communicate information about fires, etc.

Members also suggested that it would be useful to make a confidential list of people who might be vulnerable due to being ill or disabled, or had no transport, to identify who might need help in an emergency. The village could be broken down into areas with one or two residents responsible for a few streets.

It would be necessary to identify where people could go if there was a fire or shelter was needed.

RESOLVED that Cllr Howling should continue to develop the plan, and contact the MP and local Parish Councils and ask whether they have plans or policies that they could share.

7.9 Proposal that the Parish Council considers the excessive amount of promotional material on the top of the High Street and Excessive signage on the road side

RESOLVED, given the concern about restricted visibility for those pulling out onto the High Street, to write to the County Councillor seeking his support with the removal of the signs. The excessive signage had already been reported on the CCC website. Cllr Darbyshire will raise the matter with Highways.

7.10 Removal/damage of two Parish Council map information boards

Taken earlier.

7.11 Village Hero Awards

RESOLVED to run the Awards again this year, and that Cllr Yeadon should place an article in the Calendar seeking nominations and will bring them to the Parish Council to be finalised.

RESOLVED to purchase plaques for the approximate cost of £80.00 and also boxes of chocolates, to be presented at the Christmas dinner. (Prop MY, 2nd ED, unanimous)

7.12 Funding for bulbs for the Village Green

RESOLVED to approve expenditure of an additional sum of £40.00 for the purchase of spring flowers for the village green, and that Cllr Darbyshire should contact the resident who looks after the Jubilee Green about where to source the plants.

7.13 Speed monitor results

Cllr Yeadon reported that he would prepare results again for next month. He had sent the previous results to the Speed Watch group and would ask them for an update on their activities.

8. Closure of meeting

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 9.43 pm.

SignedChairmandate.