

Manduessedum - Mancetter Village
(Place of War Chariots)

Mancetter Parish Council

Serving the People of Mancetter and Ridge Lane

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF THE PARISH OF MANCETTER

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council of
Mancetter, held on Tuesday 17th February, 2026, at the
Schoolroom of St Peter's Church Mancetter, starting at 7pm.

Present:

Chairman Mr T Hopkins.

Parish Councillors Mr H Blackburn, Mrs A Ford-Rogerson, Mrs S Healy, Mr P Mann, MrJ
Tither.

County Councillor Not applicable

Borough Councillor Not applicable

Parish Clerk Not applicable

Item 1a - Welcome and Apologies

Mr T Hopkins welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Mrs G Davis, Mrs G Forknall

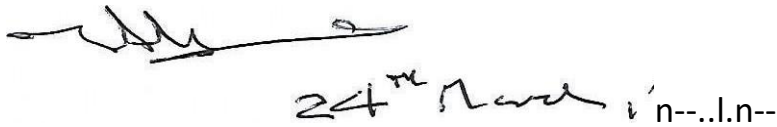
Item 1b — Recording of the meeting.

The meeting was recorded on the Dictaphone provided by the Parish Council. The recording will be erased on production of the draft minutes. Councillor Healy declared that she would be recording the meeting on her personal equipment.

Item 2 — Notice of Interest.

Interests were declared by Councillors Alice Ford-Rogerson, Trevor Hopkins and John Tither as allotment holders in Ridge Lane.

Signed Date:



24th March 2026

Item 3— Public Question Time.

There were no members of the public in attendance.

Item 4- Matters requiring the exclusion of the Public and Press, in accordance with Section IOOA (4) of The Local Government Act 1972.

.Part — Private Session

Items in this section are confidential.

Councillors discussed the issues relating to the forthcoming retirement of Mrs Elane Higgins as Clerk to the Parish of Mancetter. The Chairman confirmed that Mrs Higgins' contract as Clerk and Responsible Finance

Officer (RFO) would terminate on 31st March, 2026, having received formal notification in print from the Clerk. The Chairman also confirmed that the Clerk was currently taking official leave from duties and that this was supported by the relevant legal documentation. In order that the business of the Parish Council might continue in the Clerk's absence the Chairman was able to confirm that contact with both WALC and SLCC had taken place and that Mancetter Parish Council (MPC) had been placed upon a list to receive the services of a Locum Clerk should this prove necessary; however, Cllr Ford-Rogerson, acting as councillor overseeing communications (voluntary) confirmed that, to date, two applications to fill the position of Clerk from 1st April, 2026, had been received. It was confirmed that the content of the advertisement had been discussed previously, at an informal meeting of some councillors, before its contents were circulated through email to all councillors for comment. No objections to its content were received.

Part II — Confidential Business

Item 5 — Staffing Matters: i) Clerk and RFO Resignation; ii) Contractual Obligations.

Discussion of this issue was moved into Item Seven

Item 6 — Appointment of Interim Officers

Following personal meetings with councillors the Chairman, Cllr. Hopkins, was able to confirm that Cllr. Ford-Rogerson had volunteered to oversee communications relating the Parish and Parish Council. This agreement will stand until 31st March, 2026. The Chairman thanked Cllr. Ford-Rogerson for her continued effort and support in this role.

The Chairman confirmed that he had been active in seeking a resolution to the vacant position of Responsible Finance Officer (RFO). The Chairman has received offer of assistance from Ms Joan Daniels, currently the RFO and SILCA qualified Secretary and Treasurer to the Northern Group of

Signed Date:

Parish Councils. Ms Daniels is willing to assist Mancetter Council as and when necessary to fulfil financial duties and to offer general support to the Chairman in relation to funeral activities associated with the cemetery. The Chairman has previous experience of officiating at funerals within the parish and in contact with the local Funeral Directors (Evans of Atherstone).

It was confirmed that Ms Daniels would work initially with the current Clerk. Cllr. Healy voiced concern over this arrangement, given that the current Clerk is presently on 'leave' and she expressed 'fears' that with the limited time remaining of the financial year the council should expect to receive a 'critical inspection' by the auditor, given the challenges that the Council faces at present. Cllr Healy was critical of what she perceived



as a lack of progress in finding a resolution to the position in which the Council found itself and the current challenges that it faced. Cllr Healy stated that it was her belief that without such resolution the Council was in danger of "falling foul of statutory requirements" and that the Parish Councillors were "likely to incur a penalty for failing to adhere to strict deadlines as set by HM Government". Both Cllrs Healy and Tither were highly critical of what they believed was a lack of action regarding a number of financial issues relating to payments for contractual works within the parish. Cllr Hopkins (Chairman) challenged such criticisms and sought to offer some assurance that the matter was under control and he remained firm over actions that were being taken. Discussions continued, ~~tempered manner,~~ with a particular focus on procedures that 'should be followed', with Cllr that she would share her concerns the internal auditor if, in her view, "proper procedure" was not followed. 202, The Chairman sought to reassure the Council that all necessary actions were being enacted upon.

Further concerns were raised regarding the Clerk's personal situation, and reference was made the meeting held in January where it had been suggested that the Clerk might accept early retirement. In reply, Cllr Hopkins stated that the Clerk wished to remain in post for a while longer and she was willing to discuss a positive way forward which involved working with Joan Daniels. Whilst some councillors remained dissatisfied with this arrangement the Chairman reminded the council that whilst it expected him to communicate with the Clerk on these issues it could, and should, not expect him to 'perform dual standards'.

Against continued opposition from some councillors the Chairman again declared that from the actions that he had taken to date the Council was in a position to fulfil its responsibilities and that given obtaining the services of a locum clerk at this stage was not possible, by acting with urgency in securing the assistance of Joan Daniels an effective resolution to the challenges faced had been found. Some concern was expressed regarding the security of passwords and other confidential information, together with the role expected of Ms. Daniels and the issue of salary. In response to further questions and concerns raised the Chairman stated such issues could be resolved at the next meeting scheduled for 24th February, that Ms. Daniels responsibilities would be limited to finance and that all correct procedures would be followed. On the question of the number of hours per week Ms Daniels would work the Chairman stated that this was dependent upon what work needed to be done.

On the issue of email communications Cllr Healy asked if these could be redirected [to councillors], but the Chairman replied that a previous attempt to do so had met with failure, in part due to the

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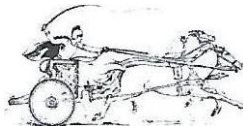
retention of 'dot org' signature, as a precaution against fraudulent activity, and he requested again that all councillors should use the 'dot gov' signature as set down by HM Government guidelines. Asking for the consent of council that Ms Daniels could attend the meeting with the Clerk, on the 18th, in order that necessary actions could be put in place the Chairman assured all present that Ms Daniels would communicate only with the Chairman as long as the role continued. It was also established that Cllr FordRogerson would continue in her role covering daily administrative matters and that both parties should be allowed to proceed free of interference from other bodies. Consent to the request was offered once Cllr Tither had received assurance that a plan from Ms Daniels on how matters would proceed would be presented to councillors at the meeting on the 24th. The Chairman agreed and emphasised again that Ms Daniels would deal only with financial matters and not with the wider responsibilities of the Clerk. It was then agreed that a meeting with the Trustees of the Memorial Hall (where the Parish office is located) would be arranged so that access to its facilities could be gained.

Item 7— Recovery and Security of Council Assets

Councillors present agreed to carry this item over to the meeting of the 24th February.


24th March 10--o-z-C

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 19.58
hrs.



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(Place of War Chariots)

Mancetter Parish Council

Serving the People of Mancetter and Ridge Lane

Signed

Date:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Signed

Date: