

Mancetter Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish of Mancetter Held at 7pm on Tuesday, 28 April 2026 at Schoolroom, St Peter's Church, Mancetter

Attendance: Cllr Hopkins (Chair), J Ambrose, Proper Officer

Members of Public: 32

1. Welcome

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 29 April 2025 were approved at the next ordinary meeting of the Parish Council 2025. No matters arising.

3. Parish Council Information

a) Chair introduced Jo-Anne Ambrose newly appointed Proper Officer, Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, who took up position 7 April 2026.

b) Chair's Report

See Appendix 1

c) Update on the Mancetter Parish Plan

Lead parishioner Ian Ritchie and Dave Atkin

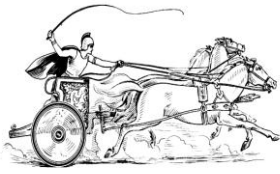
The Neighbourhood Plan is an important document for the Parish, it gives residents an opportunity to say what is important to us and where we would like to see development. It is significantly challenging in this area, railway on one side; we have the river, heritage and archaeological assets to consider. There will be pressure to have some development and if we don't undertake a neighbourhood plan, where you have a say, that decision will be taken by others. As part of the team who are looking at the updating of the Mancetter Neighbourhood Plan we are very fortunate to have living within our parish the Former Head Of North Warwickshire Borough Council's Planning Department. We will be soliciting all of your views about our parish, where you would like to see development, but more importantly where you do not want to see development within the parish. It was noted that the only way to improve services in our community is to have some development.

d) Brief update on quarry site

On 27.04.2026 a delegation from the Parish Council attended a meeting at Shire Hall with County Councillors Warren and Cheshire, who both hold portfolios at the County Council, together with senior members of staff from planning, highways and policy to discuss our concerns regarding a number of issues pertaining to the parish in general and Tarmac planning application,

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1



Mancetter Parish Council

NWB/24CM013, which remains undetermined since June 2024, further such meetings are to be arranged. A meeting between the three tiers of government and Tarmac is to be sought and we duly keep residents informed over coming months.

e) Parish Area

At the meeting with Warwickshire County Council, the Parish Council raised concerns over the continued levels of deprivation and health inequalities as highlighted in the County Council's latest business intelligence report published November 2025, as well as the high levels of road traffic accidents and serious injuries, as well as fatalities on many of our rural roads within the parish. We have made a number of suggestions including requesting the County Council facilitates producing a roadmap with milestones to improve the aforementioned issues, as both deprivation and health inequalities remain stubbornly high, for some three decades or more. Finally the meeting at Shire Hall was felt to be extremely positive and hope that there will be some change for the better over next few months and years. We shall keep parishioners informed on our parish webpages as well as our parish council social media.

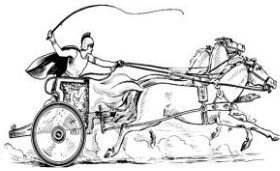
f) Severn Trent Ware/Affinity Water Canal & River Trust (also known as the Grand Union Canal Transfer (GUCT))

Sarah-Jane, Stakeholder Engagement Lead (GUCT) agreed to attend the Parish in May to consider potential alternative road diversions when closure of part of Coleshill Road takes place meaning access via Monks Park Lane will be unavailable during the planned road closure. Residents of Ridge Lane raised concerns about the suggested route for the diversion at a specially convened meeting arranged with Sarah-Jane in the community Room, Ridge Lane, March 2026. GUCT have recently held its Phase 2 consultation, we await feedback over the coming months from the Parish Councils submission.

4. Question Time

An elector asked about the precept increase – the increase is £5.32 per month. Cllr Healy explained it is down to increased budgeting - additional works are required in cemetery and improvements to steps and handrails to meet statutory regulations; Government national insurance increases, training for new Cllrs and Clerk.

An elector asked re Nuneaton Road crossing Gramer Cottage. An engineer is coming out from the County Council to assess the best position for a road crossing to be installed. At the Warwickshire County Council meeting, the road crossing was raised. The Senior Officer agreed to pursue the Road Crossing. We have asked him that residents of Gramer Cottages be consulted and we shall forward Gramer Cottages Charity administrator contact email address to the officer. Our Clerk will keep you updated of progress. The Chair reported that the parish council



Mancetter Parish Council

are in discussions, re the exit from Quarry Lane onto the Nuneaton Road may have to be altered to slow vehicles down, who often sweep out at speed onto the Nuneaton Road. The Parish Council, owns the Village Green and they may need a small area of The Green to accommodate potential road alterations. We understand the funding has been approved and is in place.

An update on the Tarmac site was requested regarding the acid water, which Tarmac have been testing during the past 12 months at onsite laboratory to find a permanent solution to the issue.

5. Reports Received from Local Community Groups & Organisations

(see appendix for details)

- a) Mancetter WI
- b) Parish Church
- c) Memorial Hall
- d) Gramer Charity
- e) Roman Exhibition
- f) Mancetter Guides
- g) Residents Group (Bingo)
- h) Little Stars
- i) Ridge Lane Chapel & Community Room
- j) Tea & Toast
- k) Youth Club
- l) Walking Group
- m) Bluebells
- n) Craft Group
- o) Allotments

6. Close of Meeting by Chair

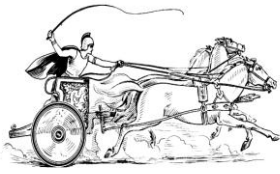
The Chair announced it has been a difficult year, a former parish clerk died, the Chair had remained friends right up until her death. As he alluded to during his speech, family comes first, he announced that earlier today at approximately 10am he had delivered his resignation to the Borough Council, both as a Parish Councillor and Chair with effect from 9pm this evening; standing down after 47 years as a parish councillor and 33 years as Chair. Several attendees gave tributes and wished Cllr Hopkins and wish him and his family all the very best for the future.

Parish council vacancies were announced, with the chairs' resignation at the close of business we currently have three vacancies, the parish clerk will follow prescribed protocols and advertise vacancies once received confirmation from returning officer at NWBC.

Meeting Closed 9.25 pm

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3



Mancetter Parish Council

Appendix 1

3.b Chairs Report 2025-2026

The report which follows is my own personal view of events and activities linked to Mancetter Parish Council and may not reflect the views of the whole council in all areas of comment.

2025- 2026 has possibly been the most difficult time experienced by the council in recent times, apart from the great battle to hold things together during the two years of Covid. In particular during that time because the Parish is a burial authority, that essential services had to continue and were conducted by the former Clerk/RFO Elane and myself.

To function during the past year has not been helped by Central Government and the uncertainty of Devolution.

On the second point, I believe that our council is in full agreement that it would benefit NWBC being a leading part in a North Warwickshire Unitary Authority and that there is a balanced South Warwickshire area. All consultation events attended by Parish Council representatives strengthen that view.

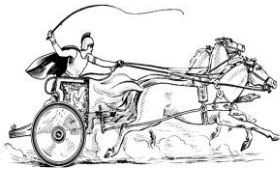
The major issue that also brought about functioning difficulties was the illness of our ten year of service Clerk/RFO becoming increasingly ill, but battling on to try and complete work. Elane finally decided to inform the council that she was going to retire from service after a medical emergency involving a close family member. Certainly, in my book, the care of family takes priority over anything else.

During the ten years of service that Elane completed, some of which was working with Karen who happens to be here this evening, a lot of progress was made to develop the Parish. The archive was jointly set up which has proved invaluable. The original minute books are certainly important. The initial attempt at an early website was adopted and further added to, and most importantly, a decision after scrutiny options with Elane and myself, the proposal put forward to the council to adopt the Scribe Financial system which has subsequently been added to by using the cemetery package has proven invaluable and easy to operate.

I had encountered a similar event in my time as Chair, and to continue without an RFO would be unacceptable. The finding of anyone who knows the NWBC area and had some knowledge of our Parish could prove difficult. I was able to finally source a fully CILCA qualified Clerk/RFO to step into the role at short notice, and to carry out the financial work associated with day to day operations, and continue the preparation work for the annual audit which had already been started by Elane. That

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4



Mancetter Parish Council

lady was Joan Daniel, who works with two other parishes in the area, and is the secretary and finance member of the Northern Town and Parish Councils Group.

Joan has done work without any charge for service to Mancetter and I have liaised with her by visiting her home which is her operational base. For this I am extremely grateful to Joan, and I hope the rest of the council hold that view.

I have been dealing with all matters relating to cemetery work, relating to interment of either full burial or ashes. I have visited and liaised with all three of the undertakers who are the main users of the cemetery, and dealt with the return or retention of essential documents. In the relatively short timescale there has been some eight enquiries, which has culminated in a number of interments. Liaising with the families and the gravediggers also forms part of the task.

An additional contractor has been used during this year to support important additional administrative work associated with Scribe. That was to carry out the detailed work of transferring cemetery records to the scribe system, while the clerk continued to keep the important ledgers and deed books up to date. This was a slow and tedious task because of cross referencing. Some deeds having a hundred year term rather than the now adopted sixty year burial term. That additional work was completed in the timescale, but further work is needed to code the memorials and complete a site map on the system. Great thanks goes from me to Caroline Foster for this work who as one of the Church Wardens at St Peter's Church had been involved in some of the interments recorded.

That brings me to the more positive functions of the Parish Council during this year.

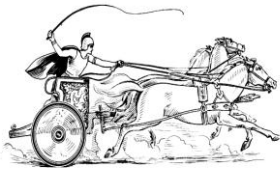
The local Community Speed Watch group was supported by council members and despite weather and individual circumstances reducing the number of operations, the results clearly demonstrated that further measures are needed to reduce speeds along Nuneaton Road and Harpers Lane. It is important to emphasise that the need for the pedestrian crossing, with funding already agreed, is installed with some measure of urgency outside the Parish Church. Supervising funerals at this site remains a dangerous and difficult operation for the attending parish representatives.

At long last the end of what has been a five-year project has finally been completed.

The start was the "Hundred Shield Event" where parishioners and active groups in the parish designed coats of arms. This allowed the consultation on new individual notice boards and village signs to be designed, adopted and produced. The noticeboards were no problem to install, but WCC managed to "sit upon" the village signs for more than a year. The intervention by our County Councillor despite repeated requests from the Parish finally brought about the installation. The Council

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5



Mancetter Parish Council

had also convinced the County to repurpose one of the original Mancetter signs at the Atherstone/Mancetter boundary. The original Mancetter sign on Quarry Lane could not be used due to roadside verge constraints.

The former changing rooms at Ridge Lane Recreation Ground were finally dismantled and the restructuring of the Mancetter Pavilion and improvements has started and are much looked forward to.

Unfortunately, there is currently no likelihood of changing facilities in Ridge Lane.

The new play area at Ridge Lane has nearly been completed. It has caused much public adverse comment and anger about the length of time to do the work. Having liaised regularly with the contractor, I can confirm their equal frustrations over the timescale and difficulties encountered.

Within the cemetery area, the large accumulation of surplus soil from grave-digging has been redistributed to level the ground in the final third area of the new cemetery. Two areas were sown with meadow grass and wildflower mixtures in a brief Saturday morning window of good weather conditions. A small workforce of three councillors, and a pressed ganged partner, completed the work within three hours.

While Centrica were carrying out work to the gas mains along Nuneaton Road and had traffic light closures, the ordered pruning of two yew trees made by WCC were completed. This was effectively a cost saving of at least £1,000 for an additional road closure order.

All trees in the cemetery have been number tagged, a schematic diagram checklist and procedure sheet have been completed. A fully qualified volunteer tree surgeon has been engaged to carry out an inspection at no cost, enabling the financial reserve to be utilised towards any works found. I am sorry to report that he is stranded abroad at the moment because of the current world situation.

All allotments are let and the parish funded a skip to remove detritus from the site. I have to report that the majority of the rubbish came from one particular allotment which had been a difficult tenancy, involving sad health issues. The new tenants had been patient in keeping rubbish contained, until it could be disposed of.

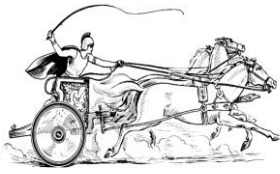
Again a schematic diagram has been drawn up for future reference of the whole site.

Planning issues have been responded to throughout the year.

Despite best efforts by the Parish and Borough councils, a refusal decision was overruled by the planning inspectorate when an appeal was lodged. This involved

Signed:

6



Mancetter Parish Council

the White Hart site at Ridge lane, where outline consent was granted for three houses to be accessed through the car park.

Other issues of concern with planning in the parish, are linked to a site bordering Hartshill and Kenilworth Farm on the A5.

Consultation paperwork on Borough Council development planning has been responded to, and this has been strengthened by earlier paperwork compiled on the Tarmac Quarry by a small team of councillors and the former clerk.

The Tarmac site is also subject to a very complicated planning agreement impacted by the lack of decisions taken by WCC. This is much to the frustration of all parties involved and Tarmac have a lodged a formal complaint on two occasions.

There has been little progress on the level of deprivation in the parish. This has been admitted by WCC and the Creating Opportunities Meetings which have been attended by parish representatives. A better bus service through Ridge Lane has been a positive.

Other major issues will be dealt with later by others, and are very much ongoing.

The future of Mancetter Parish very much depends on how other levels of government make their decisions, and is difficult to identify.

This perhaps brings me to the point where I need to give my boring voice a rest and handover to others.

A final comment from me is that I felt that I could not personally agree with the considerable increase in the parish precept, but a democratic decision was made. It may well be explained away by bringing forward a new pathway in the cemetery and other works.

Finally, I thank everyone associated with voluntary work in the parish, the hard work of fellow parish councillors, our two borough councillors Denise Clews and Keith Barnett, and Jen Warren our County Councillor.

This concludes my personal observations for the year 2025 2026.

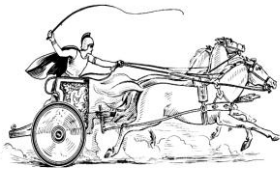
5. Local Community Groups & Organisation Summary Reports

a) Mancetter WI

At May 2025 annual meeting the committee had a change of roles, new president Janette Guslav took over. Strong membership of 45 members. Various activities such as origami, leaning about tradition of the Appalachian Mountains, talk about heirloom jewellery, bi monthly craft group, and have a new book club. We meet

Signed:

7



Mancetter Parish Council

regularly for lunches and like to support Purley Chase Centre. There is a pending darts tournament with WI's from around the County. Summer outing to Shrewsbury, and 16 people went on a taster cruise. Another cruise is happening at the end of May for a week. We organised a charity fashion show in support of the local Brownies and Guides and raised £740 for them. We engage with the Warwickshire and National Federation who offer trips, science talks and annual conferences.

b) Parish Church

The Vicar left this year and the PCC and volunteers have worked hard to keep the Church running. We have had a new kitchenette built which is great for the groups. We have children's crafts and have started a monthly lunch group £12 for two course roast lunch. We are also having quiz nights, host history and AA groups, along with Mancetter singers.

c) Memorial Hall

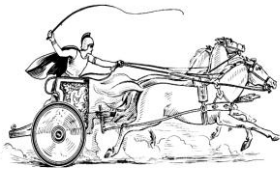
Mancetter Memorial offers a vibrant and diverse programme throughout the week, aiming to engage a wide spectrum of interests and age groups within the local community. Mancetter Memorial Hall is a small community organisation run by a small group of trustees

Throughout the week, the mobile heart failure clinic is stationed in the car park, providing essential health services to residents. The Mind Wellbeing Hub is also available in the hall. Barnardo's hosts a toddler group, catering for young families, the Rainbows, Brownies, and Guides meet in the evening. There are a range of activities including one-off workshops, training sessions, creating . The Youth Group meets; karate classes are available, Tai Chi sessions; and the Women's Institute holds regular meetings. There is also a new booking for NHS Blood Donors. Later in the week tea and chat, bowls, a tea dance, bingo and mature movers dance classes. At weekends the hall is used for children's birthday parties and weddings.

The drainage issue at the hall was recently resolved, though it required a considerable financial investment of several thousand pounds. Despite these expenses, we maintain stable prices for regular groups throughout 2025.

d) Gramer Charity

Mary Evans, Chair of Trust. Six cottages with three in the grounds of Church and the others on Nuneaton Road, all Listed buildings. All occupied, with residents living in them. We do not provide 24 hour care, but have a warden who contacts the residents every week, and if they need to contact others, they have the relevant contact details, so know someone is around to help. The cottages continue to be maintained to a high standard. With the buildings being old, they do require a lot of maintenance. We have 7 Trustees and meet 7 times a year. There was an ornate cast iron canopy that needed to be removed as a section fell down. We



Mancetter Parish Council

hope a similar structure will replace it, and are looking for a grant as it will cost over £100,000. We have to store the original as it is, as Conservation Officer will not let it be removed. We are in the process of contacting someone who can utilise parts of it. We are getting quotes to repaint the end gable wall bordering cemetery and will inform the Parish Council when the work will commence. The trees at the top cottages are in the Manor House and are in conversation to maintain the trees, as they are becoming an issue. Our income is not large but we do well with what we have. We are celebrating a 300 year anniversary in March 2027 and are planning a day of celebrations, there will also be an exhibition, all welcome to attend.

e) Roman Exhibition

Martin Saunders sent report. Attendance to exhibition is 742, of which 405 day visitors. 337 were group visits. Have opened 27 Saturdays and visited local schools and spoken to 204 children. They have 12 volunteers in the team and have completed 4045 hours of voluntary work. They are promoting Boudica's last stand. They want to go to outreach and develop further and get into publications. Margaret Hughes book is of interest and adds value to the fact this could be the last battle site.

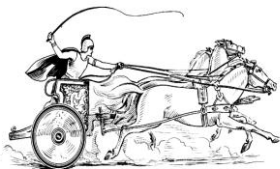
f) Mancetter Guides

Girlguiding Atherstone District - 2026

Over the last year our numbers have continued to increase, including girls waiting to join! This is not a situation that we like, but with fewer volunteers we need to stick to Girlguiding guidelines on ratios of adults to girls! Our members have gained lots of badges and we have given out some bronze and silver and gold awards in all sections. We have seen some of the most timid girls blossom and there is nothing better than seeing all the girls making new friends, joining in with activities and smiling. Some of our older girls continue to come along each week and enjoy their "Girl Only" space! Two of our girls are working towards their Girlguiding Leadership Award, which is great news!

What we did in 2025 and plans for 2026

In 2025 Guides enjoyed two camping trips, one at Mancetter Scout Headquarters. They cooked, crafted and enjoyed the outdoor space. The second was a camp at a Girlguiding site in Meriden where they joined with other Guides from our Division for a weekend camp, fully outdoors! In July 2026 10 girls and leaders will join Girlguiding Staffordshire at their International camp to be held at Statfold Country Park. There will be over 600 girls enjoying a weekend of fun and adventure. Brownies from our units in Mancetter and Warton had a sleepover in May 2025 with the theme of Teddy Bears Picnic. In February 2026 Brownies had another sleepover, this time at Mancetter Memorial Hall, where the theme was Disney. They enjoyed singing, dancing, dressing up and craft activities. We were joined by Fusion Saxophone Band on Saturday afternoon for a concert of Disney tunes,



Mancetter Parish Council

where parents joined us. These longer events give us the opportunity to try more complicated crafts and enjoy some cooking, whilst enjoying the outdoors. In July 2025 we took 50 girls and volunteers to join a large-scale event at Uttoxeter Racecourse, where over 12,000 girls from all over the Midlands Region enjoyed a full day of adventure. It was a very hot day, but we all had a great time. In May 2026 we are taking Rainbows to Polesworth Donkey Sanctuary for a day of activities, with the donkeys and goats. We are continuing to work towards badges and awards, whilst going back to basics and passing on life skills. Due to increasing costs of everything, budgeting is an ongoing task. We try to keep our membership fees as low as we can, whilst proving a varied programme and extra events. We currently have 16 Rainbows, 24 Brownies and 23 Guides in Mancetter, along with 15 Brownies who meet in Warton.

g) Residents Group (Bingo)

Sandra Holt, Chair - We are a social group who run events at Mancetter Memorial Hall every Thursday eg bingo. We are a long-time volunteer group serving the community of Mancetter. This year is our 21st year going from strength to strength with new members joining every week our total is nearly 60, which is fantastic. Our committee volunteers have all worked very hard to get this club where it is now. We run day trips to the seaside every year fish & chip nights and provide Xmas party every year with entertainment.

h) Little Stars

No report received.

i) Ridge Lane Chapel & Community Room

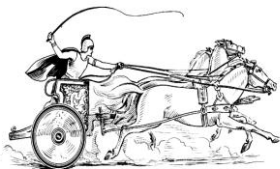
Chris, Minister – have been with Ridge Lane for 18 months, and have already had some work completed to the chapel – new doors. We are looking for grants for further work, with new noticeboards. We house a number of community groups throughout the week, WI, Tea and Toast, Church run youth club, walking group and dance group.

j) Tea & Toast

Ran by volunteers and has done so for over 8 years. From newborns to people over 80 years old. Enjoyed by lots of residents and demonstrates a community can have lonely residents and this group helps to form relationships.

k) Youth Club

Had a good year, children arrive at 6pm and collected at 7.30pm. They have an enjoyable evening. The Club has received a wall unit from NWBC to store toys. Visitors are invited to give talks eg, Safety Officer, RNLI who promotes safety by and in water. This helps children understand their environment. In winter we hold groups indoors, but with light nights and warmer weather we hold the groups outside.



Mancetter Parish Council

l) Walking Group

Ran by a volunteer in Ridge Lane and another group in Mancetter. The groups submit reports on the Rights of Way, they also litter pick. A request was issued that if any public rights of ways have been blocked by landowners or encroachment has taken place could you inform the parish clerk with a report and any photographs you are able to provide so a request can be sent to the county's enforcement team.

m) Bluebells WI

2025 was another enjoyable year for the WI, with summer socials and regular meetings. We have had many fascinating speakers, including Penelope Brown who talked to us about walking from Mexico to Canada along with Pacific Quest Trail, some 2,650 miles. We also listed to Aryn Green, a local author. Philip York talking about female spies of the English Civil War. The Bluebells organised a successful wine walk raising funds for both WI and Salvation Army Christmas Toy Appeal. This event was especially enjoyed by the Treacle Tarts of Nuneaton who will be joining us on the 2026 wine walk. After a High Court ruling about transgender women, this meant transgender women being excluded from the WI. Some of these people have been members for 40 years are no longer allowed to rejoin. Some members felt strongly that this went against the ethos of the WI of inclusivity and tolerance. Whilst we put pressures to change this ruling, we must abide by the law. Our members are looking forward to another year of great speakers, debates and most importantly, friendship and laughter.

n) Craft Group

The craft club was launched in November 2025 started by Bluebells WI and runs the first Tuesday of every month with an average attendance of 15 people. Thank you NWBC for the grant. Clubs finances are strong and healthy and want to broaden its reach and encourage greater community involvement. The club introduced childrens Easter activities and was successful and will continue during the school holidays offering parents, grandparents, childminders a welcome space to bring children and socialise with fun filled activities. The club aims to strengthen its presence by increasing promotion across local and surrounding areas via social media continuing to pursue funding opportunities. Inviting expert crafters to workshops, resource and expand materials for all.

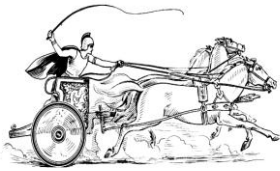
o) Allotments

John Graves report Allotment Society representative for Ridge Lane Allotments. He's the national allotment association society rep Ridge Lane Allotments, collecting allotment holders contributions for public liability insurance for their plot(s).

Growing season - has been a very difficult year, due to being wet and allotment holders have been much later this year tendering their plots, making it very late to

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11



Mancetter Parish Council

do the autumn and winter preparations. Much progress has been made, having been an allotment holder for about 15 years and in his role as a society rep, he's visited other allotments over the West Midlands during past 15 years. Plots themselves on the whole are in better condition than for many years. Most plots holders have caught up and the plots are in good shape, however first rule on the allotment code of conduct states plots must be kept in a good state of cultivation, there are a couple plots that haven't been looked at 12 months, and are in particularly bad state, these plots are covered in tall grasses, brambles and weeds. The allotment risk assessment notes those guilty of infringements as described, given a six month notice of termination of tenancy, however the society rep believes they should be given termination notice immediately because the plots are in such poor state, The code of conduct doesn't give warnings so he would recommend amending the code of conduct and suggesting 28 days notice to put right and further 28 days termination notice be issued. He requested that consideration be given to collecting the sum, currently £3.50 per allotment holder be added to the pitch/ plot annual fee and collected together, that would insure all plots holders have relevant public liability for their individual plots. The issues raised in the above report will be considered at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

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12