



Datchworth
PARISH COUNCIL
SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF DATCHWORTH, BULLS GREEN, BURNHAM GREEN & HOOKS CROSS

Datchworth Parish Council

29th September 2026

c/o Datchworth Village Hall
52 Datchworth Green,
Datchworth,
SG3 6TL
Tel : 07938743424

Present: Cllrs Sara Miller, Andrew Wood, Julia Florence, Dean Goodman, Charles Groves, Viv Marshall, Emma Norman, Pat Perry, Mark Light and Michael Sims.

In attendance: Clerk, 1 member of public, Cllr Wood left 20:30

Minutes of Datchworth Parish Council Meeting

held on Tuesday 29th September 2026

Datchworth Church Hall at 7pm

PCM26-09/01 Apologies

- a. To receive and accept apologies for absence.

PCM26-09/02 Interests

- a. To receive declarations of interests from Councillors on items on the agenda

None

- b. To receive written requests for dispensations for declarable interests

None

- c. To grant any requests for dispensations as appropriate.

None

PCM26-09/03 Minutes

Resolved To verify the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 28th July 2026 as a correct record. Unanimous

Actions

Date	Action	Responsible	
28-07-2026	To add 'infrastructure' into answer for Q1 and send to East Herts Planning. Complete.	Cllr Goodman	Completed
28-07-2026	To investigate grant funding.	Cllr Marshall	Carried forward
28-07-2026	To verify that full risk assessments are detailed and recorded monthly. Complete.	Cllr Florence	Complete

PCM26-09/04 Public Issues

Members of the Public and Councillors can raise matters of concern (15 minutes).

The clerk on behalf of a resident requested a baseline speed and volume survey for Datchworth Green, citing the increasing volume and speed of traffic and the growing number of families, children and pedestrians using the bus stops, playground, village hall events and the rugby and cricket clubs. He noted he had met with County Cllr Crofton, who supports advisory signage but has no locality budget available to fund the survey, and asked whether the Parish Council would fund it.

Councillors discussed the request at length, noting: a similar request exists in respect of Burnham Green Road; a speed and volume survey was previously declined by the Council (September 2025) partly on the basis that it is a Highway Authority responsibility; indicative costs of around £200–250 per device where existing Herts County Council street furniture can be used, rising significantly where road markings or a full survey are required; and that the parish's existing solar-powered, detachable Speed Indicator Device (SID) on Watton Road could potentially be relocated. Members raised concerns about setting a precedent by funding what is normally a Highway Authority responsibility, and about the SID's ownership, asset register status, insurance position and the permissions that would be needed to move it on highway land.

Resolved: To obtain up-to-date, accurate costs for a speed and volume survey at both Datchworth Green and Burnham Green Road, and to investigate the practicalities of relocating the existing SID camera, before deciding how to respond. Unanimous.

Action: Cllr Groves to establish how the existing SID camera was acquired and funded, whether it is on the Council's asset register, whether moving it would affect its insurance or any warranty, and what permission would be required to site it elsewhere.

Action: Cllr Sims to obtain up-to-date costs for a speed and volume survey at both locations.

PCM26-09/05 Finance (Cllr Light)

- a. Review & approve monthly finance report – August/September payments.

Cllr Light presented the monthly finance report, previously circulated. All outstanding invoices were small with the exception of the Zurich insurance premium (£1,660.80, previously agreed) and the annual website hosting/webmail charge (£248).

Resolved: To pay the outstanding invoices as presented. Unanimous.

- b. Note salary staff pay awards.

The nationally agreed 2026/27 staff pay award of 3.3%, backdated to 1st April 2026, has been implemented, with backpay included in September's wages.

- c. External Audit (AGAR) completion & matters arising.

The external audit has been completed to the satisfaction of PKF Littlejohn, with no matters arising. In line with legal guidance, the AGAR Section 3 Certificate and Notice of Conclusion have been uploaded to the website, alongside AGAR Sections 1 and 2 (previously published).

Cllr. Light reminded all Committee Chairs to submit their 2027/28 budget proposals; the deadline (previously end of September) is extended until after the Recreation Committee has met, so that finance can meet to consider the budget in the next couple of weeks.

Tree survey provision (budget discussion)

Members discussed the Council's tree inspections under which a qualified arboriculturist carries out a full detailed survey of high-risk public access areas every 10 years (next due 2030), with visual inspections in the interim carried out by a competent person every 12 months (high-risk areas) or two years (medium-risk areas). The current 12-monthly visual inspections have been carried out by volunteers from the village since July 2023. Given the exceptionally dry summer, observed tree losses and the length of time since a qualified inspection, Cllr Wood proposed that an interim survey now be carried out by a suitably qualified arboriculturist.

An estimate for the interim survey is not yet available (region of £4,000–£5,000, to be confirmed by quotation); the full 10-year survey due in 2030 cost approximately £10,000 when last carried out.

Resolved: To commission an interim tree survey and to gather comparative information from neighbouring parish councils, as set out in the actions below. Unanimous.

Action: Cllr Wood to make enquiries and obtain a quotation for an interim professional tree survey.

Action: Cllr Perry to contact the National Tree Safety Group (or equivalent body) regarding competency and qualification standards for tree inspectors.

Action: Clerk to contact neighbouring parish councils to establish how tree surgery is managed.

PCM26-09/06 Governance and Legal

a. Pound Farm response (draft sent to Councillors for review).

The Chair confirmed that a draft response regarding Pound Farm had been circulated to Councillors for review in advance of the meeting.

Resolved: to send the Pound Farm response as drafted. Unanimous.

PCM26-09/07 Planning (Cllr Goodman)

New applications:

- Lodge Farm, 124 Harmer Green Road – full application for four detached dwellings, following the earlier grant of Planning Permission in Principle. The site falls within Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council's area, but the access point lies within Datchworth parish; the Council has again raised concern with Welwyn Hatfield's Planning Department that it was not consulted. The Highway Authority raised an objection on 24th September on grounds of the access point's proximity to the Harmer Green Lane / Orchard Road junction and the resulting traffic implications. The Planning Committee resolved to support the Highway Authority's objection, and to raise a further objection on landscaping grounds, as the scheme does not show retention or replacement of the substantial frontage hedge.
- 1 Raffin Park – domestic extensions and alterations. A well-prepared submission with a full supporting planning statement; no objection.
- Monttabar, Bragbury Lane – domestic extensions and alterations in the Green Belt. Objection raised: the scheme's size, height and additional floor area exceed what would normally be acceptable in the Green Belt.

- 59 Nutcroft – two-storey side and rear extension. No objection, on balance, given the precedent of similar extensions elsewhere on the road.
- 35 Burnham Green Road – swimming pool and raised patio. No objection.

Decisions (East Herts District Council):

- 13 Burnham Green Road – domestic extensions and alterations – approved (DPC raised no objection).
- 13 Burnham Green Road – variation of condition (amended drawings) for replacement dwelling – approved (DPC raised no objection).
- 2a Raffin Park – extensions and alterations – refused, on the grounds of inappropriate development by reason of size, siting and design, consistent with DPC's objection.
- 14 Foldingshott – part single/part two-storey rear extension – approved (DPC raised no objection).

Other:

- Shipping containers, Pound Farm, Hollybush Lane – the planning enforcement officer at East Herts District Council has confirmed a planning application (possibly retrospective) is expected within three to four weeks. The Council will comment once received.

d. North Herts Local Plan Update.

Cllr Goodman drew attention to the briefing note circulated on the website. North Herts District Council has commenced its Local Plan review; the public consultation period runs from 13th October to 24th November 2026, including a drop-in session at Knebworth Village Hall on 19th October. Adoption of the new Local Plan is anticipated in 2029.

As part of the evidence base for the review, a joint Green Belt (Re) Assessment covering North Herts, East Herts and Stevenage has identified the whole of Datchworth, and part of Knebworth, as potential "Grey Belt"

Resolved: Cllr Goodman to attend the 19th October drop-in session, discuss the assessment with North Herts planning officers, and report back to the October meeting, at which point the Council will consider whether communication to the community is appropriate.

PCM26-09/08 Recreation (Cllr Norman)

a. Lottery Money.

Cllr Florence reported that, having been unable to spend the Council's remaining National Lottery grant (£4,500) on gym equipment as originally proposed, the Council is obliged to notify the National Lottery and propose alternative use. Having taken advice from Charlotte Bird (Herts Sports Partnership) and Richard Sutcliffe (the original grant bid writer), Cllr Florence reported that amendments must stay within the scope of the original bid to have a realistic chance of approval.

Resolved: To ask the National Lottery to allow the remaining £4,500 grant to be used to extend the existing Strength & Balance and Tai Chi classes. Unanimous.

Cllr Florence also reported that Herts Sports Partnership may be able to help the Bowls Club seek grant funding (via sports funding routes or the National Lottery) for a sprinkler system.

Action: Cllr Miller to contact the Bowls Club and pass on Charlotte Bird's details.

b. Turkey farm/orchard noticeboard tree map.

Cllr Norman reported a request for a map identifying the different fruit varieties in the community orchard as some trees have died and varieties are difficult to identify. A resident has offered to make engraved wooden plaques for each tree free of charge.

Resolved: To proceed with the tree map/plaques in spring, once surviving trees can be confirmed and to look again at the noticeboard.

Action: Cllr Norman to measure the existing noticeboard.

- c. Climate Change film which Chris Packham and a few others made earlier this year. She was wondering if the PC could help with the cost of the hall hire (Datchworth Village Hall at the end of October) and some refreshments. Apparently, the hall hire is around £47 per hour and she would like it for 4 hours.

Cllr Norman reported that a resident has booked Datchworth Village Hall to show a climate change film, followed by a short talk and a question-and-answer session. With the resident discount, hire of the hall for four hours is estimated at £150, plus approximately £50 for refreshments.

Resolved: To contribute £150 towards the hall hire and £50 towards refreshments (£200 in total) from the Recreation Committee's ad hoc events budget. Unanimous.

Car park noticeboard and signage (update)

Cllr Florence updated the Council on the proposed noticeboard for the car park entrance, which is also intended to replace the parish noticeboard previously removed from the Green. A first quotation for a large, double-sided, powder-coated aluminum noticeboard has been received at £4,200 (plus £200 for lighting, not considered necessary); in line with the Council's procurement policy, two further quotations will be sought before the item is brought back for a decision. Cllr Florence also outlined proposed parking signage for the car park entrance (four signs, approximately £144.56) and possible additional signage on the planter opposite the car park (approximately £124.60).

Action: Cllr Florence to bring firm recommendations and costs for the noticeboard and signage to the next meeting for a decision.

PCM26-09/09 Clerk Correspondence

Watton Road flooding

Cllr Light updated the Council on ongoing work regarding how surface water drains from Watton Road, through to the pond and beyond. In the short term, the culvert and ditch beneath the road require dredging; Noted as ongoing.

Action: Cllr Light to keep the Council updated as this project progresses.

Memorial Benches

There are two ongoing requests for memorial benches. The Clerk is awaiting a completed request form before convening a short Burnham Green meeting if needed.

Resolved: To adopt the Council's memorial bench policy. Cllr Florence abstained

Action: Clerk to obtain a current price for the bench and advise the resident of the cost and proposed siting. Cllr Groves to arrange removal of the old bench.

Burnham Green Joint Management Committee (BGJMC) Traffic

Cllr Florence reported ongoing correspondence regarding traffic concerns on Burnham Green Road: a further speed and volume survey has again been declined, the criteria for funding a speed indicator

device not having been met; a lorry recently damaged posts near Burnham Green Village Hall (reported to the police by Cllr Sims to ensure it is on record); and a faulty give-way sign on White Horse Lane is awaited replacement, expected by the end of the financial year. No decision required; the Council will continue to press for progress. The next BGJMC meeting is not until January.

Playground Inspections

The Clerk has circulated the latest playground inspection report (from the new inspection company) in spreadsheet form. Outstanding items noted: a loose screw on a slide (Cllr Groves to fit a coach bolt and cap) and the basketball backboard has further corner damage, with two cross-members now missing (Cllr Groves to carry out a self-fit repair).

Action: Cllr Groves to replace the missing slide bolt.

Action: Cllr Norman to arrange a Recreation Committee meeting to review the inspection report.

Meeting closed at 20:50

Chair: Sara Miller _____

Date ____/____/____