

Parish Clerk & RFO Report October 2026

1) Allotment Waters Rates

First reported in the August 2026 Clerk's Report, I'm struggling to understand the pricing structure of alternative water providers in order to establish if Wave (Anglian Water business) is offering the most competitive prices.

Most businesses, charities and public sector organisations can choose their water supplier from any licensed retailer, not just their regional water provider – 'Open Water' business retail market www.open-water.org.uk

I contacted SALC to ask for their advice, but they were unable to offer any information. They did however include the query in the latest weekly newsletter asking for other councils to make contact with CWPC if they could help; no-one has come forward.

I've submitted an enquiry to SES Business Water / Affinity Water, as a possible supplier, and await their response.

2) Precept

I can confirm that the Parish Council has received the second instalment of the 2026/27 precept from Babergh District Council.

3) Pheasant Rise

I continue to chase Babergh District Council Public Realm for action to be taken regarding the Lime tree on the public space area, Pheasant Rise. The tree has caused the paving to lift and crack creating a trip hazard, the driveways of no.s 7 and 9 to break up and cracks to appear at no. 9 (which is believed to be due to the draw down effect of the roots of the tree over the very dry summer).

The arboricultural officer at Public Realm is still awaiting the surveyor's comments in respect of the concrete crossover from the public highway. They also advise they will await to hear from the insurers or appointed Loss Adjusters in respect of the reported damage to the property.

4) Adopt a Gate

A fifth stile gate has been adopted, and a dedication plaque has been ordered; six gates remain available for adoption.

5) Clerk's Training

On 14th September, I attended an online SALC training session presented by NALC, which provided valuable information on the new changes being introduced by the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP), and the importance of using the Practitioners' Guide to follow proper practices for governance and accountability for smaller authorities. The changes include the introduction of a digital AGAR (Annual Governance Annual Return) and Internal Audit guidance for testing Assertion 10.

There will be a number of changes to the requirements needed to meet a positive response to the assertions, as well as new accounting formats. The AGAR Statement of Accounts will no longer report a separate figure for staffing costs but will include this in a payments total figure. I have downloaded the new 2026/27 Practitioner's Guide and will check through this to make sure CWPC is up to date with all necessary requirements.

6) PAYE 2021/22

The Parish Council has received an HMRC notification of an overdue payment of PAYE for 2021/22. This relates to the Employers Allowance which was mistakenly claimed by the Council's PAYE agent at the time, and which HMRC are demanding repayment of. I have inadvertently paid the overdue amount of £334.60 twice, and so have requested a repayment be made rather than HMRC retaining the monies on account.

Sue Frankis, Clerk to the Parish of Copdock & Washbrook