Norton Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting Held on the 8th May 2024 at 19:56 in Norton Village Hall

Following the Annual Parish Meeting

Present:

Cllr Richard Page - Chairman
Cllr Anne-Marie Delaney - Vice Chairman
Cllr Jennifer Richardson
Cllr Helen Costin

In Attendance :

Clerk of the Parish Council
County Cllr Paul McClain – during minute 24/0022 e.
6 Parishioners

24/001. To receive apologies for absence

Cllr Martin Griffiths
Internal Auditor
Borough Cllr Mark Williams

24/002. Election of chairman and the signing of the Declaration of Acceptance

The clerk chaired the meeting at this stage as the chairman's role was now complete for the year.

Cllr Page advised he was willing to stand again as chairman, there were no other candidates for the role. Cllr Delaney proposed Cllr Page's election as chairman, this was seconded by Cllr Costin, all councillors voted in favour.

The chairman signed the declaration of acceptance.

24/003. Election of Vice Chairman and the signing of the Declaration of Acceptance

The chairman proposed that Cllr Delaney continued with this role, there were no other candidates. Cllr Richardson seconded the proposal, all councillors voted in favour.

The vice chairman signed the declaration of acceptance.

24/004. To appoint the roles of –

a. The Internal Auditor

The chairman expressed the councils thanks to the internal auditor Philip Drew for his excellent work and support for several years. As he was unable to attend

the clerk has asked in advance if he would be willing to continue for the current year, which he had confirmed. All councillors voted in favour.

b. Parish Council representative for the Village Hall Management Committee

The chairman confirmed that he had fulfilled this role for the previous year, and asked if any other councillor would like to take on the role. There were no other candidates, Cllr Delaney proposed the chairman for the role for the current year and Cllr Costin seconded, all councillors voted in favour.

c. Parish Council representative on the Gloucestershire Airport Consultative Committee

Cllr Delaney fulfilled this role for the previous year, the chairman asked if Cllr Delaney would be prepared to remain on the committee, which she confirmed. All councillors voted in favour.

24/005. To review Norton Parish Council's Standing Orders Jul18.V1 with a planned review for the July meeting of the full council

The chairman proposed that Norton Parish Council Standing Orders Jul18.V1 be adopted Cllr Costin seconded, all councillors voted in favour and they were adopted. It was agreed that they should then be reviewed and updated if required for approval at the next meeting of the full council in July.

24/006. To review and adopt the Code of Conduct for Norton Parish Council May 2023 V1

Cllr Delaney proposed that the Code of Conduct for Norton Parish Council May 2023 V1 be adopted the chairman seconded, all councillors voted in favour and they were adopted.

24/007. To review and adopt the Publication Scheme for Norton Parish Council on the council website

Cllr Costin proposed that the Publication Scheme for Norton Parish Council be adopted Cllr Delaney seconded, all councillors voted in favour and it was adopted.

24/008. Declarations of Interest: Councillors are reminded that to ensure transparency and retain public confidence in the council's decisions they are required to –

a. Keep their Register of Interests form up to date;

The clerk read this statement to all present, asking that they advise of any changes when relevant.

b. Declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) and any Other Disclosable Interests (ODI) in agenda items and the nature of those interests

The clerk also read this statement and there were no new interests declared.

24/009. To review and adopt –

a. Financial Regulations V4 Jun 2021

The chairman proposed that Norton Parish Council's Financial Regulations V4 Jun 2021 be adopted Cllr Costin seconded, all councillors voted in favour and the document was adopted.

b. Financial Risk Assessment V4 Nov 2019

Cllr Richardson proposed that Norton Parish Council's Financial Risk Assessment V4 Nov 2019 be adopted Cllr Costin seconded, all councillors voted in favour and the document was adopted.

24/0010. Public participation (maximum 15 minutes)

Parishioner 1

The parishioner stated that the new entrance to the carpark is an improvement, but it is very narrow.

The chairman advised that the splay was mandated by the Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) Highway Authority. He added that within the next few weeks volunteers will be tidying the frontage and the car park itself.

Parishioner 2

Added that they also feel that it is too narrow, the chairman confirmed that it was agreed at a site meeting with the contractor on behalf of Norton Village Hall Management Committee (NHVMC), GCC Highways and a Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) Planning Officer. Following the meeting the width and angle were confirmed, and TBC have been to inspect.

Parishioner 3

Asked when the barrier will be installed for the carpark entrance.

The chairman advised that it has been on order for a few months, and that NVHMC are awaiting delivery from the manufacturer. The parishioner asked it is a steel barrier and bright yellow in colour, which the chairman confirmed adding that there will also be a key to open for both ambulances and the fire service if required. NVHMC have checked with Cheltenham Fire Service and they have agreed that it will be suitable for most appliances.

Parishioner 4

Asked what the plan is with regards to the new development at Lime Close.

The chairman confirmed that the council have seen the plans that the developer intended to submit and shared a "shopping list" of items with the developer. The council understood that a formal planning application had been submitted to TBC for registration, but it was not yet in the public domain.

The parishioner commended the council for their responses to the other two applications that have recently been received, stating that he would expect a

similar response to this application, as it must be looked at with these in consideration.

The key items that he has concern over are the access, as this is currently for 22 houses, which the application more than doubles with a further 46 houses. This would therefore make the current access unsuitable, and cannot see how this can be rectified.

Amenity must also be considered as the anticipated build time would be 2 years, which would mean 2 years of disruption. There are already issues with the sewage, as all residents of Lime Close face problems with surface and subsurface water already, and he is worries that flooding could be an issue for the new houses.

Parishioner 5

Stated that any alternative access via the farm would affect them directly and they would be against this.

Parishioner 6

Phase 1 of the Lime Close development was treated as a rural exemption site and taken out of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). The village settlement boundary should have been on the North side of the road. This will not be sustainable and phase 2 should not be possible.

The chairman responded saying that the balance for / against is tilted toward the developer because of the shortage of housing land supply. There are several strong arguments in relation to Cold Elm and Locks Paddock which are common with this application. Having discussed this with TBC, they are able to see the merit of some of these arguments and recognise that while an application should be reviewed on its individual merits, they are also able to look at the cumulative effect of several applications. The chairman stated he is hopeful, and during his meeting with TBC, the senior planner he met said that this would be considered.

Parishioner 7

Stated that they have concerns in relation to the potential installation of adult exercise equipment, it is extremely expensive and only caters for a few parents. They feel that the money would be better spent elsewhere for the benefit of the whole parish. They worry that the equipment can be dangerous if not monitored, and would have concerns in relation to insurance and liability if there was an accident. There is also a risk of vandalism due to the light summer nights.

They also advised that the gate to the Play Space from Wainlode Lane is often left open and is not always used, as people climb over the fence.

Parishioner 8

The parishioner reminded all residents that they can object / support a planning application on the TBC website at any time, right up to the meeting agenda being published, and anyone who is yet to object to any of the planning applications still can.

They asked if the storm water issues were in relation to sewerage. The chairman stated he has been advised that the sewerage issues are linked to the building of houses, but in order to make a representation evidence is needed.

The parishioner added that if residents have or do see any issues then they should report to Severn Trent and GCC Highways.

They asked if maybe an outdoor table tennis table would be a suitable addition instead of the adult exercise equipment.

The parishioner asked if the Play Space equipment will still have an external specialist completing inspections, as well as the ones being completed by volunteers. This was confirmed by the clerk.

Parishioner 9

Advised that the issues with storm water are the gulleys, which need to be washed through otherwise they clog. The chairman confirmed that the council do report the issues, but there are only two machines in Gloucestershire that clean the gulleys one for the North and one for South.

24/0011. To confirm the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13th March 2024 record any related actions not covered in this agenda

13th March 2024 parish council meeting minutes were resolved as a true record. Proposed by the chairman seconded by Cllr Delaney, and were signed as a true record by the chairman.

24/0012. To receive reports:

a. County Councillor

County Cllr Paul McLain attended other parish meetings prior to this one, his report was presented at the end of minute 24/0022 e of these minutes.

b. Borough Councillor

Borough Cllr Mark Williams was not able to attend the meeting.

c. Chairman

The chairman presented his report, appendix I of these minutes.

He referred to the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 item 1 of his report, in relation to the permanent occupation of caravans on the Red Lion Caravan Park. He asked for the councils' response to his recommendation that he be authorised to investigate this matter further and report to the Parish Council on whether the use of the Sustainable Communities Act process is appropriate in this instance.

Cllr Costin asked if this also has potential tax implications, which the chairman confirmed.

All councillors supported the chairman looking into the matter further and reporting back to the council.

With reference to item 3 in the chairman's report, in relation to Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) – Housing Needs Survey, the council agreed they were happy to engage with Mr Gwilliam and to receive his report.

d. Members

There were none.

e. Norton Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The clerk read out the report, appendix II of these minutes.

f. Neighbourhood Watch

The clerk read out the report, appendix III of these minutes.

24/0013. Norton C of E Primary School update

The chairman advised that the school Governors met the previous evening. The tenders for the work on the proposed front extension onto Old Tewkesbury Road have now closed. Work is due to commence in the summer holidays, with completion due at the beginning of October.

24/0014. Norton Rugby Club

The chairman of Norton Rugby Club sent in a report to confirm –

The team have won the League and made the final in the Cheltenham combination but unfortunately lost it with 5 minutes left.

We are starting touch rugby on Wednesday if anyone fancies coming along, they would be welcome.

24/0015. Norton Village Hall – Update from Parish Councillor on Norton Village Hall Management Committee

The chairman advised that improvements have been made with new energy efficient internal lighting being installed in the committee room and main hall.

The main hall and committee room are due to be redecorated in the next school holidays, as well as the toilets in the entrance hall being renovated. This is to create a better environment for hall users.

Other planned works -

- Basic kitchen equipment to be purchased
- Landscaping outside the building
- Replacement of outside cladding and rendering
- Guttering to be replaced

Recent maintenance has highlighted issues with rendering at the rear of the hall not having been applied correctly, and the guttering installed is not substantial enough for the building.

There was an intermittent issue with the solar panels, which meant that power was being sent to the grid but not registering on the meter. This has now been fixed.

The current bank balance is about £9,000.

24/0016. Gloucestershire Airport Consultative Committee – Update from Parish Councillor on the committee

Cllr Delaney advised that the next meeting is the following week.

24/0017. Speeding concerns – application to reduce speed on the A38 – progress update

The chairman referred to the update provided at the last meeting, where he advised that an external firm have completed the inspection and made their recommendation, and that this outcome of this was yet to be received. This is still the case.

As it has been nearly four months since GCC received the recommendation, he is chasing for further news.

24/0018. To consider the purchase and installation of a "Norton" sign for Wainlode Lane

The chairman referred to his report appendix IV of these minutes.

He asked for the councils' response to his recommendations which were as follows –

That the Parish Council:
(a) purchase a "Welcome to Norton" sign from Glasdon UK at a cost of £327.52 (plus VAT) for erection on the Wainlode Lane parish boundary.
(b) liaise with the Highway Authority and Tewkesbury Borough Council to agree the exact location for the sign.

Cllr Delaney said that the position would need to be considered due to flooding. The chairman agreed, and advised that if it were to progress, he would liaise with TBC and GCC Highways. He added that the boundary would also need to be clarified to ensure the location was correct.

A parishioner advised that the boundary was always "Fletchers Leap", where the river Chelt is crossed.

All councillors present voted in support of purchasing and installing the sign.

24/0019. Norton Nurturing Nature

a. Update from the Norton Nurturing Nature council lead

The clerk presented an update from the council lead, Cllr Martin Griffiths, who was unable to attend the meeting.

"The wild flower areas on the Green and Island continue to thrive and attract various insects. The purple flowered Vetch has taken very well, the Moorhens have chicks and there is a duck nesting on the island under the old Chestnut log we put there. Norton News continues to include articles supporting and promoting what we can all do to support biodiversity. Thank you.

It was disappointing to see someone had cut the grass area in front of the play area. There is no need for it to be turned into lifeless monoculture as the longer grasses and wild flowers (NOT WEEDS!) support insect life and diversity of habitat."

24/0020. Norton Play Space

a. Maintenance inspection plan – update

The clerk thanked the volunteers who are completing the weekly checks on Friday's.

b. Update on the planned treatment of moss on and around the MUGA by UBICO

The clerk has spoken to UBICO who have advised it will take about an hour to put down the treatment and said that the school would stay off the MUGA for a day.

The council approved the work and the clerk is to arrange with UBICO.

c. To consider the parishioners' thoughts on whether the installation adult of exercise equipment would be beneficial to the parish

The chairman referred to his report appendix V of these minutes.

He has researched the options and asked parishioners for their thoughts through a post in Norton News. There have been 4 responses, 1 to support and 3 objecting.

The main reasons for objections were –

- Legal liability
- Concerns of the equipment not being used correctly and causing injury
- Not a good use of public money
- Vandalism

The cost of 3 items would be £4,000
The cost of 5 items would be £6,500

The chairman asked for the councils' thoughts.

Cllr Richardson said that there is not enough public support to justify moving forward, she felt it could have been considered if there was. Cllr Costin agreed with this.

The chairman agreed that it was not justifiable for the money, with Cllr Delaney stating that time to manage the purchase and installation could be better spent elsewhere. Cllr Richardson added that with the current planning issues, this would be a better use of the council's time.

Cllr Delaney said it was worthwhile investigating, but a clear no.

The council agreed not to move forward with this.

d. To consider a response to Norton C of E Primary School Parent Teacher Association's (PTA) request to install a fence around the GCC/School land used for Forest School following their revised request

Following the council's feedback at the previous meeting, the PTA came back with the revision to their request for a fence –

With reference to our conversations regarding the fence we understand a high fence would look unsightly.

Putting safeguarding and the children's safety and some discussions at school we are going to go with a post and rail fence with some wire (probably chicken wire) between and consider planting a mixed native hedge when funds permit.

It would be a standard 3 rail fence, 120cm high with wire (so that any children can't climb through or between the rails & escape!)

The chairman was supportive saying that this solution would provide security and not be intrusive.

Cllr Richardson was appreciative that the council's feedback was taken on board. With Cllr Delaney adding that this would also mean that the area would be fully visible at night.

The council thanked the PTA for taking on the council and residents views and supported the installation.

24/0021. To record the Clerks appraisal

The chairman confirmed that he and Cllr Delaney have completed the clerk's appraisal for 2023-24.

24/0022. Planning Matters

a. To consider the proposal to change permitted development rights and the potential effects on Norton Parish

The chairman referred to his report appendix VI of these minutes, there were no further comments.

b. To consider how the council should compile data to record issues with storm water in Norton, so that it can be used for future planning responses

The chairman open explaining that there is an issue in the parish with storm water, currently when there is an issue the drainage authority Severn Trent and GCC Highways are contacted. There needs to be a co-ordinated approach to get the statutory authorities to action the concerns.

He thanked those who have already sent in photos and reported issues, and asked that parishioners continue to send these in. As well as the photo evidence the council need to know who has sent them, where the photo is of and when it was taken. The council can then create an effective log.

The chairman is going to share via the website, and in Norton News the details of what the council need to receive. Whilst the council can deal with future potential issues through the planning process, historical issues need to be addressed.

Cllr Delaney asked if there was a form that could be used to report issues, the clerk suggested that the council could create a google form and have a dedicated email inbox to collect photographic evidence.

This was agreed as it would help the council to provide photographic evidence with details rather than just hearsay.

c. To consider the response to the proposed application for Phase 2 of the Lime Close Development in Norton

The chairman advised that there was no application available to the council currently, but that they have seen plans which may or may not be the ones that are submitted with the application. The plans seen link back to the Centaur Homes public consultation. The chairman has circulated a bullet point list to councillors so that they can begin to consider a potential response, this included asking the council for their basic stance.

Secondly, the council know from the plans that there is a controversial proposal for dealing with surface water, as the developer does not want to connect to the pumping station in Wainlode. Instead, there will be a Sustainable drainage system (SuDS) balancing pond and at night the storm water will be pumped to the main under the A38.

For the water to get to this location, a rising main would need to be installed across the playing field, along the back of the MUGA and across the village hall carpark. Norton Parish Council (NPC) would need to grant an easement for a 6 metre pipe and allow access for this to be maintained. This would mean digging up the newly laid carpark, and would mean that it would not be possible to park or build over this area. This cannot proceed without the council's agreement; therefore, the council need to consider this.

The chairman recommended that the council should plan an objection based on the plans that they have seen, and decline to give consent to the easement. Cllr Costin agreed with this approach.

Cllr Delaney added that if in 10 years there was the possibility of extending the hall, this would not be possible if the easement was granted. The land is for the good of the parish and therefore she agrees with the objection and declining the easement.

All councillors were in favour of an objection and declining the request for the easement, when the application is received.

d. 24/00086/OUT - Part Parcel 4670 Tewkesbury Road Norton Gloucester – Update on response

The chairman advised that this was a formal update to confirm the submission of the response to the application by NPC on 4th April.

e. Update on a proposed review of the Down Hatherley, Norton and Twigworth Neighbourhood Development Plan

The chairman stated that the plan is needed to protect the interests of the parish. He has spoken to both Down Hatherley and Twigworth Parish Councils who have agreed to review the current NDP. He has also approached TBC for their guidance which they have confirmed they will do. They will also advise of the process and cost to complete the review, and he has a meeting with staff from TBC at the beginning of June.

The chairman will report back with further information at the next meeting.

At this point County Councillor Paul McClain arrived following his previous meeting and presented his report

He advised that £6.14 million has been allocated to social care, there is a capital spend allocation of £2 for solar panels for schools, and he has messaged Norton CofE directly to make them aware of this. There is also £100,000 revenue and £100,000 capital for increased safety around schools at drop off and pick up times.

He explained that Gloucestershire has one of the slowest discharge rates in the country. This is leading to a reassessment of adult care, including reablement as a key target to make the return to home easier.

There is an additional £2 million set aside for flooding, plus extra funds for natural alleviation. There is a central grant available for those who are affected by flooding, which allows them to take from a capital pot rather than wait for insurance pay outs.

The "Build Back Better" scheme is also available to NPC, and he has already been speaking with Cheltenham Civil Service RFC in relation to this with regards to the mixed ability rugby that takes place at Norton. He encouraged the council to think about any other initiatives that they may be able to use the funds for.

There are large pots of money available for electrical vehicle charging points, if the council would like one for the hall.

The chairman thanked Cllr McClain for his report.

24/0023. Finance

a. To receive the finance report

All councillors received a copy of the report prior to the meeting and there were no questions. The report was proposed by Cllr Richardson and seconded by Cllr Delaney. All councillors were in favour of the report and it was recorded as a true reflection of the parish council's current accounts.

b. To approve payments in accordance with the finance report

The following payments were **authorised** by the full council after they were proposed by the chairman and seconded by Cllr Costin -

Recipient	Amount	Details	Legal Note
Clerk – Monthly Salary *(Standing Order)*	£351.00	*May 2024*	*LGA 1972 s.112(2)*
Clerk – Monthly Salary (Standing Order)	£351.00	*June 2024*	*LGA 1972 s.112(2)*
Norton Village Hall	£20.50	*Inv 2100 – 13/03/2024 Room hire*	*LGA 1972 Sch 12 s. 10 (1)*
GAPTC Membership	£146.76	*Annual Membership Subscription for 2024/2025*	
UBICO	£1,030.72	*Grounds Maintenance for 10/04/2024 – 31/03/2025*	*LGA 1894 s.8(i)*
ICO (Annual – Direct Debit)	£40.00	*Data protection renewal fee*	*Data Protections (Charges and Information) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/480)*
Total	**£ 1,939.98**		

c. To approve and sign the Certificate of Exemption – AGAR 2023/24 Form 2

The parish council agreed that the council meet the exemption criteria and **approved** the signing of the Certificate of Exemption, proposed by the chairman and seconded by Cllr Costin.

d. To receive and record the Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

The audit report was received and **accepted** by the council, proposed by Cllr Delaney and seconded by Cllr Costin.

e. To review Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year to 31st March 2023

The parish council reviewed Section 1 of the AGAR, there were no questions. Cllr Delaney proposed and Cllr Costin seconded, all councillors **approved** and the document was signed.

f. To approve Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), the Annual Governance Statement for financial year to 31st March 2023

The parish council reviewed section 2 of the AGAR, there were no questions. The acceptance of the report was proposed by Cllr Richardson and seconded by Cllr Costin, all councillors **approved** and the document was signed.

g. To adopt the accounts for the Year Ended 31st March 2023

All councillors received a copy of the accounts the acceptance of which was proposed by the chairman and seconded by Cllr Delaney, all councillors **approved**.

The **certificate of exemption AGAR 2022/23** was signed by the responsible finance officer and the chairman.

24/0024. Matters arising not on this agenda to be considered at the next meeting

Cllr Costin raised that the condition of the footpaths past the Old Vicarage. The chairman advised that he has reported to Highways. He added that the verge pm the A38 was also rather high.

Actions following meeting –

Detail	**Owner**
Review and update disclosable interests as and when required	All Councillors
Review Norton Parish Council Standing orders for approval at the July meeting	All Councillors
Investigate Sustainable Communities Act 2007 in relation to Red Lion Caravan Park and report back to the council	Chairman
Arrange the purchase and installation of a Norton sign for the Wainlode end of the parish	Chairman / Clerk
Arrange for the moss treatment on the MUGA	Clerk

Confirm the approval of the revised fence installation with Norton PTA	Clerk
Create a way to record reports of stormwater and flooding in Norton	Clerk
Submission of AGAR documents to External Auditor	Clerk
Upload of 2023/24 Accounts to Parish Council website	Clerk
Make payments in accordance with the finance report	Clerk

Date of the Next Meeting: Wednesday 10th July 2024.

Annual Parish Meeting Closed 21:26

Signed – Dated –

Appendices

Appendix I.

Norton Parish Council

Parish Council meeting – Wednesday 8 May 2024

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

(1) Sustainable Communities Act 2007

A parish council can influence national policy in two ways.

Firstly, by submitting a motion to NALC (via our county association) which, if approved by their Policy Committee, would be adopted as NALC policy and generate some lobbying on our behalf.

Secondly, by submitting a motion direct to central government using the provisions of the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 (SCA).

The SCA is a little-known and rarely used provision which allows parish and town councils to make direct proposals to government to remove legislative or other barriers that prevent them from improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area. To be considered, these proposals:

- must address a problem of national importance;
- be accompanied by supporting evidence, including the results of a public consultation; and
- specify a solution for the issue and how it can be implemented.

These bullet points set a high bar for a parish council to clear, which is perhaps why the SCA is rarely used. But that shouldn't deter Norton from using the SCA, if the parish council believes that there is an appropriate issue which should be brought to the government's attention.

And I suggest that there is such an issue.

For some time, residents of Wainlode Lane have been complaining about the occupation of caravans on the Red Lion Caravan Park. Residents allege that some static caravans classed as holiday homes are being occupied all year round, rather than the permitted maximum of 15 weeks a year.

The licencing and management of caravan parks is subject to the Mobile Homes Act 2013 which requires that:

- Occupiers cannot live in a static caravan all the year round unless the caravan park has a permanent residential licence. (The resident's complaints relate to static caravans on a part of the Red Lion site which doesn't have such a licence.)
- Occupiers of a static caravan on a caravan park without a licence must have a permanent address elsewhere. (In other words, this caravan must be either a second home or a holiday let.)

However, the application of these provisions is constrained by government guidance on the enforcement of the licencing regime issued in March 2015, which states at paragraph 3.2 that:

"*In every case where enforcement action is proposed, the interests of home owners and occupiers, as well as the site operator, should be considered. This may mean drawing a line under existing site licence breaches, where there is a risk of harm to persons or property, to enable all to move forward in a constructive and positive way*."

Consequently a tightening of this guidance might assist local planning authorities to deal with the kind of potential breaches raised by our residents.

Recommendation:

That I be authorised to investigate this matter further and report to the Parish Council on whether the use of the Sustainable Communities Act process is appropriate in this instance.

(2) Martyn's Law Steering Group update

The Group has reviewed the findings from a survey of local councils on the Home Office's Standard Tier consultation (referred to in my January report).

While respondents to the survey welcomed the Home Office's efforts to ease some of the standard tier requirements, it was noted that compliance could still be challenging for local councils. Many councils requested a standard tier evaluation form, together with training, tailored support and guidance. The level of training and other support available is under active consideration.

I was one of the Steering Group members who met representatives of the Home Office to discuss requirements for the "standard tier" (ie public venues and events with a capacity of between 100 and 799 persons). Although the Group is divided on whether the standard tier minimum threshold should be retained, the government clearly wishes to retain the current threshold.

We pointed out to the Home Office that this could cause resource issues for smaller councils managing venues such as village halls and their hirers. It was agreed that the proposed requirements for standard tier compliance could make it harder for local councils to secure certain types of insurance and discussions are taking place with the ABI on this point.

(3) Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) – Housing Needs Survey

I have received a letter (previously circulated) from Tim Gwilliam, the GRCC's new Rural Housing Enabler, offering Norton parish a Housing Needs Survey.

Mr Gwilliam says: "*My task is to provide assistance to Parish Councils and the wider community to enable the delivery of affordable housing in the parish, with the aim of providing the appropriate number, house-types and tenures…of affordable housing to meet the specific needs of your parish*."

He goes on to say that: "*The delivery of affordable housing for rural communities helps to sustain remaining services as well as providing jobs and support for the*

economy which is needed to help keep our rural communities alive and vibrant. By working with you it will enable your community to have a sense of having more of a say on what housing is built on your doorstep."

All householders would be invited to complete the Housing Needs Survey, either digitally or by Freepost. The results of the survey would be collated by GRCC and a report produced.

Mr Gwilliam offers the Parish Council "*an initial discussion, to talk about the issues relating to the provision of affordable housing and local housing needs survey*." The Council's views are invited.

Richard F N Page
5 May 2024

Appendix II.

Norton PCC Report

The eight bells from the church have been taken down to be sent away for retuning and repair. We were fortunate to obtain some grants to cover the cost.

We have two services in May, 12th May Evening Prayer at 4.00pm and Benefice Holy Communion on the 19th at 10.00am. On the 15th May we are holding a Coffee Morning in the church from 10.30-12.00. All are welcome.

Appendix III.

Norton Neighbourhood Watch Report

Norton Neighbourhood Watch Report - Norton Parish Council meeting 8th May 2024

There are 103 members of the Norton Neighbourhood Watch WhatsApp Group.

2. March 2024

Mobile phone found, owner located.
Final St Mary's Norton bell ringing on 20th for start of the bells' restoration project.
Villager informs others of last day to post objections to TBC of new development.
Recommendation of lawnmower repair and suggestions offered.
Garmin lost in village.
Villager advises of EVRI email scam
Villager advises that Frogfurlong Lane flooded. Picture of storm drain flooding in A38, Highways informed but say they haven't got resources to deal with it. Video of extensive flooding of Brickhampton Golf Club.
Dog running free in Broad Close and owner reunited with dog.
Information regarding fundraiser for Norton Village Hall Quiz night and Pop-up Bar.

2. April 2024

Response to planning application from Norton Parish Council can be viewed on the Council website.
Photography exhibition at Nature in Art

Villager suggests Longlevens Community Food and Produce Swap is a good idea.
Request for the contact of the village hall.
Villager whilst walking in Norton was bitten by a terrier and had to receive treatment.
Requests that the dog should be kept on a lead at all times.
Village contacted Severn Trent to find out more details about the proposed Wainlode Lane closure in April. Confusion over exactly what area will be closed.
Dog missing but found safe in Sandhurst.
Query as to whether Wainlode Lane is open yet after being closed for flooding. Villagers agree that the Lane has been closed for most of the time since October.
Villager asks for information regarding a fallen tree and which has since been taken away. The tree was earmarked for a project.
Report of 2 small dogs running freely in the lane.
Villagers ask if Wainlode Lane is open yet and advice given that it is still closed.
Report of a lone sheep stuck in the fields.
Notice given of the Norton coffee morning. Everyone welcome.
Police Alert: Ticket Fraud
Poster giving information about Norton's Car Boot Sale on 12th May.
Report and pictures from CCTV of walkers bagging up dog muck only to leave it on the bridle way.
Villager asks if Wainlode Lane is open and informed that it is now open.
Police Alert: Rogue Traders in local area
Villagers gives link to the proposed Solar farm approved for Twigworth floodplain.

3. May 2024

Poster advertising the Plant Sale in aid of the Horticultural Show.
Dog missing but since reunited with owner.
Villager advises of near miss with red car being driven in excess of the 30 mph speed limit.
Next Parish Council meeting and AGM to be held on 8th May at 7.30 pm

Christine Williams, Norton Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator

Appendix IV.

Parish Council meeting – Wednesday 8 May 2024

Agenda item 18 – "To consider the purchase and installation of a "Norton" sign for Wainlode Lane."

In 2022 the Parish Council erected two "Welcome to Norton" signs at the entry points to the village on the A38. These village signs have proved universally popular with both drivers passing through and local residents. (in fact I received an email from a parish councillor in another county who asked me where we got the signs from!) They were purchased from Glasdon UK Limited at a cost of £880.35 each.

It has now been suggested that the Parish Council should erect a similar sign at the currently unsigned entrance to the village from Wainlode Lane, below the Red Lion. I therefore contacted Glasdon UK who have quoted me £327.52 (excluding VAT) for an identical village sign. The reason for the reduction in price is that when we bought the signs in 2022 I retained ownership of the artwork so that we could order replacements without the signs needing to be redesigned.

Although this is unbudgeted expenditure, the cost could be covered (in whole or in part) by applying to County Councillor Paul McLain for a grant from the discretionary

fund he holds for the benefit of parishes in his constituency.

Recommendation:

That the Parish Council:
(a) purchase a "Welcome to Norton" sign from Glasdon UK at a cost of £327.52 (plus VAT) for erection on the Wainlode Lane parish boundary.

(b) liaise with the Highway Authority and Tewkesbury Borough Council to agree the exact location for the sign.

Richard F N Page
5 May 2024

Appendix V.

Parish Council meeting – Wednesday 8 May 2024

Agenda item 20c – "To consider the parishioners' thoughts on whether the installation of adult exercise equipment would be beneficial to the parish."

At the last Parish Council meeting, Councillor Griffiths suggested that the Council should consider installing adult fitness equipment in the Play Area. I promised to research the matter and write an article for the Norton News asking residents to comment on the proposal.

The Clerk has received one response from a resident who strongly supports the idea and I have received three responses opposing the proposal. Objections raised were:

- The equipment could be injurious to health if used incorrectly.
- The equipment would invite misuse and vandalism from local youths.
- Problems could create a legal liability for the Parish Council.
- Purchasing this equipment wouldn't be a good use of public money.

To help the Council make an informed decision, I have obtained some sample prices from Fresh Air Fitness Limited of Frimley in Surrey, a leading supplier of outdoor gym equipment to schools and local authorities.

Their Starter Park Pack includes 3 pieces from their adult range – an Air Skier, Double Air Walker and Rider, which are suitable for adults of any age or ability. This pack would provide 5 user stations for 5 people to use at any one time, and would be delivered and installed for £4,000.

Alternatively, Fresh Air Fitness's Park package includes 5 pieces from their adult range, namely: an Air Skier, Bike, Double Sit Up Boards, Rider, Seated Leg Press and a Triple Pull Up. This would provide11 user stations, and would be delivered and installed for £6,500.

Fresh Air Fitness's promotional material states that each piece of gym equipment is simple to use and designed to improve muscle strength, cardio fitness, flexibility, balance and co-ordination.

When considering this matter, the Council should take a number of factors, including resident's views, into account.

Signed

- Purchasing this outdoor gym equipment would be unbudgeted expenditure, therefore the Council would need to obtain funding to cover the cost.

- Is there enough space in the Play Area to create a dedicated outdoor gym?

- If the Council wishes to proceed, it would be advisable to obtain quotes from a number of different manufacturers.

Richard F N Page – 5 May 2024

Appendix VI.

Parish Council meeting – Wednesday 8 May 2024

Agenda item 22a – "To consider the proposal to change permitted development rights and the potential effects on Norton Parish."

The Department of Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities has recently consulted on wide-ranging changes to Permitted Development Rights (PDRs) which could have implications for local councils. As Vice-Chairman of NALC's Policy Committee, I helped draft NALC's response to this consultation and therefore I thought that it might be helpful if I outlined some of the proposed changes to PDRs and their potential effect on parish councils like Norton.

In essence, NALC does not support an "across the board" extension of PDRs. Policies on PDRs should be the prerogative of local planning authorities and set out in their Local Plan, rather than decided nationally.
An unfettered extension of PDRs will remove the right of local planning authorities to make decisions on a range of local planning matters and prevent parish councils from commenting on them. This constitutes a further and unnecessary erosion of the democratic planning system.

Expanding PDRs simply to speed up the planning process generally has a harmful impact and their expansion should only take place where there is a compelling case to do so. PDRs should have a minimal role in the planning system because every parcel of land and the circumstances surround it are different.

While there are significant issues in the building industry which are slowing down the delivery of more housing, these issues are unlikely to be solved by extending PDRs in order to loosen the planning system.

These are main PDRs changes for householder development which are likely to affect parish councils.

An increase in the maximum depth for rear extensions.

- Single-storey extensions on detached houses – an increase from 4 metres to 5 metres

- Single-storey extensions on semi-detached or terraced houses – an increase from 3 metres to 4 metres

- All two-storey extensions – an increase from 3 metres to 4 metres.

Signed

The existing limitation that extensions must be at least 7 metres from the rear boundary of the house will now only apply if the adjacent property use is residential. Materials used in any exterior work no longer need to be of a similar appearance to the existing appearance of the property. (NALC's view was that materials used in maintaining or constructing external sections of a house should be in accordance with local design codes and conform to any Neighbourhood Development Plan.)

Changes have been made to PDRs for the demolition and rebuild of existing properties. Basically, the proposals will relax the current restrictions. NALC has argued that the current restrictions should remain unchanged.

However, NALC has supported the following changes to PDRs which we believe will help combat climate change.

Bin and bike stores should be permitted in front gardens, except in Conservation Area or Areas of Outstanding National Beauty. These bin and bike stores should be no more than 2 metres in width, 1 metre in depth, and up to 1.5 metres in height, otherwise planning permission would be required.

PDRs will be extended to further support the installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

- The limitation that wall-mounted outlets for electric vehicle charging cannot face onto and be within 2 metres of a highway will be removed
- The limitation that electrical upstands for electric vehicle charging cannot be sited within 2 metres of a highway will be removed
- PDRs will be extended to cover the installation of equipment needed to support non-domestic upstands for electric vehicle charging
- More than one unit of equipment housing will be permitted in a non-domestic car park

Detached houses will be allowed to install a maximum of two air source heat pumps. Blocks of flats will be allowed to install more than one air source heat pump, but installing more than one heat pump will require prior approval about siting. As with satellite dish clusters, local planning authorities will need to work with residents and developers to ensure that heat pumps adjoining blocks of flats are not ungainly or excessive in number.

NALC has also specified that noise pollution from heat pumps must be minimised. The limitation that an air source heat pump must be at least 1 metre from a property boundary will be removed.

If adopted, another proposed change could have a positive effect for the parish. Local planning authorities will be given the right to issue a direction to remove PDRs from Assets of Community Value. These directions restrict the scope of PDRs for an area, site or development anywhere in the local planning authority's area.

Richard F N Page
5 May 2024

Signed