Norton Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting Held on the 13th November 2024 at 19:30 in Norton Village Hall

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Present:

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

In Attendance :

Clerk of the Parish Council
Borough Cllr Mark Williams
9 Parishioners

24/0059. To receive apologies for absence

Cllr Martin Griffiths
Cllr Jennifer Richardson
Internal Auditor

24/0060. Declaration of Interests in items on this agenda

Cllr Delaney declared an interest in reference 24/0075 e. of these minutes, as they are neighbours.

24/0061. Public Participation

Parishioner 1

Pointed out that the gulleys that were cleaned under Wainlode Hill are still not working correctly. Adding that the Norton Farm gulley needs to be cleared more regularly, with a suggestion of every 6 months.

Cllr Delaney advised that Severn Trent believe that the issue is being caused by the stream. The parishioner added that there is a spring there, but they believe the issue is with the gulleys not being clear.

The chairman confirmed that he would make sure that the Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) Highways Manager is aware.

Parishioner 2

Advised that the flood warning sign is still showing, the chairman said he would pass this on to the Flood Warden.

Parishioner 3

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Raised their concerns with regards to Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) not preventing the development at the Red Lion Caravan Park in contravention of the licence held.

TBC were contacted 3 months ago and the first site visit is being made next week. Spoil has been removed, with placements for caravans having been built and drainage installed. The parishioner was concerned that this potentially unauthorised development might not be reversed. A freedom of information request provided evidence that caravans are being used as permanent residences in contravention of the site licence. This means that there is a loss to TBC as the residents are not registered and paying Council Tax.

In 2015 the Environment Agency advised that the site waste and sewerage system were not fit for purpose, and this now flows into the stream and field.

The parishioner wanted help from Norton Parish Council (NPC) to hold TBC accountable for their lack of enforcement.

The chairman contacted TBC Enforcement in summer 2023 who assured him that they had carried out an investigation and found nothing inappropriate at the site. He contacted them again last month with information and photographs provided by Wainlode Lane residents and TBC promised to investigate.
The parishioner advised that the freedom of information data shows that there are 35 people registered at the Caravan Park's postcode, which is far more than are housed in official permanent dwellings.

Borough Cllr Mark Williams stated that he would contact TBC to raise parishioners' concerns.

Parishioner 4

Asked if there will be planning updates provided during this meeting. The chairman confirmed that there will be updates on the planning items on the agenda.

The parishioner added that they feel TBC have just dismissed the concerns that have been raised with regards to the sewerage and drainage issues in the parish, and asked how they can be held to account.

The chairman said that the issue is that TBC don't have a 5-year supply of housing, and he suspects that decisions are made due to this. Only one of the current applications have been approved, which is the application at Cold Elm referred to as "The Teachers."

Cllr Williams added that there is nothing that TBC can do with regards to the sewerage. The parishioner stated that they do not understand how TBC can allow planning applications through and then just pass the buck to Severn Trent. Why are TBC approving applications that are not supported by existing infrastructure when there are no solutions to resolve the known issues. Cllr Williams added that he has recently visited a sewerage station at Haydon, where there have been no modifications for years.

Parishioner 5

Raised that they believed that due to the recent IT outage at TBC not all applications will go to committee. The Chairman advised that all planning that

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progresses to an application will be discussed at NPC meetings. He will also continue to keep the parish updated via Norton News.

24/0062. To confirm the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 26th September 2024 and record any related actions not covered in this agenda

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 26th September 2024 were resolved as a true record. Proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Cllr Costin, and were signed as a true record by the chairman.

24/0063. To adopt the General Power of Competence

The chairman explained that currently NPC can only exercise specific statutory powers, but if the General Power of Competence (GPC) is adopted the council are able to do anything that a member of the public can do legally. This allows the council to have a little more freedom on how they spend money. This includes the type of grants that can be made, with GPC the council can approve any grant it feels appropriate.

By adopting the power, the council do not have to use it, but it would be useful to have as an option. If it is adopted then it will need to be re-adopted annually by the council. There are conditions to the power being applicable, these are that two thirds of the council must be elected members, and the clerk needs to be qualified. These conditions are all met by this council currently.

Cllr Delaney advised that she could see no downside of the adoption, Cllr Costin agreed.

The chairman read out the following statement –

Norton Parish Council resolves from 13 November 2024 that, having met the conditions of eligibility as defined in the Localism Act 2011 and the Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012, it adopts the General Power of Competence as set out in sections 1 to 8 of the Localism Act 2011, empowering the Council to do anything that individuals generally may do, provided it is within the law.

All councillors voted in favour of adopting the GPC.

Cllr Williams stated that the power will make the council nimbler.

24/0064. To receive reports:

a. County Councillor

Not present

b. Borough Councillor

None

c. Chairman

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

He highlighted the item on remote meeting and proxy voting. The rules requiring councils to hold their meetings in public were relaxed temporarily during the

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Covid pandemic and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) had campaigned unsuccessfully last year for this relaxation to be made permanent. Angela Rayner, in her capacity as Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government, had announced that there is to be a consultation to consider allowing remote or hybrid meetings, as well as the introduction of proxy voting.

He added that this would be an important consultation for NPC as it could be beneficial to hold online meetings, as it could open meetings up to more parishioners.

The chairman recommended that the council authorise him to respond to the consultation on behalf of NPC, as the closing date was before the council's next meeting, and asked for any specific points or views that councillors had.

Cllr Delaney confirmed she would be happy for the chairman to respond. Adding that remote meetings would be helpful as it would make it easier to attend meetings, but she has concerns around proxy voting.

Cllr Costin was in support of the chairman responding on the council's behalf, and asked if he could share the response. The chairman confirmed that he would respond and share the response if the system allowed.

The chairman also highlighted that he had attended a NALC meeting where it was recommended that councils use gov.uk emails, to provide added security. NALC have created a briefing paper to guide councils on how to implement this.

He felt that this should be considered by the council from a data security point of view. It was agreed that he and the clerk would investigate and report back to the January meeting.

d. Members

None

e. Norton Parochial Church Council (PCC)

A representative of the PCC reported that there is an Advent Carols event on 1st December at 4pm at Norton church and on 22nd December at 6.00pm there is Carol Service. A coffee morning is planned for Wednesday 11th December at Norton Village Hall starting at 10.00am all are welcome.

f. Neighbourhood Watch

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

24/0065. Norton C of E Primary School update

None

24/0066. Norton Rugby Club

None

24/0067. To consider a request from Longford Football Club to display a banner near the Village Hall

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The clerk shared an email request from Longford Football Club to display a banner at the front of the Village Hall near to the road, to promote the youth football team. The chairman asked for the council's view on the request.

Cllr Costin advised that planning consent would be required and if agreed to it may create a precedent.

The chairman confirmed that consent would be required from TBC; this applies if any one of three occurrences are met –

- The size of the banner exceeds 0.6m²
- 1 letter or the logo exceeds 0.75m in height
- The banner is displayed for more than 28 days in a calendar year

It needs to be established if they have checked this and whether permission is required. As NPC would be responsible for any breach as they are the landowner.

Also, this is a Longford team and not Norton, so could also create a precedent that then opens up potential requests from other clubs and societies.

Cllr Costin suggested that along the fence between the carpark and the playing field would be a more suitable alternative. As it would not be aesthetic to have multiple banners along the fence fronting Old Tewkesbury Road.

It was agreed for the clerk to go back to the football club suggesting that the banner be placed along the fence between the car park and the playing field.

24/0068. Norton Village Hall – Update from Parish Councillor on Norton Village Hall Management Committee

The chairman reported that the Village Hall Management Committee last met on 4 November 2024. The main points from that meeting were:

- Refurbishment of the Committee Room is due to start on 20 December
- The CCTV system is being upgraded with new and better cameras
- A new booking system with Terms and Conditions has been introduced
- The Hall's insurance policy has been extended to include Trustee liability
- The charity has approximately £7,300 in its bank account

24/0069. Gloucestershire Airport Consultative Committee – Update from Parish Councillor on the committee

Cllr Delaney advised that there have been no meetings since the last NPC meeting.

24/0070. GRCC Housing Needs Survey - update

Following the approval for the survey to take place at the last meeting, the survey was subsequently circulated the following week. The council will receive a report from GRCC once the responses are collated.

24/0071. Speeding concerns – application to reduce speed on the A38 – update

The chairman advised that both Down Hatherley Parish Council (DHPC) and NPC have been in communication with GCC's local Highways Manager about the proposed Traffic Regulation Order to reduce speed on the A38. GCC is now

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looking at extending the speed reduction from Down Hatherley to The Leigh from 50mph to 40mph. The original request included the installation of double lines in the road to forbid overtaking. The Highways Manager is not in favour of this and is not pushing GCC's Road Safety Team to include this action in the proposals.

24/0072. Flooding update following contact with Severn Trent

The chairman advised the he had contacted Severn Trent and brought all issues to their attention. He thanked the parishioners for the evidence received. Severn Trent have confirmed receipt of the information the chairman has provided and advised that they will investigate the issues and come back to him.

24/0073. Norton Nurturing Nature

a. Update from the Norton Nurturing Nature council lead

Cllr Griffiths was not present, but he had advised via email prior to the meeting that the fence around the pond was going to be maintained by a parishioner. The cost of this is to be confirmed.

b. Review quotation prices for replacement fence material for the Village Green

As above.

c. To consider making an application to the Ash Dieback Project: replanting scheme 2024-25 Season

Carried forward to the January meeting.

24/0074. Norton Play Space

a. Maintenance inspection plan – update

The clerk thanked the volunteers who are completing the weekly checks.

b. To receive Annual Inspection

The external inspectors have completed the annual inspection of the Play Space. There were a few medium findings that need to be addressed. The clerk asked if the council was comfortable asking the volunteers if they would complete the work if the council provided the materials. This was agreed.

The clerk also suggested that the council should investigate installing "sleeper" steps on the "mound" to help reduce the erosion of the mound. It was agreed that this should be investigated.

24/0075. Planning Matters

a. 24/00808/PIP - Land North of A38 Junction Tewkesbury Road Norton Gloucester – Response

The chairman circulated a proposed response to the council prior to the meeting. All councillors approved the response objecting to the proposed development and authorised the clerk to submit the response on the council's behalf.

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b. 24/00691/FUL - Part Parcel 3330 Tewkesbury Road Norton Gloucester - Response (also known as Land at Brookelands)

The chairman circulated a proposed response to the council prior to the meeting. All councillors approved the response objecting to the proposed development and authorised the clerk to submit the response on the council's behalf.

Cllr Delaney thanked the chairman for his work on the responses.

Both responses will also be published on the NPC website.

c. 24/00843/FUL - The Wooden Bungalow Church Lane Norton Gloucester - Response

The council agreed that they have no comment on the application and the clerk was authorised to submit a neutral response.

d. 24/00331/FUL - Land south of Lime Close, Norton – Update (also known as Lime Close phase 2)

The chairman confirmed that NPC have submitted an objection, including refusing the easement requested across the Village Hall Car Park. A revised drainage plan will need to be submitted for the application to proceed.

e. Wainlode Lane caravan park – Update

The chairman confirmed that NPC and parishioners have contacted TBC with concerns regarding both the works that have taken place on the site and that caravans are being occupied by permanent residents in contravention of the site licence. There is a meeting planned between TBC and the landowner on 18th of November.

24/0076. 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 Delaney and seconded by the Cllr Costin. 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 Cllr Delaney and seconded by Cllr Costin -

Recipient	Amount	Details	Legal Note
Clerk – Monthly Salary *(Standing Order)*	£351.00	*November 2024*	*LGA 1972 s.112(2)*
Clerk – Monthly Salary (Standing Order)	£367.38	*December 2024*	*LGA 1972 s.112(2)*
PATA Payroll	£31.05	*Inv 24/0004/PPS – Payroll Services Q2 2024*	*LGA 1972 s.112(2)*
Gordon Playground Inspections Ltd	£180.00	*INV-0842 – Annual Inspection*	*Open Spaces Act 1906, s.9-10*
Clerk – Backpay	£131.04	*April 2024 to November 2024 NALC increase 2024/25 Point 11 backpay (8 months)*	*LGA 1972 s.112(2)*
Total	**£1,060.47**		

Signed

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24/0077. Matters arising not on this agenda to be considered at the next meeting

There were none.

Actions following meeting –

Detail	**Owner**
Review and update disclosable interests as and when required	All Councillors
Reply to NALC consultation on remote / hybrid meetings and proxy voting	Chairman
Investigate "Norton.gov.uk" emails and report back to January meeting	Chairman / Clerk
Reply to Longford FC's request to display a banner outside the Village Hall	Clerk
Ask Play Space inspection volunteers if they are able to carry out some maintenance works	Clerk
Submit planning responses to TBC	Clerk
Make payments in accordance with the finance report	Clerk

Date of the Next Meeting: Wednesday 8th January 2025.

Meeting Closed 20:57

Signed – Dated –

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Appendices

Appendix I.

Norton Parish Council

Parish Council meeting – Wednesday 13 November 2024

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

(1) Government proposals regarding remote meetings and proxy voting

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government recently issued the following announcement:

"Consultation – Enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at council meetings Today (24 October), the Deputy Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP, announced in her speech to the Local Government Association Annual Conference 2024, the launch of a government consultation on enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at council meetings.

This consultation seeks views on the detail and practical implications of allowing remote and hybrid attendance at council meetings. It also tests views on the possible introduction of proxy voting for those occasions when an elected member, due to personal circumstances, may be unable to attend even remotely. For example, during maternity, paternity or adoption leave.

The consultation will close on 19 December 2024".

This is very good news as online meetings allowing remote attendance at council meetings proved very successful during the Covid outbreak. But this was only a temporary relaxation of the Local Government Act provision which requires all Council meetings to be held in public and in person. Since then, there has been mounting pressure on government, particularly from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), to change the law to allow remote and hybrid attendance at council meetings.

Proxy voting at council meetings is an interesting suggestion which divides opinion. It certainly has merit, but there are concerns in some quarters that it might result in decisions effectively being taken before a council meeting, encourage the casting of votes along political lines, or enable less committed councillors to skip meetings. The Parish Council should respond to this consultation, but as it closes before the date of the next meeting, I request that I be authorised to respond on the Council's behalf. I should therefore be grateful for the Council's views on remote meetings and proxy voting so that I can respond to the consultation accordingly.

(2) Effect of the National Insurance increase on parish councils

Following the planned increase in National Insurance Contributions (NIC) from next April, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that a support fund for local authorities would be put in place so that councils didn't have to bear the full cost of the increase.

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NALC has now been told by the Treasury that only principal councils (i.e. county councils and district councils) will be eligible to claim from this support fund. Town and parish councils will therefore have to pay the full NIC increase. The reason given for this decision was that local councils don't receive public money! NALC's Chief Executive will be meeting Treasury officials to try and get the decision reversed.

In view of this uncertainty, we should include the full NIC increase in the parish council's budget for 2025/26.

(3) Council and councillor email addresses and online security

NALC has recommended that parish councils should adopt a gov.uk domain name to improve professionalism within the sector and better manage information within the council. NALC is working closely with the government's Parish Council Domains Helper Service to promote the benefits of gov.uk domain names and to help councils better understand how adopting gov.uk domain names can be made more straightforward.

Consequently NALC has issued a briefing note which highlights the main advantages of this approach for councillors and clerks. The briefing note includes good practices in managing passwords and email security, which will help stop potential data breaches and ensure that emails are kept confidential and only accessed by the appropriate person.

This is something the parish council should look into and I therefore recommend that the parish clerk and I be instructed to investigate the benefits of a gov.uk domain name and to present a report of our findings to the next Council meeting on 8 January 2025.

(4) Consultation on the publication of councillor's addresses

I am reliably informed that the Home Office will shortly be issuing a consultation on the publication of councillor's home addresses. This follows security concerns expressed by several principal councils. I will update the parish council as soon as I have any further information.

Richard F N Page
12 November 2024

Appendix II.

Norton Neighbourhood Watch Report
Norton Parish Council meeting 13th November 2024

There are **124 members** of the Norton Neighbourhood Watch WhatsApp Group.

September 2024

From 20th September through to 30th September numerous daily messages from parishioners regarding the flooding which occurred in and around Norton. Roads became impassable. The Council and Severn Trent were contacted. Advice was given by residents about depth of flooding for cars and pedestrians. Reports also of drains blocked. Photos of

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flooded roads were posted and deemed helpful. Comments were made about the proposed housing may have an impact.

October 2024

Police Alert: The perceptions of Crime Survey

Report of mud all over the end of Wainlode Lane from the construction going on at the campsite. TBC contacted.

Temporary road closure advised at Down Hatherley Lane.

Police Alert: Operation Vanquish

Report of road traffic accident and road closure near Old Spot Inn. Traffic congestion reported.

Accident at Coombe Hill traffic lights causing congestion.

Update on 4 blocked drains on Wainlode Lane hill following reporting the issue to Gloucestershire CC

TBC website and planning section is now working. Wain Homes have submitted their planning application at Brookelands.

Report of van being broken into on Wainlode Hill and tools stolen. Resident requesting any camera footage.

Police Alert: 2024 Crime and Community Survey launched.

Report of deep water on junction at bottom of Wainlode Lane. Resident posts pictures of flooding at Cook Lane. Questions asked if the blocked drains have been seen to.

Police Alert: Crime Update

Pictures posted of the Northern Lights being visible in Norton

Contact number for village hall requested re a booking made.

Invitation to attend the rededication service of the bells at St Mary's church.

Information posted about Capital grant funding available for local rural businesses

Picture of stranded cows in field due to flooding. Farmer contacted.

Flooding along Wainlode Lane, passable with care. Lane since closed.

Resident reports that sheep now grazing around Norton and dog walkers should be aware and keep dogs on leads.

Police Alert: Theft of pickup truck
Poster available for those residents who do not wish to take part in Halloween visits.

Information regarding talk by the History Society.

November 2024

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Signed

Resident asks who is the Flood Warden. The sign has not been altered for several weeks after the lane now being passable.

Christine Williams
Norton Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator

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