Norton Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting Held on the 8th January 2025 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
Cllr Jennifer Richardson

In Attendance :

Clerk of the Parish Council
3 Parishioners

24/0078. To receive apologies for absence

Cllr Martin Griffiths
Internal Auditor
Borough Cllr Mark Williams
County Cllr Paul McLain

24/0079. Declaration of Interests in items on this agenda

Cllr Delaney declared an interest in reference 24/0095 d. of these minutes, as they are neighbours.

24/0080. Public Participation

Parishioner 1

Advised that they have been in discussions with Cllr Griffiths with regards to the fence that surrounds the pond, and will arrange for it to be replaced to the original standard. With the work being completed at the cost of materials. The chairman thanked the parishioner for their support.

Parishioner 2

Emailed the clerk prior to the meeting with regards to the moss around the MUGA. The clerk advised that they have followed this up with UBICO who are the maintenance contractor.

They had also enquired about when the bus shelter would be finished, the chairman advised that the shelter is sound it just requires painting, and that this is being chased.

Lastly, they asked when a parish noticeboard will be installed in the shelter, the chairman confirmed that this would be done when the shelter is complete.

Parishioner 3

Asked what was happening with regards to a path from Wainlode Lane to the play space. The chairman advised that he would ask the school and Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) as this is not parish council land.

24/0081. To confirm the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13th November 2024 and record any related actions not covered in this agenda

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13th November 2024 were resolved as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Costin and seconded by Cllr Delaney, and were signed as a true record by the chairman.

24/0082. To receive reports:

a. County Councillor

County Cllr McLain was not present but provided a report which the clerk read out, appendix I of these minutes.

b. Borough Councillor

Borough Cllr Mark Williams called the clerk prior to the meeting to advise that he was attending a meeting along with County Cllr McLain to discuss the Government's recent devolution announcement.

He had no updates, and asked that the council contact him if there are any issues that require his attention or assistance.

c. Chairman

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

He highlighted the item on remote meeting and proxy voting that he reported on at the previous meeting, confirming that he had submitted a response to the consultation on behalf of the council as agreed, and that he had circulated this to the council.

The next item was reference to the changes that have been announced in relation to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), his report covers the main points that the council need to be aware of.

As referred to in the report from County Cllr McLain, the Government's Devolution White Paper includes a reorganisation of Local Government, with the creation of unitary authorities with a minimum population of 500,000 to replace the 2nd tier, which would affect the Borough Council. The size of these unitary authorities may leave them remote from the communities that they serve, which will strengthen the role of the Parish Councils as the "community tier".

This also means that Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) have put on hold their rename and rebrand, until the way forward is clear.

The chairman confirmed that he was in discussions with TBC with regards to the S106 monies that will come from the up to 35 dwellings that have been granted at Cold Elm.

d. Members

None

e. Norton Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The clerk read out the following from the PCC –

We are holding a coffee morning next Wednesday 15th in the village hall 10-11.45am.

There are two services in Norton church in January 12th Evening Prayer 4.00pm and January 26th Benefice Holy Communion at 9.30am

We have a monthly Benefice magazine if anyone would like to receive one. There is a magazine on the Village Hall notice board for people to read.

f. Neighbourhood Watch

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

24/0083. Norton C of E Primary School update

None

24/0084. Norton Rugby Club

None

24/0085. To consider a request from Longford Football Club to display a banner near the Village Hall

Following on from the previous meeting the clerk contacted Longford Football Club to advise that the council and Village Hall Management Committee (NVHMC) would support a banner on the fence between the car park and the playing field, but not outside the car park and hall facing the main road.

Whilst the club were hoping the banner could be placed on the main road, they would like to proceed with the alternative. With the banner measuring approximately 5 feet x 2 feet in size and of a design emailed to the clerk and shared at the meeting.

All councillors approved the banner location, size, and proposed design.

The clerk is to confirm with the club.

24/0086. Norton Village Hall – Update from Parish Councillor on Norton Village Hall Management Committee

The chairman reported the following on behalf of NVHMC:

- They held a successful social event in the hall before Christmas
- There is circa £6,000 in the bank

- There was an issue with a party in November and the committee are considering measures to mitigate these challenges. For example, requesting deposits and completing checks on hirers who are not from the parish
- The hire charges are to be reviewed for 2025 due to rising costs and the fact that the current charges have been in place since January 2021
- The next NVHMC meeting is on 30 January 2025

24/0087. Gloucestershire Airport Consultative Committee – Update from Parish Councillor on the committee

Cllr Delaney advised that there are no minutes yet from the last meeting. However, she was able to advise that the new manager of the airport is happy to communicate with people with regards to noise issues, as well as looking to fix the issues experienced with repeat offenders.

They are also looking to improve the current online complaints reporting system, as there appear to have been some glitches previously.

Cllr Delaney advised that she would circulate the minutes once they are received.

24/0088. GRCC Housing Needs Survey - update

The chairman confirmed that the survey has been completed and that the council are just awaiting the results.

24/0089. To consider the purchase of a ".gov.uk" domain for the parish council website and council emails

Following the action from the previous meeting the clerk investigated the process for the purchase and instigation of a .gov.uk domain for the council.

The clerk confirmed that -

- As per email communication the council have secured the Parish Council Domains Helper Service funding. The initiative offers a £100 + VAT discount for domain registration through Approved Registrars, covering up to 1,000 councils on a first-come, first-served basis

- The community must know that the council's communications are legitimate, accurate, and trustworthy. Using a .gov.uk domain is the best way to meet the communities' expectations and work safely and efficiently online

The clerk presented the following to the council for consideration –

- That the council proceed with the purchase of a .gov.uk domain to show due diligence to how correspondence and data is handled, as well as showing that emails are coming from a trustworthy source when sent to external parties

- The cost of the initial .gov.uk domain will be £10 + VAT as the council have secured the funding

- The council use James Lungley of Parish Council Websites as their Approved Registrar. (Following the clerk speaking with him and several other potential providers)

- They approve the cost to apply the domain to the council's hosting provider Host Presto. Estimated at £56 per hour, with the work to be completed by James and to take 1-2 hours

- Ongoing costs - to upgrade of current the current Host Presto package to £10+VAT per month. This will provide unlimited GB space and unlimited email addresses, as opposed to the alternative is £6+VAT for 10GB to be shared between the website and the emails

The chairman proposed to proceed with the purchase of the .gov.uk domain, and that the council upgrade to the unlimited storage with Host Presto. This was seconded by Cllr Costin, and approved by all councillors.

24/0090. To consider responses to the Government Consultations on –

a. Local audit reform: a strategy for over hauling the local audit system

b. Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities

It was agreed that it is important that the council responds to both consultations, the chairman asked for authority to respond on the council's behalf. This was proposed by Cllr Costin and seconded by Cllr Richardson, and was approved by the full council.

24/0091. Speeding concerns – application to reduce speed on the A38 – update

The chairman advised that there was nothing to report and that the item be carried forward to the March meeting.

24/0092. Flooding update following contact with Severn Trent

The chairman advised that he has received nothing more than the initial acknowledgement of his email. Cllr Delaney said that she has seen a van investigating an issue near to the Red Lion end of Wainlode Lane, and they have since returned.

24/0093. Norton Nurturing Nature

a. Update from the Norton Nurturing Nature council lead

Cllr Griffiths was not present, but the chairman thanked the parishioner who is supporting the fence replacement around the pond.

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

As above, the cost will be for materials and is to be confirmed.

24/0094. Norton Play Space

a. Maintenance inspection plan – update

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

24/0095. Planning Matters

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

There are no further updates at the time of this meeting.

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

There are no further updates at the time of this meeting.

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

The clerk referred to a response on the TBC planning portal from the Highways Department at GCC dated 17th October 2024, uploaded on 4th December. They have recommended that the application be deferred, and advised that they share the concerns raised by the parish council in their response.

d. Caravan And Camping Site Adjacent Red Lion Inn Wainlode Hill - Update

The chairman has written to TBC about the site, but their reply only answered some of the questions he asked.

The first question raised was with regards to the unauthorised use of the site for permanent residency and the unauthorised expansion. The residential use is now under full investigation.

He has also notified TBC that residents have submitted freedom of information requests, the results of which have shown that more residents are registered in the area than are living in fixed households. He advised that TBC may or may not issue enforcement notices for those without permission to live permanently on the site to leave. The chairman has shared some information with TBC that has been passed to him by residents, and will be sharing further information as well.

TBC have advised that they were not aware of the movement of the spoil, and they are now also considering this.

One of the concerns not responded to was the partial removal of the boundary hedge which is in contravention of the agreement, and so he will follow this up.

24/0096. 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 the chairman and seconded by Cllr Richardson. 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 Richardson -

Recipient	Amount	Details	Legal Note
Clerk – Monthly Salary *(Standing Order)*	£367.38	*January 2025*	*LGA 1972 s.112(2)*
Clerk – Monthly Salary (Standing Order)	£367.38	*February 2025*	*LGA 1972 s.112(2)*
Total	**£734.76**		

24/0097. To approve the 2025-26 budget

All councillors received a copy of the 2025-26 budget prior to the meeting and there were no questions. The report was proposed by the chairman and seconded by Cllr Costin. All councillors were in favour of the budget and it was approved.

24/0098. To approve the 2025-26 application for precept to be submitted to Tewkesbury Borough Council

Based on the 2025-26 budget a precept of £15,000 was proposed by the chairman and seconded by Cllr Costin. All councillors were in favour of the precept and it was approved that the clerk make a request for this amount from TBC.

24/0099. 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
Submit responses to local audit reform and standards and conduct consultations	Chairman
Liaise with UBICO on treatment of moss around the MUGA	Clerk
Chase the completion of the bus shelter with the contractor	Chairman / Clerk
Proceed with the purchase and implementation of the .gov.uk domain for Norton Parish Council	Clerk
Reply to Longford FC's request to display a banner on the playing field / car park fence	Clerk
Make payments in accordance with the finance report	Clerk
Submit precept request to TBC	Clerk

Date of the Next Meeting: Wednesday 12th March 2025.

Meeting Closed 20:13

Signed – Dated –

Signed

Appendices

Appendix I.

Update from County Cllr Paul McLain

The Gloucestershire County Council budget has just gone out to public consultation. As mentioned previously, it is one of a minority of local councils across the UK which is able to propose a balanced budget and showing real terms growth rather than cuts. The proposed spending plans for 2025/26 will see spending rise by more than £32.7 million on 2024/25 levels, to almost £650 million.

I am mindful that changes are likely to be made in order to accommodate the Devolution Bill costs / requirements as mentioned above.

The council is in a good financial position meaning it is able to continue support for existing services as well as make significant investments across the county. The £649.6 million proposed budget includes significant investment into the council's priority areas of highways, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), adult services, infrastructure, and the environment.

A further £10 million is proposed to be put towards delivering on the council's £100 million four-year commitment to go on improving Gloucestershire roads, with a greater focus in 2025/26 on tackling rural roads.
A total of £12.8 million is set to go towards a new £16.5 million 200 place special school.

Young people with SEND and their families would be supported with an extra £2.1 million.

£7.5 million towards the future construction of three new adult care homes is being set aside, with further investment planned in future years.
The council plans to increase capacity and improve school buildings and facilities of other schools across the county with a £12.4 million investment.

Household Waste Recycling Centres across the county will see improvements with a £1.3 million injection.

The budget proposes raising £16.5 million to help fund services through a council tax increase of 2.99%. The proposals would also see £7.8 million raised specifically to support work with the most vulnerable adults in the county through a further 2% increase in the adult social care precept.

Despite this increase the council still expects to have one of the lowest council tax levels of any county council. Based on a band D property, residents would pay an additional £6.65 each month

Appendix II.

Norton Parish Council

Parish Council meeting – Wednesday 8 January 2025

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

(1) Government proposals regarding remote meetings and proxy voting

As agreed at the last meeting of the Parish Council, I responded to this consultation on the Council's behalf and circulated a copy of the response to all councillors.

The response emphasised that local councils should be free to decide how and when to hold their meetings. This flexibility would empower parish councils like ours to respond quickly and effectively to their communities' needs through in-person, remote, or hybrid meetings.

The consultation response opposed the government's proposal to introduce proxy voting at council meetings. Echoing concerns raised by other bodies, notably the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), it pointed out that proxy voting could undermine democratic accountability, weaken decision making and create procedural challenges.

(2) Government publishes revised National Planning Policy Framework

In December, following a significant planning consultation earlier in the year, (which the Parish Council responded to) the Government announced major changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

These changes are intended to support the Prime Minister's recent Plan for Change, which targets delivering 1.5 million new homes over five years. To achieve this, principal authorities (including our borough council) have been tasked with an ambitious combined target of building 370,000 homes a year.

The key changes to the NPPF include introducing mandatory housing targets to accelerate housebuilding, focusing on areas with the highest housing unaffordability and greatest growth potential.

Principal authorities must also review Green Belt boundaries while keeping to a brownfield-first approach. Any development on Green Belt land must meet strict requirements, called Golden Rules, which require developers to provide important infrastructure for local communities, including pre-school nurseries, doctors' surgeries and public transport, together with an increased level of social and affordable housing.

Additionally, there will be a greater emphasis on houses for social rent, which principal authorities and developers must prioritise in new developments. To help achieve this, local authorities will be given greater powers to deliver affordable housing.

(*However, I suggest that loosening planning controls alone will not increase the delivery of more housing. There are other, arguably more important,*

considerations – namely the lack of a trained workforce to build them, the absence of the necessary public infrastructure, such as water, electricity and drainage, and the ability of prospective purchasers to pay for these houses.)

On neighbourhood planning (which is of particular importance to Norton) very little has changed. The revised NPPF still states that Neighbourhood Plans (NDPs) should be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan, and can't promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area.
Going forward, the main challenges for Neighbourhood Plans will be:

- the transitional arrangements for emerging NDPs; and
- addressing the expected push from Government to get new and/or updated local plans in place containing the increased housing targets.

To ensure that councils take prompt action with the development of these local plans, all local planning authorities must now produce an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) within 12 weeks of the publication of the new NPPF, ie by no later than 6 March 2025. The LDS gives a timetable for the various stages of plan development and consultation.

This is a very tight timeframe and means that existing NDPs are less likely to be in conformity with local plans. Therefore the chances of them needing to be updated, or being superseded by new plans, is bound to increase. Consequently, it's even more important to review our NDP to ensure that it doesn't become out of date.

As expected, the development of onshore wind energy projects will be made easier and there will be new guidance on renewable and low carbon developments. The NPPF also states that climate change is important in decision making as well as in local plan making.

In response to flood risk issues, the revised NPPF provides greater clarity on how flood risk assessments (called the "sequential test") should be applied to housing development in areas of flood risk and encourages the use of sustainable drainage systems in new development.

Other changes include the widening of permitted development rights for home extensions and loft conversions, and the easing of regulations relating to the installation of electric vehicle charging points and air source heat pumps.

Planning fees for householder applications will be increased so that the applicant pays the full cost of processing their application. The Government will also include measures in the proposed Planning and Infrastructure Bill to give local planning authorities the power to set their own fees.

(3) Government publishes English Devolution White Paper

The Government published its English Devolution White Paper last month. The white paper is a wide-ranging, 105 page document which aims to provide: "*growth, more joined up delivery of public services and politics being done for communities, not to them*". The key proposals are:

The creation of Mayoral Strategic Authorities (similar to Greater London and the West Midlands) and the granting of extensive new powers to Mayors to enable them to "*take difficult decisions needed to drive growth*". Those powers will include over-arching control of housing, planning and transport. On transport,

Mayors will be responsible for developing and co-ordinating both the road and rail networks in their area.

Mayors will also take on Police and Crime Commissioner and Fire and Rescue Authority responsibilities.

A new Integrated (financial) Settlement to give Mayors the flexibility to fund local priorities. Mayors will receive "*a consolidated budget across housing, regeneration, local growth, local transport, skills, retrofit, and employment support. This will enable Strategic Authorities to move funding between policy areas*."

The re-organisation of local government, including the creation of unitary authorities across the country, mainly to replace England's second tier of local government, which comprises 21 county councils and 164 district councils. Unitary authorities must have a population of at least 500,000 and therefore may not necessarily follow existing county or geographical boundaries.

The English Devolution Bill will "*legislate for a ministerial directive*" that will allow ministers to intervene where they believe that local leaders have not made sufficient progress towards the creation of unitary authorities, and to ensure that Mayors "*hardwire their growth priorities into the way the UK government works.*"

It is essential that devolution acknowledges the position of parish and town councils as the community tier of local government. The creation of large unitary authorities may leave them remote from the communities they serve. Consequently parish and town councils, because of their closer relationship with the electorate, are uniquely placed to deliver government priorities at a local level and these proposals should strengthen their role.

NALC has recognised that as part of the discussions about the white paper, the sector must urge government to invest in neighbourhood governance, simplify the process to set up a parish council, promote civility and respect, allow hybrid council meetings where local communities see fit, and provide fairer access to central government funding and a tailored audit framework.

The role of parish and town councils in devolution featured in the debate on the white paper in the House of Commons. Responding to questions from MPs, the Minister for Local Government and English Devolution said: "*At a neighbourhood level, we see parish and town councils playing a critical role in devolution, and we look forward to further discussions with the sector*".

NALC's Policy Committee will be holding a special meeting on 28 January to frame our sector's response to the Government's proposals.

(4) Tewkesbury Borough Council name change

Tewkesbury Borough Council initially planned to introduce its change of name to "North Gloucestershire Borough Council" in stages, beginning in December 2024. However, the borough council has now decided to reschedule the launch of its name change until March 2025 so that it can first consider any potential impact from the government's white paper on devolution.

(5) Housing development on land at Cold Elm

Tewkesbury Borough Council recently granted outline planning permission for the erection of up to 35 dwellings on land at Cold Elm: between Cold Elm Cottage and The Teachers.

I am currently in discussions with the borough council and the applicant's agent regarding payment of a Community Infrastructure Levy to the parish and a Section 106 contribution to the Village Hall. Negotiations are at a delicate stage and I hope to report in more detail to the next Council meeting in March.

Richard F N Page
1 January 2025

Appendix III.

Norton Neighbourhood Watch Report
Norton Parish Council meeting 8th January 2025

There are **127 members** of the Norton Neighbourhood Watch WhatsApp Group.

November 2024

Responses to planning applications are now available on the Parish Council website.
Residents report antisocial behaviour at the Village Hall by people attending an evening party being held there.
Anyone wishing to try their hand at bell ringing at St Mary's Norton Church can contact local resident for information.
NW window stickers available to residents who may wish to have some.
Dog First Aid training local course posted for anyone who is interested.
Residents report dog mess on pavement areas.
Request for local pest control person and recommendations given.
Poster advertising Norton Christmas Fayre.
Police Alert: Scam telephone calls from bogus officials.
Resident reports road closure at Coombe Hill due to an incident on motorway flyover and subsequent traffic congestion.
Residents report antisocial behaviour at the Village Hall by people attending an evening party being held there. Member of the Norton Village Hall committee is alerted.
Residents report Sky internet connection issues which appear to be across the country.
Local flooding is reported. Flood warden reports river flood warning from the EA.
Many residents report the areas of flooding and roads that are impassable.
Recommendation for Aerial reconnection following the latest storm.
Flood Warden explains about the procedure for the Flood sign. The Highway Authority advise if roads are fit for traffic.
Police Alert: Burglary in the local area.
Advice asked about impending Gigaclear work along Wainlode Lane and how it will affect access.
Police Alert: Caution re Shopping online.
Residents confirm internet connection troublesome. Resident advises that Sky gives outage compensation.
Residents check with Gigaclear about access during workings and lane closure.
Resident reports that Glos CC have communicated about planned drainage work following the flooding.
Following more local flooding residents share road closures.
Resident reports boundary fence to play area unstable due to recent storm.

Report of missing dog in nearby Staunton and Corse.
Resident reports tree down near New Dawn on slip road to A38.

December 2024

Police Alert: Theft from vehicle
Police Alert: Warning re receiving a message that seems suspicious.
Recommendation for local electrician.
Residents ask about recent road closures following more floods.
Advance warning of a section of Old Tewkesbury Road being closed in February due to gas main works.
Report of serious road traffic accident on A38 and subsequent road closure.
Advice given about traffic congestion in the area.
Norton Village Hall Charity Collection in aid of The Pied Piper Appeal to be held on 19th December.
Resident reports tree down on A38 near Norton. Since removed by parishioner.
Report that Wainlode Lane is now open.
Bin collection days advised.
Police Alert: Gift Card Fraud
Resident advises of leakage coming from under the fence at New Dawn. Advice given on how to contact Landlord.
Police Alert: How to prevent parcel thefts
Flooding again in Wainlode Lane. Updates given when it is re-opened.

January 2025

Resident reports tree down at Wainlode Lane and Haw Bridge junction.
Residents organise collection of used Christmas cards for Cobalt Centre.
Report of missing dog and since found.
Poster re Bin collections
Reports of dog mess on local pavements.
Report of flooding issues near the pond at The Green.
Due to heavy overnight rain flooding issues across the county. These are affecting local residents. Many posts by parishioners giving advice on impassable roads and traffic congestion.
River flood warning issued by EA causing road closures and Wainlode Lane now closed.
Information given re Parish Council meeting to be held on 8th January.

Christine Williams,
Norton Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator
8th January 2025

Signed