Norton Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting – Wednesday 20 May 2026

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2025/2026

The past year has been an extremely busy and productive time for Norton Parish Council and this report details the Council's principal activities since the Annual Parish Meeting last May. The Council has met six times during that period.

Co-option of Councillor Andrew Mason

At the Council's meeting in January, Andrew Mason was co-opted as a parish councillor to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Jennifer Richardson. The Council thanked Jennifer for her service.

Planning matters

One of the key statutory powers of a parish council is the right to be consulted and to comment on planning applications relating to land and buildings in the parish. This is a responsibility that the Council takes very seriously.

During the reporting period the Council has commented on 15 separate planning applications involving a wide range of planning issues in the parish, and in doing so has maintained its excellent working relationship with the Local Planning Authority to the mutual benefit of both councils.

The Council identified several breaches of planning control in the parish which have resulted in three enforcement investigations. In two cases, the landowner has been required to submit a retrospective planning application. The third case is ongoing.

The Council also responded to the Government's consultation on proposals to revise the National Planning Policy Framework (the rules on which all planning application decisions are based).

Governance

The Council reviewed and adopted the following policies and procedures:

- Standing Orders
- Code of Conduct for Councillors
- Financial Regulations and Financial Risk Assessment
- Action Plan
- Asset Register
- Communication Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Data Protection Policy

- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Internal Control Policy
- IT Policy
- Publication Scheme for the Council's website
- Reserves Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Training & Development Policy.

Parish Emergency Plan

The Council has adopted an Emergency Plan documenting how the parish will deal with either significant flooding in the parish, or another emergency event.

The Council also set up a Community Response Group composed of councillors and local volunteers to manage the community's response to an emergency event.

Financial

Mindful of parishioners' finances in these difficult times, the Council has attempted to balance the need for a full range of services with financial prudence. As a result, the parish council element of Norton's Council Tax bills is unchanged for the current financial year. The Council's precept for 2026/27 (its annual income) is £15,000.

Local Government Reorganisation

This is an increasingly important subject for local authorities and the Council has kept itself fully informed of developments at both national and local level. In March, the Council submitted a detailed response to the Government's public consultation on proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Gloucestershire.

Norton Nurturing Nature

The arrangement between the Council and the residents of The Green for the maintenance of the Village Green and Pond continues to be a great success. The Council thanks the local residents for maintaining The Green to such a high standard.

The Council is grateful to Councillor Martin Griffiths for acting as the Norton Nurturing Nature lead.

Maintenance of the Play Area

Supported by local volunteers who carry out regular interim inspections, the Council has appointed Copeland Maintenance to conduct comprehensive quarterly inspections and maintain the play equipment to ensure that it's fit for purpose and complies with all the necessary safety standards.

Speed limits on the A38

Following two years of intense lobbying by the Council (with support from Down Hatherley Parish Council), Gloucestershire County Council made a Traffic Regulation Order to reduce the speed limit on the A38 between Down Hatherley Lane and a point just beyond the junction with Church Lane from 50mph to 40mph.

Erection of new phone mast

The Council has partnered with the Atlas Tower Group to secure the erection of a phone mast in the parish to improve local mobile coverage and reception. Atlas has found a suitable location for the phone mast close to the A38 and carried out an initial drone survey of the site. The mast should be erected in the next few months.

Norton Award

The Council has introduced an annual "Norton Award" to recognise a person who has given exception service to the community, or significantly improved the lives of parishioners in some way, during the previous year.

A number of nominations have been received from parishioners and these are currently being considered by the Council. An announcement on the Award for 2026 will be made shortly.

Thank You!

This Annual Report is the perfect opportunity to thank all those people who work tirelessly behind the scenes to make parish affairs run smoothly. I want to thank the following people in particular:

The volunteers on the Village Hall Management Committee who run the Village Hall for the benefit of the parish. The new Committee who took over in January: Aad Nasrat (chairman), Lynne Berry (treasurer), Liz Spiers (secretary), Mel Hadfield (projects and maintenance), and Becky Stiles (bookings) are doing a superb job.

The volunteers who inspect and carry out running repairs to the play area equipment: Neil Davies, Nick Lewis, Nicholas Smale and Councillor Andrew Mason.

The Flood Warden and Snow Warden, Jeremy Phelps, for diligently carrying out his responsibilities.

Kieran O'Donoghue for editing and publishing the excellent Norton News.

Councillor Anne Marie Delaney for representing the parish on the Gloucestershire Airport Consultative Committee.

Our Borough Councillor, Mark Williams and our County Councillor, Richard Stanley for their continued support of the parish.

I particularly want to thank our Parish Clerk, Daniel Hinde, for keeping the legal and financial affairs of the Council running smoothly, and for supporting me as Chairman.

My colleagues on the Parish Council. It's often forgotten that parish councillors are all unpaid volunteers and there's much more to the role than just attending meetings so I want to thank them, especially the Vice-Chairman Anne Marie Delaney, for all their hard work.

And finally I want to thank you, the parishioners, for attending Council meetings like this, volunteering whenever volunteers are needed, and for generally taking an interest in parish affairs.

Looking to the future -

There are a range of challenges ahead, notably the impact of local government reorganization and devolution, increased pressure for new housing, the need to protect our environment - and others will certainly emerge over time. Nevertheless, we face these challenges with confidence and, working in partnership with other agencies, your parish council will play a pivotal role in the provision of integrated, accessible, and high-quality services to meet the needs of our community.

Civic excellence is like a muscle: it grows with regular exercise. Therefore Norton Parish Council will constantly strive to increase the range and impact of its services for the benefit of the whole parish.

Richard F N Page
Chairman of the Council
20 May 2026