NORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Norton Parish Council Annual meeting held on 20th May 2026 at Norton Village Hall commencing at 7.30pm

Present – Cllrs R. Page (Chairman), A. Delaney (Vice Chair), H. Costin, A Mason and M Griffiths (arrived 19:34)

Attendees – D Hinde (Clerk), 4 members of the public

Minutes

20.05.26.1 **To receive and consider apologies for absence and confirm the meeting is quorate**

Apologies received from Borough Councillor M Williams and the meeting was declared quorate

20.05.26.2 **To elect Chairman Acceptance of Office form to be signed**
To elect Vice Chairman Acceptance of Office form to be signed

Council elected Richard Page as Chairman
Proposed Cllr Mason **Seconded** Cllr Delaney
Council elected Anne Marie Delaney as Vice Chairman.
Proposed Cllr Page **Seconded** Cllr Costin
Acceptance of Office forms were signed

20.05.26.3 **To receive declarations of interest on the agenda below (Localism Act 2011)**

None

20.05.26.4 **To appoint the roles of:**

a) **The Internal Auditor**
COUNCIL AGREED to appoint GALC as their internal auditor in 2026/27
Proposed – Cllr Page **Seconded –** Cllr Costin

b) **Parish Council representative on the Village Hall Management Committee**
COUNCIL AGREED that Cllr Page would be their representative on the Village Hall Management Committee
Proposed – Cllr Mason **Seconded –** Cllr Delaney

c) **Parish Council representative on the Gloucestershire Airport Consultative Committee**
COUNCIL AGREED that Cllr Delaney would be their representative on the Gloucestershire Airport Consultative Committee
Proposed – Cllr Page **Seconded -**Cllr Mason

20.05.26.5 **To receive questions from the public and comments on agenda items below– no decisions will be made on issues raised. Any items requiring decisions will be added to the agenda for the next meeting (NB Councils cannot lawfully decide items of business that are not specified on the agenda) The time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders (3(e)) shall not exceed 15 minutes and will be under the direction of the chairman of the meeting. Subject to standing order 3(f), a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes**

None

20.05.26.6 **To confirm the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11th March 2026 and record related actions not covered in this agenda**

NORTON PARISH COUNCIL

COUNCIL APPROVED the minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2026

20.05.26.7 **To receive reports from the following**

a) **Borough Councillor**
None

b) **County Councillor**
None

c) **Chairman's report**
The Chairman's report was received as per **APPENDIX I**

d) **Members**
Cllr Griffiths confirmed the green was looking good and passed on thanks to Jeremy Phelps for fixing the fence. Cllr Griffiths also spoke on the flowers and wildlife on the green and confirmed uncut areas were good for insects.
Cllr Griffiths announced that he would be resigning from the Parish Council at the end of the meeting because he had moved house to Ledbury. He offered his thanks to the Chairman and Parish Councillors. Cllr Page thanked Cllr Griffiths for all his hard work on the council.
Cllr Mason asked in the bus stops on the A38 northbound off Marlepit Lane could be upgraded as it currently only a pole in the grass. Cllr Page advised that the County Councillor has a pot of money and he would contact him to see if he could contribute anything. There is no room for a bus shelter in the area but there is room for a long bar seat.
There is damage to the gate leading to the MUGA as the locking bar has been bent and the gate can not be closed. Council to ask Copeland Maintenance if he can repair it.
It was reported that someone had been using an external plug at the village hall to charge their vehicle. The guilty party had been identified and advised that if they were to do this again police would be involved. Cllr Page advised of the high cost to put a dedicated charge point in.

e) **Norton PCC**
Parishioner stated that the church will ring bells for 150th anniversary of Village School on 6th June. It was confirmed an announcement would be made on the Norton WhatsApp group to advise the reason for the bells. The bells will ring between 3&4.

f) **Neighbourhood Watch**
The Neighbourhood watch report was received as per **APPENDIX II**

20.05.26.8 Finance, all documents circulated prior to the meeting

a) **To approve payment May 2026 Payment List/those paid since last meeting, to note receipts and agree actions**
COUNCIL APPROVED the May 2026 payment list as per **APPENDIX III**

b) **To approve bank reconciliation up to 30th April 2026**
COUNCIL APPROVED the bank reconciliation up to 30th April 2026 as per **APPENDIX IV**

c) **To approve budget monitoring report up to 30th April 2026**

COUNCIL APPROVED the budget monitoring report up to 30th April 2026 as per **APPENDIX V**

d) **To review bank signatories**
Council confirmed they were happy with Cllr Delaney and Costin being added as signatories

e) **To review direct debits**
COUNCIL APPROVED direct debits as per **APPENDIX VI**

f) **To consider insurance renewal quotations in respect of all insured risks and agree actions**
COUNCIL AGREED to renew their insurance for £570.29 with Community First Insurance. This is year 3 of a 3 year agreement.

20.05.26.9 **To review the following documents and agree actions**

a) **Standing Orders**
Council reviewed and agreed no changes were required.

b) **Financial Regulations**
Council reviewed and agreed no changes were required.

c) **Code of Conduct**
Council reviewed and agreed no changes were required.

d) **Complaints Procedure**
Council reviewed and agreed no changes were required.

e) **Data Protection Policy**
Council reviewed and agreed no changes were required.

f) **Asset Register**
Council reviewed and agreed no changes were required.

g) **Communication Policy**
Council reviewed and agreed no changes were required.

h) **Internal Control Policy**
Council reviewed and agreed no changes were required.

i) **Action Plan**
Council reviewed and agreed no changes were required.

j) **Risk Management**
Council reviewed and agreed no changes were required.

k) **Publication Scheme**
Council reviewed and agreed no changes were required.

l) **Training and Development**
Council reviewed and agreed no changes were required.

m) **Grievance Policy**
Council reviewed and agreed no changes were required.

20.05.26.10 **To receive an update on the following**:

a) **Primary School**
None

b) **Rugby Club update**
None

c) **Norton Village Hall - update from Parish Councillor on Norton Village Hall Management Committee**
Whilst the small leak in the roof was being repaired it was noted the mortar holding the ridge tiles on had degraded. The tiles will be replaced and repaired in the summer holidays.
A quote has also been accepted for the work on the heating and hot water system and this will also be carried out over the summer

holidays. The toilets will be refurbished and new sanitary ware added.

Councillor Page advised he was currently negotiating S106 Agreements with 3 separate developers with funds to be used to pay for maintenance on the playpark, improvements to playing fields and changing rooms.

The S106 contributions from one of these developers will be put towards the permanent repairs to the Village Hall roof. Three years ago these repairs were estimated to cost between £250,000 and £300,000

d) Gloucestershire Airport Consultative Committee - update from Parish Councillor on the Consultative Committee

Cllr Delaney reported that the next meeting of the Airport Consultative Committee was due to take place the following week and she would present a report of that meeting to the Council in July

20.05.26.11 **To receive an update from Norton Nurturing Nature – from the Norton Nurturing Nature council lead**

This was covered in agenda item 20.05.26.7d

20.05.26.12 **To receive the report for Norton Play Space – from Copeland Maintenance**

Awaiting Carousel repair quote

20.05.26.13 **To agree a response to the Tewkesbury Borough Council Community Governance review**

COUNCIL AGREED to respond to the Tewkesbury Borough Council Community Governance review as per **APPENDIX VII**

20.05.26.14 **Planning**

20.05.26.14a **To discuss Lime Close planning application**

This application is expected to be on the agenda for Tewkesbury Borough Council's Planning Committee meeting on 18 June 2026. Cllr Delaney will represent the parish council at the meeting.

The parish council has been informed that discussions may have taken place between the lessor of the playing field land and the Lime Close developer, Centaur Homes, about the creation of a public right of way across the playing fields. Cllr Page advised that the creation of a right of way would need parish council consent as the council's lease of the playing fields still had approximately 40 years to run.

20.05.26.15 To receive items for the next agenda

None

Date of next meeting – 8th July 2026

Meeting Close: 20:47

NORTON PARISH COUNCIL

APPENDIX I

Norton Parish Council

Parish Council meeting – Wednesday 20 May 2026

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

(1) Public consultation on Local Government Re-organisation

At our last meeting on 11 March 2026, I was authorised to respond on the Council's behalf to the Government's public consultation on proposals for Local Government Re-organisation in Gloucestershire. I attach a copy of the submitted response for councillor's information.

(2) Wainlode Lane road closures

The Parish Council has been notified of the following temporary road closures on Wainlode Lane:

(a) From 8am to 5pm on Tuesday 9 June - between properties known as "Green Corners" and "Dunsworth Cottage" (a distance of approximately 150 metres). This closure is for one day only for sewer work. An alternative route will be signposted.

(b) On Monday 29 and Tuesday 30 June – between Wainlode Lane's junction with Old Tewkesbury Road and its junction with the B4213. This closure will allow Severn Trent Water to carry out sewer patching repair work along Wainlode Lane. Emergency and pedestrian access will be maintained throughout this period.

(3) Erection of a mobile phone mast in Norton

Further to my report at the Council's March meeting, the Atlas Tower Group has told me that they've now agreed on suitable location for the phone mast close to the A38 and carried out an initial drone survey of the site. Full details will be published following the successful completion of a full onsite survey.

Richard F N Page

10 May 2026

NORTON PARISH COUNCIL

APPENDIX II

Norton Neighbourhood Watch Report -

Norton Parish Council meeting 20th May 2026

There are **150 members** of the Norton Neighbourhood Watch WhatsApp Group.

March 2026

Recommendation for window cleaner.

Request for name of local councillor. Information given re local councillor and our MP.

Residents notice lack of water pressure due to burst water main in Gloucester.

Down Hatherley Lane now open.

Information given about route of local Police Escort for abnormal load.

Poster shared for Norton School Easter Trail

Missing parcel.

April 2026

Request for child care in the village.

Norton Newletter publishes information re various local projects

Resident advises that nitrous oxide bottles have been littered on Wainlode Lane.

Poster re Red Lion Easter opening hours.

Police Alert: Investment Fraud

Volunteer needed urgently to assist the Village Hall's booking Clerk

Resiident advises that beer cans have been found in the grass verges near the school. Request that Highways should cut the grass verge to deter littering.

Dogs loose near Cook Lane.

Advice and responses given re Gigaclear whether a switch to them is a good option.

Norton Primary School celebrating World Earth Day and having a plant sale.

Community Alert: Driving safely in Spring

Poster advertising Norton School in June celebrating 150 years of the village school.

Missing parcel.

NORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Community Alert: Vehicle crime

May 2026

Bike lock left on bench by the pond. Collected by owner.

Missing parcel.

Dates given for bin days following Bank holiday.

Recommendations for handy man and plumber.

M5 closed due to serious accident and congestion on A38 following diversion. Wainlode Lane busy with traffic, some speeding. Accident also on A38 near Garden Centre causing added congestion.

Resident advises of suspicious man looking over their fence.

Clothes left on fence near the pub.

Information given about impending closure on Wainlode Lane.

Request for two more volunteers to help with improvements to the Village Hall.

Poison hemlock plant has been spotted by resident on verges along Wainlode Lane. Harmful to both humans and animals. Reported to Tewkesbury Borough Council and Highways Agency for removal.

Information given about closure of road at Haw Bridge in Tirley together with closure of Wainlode Lane.

Two dogs loose in field, owner found.

M5 closed due to accident and traffic backing up on A38 near The Leigh and Coombe Hill.

Jackets left in the park.

Hemlock also located near the path to the gun club.

Poster advertising the Gloucester Dragon Boat Festival for charity.

Recommendations for plumber, gas fitter and Pilates class.

Notice of Parish Council Meetings: 20th May in the hall.

Christine Williams - Norton Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator - 20th May 2026

NORTON PARISH COUNCIL

APPENDIX III

Norton Parish Council

Finance report presented to Norton Parish Council on the 20th May 2026

A summary of financial activity for 2026/27

Income during the period			
	Amount	**Legal Note**	**Comments**
C/f from 2025/26	£ 32,686.42		
Precept paid on 28/04/2026	£ 15,000.00	*Local Government Finance Act (LGFA)1992 sc. 41*	
HMRC VAT Refund			Requested VAT refund of £493.52
CIL	2258.08		
Total	**£ 42,508.96**		

Expenditure during the period	Payments To be Approved 20/05/2026	Total spend 01/04/2026 to 30/04/2026	Payments made yet to clear 20/05/2026	Total Committed Payments to 20/05/2026	2026 / 2027 Budget	Notes
Clerk's salary and associated costs	£389.79	£374.13	£0	£0	£5462	
Hiring of village hall	£0	£0	£0	£0	£200.00	
Maintenance of Parish graveyard	£0	£0	£0	£0	£400.00	
Defibrillator	£0	£0	£0	£0	£120.00	
Grounds maintenance	£0	£0	£0	£0	£2,000.00	
Maintenance of Assets	£198.00	£0	£0	£0	£400.00	
Insurance premiums	£0	£0	£0	£0	£595.00	
Audits & Accounts Fees	£0	£0	£0	£0	£220.00	
Subscriptions	£193.65	£0	£0	£0	£475.00	
Website	£0	£0	£0	£0	£275.00	
Training	£50.00	£0	£0	£0	£300.00	
NDP & Planning Costs	£0	£0	£0	£0	£2000.00	
Norton Nurturing Nature	£0	£0	£0	£0	£850.00	
Bus Shelter Noticeboard	£0	£0	£0	£0	£150.00	
Play Space Maintenance	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1000.00	
Contingency	£0	£0	£0	£0	£502.00	
Bank Charges	£0	£4.25	£0	£0	£51.00	
Total Expenditure	**£831.44**	**£378.38**	**£0**	**£0**	**£15,000.00**	

20th May 2026 Meeting

Comments

i. The online bank statement of the 30th April 2026 showed a balance of £47,308.04

ii. There are no payments from the previous report which are yet to clear.

iii. The current bank balance includes the following amounts agreed at previous Parish Council meetings which are being held in reserve –

Norton Pond restoration (increased by £280 at 15/07/2020 meeting)	£500.00
Norton Pond legal costs	£1,200.00 (Including VAT)
National Lottery – Grant for Jubilee event – (Adjusted for expenses incurred net of VAT, original amount £1,563.00)	£538.11
Community Infrastructure Levy	£2258.08
Cantilevered Bus Shelter	£4000.00
NDP	£6000.00
Planning Consultancy	£200.00
Playspace Maintenance	£10000.00
Reserve Total	***£24,696.19***
True Current Account Balance	***£22,611.85***

iv. Approval required for the items listed below

Invoices to be considered at the January 2026 meeting -

Recipient	Amount	Details	Legal Note
Clerk – Monthly Salary	£374.13	*May 2026*	*LGA 1972 s.112(2)*
Clerk Expenses	£15.66	*Mileage*	
GALC	£193.65	*Subscription Invoice 1550*	
GALC	£50.00	*Clerk Training Invoice 1661*	
Copeland Maintenance	£198.00	*Invoice 0177 and Invoice 0170*	
Total	**£831.44**		

NORTON PARISH COUNCIL

APPENDIX IV

15 May 2026 (2026-2027)

Norton Parish Council

Prepared by: _____ Date: _____

Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

	Bank Reconciliation at 30/04/2026			
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2026			32,686.42
	ADD			
	Receipts 01/04/2026 - 30/04/2026			15,000.00
				47,686.42
	SUBTRACT			
	Payments 01/04/2026 - 30/04/2026			378.38
A	**Cash in Hand 30/04/2026** (per Cash Book)			**47,308.04**
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements			
	Petty Cash	07/03/2023	0.00	
	Parish Council of Norton - Treasure	30/04/2026	47,308.04	
				47,308.04
	Less unpresented payments			
				47,308.04
	Plus unpresented receipts			
B	**Adjusted Bank Balance**			**47,308.04**
	A = B Checks out OK			

NORTON PARISH COUNCIL

APPENDIX V

Norton Parish Council 15 May 2026 (2026-2027)

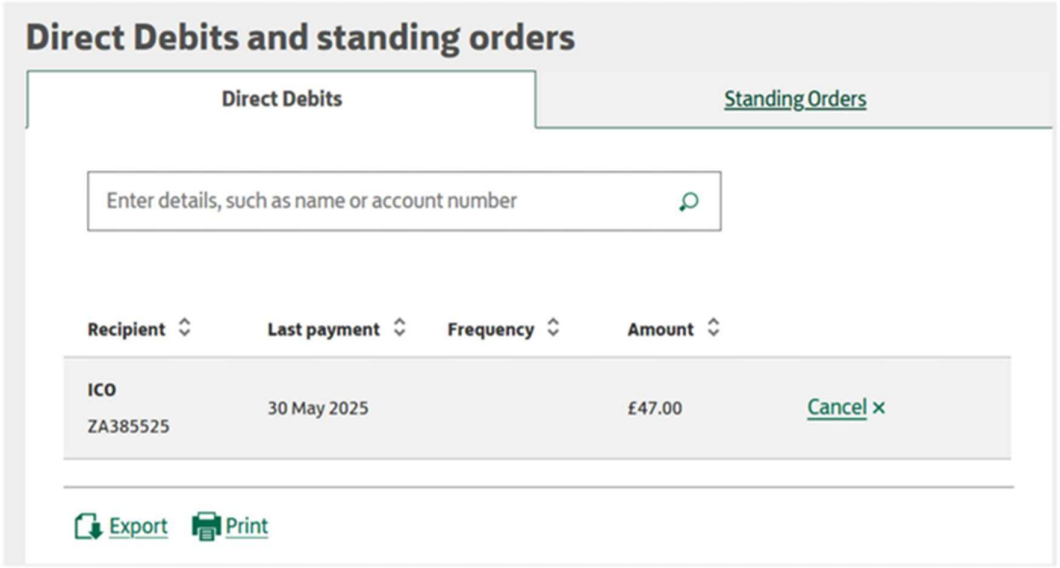
Monthly breakdown of Receipts and Payments

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/04/2026 and 31/03/2027)

	Budget	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total	Variance
PAYMENTS															
Admin costs															
Scribe Accounts	361.00														361.00
Bank charge	51.00	4.25												4.25	46.75
VAT Refund															
Audits															
Audit Fees	220.00														220.00
Bus Shelter															
Bus Shelter Noticeboarc	150.00														150.00
Bus Shelter	150.00														150.00
Chairman Expenses															
Chairman's Expenses															
Churchyard Maintenar															
Churchyard Maintenanc	400.00														400.00
Clerk Costs															
Clerk Salary	4,670.00	374.13												374.13	4,295.87
HMRC Payments															
PATA Payroll	178.00														178.00
Clerk Mileage	47.00														47.00
Clerk Expenses	206.00														206.00
Communications															
Communications	200.00														200.00
Community Infrastruct															
Community Infrastructur															
Contingency															
Stationary	502.00														502.00
Defibrillator															
Defibrillator	120.00														120.00
Dues & Subscriptions															

NORTON PARISH COUNCIL

APPENDIX VI



NORTON PARISH COUNCIL

APPENDIX VII

Norton Parish Council

Response to Government consultation on proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Gloucestershire

1. Introduction

Norton Parish Council is a small semi-rural parish located midway between Gloucester and Tewkesbury in the county of Gloucester. The Parish Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Government's consultation on proposals for local government reorganisation in Gloucestershire.

In common with most parish and town councils in the county, we support the establishment of a single unitary authority for Gloucestershire as the most coherent and recognisable structure at a county level.

However, local government reorganisation is not solely a question of structural configuration. The effectiveness of any new system will ultimately be determined by how well it reflects and responds to the needs of individual communities across Gloucestershire. Those needs are understood most clearly at the neighbourhood level and are already addressed, day to day, by parish councils as the closest tier of government to residents.

This response therefore focuses not only on the overall structure, but on the principles, governance arrangements and relationships that will be required to ensure that any new unitary authority, particularly a single countywide model, works effectively in practice. In doing so, it sets out how parish councils must be recognised, engaged and enabled as core partners in delivering local outcomes and sustaining strong, connected communities.

2. How this response aligns with the consultation criteria

This response is structured to align with the key themes and assessment criteria set out in the consultation. Rather than respond to each question in isolation, we want to address the underlying considerations across the following areas:

- geography and place (Q1)
- delivery, scale and sustainability (Q2–Q4)
- local voice and engagement (Q5 and Q7)
- devolution and future governance (Q6)
- boundary considerations, including the Gloucester-specific proposal.

3. The Strategic Role of Parish Councils

Parish councils are not simply stakeholders within the system - they are the existing neighbourhood tier of government.

Across Gloucestershire, parish councils already:

- provide democratic representation at the most local level
- deliver services and manage community assets
- convene partners across public, voluntary and community sectors, and

- respond directly to local needs and priorities.

Their contribution extends beyond governance into health, wellbeing, and economic resilience.

Parish councils play a critical role in:

- reducing social isolation and supporting ageing populations
- enabling preventative approaches that reduce pressure on NHS and social care services
- supporting local economies, high streets, and community infrastructure, and
- strengthening social cohesion and community resilience.

In a county like Gloucestershire, with a growing and ageing population, this role is increasingly important. Investment in the first tier of local government is not only democratic, it is economically and socially preventative, and reduces demand on more costly public services.

Any future structure, particularly within a single unitary authority model, must therefore:

- recognise parish and town councils as core delivery partners
- build on this existing infrastructure, and
- strengthen, not dilute, their role within neighbourhood governance

(a) Geography and Place (Q1)

A single countywide geography broadly aligns with how residents currently experience Gloucestershire. However, parish councils have a uniquely detailed understanding of the places they serve and this hyperlocal knowledge must be central to determining what constitutes “sensible geographies”.

Sensible geographies should:

- reflect real communities and lived experience, not administrative convenience
- align with how residents access services such as health, education, transport and employment
- recognise the distinct characteristics of urban, peri-urban and rural areas, and
- maintain coherent community identities, avoiding fragmentation.

There is strong concern within the sector that:

- artificial or imposed boundaries risk disconnecting communities from services and decision-making
- rural areas may be grouped in ways that do not reflect geography, and infrastructure or economic relationships.

This principle applies equally to:

- unitary authority boundaries, and
- neighbourhood partnership arrangements

Parish councils should be extensively and meaningfully consulted in shaping both. Without this, there is a significant risk that the new structures will fail to reflect how communities actually function.

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(b) Delivery, Scale and Sustainability (Q2, Q3, Q4)

A single unitary provides the clearest opportunity for consistency and efficiency, if the delivery of outcomes are based on financial sustainability, capacity and realistic transition planning.

Financial sustainability

In common with other local councils in Gloucestershire, Norton Parish Council believes there is no mandate for unfunded devolution, and that any additional responsibilities must be accompanied by long-term, sustainable funding.

Parish councils like ours rely primarily on the precept, and do not receive revenue support grant or equivalent funding streams available to principal authorities.

Transferring services without funding would:

- place unsustainable pressure on parish councils
- lead to increased precepts for residents, and
- risk creating inequity and double taxation.

Any devolution of services or assets must therefore be:

- fully funded, not reliant on local taxation
- supported by clear financial frameworks, and
- sustainable beyond the transition period.

Capacity and workforce

There is significant variation across the local council sector. While larger parish and town councils may have the staffing and infrastructure necessary to expand, many smaller parish councils like Norton's operate with limited capacity, with their only employee being a part-time clerk. Therefore we couldn't take on any additional responsibilities without substantial support.

Any model must:

- recognise this diversity
- avoid a one-size-fits-all approach, and
- provide appropriate support, training and resourcing.

Transition and delivery realism

Reorganisation presents risks to:

- planning and enforcement
- highways and infrastructure services, and
- local responsiveness and access to officers.

There is concern that:

- over-centralisation may reduce accessibility and responsiveness
- institutional knowledge may be lost during transition, and

- services most valued locally may be weakened.

Delivery success will depend on:

- retaining local knowledge and expertise
- maintaining accessible local service delivery, and
- ensuring continuity and clarity during transition.

(c) Local Voice and Engagement (Q5 & Q7)

The risks associated with a single unitary authority, particularly the increased distance from decision-making, make strong neighbourhood governance essential. Parish councils are already the democratic infrastructure at neighbourhood level and reorganisation must strengthen, not duplicate or dilute, this role.

Consultation and local input

There are concerns across local councils in Gloucestershire that:

- engagement to date has been limited
- timescales have restricted meaningful participation, and
- there is insufficient clarity on how local views will influence outcomes.

This creates a risk that:

- proposals are not fully informed by local knowledge, and
- communities feel disconnected from decision-making.

Neighbourhood arrangements

Proposals for neighbourhood groupings raise important issues, namely:

- potential dilution of local representation
- lack of clarity on governance, accountability and decision-making, and
- risk of creating structures that duplicate or compete with existing parish councils.

Neighbourhood governance must therefore:

- be built on the existing parish and town council network
- ensure each community retains a clear and independent voice, and
- avoid creating additional layers that weaken accountability

Critically, parish councils must have:

- a defined and meaningful role in decision-making, not solely advisory status
- representation within neighbourhood structures that reflects their democratic mandate, and
- clear mechanisms for influencing local priorities, service delivery and resource allocation.

Without this, neighbourhood empowerment will remain aspirational rather than operational.

NORTON PARISH COUNCIL

(d) Devolution and Future Governance (Q6)

A single unitary authority provides the most coherent platform for devolution. Parish councils are central to this, providing:

- local leadership and democratic accountability
- community engagement and insight, and
- delivery capacity at neighbourhood level.

For devolution to succeed, it must be underpinned by clear governance structures and partnership arrangements.

Structured partnership and representation

There must be formal recognition of the role of parish councils within governance arrangements, with a formal mechanism for ongoing engagement between the unitary authority and parish councils.

Consequently, consideration should be given to establishing a Devolution Committee or Board, with representation from the unitary authority and parish and town councils. This body should oversee neighbourhood arrangements, devolution of services, and partnership working.

Governance frameworks

A clearly-designed framework should set out:

- roles and responsibilities
- decision-making processes, and
- expectations for engagement and collaboration.

This should include:

- a locally-agreed charter between the unitary authority and parish and town councils
- clarity on service delivery, asset transfer, and funding arrangements, and
- mechanisms for accountability and dispute resolution.

Dedicated support and infrastructure

Effective partnership requires:

- a dedicated officer function to support engagement with parish and town councils
- structured and regular engagement at both strategic and operational levels, and
- investment in training, capacity building and sector development.

Without these structures, there is a significant risk that devolution remains fragmented or inconsistent, and local engagement is reduced rather than strengthened.

(e) Boundary Change Considerations (the Greater Gloucester proposal)

NORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Any boundary changes within a unitary model must be supported by clear and robust justification. Boundary changes must therefore:

- demonstrate clear benefits for public service delivery and financial sustainability
- avoid unnecessary fragmentation of communities, and
- reflect existing community identities, service patterns and local connections.

We are particular concerned that boundary changes might:

- divide established communities
- create complexity in service delivery, and
- weaken local representation.

Any such changes must therefore be:

- evidence-based
- clearly communicated, and
- shaped through engagement with affected communities and parish councils.

4. Conclusion

Parish councils, like Norton, are already delivering at neighbourhood level as democratically elected, place-based institutions with deep community insight. They provide an existing and functioning foundation for local governance which should be built upon, not replaced or marginalised.

Local government reorganisation presents a significant opportunity to strengthen local democracy, improve service delivery, and support community wellbeing. But this opportunity will only be realised if parish councils are fully integrated into governance arrangements, supported by clear frameworks, sustainable funding and genuine influence over decisions that affect their communities.

Richard F N Page — Chairman - Norton Parish Council
26 March 2026