

NASSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL



MINUTES - NASSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday 9th April 2025 at 7.00 pm in Nassington Village Hall

25.2556. Attendance and apologies for absence

Present: Cllr Sam Attenborough (chairman), Cllr Elliott Clark, Cllr Rebecca Downey, Cllr Charlotte Lemmon, and Cllr Derrick Mortimer. Apologies received from Alain Kingsley and Andy Russell for personal reasons. Officer present: The clerk. One member of the public present.

25.2557. Declarations of interest

Charlotte Lemmon declared a pecuniary interest on the planning application relating to the property on Station Road and absented herself from the meeting.

Dispensations are in place for all members of the council who are also members of the cricket club, for members with allotments, for members with association/governorship with the school, preschool, and for members with association with the church. The council has previously acknowledged that associations with and membership of other organisations might on occasion be pecuniary in nature but felt those to be incidental to the member's council role rather than of pecuniary advantage or disadvantage to the member, that the roles would not conflict, and that members would put their statutory duty as duly appointed members of the council as priority in any decision-making process.

25.2558. Approval of Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes, circulated in advance of the meeting, of the meeting held in March 2025.

A brief discussion ensued about the importance of understanding of governance and training for the duration of the forthcoming new council term and agreed to discuss at the next meeting.

The chairman of the meeting signed the minutes.

25.2559. Questions or address from members of the public:

There were none.

25.2560. Planning and Development (1):

- a) NE/25/00345/FUL | Change flat roof to pitched roof, alter position of pedestrian door, change window to French door. | 59 Station Road Nassington It was **RESOLVED** that the council has no objections or further comment to make.
- b) NE/25/00040/FUL | Extension to existing factory comprising of additional workshop area and changing rooms | Unit 5A Kings Cliffe Industrial Estate Wansford Road Kings Cliffe. The council considered the application alongside comments submitted by members of the public and statutory consultees. It was **RESOLVED** that the council has no objections but would recommend that the planning authority takes into account the comments received from public representation and the comments regarding public rights of way received from NNC highways. The council would also refer the planning officers to the emerging Nassington Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- c) A split decision notice had been received relating to a Holm Oak against application NE/25/00126/TPO/ and was noted for reference.

25.2561. Planning and Development (2):

- a) **Neighbourhood plan:** The councillors who have been involved with the neighbourhood plan to date and with the collation of the council's responses to the Regulation 14 comments and consultant's observations would attend a meeting with the consultants to move the project forward. The dates would be confirmed by email after checking the consultant's availability.
- b) **Heat Nassington.** It was agreed to approve Variation to Grant Funding Agreement to authorise the CEF Project Change Request Form to allow variation to dates, which have been put back slightly.

25.2562. Playing field

- a) It was agreed to approve a request for construction of a shed on the playing field carpark to support the cricket club pavilion.
- b) The licence for use of the playing field to play cricket has been signed. A council task and finish group will work with the cricket club to establish a fit-for-purpose risk assessment that covers all aspects of safety and playing cricket to comply with the licence. All council members are to receive copies of the risk assessments received to date.
- c) The licence agreed with the cricket club will form the basis of licences that will be agreed with all users of the playing field, which will include, but is not limited to, the Nassington and Yarwell Garden Society for the annual garden show, Nassington School, Nassington Pre-School, and any users who wish to use the playing field for public gatherings. It was noted that the new “Martyn’s Law” received royal ascent in the preceding days which may have a bearing on some events in the future. It was agreed that Sam Attenborough, Elliot Clark and Derek Mortimer would be members of a working group to take this licence project forward, and bring to the council for full agreement.

d) **Play area:**

- o Slide: The clerk had met with one of the possible suppliers of the new slide to determine whether the proposed site could be moved to the west of the site of the current slide. It was confirmed that this would be possible and beneficial in terms of laying the grass protection mats. The slide itself should face north to minimise heat from the sun.
- o Invitations to tender had been submitted to three separate firms, detailing the council’s requirements in terms of a bespoke wave slide to be installed on the sloped part of the playing field, and to be designed in such a way to enable use by as wide a range of users as possible. It was **RESOLVED** to proceed with Wicksteed Leisure who had submitted a tender of £27,560.78. The clerk was instructed to proceed with the final stage of the grant compliance requirements and to confirm the order with Wicksteed once the grant is confirmed.

e) **Play area / playing field safety inspection:** The monthly inspection highlighted:

- o rabbit holes near the MUGA area;
- o the needing for strimming around play equipment and tables, which had been rectified by being cut since the report was collated;
- o one of the oak bench slats is showing signs of rotting;
- o one of the picnic benches is sited under a tree leading to bird droppings;
- o the farmy rocker is squeaky, some of the seat backs have loose screws and there are some missing screw caps;
- o one of the climbing foot ‘rocks’ on the multiplay is loose;
- o The note about the the rocking horse paint needing a refresh will be revisited as it was painted the preceding autumn;
- o Some of the swing seats are a bit worn and the surface eroded.

Sam Attenborough undertook to try to tighten the loose bolts. If necessary, the council will buy a set of screwdriver heads to fit the units. The next monthly inspection would be carried out by Sam Attenborough.

f) **Play area:** At the previous meeting, it had been agreed to ask RoSPA to upgrade the check list it had provided to instruct the council’s regular inspection of play equipment, to cover the new play equipment. However, RoSPA no longer offers that service. Instead, it offers an alternate fully online arrangement for monthly councillor led inspections, details of which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. This would necessitate the procurement of and custody-rotation of an ipad as well as a photograph to be taken of every piece of equipment at every inspection. There is a modest annual fee as well. It was agreed not to proceed with that alternative but to maintain the current inspection system, using the previous trim trail guide for the new equipment.

g) **Play area:** It was **RESOLVED** to commission HAGS, as the supplier of the zip slide, to carry out a full and thorough inspection of the Mantis zip-slide cableway, including dropping the cableway and inspecting all

components, at a cost of £590, less 10%. It was agreed that should replacement of any of the parts be necessary, the work can proceed in accordance with sales quotation 2507435\000 dated 10th March 2025, under delegated powers.

The cost of having this inspection carried out on an annual basis would be investigated.

25.2563. Governance matters:

a) **Internal audit:** The internal audit had been carried out the preceding Monday via Zoom, the clerk/RFO in attendance, with the Northants CALC internal auditor.

All matters raised in previous financial year's (23/24) audit had been addressed to the satisfaction of both the council and the internal auditor. These related to noting receipts at meetings (and minuting same) and monitoring the council's website to ensure that links to all governance papers are functional and that statutory and best practice processes are adhered to. No matters arose from external audit.

The initial report pertaining to the 2024/25 audit had been received. The report stated that other than protecting bank balances of over £85,000 there were no issues arising and Nassington Parish Council has had a very successful year. To protect bank balances exceeding the £85,000 Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) limit in the UK, the council should consider splitting savings across multiple, separate financial institutions, each registered with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). The council noted this point and noted too that the clerk had addressed the matter with the internal auditor by explaining that this had been tabled for discussion in February but held over to consider going forward.

b) **Note IA's submission of page 3/ internal audit of the AGAR:** This is to follow and will be submitted to external audit as part of the AGAR submission on receipt, unless there is any deviation from the summary outlined in (a) above.

c) **Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Report (AGAR)** had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Each of the 9 questions on the form was considered in turn. It was **RESOLVED** that the council:

- prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
- has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
- during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
- considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
- arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
- responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
- disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant
- The last question regarding being a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts is not applicable.

d) The dates for the exercise of public rights (to inspect accounts and associated papers) were confirmed as 3rd June – 14th July 2024.

e) **Elections:** Fewer nominations for people standing for election were submitted than available seats, which means that there will not be a contested election, and the people nominated are duly elected as of 6th May. The newly elected members may co-opt to fill unfilled vacancies at or after the first meeting of the new council. The vacancies for co-option can begin immediately. Elliot Clark indicated that he would stand for co-option as he would have been nominated to stand for election had he not been away on a long business trip during the appropriate period.

f) **Parish Forum:** The clerk gave verbal feedback of the forum meeting and would forward any emails received as follow up, such as minutes or copies of presentations. Emails exchanged with the assistant directors for Customer Experience and for Waste, Highways and Growth had not led to any response of substance from the Neighbourhood Planning department, or even from the planning department in general.

g) **Big 50:** Big50 is a North Northants 25year aspirational project aimed at enhancing living standards and job prospects for those living and working in the region and which aims to make the area a proud, prosperous and proactive place by 2050. It was launched last summer and is being rolled out. Details of a one-hour introduction online session for councillors on 29th April had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The chairman and the clerk both undertook to try to attend the session.

h) **Salary matters:** In the latest Northants CALC E-update publication there had been an article addressing the governance surrounding the clerk's salary. Details of the article, the contracting bureau recommended by Northants CALC and the custom quote had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The set up cost is £30, monthly charge £15 and year end an additional £15. Any additional charges are charged in ten-minute segments at £73.50 per hour. However, whilst the full details of the facts to be considered had been sent to all members, this agenda item had not appeared on copies of all agendas sent to members, so will be ratified at the next meeting

25.2564. Environmental matters:

a) **Arboricultural inspection report.** The arboricultural report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. It was agreed that the works recommended as high priority. It was **RESOLVED** that an invitation to quote should be sent to three tree surgeons in accordance with the recommendation under T19a section of the report.

b) **Churchyard:** It was noted that under delegated powers, on behalf of Nassington Nature, the council purchased some bird boxes and volunteers erected them in the churchyard. Lavender, rosemary, and creeping thyme, along with growing medium, has been purchased using money donated by Nassington and Yarwell Garden Society. These will be planted by a working party. Epicormic growth had been removed from the sycamore in the churchyard by a third party against the council's wishes and despite the council having agreed to maintain it as part of the environmental churchyard approach, as there is evidence of nesting and additional biodiversity benefits.

25.2565. Community / Projects

a) **Allotments:** It was agreed to request TAG Signs, a design company in the village, to use the same broad design as the Nassington Nature and Nassington Neighbourhood plan logo designs for a new allotment logo, providing the cost is similar to that of the Nassington Nature logo.

The last of the rubbish left over from the allotment clearance has not yet been removed and the pile has been added to, although nobody knows by whom. It was agreed to arrange hire of a skip and a working party to clear the remnants of detritus on the site.

b) **Pocket Park:** There had been clarification of the area to be strimmed at the pocket park whereby it covers not just the grassed area in the front section, but the wilder areas to either side of the grassed section where the picnic bench is, within the area bound by a path on the northern side of the pocket park. The contractor will be advised accordingly.

c) **Blue plaque project:** There was an update on the revised launch date of the project. All councillors are invited to attend the launch event.

d) **PLR/policing:** An email detailing a short report was circulated in advance of the meeting and taken as read. It detailed a recent initiative by the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to drive engagement with rural stakeholders to address the experience of policing and public confidence from people who live in rural areas don't always feel safe, or that their needs are understood. As plans roll out, the council will engage on behalf of the wider community via the PLR.

25.2566. Highways

Unmetered electricity supply At the last meeting, it had been agreed to continue with SSE as the supplier of unmetered supply of electricity for street lighting. However, the offer was based on information misunderstood at the meeting, and it transpires that the new contract is in place for only 4 months, due to the uncertainty in the unmetered supply market at the current time. The matter would be re-addressed in June/July meetings.

25.2567. Financial matters:

- a) The year end accounts to 31st March 2025 had been circulated in advance of the meeting. It was **RESOLVED** to approve accounts at 31st March 2025 as follows:

ledger balance current account	15,618.11
Tailored reserve	24,793.47
Nationwide 95 day saver	93,331.95
Total cash:	133,743.53

Per cash book

Balance b/f	141,210.77
Add receipts for year	93,144.94
less payments for the year	100,612.18
Balance c/f:	133,743.53

- b) It was **RESOLVED** to approve Section 2 of the AGAR as circulated in advance of the meeting:

	31 Mar 2024 £	31 Mar 2025 £
Balances brought forward	113,113	141,211
(+) Annual Precept	50,750	50,750
(+) Total other receipts	20,866	42,395
(-) Staff Costs	12,165	13,686
(-) Loan interest/capital repayments	-	-
(-) Total other payments	31,353	86,926
(=) Balances carried forward	141,211	133,744
Total cash and investments	141,211	133,744
Total fixed assets and long term assets	222,483	240,807
Total borrowings	0	0

- c) It was **RESOLVED** to note the following receipts, details of which had been circulated in advance of the meeting with the detailed accounts:

Receipt	Goods/service
£600.71	Interest
£32.00	Allotment rents
£15,000.00	C&P CA Grant
£100.00	Garden society grant

- d) It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following payments, details of which had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

Goods/service	Supplier	Nett	Gross	Power
Membership/audit fee	Northants CALC	769.44	830.64	LGA S111 ⁱ
Design fee	TAG Signs	30.00	36.00	LGA S111 ⁱ
Churchyard maintenance	Plough env'ntal		180.00	LGA Act S215 ⁱ
Village groundworks	Plough env'ntal		40.00	PHA Act S164 ⁱⁱ
Urban verge cutting	Plough env'ntal		250.00	LGA S136 ⁱ
<u>Direct debits/SOs/Credit card:</u>				
Birdboxes in churchyard	CJ Wildbirdfoo	74.13	88.96	NERC S40 ⁱⁱⁱ
Shrubs for churchyard	Crocus.com	115.39	111.16	LGA S215 ⁱ
Streetlighting	SSE	99.41	106.71	PCA ^{iv} 1957 s3/ HA ^v 1980 s301
AED in phonebox	SSE	8.05	9.66	PHAvi s234

Salary and pension 1,116.45 LGAⁱ S112 & pensions act
e) Those councillors present signed the Nationwide bank mandate form adding them as signatories.

25.2568. Announcements and correspondence –.

- An invitation to engage with the local MP has been received and accepted, by the chairman and the clerk has initiated a meeting as well.
- The council expressly thanked Alan Burns and Rebecca Downey for their service as parish councillors and, in the case of Mr Burns, chairman.

25.2569. Newsletter / Social Media / community communications

Information about the new play equipment; newly elected councillors; accounts and period of public inspection.

25.2570. Matters to note / to be carried forward

The next meeting is the first meeting of the new council term and the annual meeting of the council at which several governance and policy decisions will be transacted, as well as members code of conduct and statement of training intent.

For future consideration: Tree Protection Orders and Rights of Way improvements.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 14 TH MAY 2025		
Approved by Nassington Parish Council:		
Signature of Chairman		Date:

ⁱ Local Government Act 1972

ⁱⁱ Public Health Act 1875, s.164

ⁱⁱⁱ Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

^{iv} PCAct -Parish Councils Act 1957

^v HA- Highways Act 1980

^{vi} PHA – Public Health Act 1936