

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
NORTON-JUXTA-KEMPSEY PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
20 JUNE 2024**

There were no Public Question Time discussions.

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** C. Dawson, A. Job, P. Richmond, J. Waizeneker, C. Rega (late arrival), Cllr R. Adams (WDC District Councillor), Cllr Mrs L. Robinson (WCC County Councillor) (late arrival). These apologies, and the reason for them, were accepted and approved.

Attending: K. Fincher (Chairman), C. Arrow, M. Pollard, C. Rega, J. Greenway (Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer), Cllr Mrs L. Turier (WDC District Councillor) and Cllr Mrs L. Robinson (WCC County Councillor). The meeting was quorate from the start, with 3 Parish Councillors in attendance.

2. Changes to Membership

WDC has issued a notice of vacancy which has been publicised. WDC will advise whether the vacancy can be filled by co-option after 2 July 2024.

3. Declarations of Interest

a) Reminder and requirements noted.

b), c) and d) Cllr Fincher's interest in item 24 was noted (due to the company assisting with the migration project being Cllr Fincher's employer). As agreed at the 25 April 2024 Parish Council meeting, Cllr Fincher is allowed to take part in discussions relating to this agenda item.

4. 2024/145 Minutes

a) The minutes of the annual meeting held on 23 May 2024 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Proposed Cllr Pollard, seconded Cllr Arrow and agreed by all.

b) The minutes action summary was reviewed and will be updated following the meeting. Discussions pertinent to agenda items are recorded within the relevant section of the minutes. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr Mrs Robinson arrived at 7.40pm during item 4b.

5. 2024/146 Reports

a) Cllr R. Adams and Cllr Mrs L. Turier (Wychavon District Council (WDC) District Councillors)
Cllr Adams' report circulated in advance of the meeting was noted. Cllr Mrs Turier confirmed that the Parish Council's Community Legacy Project application has been received and is being reviewed.

b) Cllr Mrs L. Robinson (Worcestershire County Council (WCC) County Councillor)

Cllr Mrs Robinson's report circulated in advance of the meeting was noted along with a potential requirement for solar panels to be installed on all new business units.

Following discussions under agenda item 4b:

The new WCC Cabinet Member with responsibility for Highways and Transport, Cllr Marc Bayliss, has been invited to visit the Parish to observe the deficiencies of the Active Travel Corridor (ATC). Cllr Mrs Robinson advised this invitation has been positively received, with this to be progressed after the General Election on 4 July. **Action: Cllr Mrs Robinson**

Cllr Mrs Robinson continues to press WCC Highways to take action to improve safety along the ATC route, particularly the Woodbury Lane section. The Parish Council highlighted regular instances of near misses along this route, and continued to stress that WCC needs to make the ATC route through the Parish safe or to de-classify it as an Active Travel Corridor which promotes its use by pedestrians and cyclists. Also see discussions under item 15.

Efforts continue to press WCC Highways to resolve the safety issue relating to the Crookbarrow Way Bridleway Bridge surfacing when icy. **Action: Cllr Mrs Robinson**

The date of the next Active Travel Forum meeting will be advised to the Parish Council once a new date has been set and notified to Cllr Mrs Robinson. **Action: Cllr Mrs Robinson**

In view of the period of time elapsed since a meeting was proposed with the WCC Public Rights of Way Manager to discuss WCC changes to PRow management (February 2024), it was agreed that this meeting would no longer be pursued by the Parish Council as the WCC changes have now taken effect and management of the PRow in the Parish has been 'handed back' to WCC. The WCC PRow Manager will be advised that if he wishes to discuss the situation, the Parish Council would be delighted

to meet. Proposed Cllr Arrow, seconded Cllr Pollard and agreed by all. **Action: Cllr Mrs Robinson**
The situation regarding water discharge from the old Methodist Chapel site was reviewed and an update received. Cllr Mrs Robinson advised that there is still work to be done to resolve this situation and WCC Legal is reviewing options to achieve this. It was noted that the owners of the Chapel site have capped off the outflow pipe, but concerns were expressed that the water running through this natural watercourse needs to flow, and the most likely route at present is onto Wadborough Road. Suggestions for holding ponds to the rear of the site are being explored, with the aim to slow down the flow of water at times of heavy rainfall. Clarification will be sought to establish whether the owners of the Chapel site applied for Land Drainage Consent prior to work being undertaken to pipe a section of watercourse that was previously an open ditch. **Action: Cllr Mrs Robinson**

Following email exchange between a resident/Cllr Mrs Robinson on the subject above, and feedback received by the Parish Council, Cllr Mrs Robinson will advise the resident that WCC acknowledges the need for further work and will outline how this will be progressed. **Action: Cllr Mrs Robinson**

c) Finance

(i) Balances: current account £5,868.64, instant access deposit account £83,318.87, 32-day notice account £50,693.73 (20 June). Members were reminded that whilst balances are healthy, funds are committed or earmarked for future expenditure, and these include the £18,100 UK Share Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) grant relating to Parish Green Spaces Working Group projects.

(ii) The monthly accounts and bank reconciliation to 31 May 2024 are being prepared by the Council's accountant and will be circulated once received and reviewed. **Action: Responsible Finance Officer**

d) Social Media Communications

The report circulated in advance of the meeting was noted, including most popular Facebook (FB) posts (training opportunities for Armed Forces veterans, Wadborough Road closure and summer newsletter). The number of FB followers continues to increase (to 692), with website subscribers increasing to 107. The website has migrated to www.nortonjuxtakempseyparishcouncil.gov.uk, with an auto direct added to the old website. The change will be highlighted in the next Chairman's Blog. **Action: Cllr Fincher**

It was agreed to retain ownership of the old domain www.nortonjuxtakempseyparishcouncil.org at an annual cost of £14.99. This will prevent a third party purchasing this domain name and potentially using it maliciously. Proposed Cllr Arrow, seconded Cllr Fincher and agreed by all. **Action: Clerk**

After receiving guidance regarding how to reduce the risk of automated processes accessing the website and skewing website data, visitors from certain countries have been blocked and this has significantly reduced the number of visitors that didn't appear genuine.

e) West Mercia Police

The report and Police.uk data circulated in advance of the meeting were noted along with the West Mercia Police Public and Personal Safety Guidance for Local Councillors which will be circulated on an annual basis as a reminder of its content. **Action: Clerk**

The successful investigation following the Parish Hall and 'allotment garages' break ins was welcomed. Also see item 20.

g) St. James the Great Church, Norton

Apologies from Rachel Coulthurst (Assistant Curate) were noted along with the report circulated in advance of the meeting.

6. 2024/147 Independent Internal Audit Report 2023/24

The independent internal auditor's 2023/24 reports were received and considered, with no matters to be brought to the attention of the Council. Approved as proposed by Cllr Arrow, seconded by Cllr Pollard and agreed by all.

7. 2024/148 Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

The Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) referred to the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). Section 1 of the AGAR – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24, was considered, approved and was signed by the Chairman and Clerk/RFO. There were no 'no' responses. Proposed Cllr. Arrow, seconded by Cllr Fincher and agreed by all.

Cllr Rega arrived at 8.30pm.

8. 2024/149 Accounting Statements 2023/24 and Accounts for Year Ended 31 March 2024

The Clerk/RFO referred to the AGAR and draft accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024.

a) AGAR Section 2 – Accounting Statements for 2023/24 and draft accounts for year ended 31 March 2024 were considered.

b) AGAR Section 2 – Accounting Statements for 2023/24 and draft accounts for year ended 31 March 2024 were approved. Proposed Cllr. Pollard, seconded by Cllr. Fincher and agreed by all.

c) AGAR Section 2 – Accounting Statements for 2023/24 and draft accounts for year ended 31 March 2024 were signed by the Chairman and Clerk/RFO. Proposed Cllr. Pollard, seconded by Cllr. Fincher and agreed by all.

9. 2024/150 Exercise of Public Rights

The Clerk/RFO advised that the audit will be advertised to comply with requirements. **Action: Clerk**

10. 2024/151 Completion of the Remainder of the 2023/24 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and Submission to the External Auditor

Supporting information to be submitted with the 2023/24 AGAR including year-end bank reconciliation, explanations for significant year on year variances, explanations for difference between Section 2 boxes 7-8, reserve levels and dates for exercise of public rights, was considered and approved for submission. Proposed Cllr. Fincher, seconded by Cllr. Rega and agreed by all. Submission will be made in accordance with required timescales. **Action: Clerk**

The Clerk/RFO was thanked for completing the annual accounting process and the AGAR submission with supporting papers.

11. 2024/152 Reserves Policy

The draft Reserves Policy and supporting information was reviewed and adopted. Proposed Cllr Pollard, seconded Cllr Arrow and agreed by all. **Action: Clerk**

At the request of Cllr Mrs Robinson, agenda item 15 was discussed after item 11, minuted as below.

Cllr Mrs Robinson and Cllr Mrs Turier gave their apologies and left the meeting at 9pm.

12. 2024/153 Community Apiary

Updates received in advance of the meeting were noted.

13. 2024/154 Parish Green Spaces Working Group (PGSWG)/Biodiversity Matters

PGSWG updates received in advance of the meeting were noted. Work to define the boundary and install gates to the area that will become 'The King's Meadow' has been completed, funded from the UK Share Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) £18,100 grant. Other grant opportunities continue to be positively explored. The WDC Community Legacy Grant application has been submitted and a National Highways grant agreement has been received for review. It was agreed to seek a legal opinion regarding the National Highways agreement. **Action: Clerk**

The National Highways grant would fund a parish biodiversity survey and associated works. Specific guidance is being received to support creation of a wildflower meadow and de-silting the existing pond to protect and improve biodiversity and habitat.

Delivery of the open-air gym 'Air Skier' is in the process of being arranged.

14. 2024/155 Public Rights of Way (PRoW) / Parish Paths Warden (PPW)

PPW updates circulated in advance of the meeting were noted along with complaints received from residents regarding overgrown/poorly maintained PRoWs; residents have been advised to report these to WCC for attention. Also see discussions under item 5b.

15. 2024/156 Public Open Space/Verge Maintenance, Highways and Drainage Matters

Discussed after item 11 to allow for input from Cllr Mrs Robinson and Cllr Mrs Turier.

Cllr Mrs Robinson enquired whether a one-way system had been considered at the time the 'Henry Harbord' Active Travel Corridor (ATC) plan was developed e.g. making the section of Woodbury Lane from the Church Lane/Wadborough Road junction to the area by Norton College one way. Cllr Mrs Robinson was advised that the Parish Council is open to ideas to improve the safety of the ATC and whilst a one-way system was previously considered, this wasn't deemed to be workable (and it was agreed that this continues to be the case). It was noted that issues between vehicles/ pedestrians/ cyclist are a regular occurrence, with concerns expressed that nothing will be done until someone is seriously injured or worse. The ATC is a natural route through the Parish to the Parkway Station, and as more houses are built as part of the South Worcester Urban Extension (SWUE), the route is likely to be used by more vehicles, pedestrian and cyclists, making the route more dangerous.

To assess current volumes of traffic using the ATC route, WCC will be requested to carry out a traffic survey. **Action: Cllr Mrs Robinson**

Details of previous traffic surveys undertaken will be forwarded to Cllr Mrs Robinson to assist with assessment of whether traffic levels are increasing. **Action: Cllr Pollard**

The Parish Council again raised the matter of the £10k provided to WCC by the SWUE developers as a contribution towards traffic calming measures along Church Lane (around the War Memorial), with no sign of such measures being introduced by WCC.

Work to rebuild/repair sections of the Barracks curtilage wall along Brockhill Lane has re-commenced, with completion due around end July/early August.

WCC has responded to the Parish Council's enquiry regarding installation of a crossing point on Norton Road (to provide a safe crossing to Little Treasurers Nursery) and for the 40mph speed limit in this vicinity to be reduced. WCC has provided details of the lengthy and costly process to assess and survey the site, with adjustments to speed limits also requiring consultation phases and court hearings. WCC has advised that it does not have an allocation of funds for such crossings and that the Parish Council would need to fund/obtain grant funding for the cost of a zebra crossing (£80k-£100k) or a Pelican type crossing (£180k to £200k). It was agreed that this is cost prohibitive for the Parish Council without WCC funding; the resident will be updated. **Action: Clerk**

Also see item 5b above for discussions relating to WCC safety improvements to the Active Travel Corridor (ATC) and Wadborough Road flooding matters.

16. 2024/157 Norton Connector (NC)

With 86 passengers, the month of May recorded the 5th best month of passenger numbers since the service began. Discussions continue with WDC and WCC regarding future funding opportunities.

17. 2024/158 Employment Matters

a) This item was discussed on a confidential basis, with minutes prepared on a summary/overview basis.

b) An update was received including offers made. It was agreed that any offers not accepted will be re-advertised. Proposed Cllr Rega, seconded Cllr Arrow and agreed by all.

18. 2024/159 Planning

a) The following current planning applications were noted.

	<u>Application</u>	<u>Description of Proposal</u>
Approvals:	None	
Refusals:	Land At (Os 9017 5117), Mucknell Farm Lane, Stoulton W/22/01955/FUL	Development of a 1MW solar farm and associated infrastructure. Parish Council objects.
Awaiting Decision:	Hazeldene, 22 St James Close, Littleworth W/24/00497/HP	Erection of single-storey rear extension; two storey front/side extension; extension of stable; relocation of garage and widening of access. Parish supports subject to views of residents being fully considered.
	Properties 1 and 2, Church Cottages, Church Lane, Norton, W/23/02496/FUL	Creation of 2no. Detached Bungalows. Comments submitted without support or objection.
Internal Consultation:	Unit 8, Crucible Business Park, Woodbury Lane W/24/01136/FUL	Construction of new employment building (use classes E, B2 and B8) together with ancillary parking and other works.
Other:	None	

b) SWDPR: The Joint Parishes Group continues to seek positive engagement with the SWDPR Team.

19. 2024/160 Neighbourhood Plan (NP)/Parish Aspirations Document

The NP working group will meet to review the outcome of the Housing Needs Survey once the analysis is available from Wychavon DC. The quarterly review of the Aspirations Document (now due) will be undertaken at the same meeting. **Action: NP Working Group**

20. 2024/161 Parish Council Owned Land

The latest update from Kidwells solicitors reports progress to resolve the issues with the Persimmon Homes Land Registry transfer documents. Evidence of submission to the Land Registry, and Land Registry acceptance of the paperwork will be requested to provide reassurance regarding submission of the correct paperwork and progress towards registration of title. If the response received is not considered to be satisfactory, it was agreed for the Parish Council to take this matter to the Legal Ombudsman. Proposed Cllr Pollard, seconded Cllr Arrow and agreed by all. **Action: Clerk**

Break-in to the garages adjacent to the allotments was noted, with this reported to the Police. Damage to the two garage doors was considered and it was agreed to explore an insurance claim to cover the cost of replacement doors. Proposed Cllr Pollard, seconded Cllr Arrow and agreed by all. **Action: Clerk**

Quotes for replacement doors (including frames and opening mechanisms) will be sought for consideration. Proposed Cllr Pollard, seconded Cllr Arrow and agreed by all. **Action: Assistant Clerk**

It was agreed as not necessary to submit a Police Business Impact Form relating to this incident.

21. 2024/162 Allotments

The update circulated in advance of the meeting was noted.

22. 2024/163 Parish Defibrillators

Little Treasurers Nursery has been contacted to arrange installation of the sign above the defibrillator and to formalise the record of checks being undertaken by Little Treasurers.

23. 2024/164 Parish Hall Recreation Facilities and Outside Space

No update has been received from the baseball team regarding drainage proposals.

Following review of quotes received and equipment replacement costs it was agreed to:

- Instruct Reids Playground Maintenance Ltd to strip down the 'hip hop/spyro giro' piece of equipment, to check parts for wear, and to re-fit item if safe to do so, at a cost of £220 + VAT. It was noted that if parts need replacing, this will be subject to additional cost. Proposed Cllr Arrow, seconded Cllr Rega and agreed by all. **Action: Clerk**

- Instruct eibe play Ltd to service the roundabout/carousel bearing and to repair subsidence and surfacing around this, at a cost of £2,456.00 + VAT. Proposed Cllr Fincher, seconded Cllr Rega and agreed by all. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr Arrow offered to join the engineers on site subject to his availability at the time of the repairs.

CDF Management Group Ltd has confirmed that the areas for weed spraying include the play area, MUGA and tennis court, and have been instructed as agreed at the May Parish Council meeting. Prior notice of the weed spraying visit has been requested for the Hall Manager.

Quotes are being sought for Hall car park manhole covers to be lifted and checked, and to be re-fitted where required. Details of the contractor that carried out the car park re-surfacing work will be provided to Cllr Arrow. **Action: Clerk**

A one off 'cut and collect' mow of the baseball pitch including outfield area (by the existing mowing contractor) was agreed in principle subject to cost. This would collect the excess grass clippings that have gathered in the area and allow for more even cutting to a 22mm grass length. The Clerk was authorised to review the quote received and to accept this up to a cost of £500 + VAT. Proposed Cllr Rega, seconded Cllr Arrow and agreed by all. **Action: Clerk**

Quotes have been sought to manage the playing field mole population. It was noted that the mole hills are becoming more extensive, with the number of these limiting the areas that can be mowed due to the risk of damage to machinery. The Clerk was authorised to review quotes received and to accept up to a cost of £500 + VAT. Proposed Cllr Rega, seconded Cllr Arrow and agreed by all. **Action: Clerk**

24. 2024/165 Parish Council Website Domain Names and Email Addresses

The nortonjuxtakempseyparishcouncil.gov.uk website is now live with all content migrated. The hosting cost is £9.99 + VAT per month to include new .gov.uk email addresses for employees and members (along with storage). It was agreed to progress new .gov.uk email addresses along the lines of existing email addresses unless members wish to suggest alternative naming conventions. Proposed Cllr Arrow, seconded Cllr Rega and agreed by all. **Action: Cllr Pollard**

25. 2024/166 Parish Hall

A brief update was received from Cllr Fincher (Chair of the Hall Trustees and Parish Council representative), with a first beer festival being planned.

26. 2024/167 Worcester Norton Community Interest Company (WNCIC)

An update was received from Cllr Fincher (Parish Council WNCIC Board representative) in line with the agreed dispensation. The project is progressing well and although there has been a little movement in dates, the facilities are due to open to the public in mid-late August.

27. 2024/168 Martyn's Law - Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill

Further guidance is awaited. It was agreed for this item to remain on meeting agendas for discussion of guidance as this evolves.

28. 2024/169 Sentry Statue Landscaping Proposals

No further news.

29. 2024/170 Live Streaming of Parish Council Meetings

This was considered and agreed not to progress at the current time.

30. 2024/171 Finance

a) It was proposed by Cllr. Arrow, seconded Cllr. Fincher **and all were in agreement** that the accounts presented to the meeting, as summarised below, be approved for payment/confirmation.

Accounts for Confirmation:

Category	Detail	Amount £ *
Administration	Migration of website and emails to .gov.uk domain (agreed 23 May Parish Council meeting)	150.00
	Internal audit fee 2023/24	120.00
	May/June 2024 printing (ink)	25.49
	Mobile phone contract June 2024 DDR	11.10
	Website fees June 2024	5.98
Grounds/ Parish Property Maintenance	May playing field mowing, 'groundsman' mowing and 'King's Meadow' fencing/gate work (agreed 22 January Parish Council meeting)	3,937.01
	Verge mowing at Norton 31 May 2024 (commuted sum)	224.40
	Lengthsman duties May 2024	224.00
	TOTAL	4,697.98

* Incl. VAT where payable on invoice

Accounts for Payment:

Category	Detail	Amount £ *
Administration	Session 1 'Clerking 1-2-3 training' CALC – new Clerk/RFO	42.00
Community Services	Norton Connector May 2024	320.00
Grounds/ Parish Property Maintenance	Verge mowing at Norton 16 June 2024 (commuted sum)	224.40
	Undergrowth clearance FP20 (NJ543) second of 3 cuts a year	90.00
	Allotment water bill (older meter – monthly billing)	13.15
Staff Costs	June 2024 payroll (gross): Clerk and Assistant Clerk (incl. pension contributions and expenses reimbursement)	1,932.94
	TOTAL	2,622.49
	GRAND TOTAL	7,320.47

* Incl. VAT where payable on invoice

31. 2024/172 Correspondence for Information

See Appendix 1 for a list of correspondence received.

32. 2024/173 Clerk's Report on Urgent Decisions/Expenditure Delegations since the Last Meeting

As reported during the meeting.

33. 2024/174 Items for Update to Local M.P.

None.

34. 2024/175 Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agenda

None.

35. 2024/176 Date of Next Meeting

Parish Council Meeting 18 July 2024.

The meeting closed at 10.25pm.

<u>Correspondence Received for 20 June 2024 Parish Council Meeting</u>	
Sender	Subject
CALC	Information/updates including: The pre-election period for local authorities, Local Council Conference, Helping other Parish/Town Councils, New NALC Micro Councils Network (MCN), The King's Award for Voluntary Service, New Year and Birthday Honours list, D-Day 80 - Flag of Peace, training events, NALC events, diary dates, general reminders, Clerk Vacancy, NALC Chief Executive's bulletin
Community First	Newsletters/bulletins
CPRE: The Countryside Charity	Campaign updates
NALC	Newsletters, Chief Exec's bulletins
National Highways	M5 junction 8 carriageway repairs update - incl. full carriageway closure of the M5 southbound between J7 & J8: 1 to 19 July (Mon to Fri)
One Network	Local roadworks reports
Police / Police & Crime Commissioner / Neighbourhood Watch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Man arrested, charged & remanded for Burglary, Thefts & Drugs Offences • Special PCC newsletter - June 2024: The Big Conversation • PCC newsletter May 2024 • Burglaries and criminal damage within the Parish
Resident	Complaint re WCC maintenance to the public right of way NJ552 (Radley bridleway)
Resident	Damage to Parish Council garage door
Resident	Enquiry/complaint re overgrown state of public rights of way to the rear of Orchard Grove (NJ541/542)
Resident	Information re bees
Rural Bulletins	Bulletins: Rural opportunities/funding/vulnerability service/news
Soc. Local Council Clerks	Chief Exec news bulletins and updates
Wychavon DC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New green measures for Wychavon's parks • Chance to dig into Wychavon's past – Hartlebury Castle - special open day Saturday 13 July, 11am to 5pm • Award for commitment to inclusion and diversity • New deal for future of Droitwich Spa Waitrose • Look out for your poll card as deadline looms • Residents urged to get election ready • Questionnaire regarding Neighbourhood Plans • Droitwich in Bloom back in bud
Wychavon DC Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda for Planning Committee meeting 20 June 2024 • Minutes for Planning Committee meeting 23 May 2024 <p><u>Refusal Notice:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W/22/01955/FUL - Land At (Os 9017 5117), Mucknell Farm Lane, Stoulton: Development of a 1MW solar farm and associated infrastructure.