

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING FOR ECTON PARISH HELD ON TUESDAY 19TH MAY 2026, HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, ECTON AT 7.30P.M

Present: Mr I Whittaker (Chair), Mrs S Bell, Mr N Bond, Mr D Dicks, Mr J Fernley and Mr S Grisewood

In Attendance: Mrs S Wong – Parish Clerk and NNC Councillor Scott Brown

Apologies: Apologies were received from Parish Councillor Chrystel Adams and North Northants Councillor Ms V Jessop all had other commitments to attend. Mr S Sandhu was not in attendance.

The Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting was held on 20th May 2025 as previously circulated, were approved and signed by the Chair as an accurate version of events.

Chairperson's Annual Report to Ecton Parish Council for 2025-2026

Mr I Whittaker's has completed his third consecutive year as the Chairman of Ecton Parish Council.

Report as read out by Mr I Whittaker

Ecton PC May 2026

It doesn't seem that long ago, that I was giving a similar overview of where we are and what has been accomplished.

I apologise if I have missed anything, but I would like thank everyone here tonight for their time and commitment to the village.

In the 12 months which has elapsed between speeches, we have kept the budget on a firm basis, and I think we are in a good shape going forward.

I would like to thank Crystel for the ongoing Chair Pilates in the village hall, and I have only heard good feedback, from those attending.

Also, Simon has taken time to setup a new website for the parish council, so hopefully Shirley is now compliant with those that be!!

As part of the going forward we still have various issues which need our attention, such as the A4500, and the roads within the village with speed and parking issues. Unfortunately, our request for improvements was turned down, but hopefully an appeal on the 21st of May might hopefully create some activity.

This year the fly tipping has been impacted by WNCs decision to make 'our' nearest refuse tip, solely for WNC residents, meaning that our nearest option is now 12 miles away. Also being a book-able only option, has also caused some drivers to dump rubbish in our lanes, although WNC seem oblivious to this.

I know there are some discussions behind the scenes, but if nothing happens, I believe we will have to discuss how we escalate onward and outwards!!

On the plus side, the dog bin has now been sold, so there are some positives in this message!!

Again, thank you to all, and also to Shirley for the accounting and compliance side of things!

My personal thanks - Ian

Parish Council Accounts for 2025/2026

Accounts for 2025 / 2026 were presented and read out by the Chairman. The current balance to be carried forward to 2026 / 2027 is £22,700.00 this is broken down as follows:

David Cross,	£3,356.25
Playing Field	£0.00
Chair Pilate Fund	£3,16.00
Parish Funds balance.	£19,027.75

The accounts were inspected by NCALC Internal Auditor Tina Charteress on the 27th April 2025 and remain to be audited by external auditors PKF Littlejohn. The PCC declares themselves exempt from sending the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor for limited assurance review and will submit a certificate of exemption due to both the income and expenditure for the year being less than £25,000 which is the qualifying criteria for exemption.

Charity Accounts

Councillor David Dicks circulated copies of the financial details of both charities prior to this meeting as at the year ended 15th November 2025.

Ecton Relief in Need Charity

Income	£114.08
Grants made	£115.00
Balance c/fwd.	£116.72

Ecton Educational Charity

Income	£4300.37
Admin.Expenses	£109.00
Grants Made	£4509.08
Balance C/fwd.	£8956.65

These accounts were audited on 9th December 2025.

AOB

Unitary Councillors Scott Brown and Vicki Jessop composed an Annual Report to be shared at the meeting.

Annual Report from NNC Ward Councillors Council Corporate News

North Northamptonshire Council is still a relatively new unitary authority, and over the last year there's been a strong focus on improving how services are delivered after the transition from the former district/borough Councils.

It's also worthwhile recognising that NNC has recently received external recognition for its work, with the authority being shortlisted for a number of local government awards, namely 'Most Improved Council' at the Local Government Chronicle Awards 2026.

A local government association review in Oct 25 found that we are improving services for residents as well as how they are run.

Earlier this year a new corporate plan was adopted which set priorities around families, communities, prosperity and delivering smarter faster and fairer public services.

An expression of interest was sent to Government in March 2026 to create a strategic foundation strategic authority with West Northamptonshire Council to attract funding from Devolution.

Health & Leisure

We've continued to invest in Leisure centres with some of the 'in house' services such as Lodge Park Sports Centre in Corby gaining an excellent award for customer service, as well as investment in parks, public spaces, sports pitches and community wellbeing facilities across North Northamptonshire. A greater focus has been placed on using leisure and cultural services to improve physical and mental health outcomes.

The management contract for leisure centres expires in 2027/28, and work is underway to explore future delivery options such as delivery in house or through a single contractor or a combination of both to ensure leisure services are financially sustainable and meet local community needs.

Finance

Like every council nationally, finances remain challenging due to inflation, rising demand and reduced government funding. We had hoped that the governments new "fair funding" formula would look to rebalance this in our favour, however that hasn't been the case and we continue to be unfairly financed when compared to the largely urban or metropolitan council's.

Despite these challenges, NNC has set a balanced budget for the coming financial year, with a revenue budget of £432.5m alongside approximately £278m of capital investment over the next 4 years including investing over £135m into highways, £61m for continued investment into housing stock, £44m for investment into schools, £10m to support facilities for those with disabilities and £6m in improving digital infrastructure.

There are still some savings and efficiencies to be delivered through service transformation and digital improvements which we hope will come to fruition in the coming few years as well as an improvement in funding from business rates.

Assets, Waste & Environmental Service

We have had an increased attention on tackling fly-tipping and environmental enforcement. With response times improving and a few high-profile prosecutions.

The roll out of food waste will be completed around September of this year, meaning that waste services will finally be completely harmonised across North Northants.

We're seeing an increase in investment in council housing stock with 90% of all homes meeting the decent homes standard and an improvement plan in place to get to a C1 following the Regulator for Social Housing C2 grade earlier this year. Investment continues for public assets and EV charging infrastructure.

Children, Education & Families

Children's services remain one of the biggest spending pressures, but the council has increased investment by around £6m+, with further planned investment into SEND provision and school capacity.

A new Corporate Parenting Strategy was approved which sets out how the council aims to be best the 'extra parents' it can be.

Approval by Government in June 2026 of a Local SEND Reform Plan will cover up to 90 per cent of the council's historic High Needs-related Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

Education expansion remains a key priority as communities continue to grow.

Highways & Travel

Roads are one of the biggest issues residents raise, but there has been significant investment committed to highways maintenance, pothole repairs and infrastructure improvements. With around £60m being allocated for medium term projects.

Isham Bypass is currently awaiting a verdict from central government, a decision was expected anytime now, however this has been delayed until June time.

Work has also continued to expand walking and cycling infrastructure across the area – through projects such as the Greenway linking towns through a walk/cycle way, namely the Griffin way from Braybrooke to Market Harborough.

Planning & Economic Growth

NNC continues to see strong housing and commercial growth, with a specific focus on ensuring we get the balance of development and infrastructure needs correct.

A new Local Plan timetable will see the submission to Government by 2027/early 2028.

A transformation programme is now underway with the four legacy council's planning databases have been consolidated into one system and greater investment in the team, which appears to now be working more efficiently and with a full quota of staff, something which has been tremendously difficult to do, given a national shortage of planning officers. The Planning team remains busy managing housing applications and enforcement actions.

This meeting ended at 7.35pm and was followed by the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

Signed byDate.....