

Parish Council of Little Harrowden

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The Annual Parish Meeting - Wednesday 22nd April 2026

Minutes

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Anne (yoga), Cllrs Jessop, MacKay, and Cotter.

2. Welcome & introduction, Councillor Davies (Chair)

Cllr Davies gave a warm welcome to the attendees and was pleased to note the number of people in attendance. Thanks given to Scott Brown for attending. Updates on dates of meeting provided and request for new Councillors to join the PC.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the meeting held on 6th May 2025

Printouts and download codes were available for the 2024 Parish Meeting minutes:

<https://littleharrowdenparishcouncil.gov.uk/meetings/annual-parish-meeting-2026/>

Minutes of the meeting were agreed to be accurate and approved. Amendment for the Church of St Mary the Virgin noted as updated to confirm the money raised was £6000 out of the £15000 due to be paid.

4. Matters arising

None noted.

5. Annual report from the Parish Council, Councillor Davies, followed by questions and answers.

Printouts and download codes were available for the Parish Council Annual Report:

<https://littleharrowdenparishcouncil.gov.uk/meetings/annual-parish-meeting-2026/>

The Chair provided an overview of the work completed over the past year confirming the Council's focus being on improving life for residents in Little Harrowden.

Projects completed included new speed signs, park play equipment and footpath improvements.

The focus for the forthcoming year includes the Neighbourhood Plan and funding to install a public footpath along Orlingbury Road to Gt Harrowden to allow residents to access the public bus service from the village's nearest stop.

Introductions by Cllrs Nikki MacKay and Henry Reynolds were received.

Councillor responsibility updates were read out. The following were noted:

- Changes to the council with the resignations of two Councillors
- Thanks given to Councillors who have resigned
- Keen to recruit to spread the work out evenly and ensure the village is represented effectively

The council advised that they would be very happy to hear from residents who would like to become a parish councillor as there are three seats left to be co-opted due to two resignations in 2025.

The following questions were raised:

- a. Community speed watch – how many volunteers are needed overall and per session?
 - i. At least three per session but the more volunteers we have the more sessions can be delivered.
 - ii. Example given if a volunteer cancels then the session needs to be cancelled. If a larger number of volunteers were available, a substitute could be found and booked sessions could continue.
- b. What are the details of the proposed remediation to the footpath along the park?
 - i. Removal of loose shale
 - ii. Re-siting the removed shale to another exit of the park to counteract the muddy and slippery surface
 - iii. Self-binding gravel if the path quality decreases
 - iv. Due to the expense this will need to be planned within several budgets or a grant sought.

6. Reports from Ward Councillors

Cllr Scott Brown gave an update on North Northants Council news:

Political

- North Northamptonshire Council has continued bedding in as a relatively new unitary authority, and over the last year there has been a strong focus on improving how services are delivered after the transition from the former district/borough Councils.
- A new corporate plan has been adopted, setting priorities around families, communities, prosperity and delivering smarter public services.
- It is also worthwhile recognising that NNC has recently received external recognition for its work, with the authority being shortlisted for – and in some cases winning – a number of local government awards. These have recognised areas such as innovation, transformation, digital services, and partnership working. This is a positive reflection of the progress the council has made in a relatively short period of time.
- The Leadership has demonstrated a willingness to work collaboratively across political divides, offering roles to opposition parties – such as chairmanship of scrutiny committees and amending membership criteria to allow all parties to be represented in the various committees. This is something they are not obligated to do but has been welcomed by many.

Health & Leisure

- We have continued to invest in Leisure centres, parks, and community wellbeing facilities across North Northamptonshire. Including investment into sports pitches and public spaces.
- Work is underway to make leisure services more financially sustainable whilst still protecting access.
- A greater focus has been placed on improving use of leisure and cultural services to improve physical and mental health outcomes.

Finance, Efficiency & Change

- 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 has not been the case, and we continue to be unfairly financed when compared to many other councils.
- Despite these challenges, NNC has set a balanced budget for the coming financial year, with a revenue budget of approximately £400m alongside over £200m of capital investment over the coming years.
- 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.

Assets, Waste & Environmental Service

- We have had an increased attention on tackling fly-tipping and environmental enforcement. With response times improving and a number of 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 are seeing an increase in investment in council housing stock and public assets and EV charging infrastructure is continuing at a pace.

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

Highways & Travel

- Roads remains 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 the end of the summer.
- Work has also continued to expand walking and cycling infrastructure across the area.

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.
- Planning team remains busy managing housing applications whilst ensuring local plans reflect need. There has been a strategy to work smarter and a 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.

Questions were raised and responses provided around the following:

- a. Potholes – concern raised around over-innovation. Fixing potholes does not need to be complicated. There is a JCB machine that can cover 200m of tarmac in a day
- b. Suggestion to share best practice, eg Blackpool who have managed
 - i. Best practice is shared over many councils
 - ii. Biggest battle is knowing where potholes are. Cameras are now placed on most NNC vehicles to detect potholes, and this is then sent to the database.
 - iii. Reliant on members of public to submit notification of potholes direct to NNC
- c. Long stretches of road closed but then areas are left unfixed. Common cause is boundary between local authorities.
 - i. Number of issues are being experienced because of lack of partnership working between councils, eg recycling centres and pothole repairs.
 - ii. Cross boundary committee to work through improved partnerships to mean things like potholes are fixed.
- d. Request for web address to submit notifications of potholes.
 - i. Preference is to submit direct to NNC as a result of a 24-hour delay via FixMyStreet which also fails to submit all the information provided by the notifier.
 - ii. Go to:
 - <https://northnorthants.gov.uk/roads>
 - <https://highways.northnorthants.gov.uk>
 - For urgent/dangerous potholes call 0300 1263000

7. Reports from local clubs & organisations and questions & answers

Printouts and download codes were available for the following report:

<https://littleharrowdenparishcouncil.gov.uk/meetings/annual-parish-meeting-2026/>

i. Little Harrowden Primary School

- Next big step is eight spaces in a nursery provision in September.
- 100% pass rate in phonics screening.
- Lots of improvements of facilities in the school.
- Thanks given to the PTA, governing body, and volunteers for all their hard work to enrich school life and provide facilities and events.
- Thanks given to the support and understanding from villagers with regards to parking. Assurance given on all the hard work and continual notifications to parents to ensure they park safely.
- PTA and donation of money from D of ??? to purchase roadside children's sign.

ii. Little Harrowden Village Hall

- Aim of the committee is to do as much as possible for the village like the Thursday cafés to help isolated residents to socialise
- Over 60's Christmas Dinner improvements will continue
- Lots of other activities being delivered as well as increased lettings to companies, activities providers and individual hire
- Open to suggestions and enthusiastic committee members.

iii. Little Harrowden Working Men's Club

- 101st year of being open
- Lots of events being delivered like quizzes and music nights as well as traditional activities
- Misconceptions that the club is not open, but they will only open if villagers support and visit
- The club is available for hire, and all are welcome, even the dog!

iv. Telephone Box Lending Library

- Well used and a great success with lots of books and extra shelving and waterproofing
- Communicate regularly via Facebook
- Sign within the phone box for donation locations
- Thanks given to the council for helping to set it up

v. Yoga Club

- Remains well supported with no spaces.
- The village hall intends to run a second club to meet demand starting on 02.05.26

vi. Indoor bowls

- Membership remains the same
- Meet Tuesdays
- Must love cake!

vii. The Church of St Mary the Virgin

- New vicar starting on 28.04.26
- Lots of special services have been delivered over the year
- Very well supported by a community of fundraisers
- £6500 raised this past year to pay towards diocese on top of the maintenance and running costs
- Callout for more support from community to help with fundraising
- Youth group and breakfast club numbers are increasing, men's breakfast and Wednesday community coffee morning doing very well

viii. St Mary's Church Heritage Trust

- Just three committee members but still run events through the village including speaker and music evenings
- Determined to keep the church safe and secure for future generations.

ix. CAN Champion

- Creating a Parish Nature Recovery Plan designed to improve Little Harrowden's biodiversity
- Working group being established to plot wildlife assets and identify potential sites to improve nature
- If anyone is passionate about nature and would like to improve the village for children and grandchildren then please contact clerk@littleharrowdenparishcouncil.gov.uk to help.

Overall, there was a general consensus and a call for volunteers to support the clubs and organisations because the current volunteers are getting older and new blood is needed to support the amenities to keep them going.

8. Open forum

No questions were raised.

Cllr Grout pointed out that a Parish Council noticeboard was now installed in the village hall main room so every villager can continue to read about what's happening and being delivered by the PC in the dry and warm when it's cold, wet, and miserable outside.

As there were no further questions the meeting was closed at: 21.24pm.