

# Parish Council of Little Harrowden

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## The Annual Parish Meeting - Tuesday 6th May 2025

### Minutes

#### 1. Apologies

Apologies received from Mr Barton (St Mary's Heritage Trust), Anne (yoga), Cllrs Hallam and Lawman and Cllrs Woods-Shepherd, MacKay, Renshaw and Arissol.

#### 2. Welcome & introduction, Councillor Davies (Chair)

Cllr Davies gave a warm welcome to the attendees and was pleased to note that this was the first proper Parish Meeting for a number of years. Congratulations were given to Cllrs Scott Brown and Vicki Jessop for being re-elected.

#### 3. Approval of the Minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024

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

[https://littleharrowdenparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Approved-2024-05-08-Minutes-Annual-Parish-Meeting.pdf?fbclid=IwY2xjawKG7NBleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHuzee2eAP4CfG32q6olwgbSakaGkYu2lah7TCmraNsicN6cmgDoNgliR2s0u\\_aem\\_emmK8txS2RDriOK3yx2rBQ](https://littleharrowdenparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Approved-2024-05-08-Minutes-Annual-Parish-Meeting.pdf?fbclid=IwY2xjawKG7NBleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHuzee2eAP4CfG32q6olwgbSakaGkYu2lah7TCmraNsicN6cmgDoNgliR2s0u_aem_emmK8txS2RDriOK3yx2rBQ)

Minutes of the meeting were agreed to be accurate and approved.

#### 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 following report:

[https://littleharrowdenparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/LHPC-Annual-Report-20245\\_2025.pdf?fbclid=IwY2xjawKG7M1leHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHgnJPytUvDM-ghY7tCSxq8axUGsXo08UDGgiB4UzOVHOZVPZtCMIvTVxL5QWv\\_aem\\_ptreQDTF-E7\\_fOF1qXrEAA](https://littleharrowdenparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/LHPC-Annual-Report-20245_2025.pdf?fbclid=IwY2xjawKG7M1leHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHgnJPytUvDM-ghY7tCSxq8axUGsXo08UDGgiB4UzOVHOZVPZtCMIvTVxL5QWv_aem_ptreQDTF-E7_fOF1qXrEAA)

Particular thanks were given to Martin for volunteering, on an unpaid basis, to fill the role of Clerk/RFO for nearly two years.

The council advised that they would be very happy to hear from residents to become a parish councillor as there are 2 seats left to be co-opted. However, 7 seats have been filled, a number that the Council is happy to announce is the highest number of members for several years.

The councillors who were present introduced themselves and explained why they became Councillors.

Questions were raised around the following:

##### A) The neighbourhood plan:

- i. How many people are needed to support the plan in order for it to go ahead:  
50% of *respondents* need to be in support of the plan, i.e. 50% of those who vote.
- ii. What areas will the plan cover:
  - housing needs – e.g. barriers to housing/moving to Little Harrowden / types of housing needed (starter/shared ownership/higher value etc)
  - green spaces and protected areas
  - access to transport/transport links/road and highway safety etc.

- village amenities, e.g. shop, cafe, pubs, etc.
- iii. Why should we have the plan:  
The plan becomes statute (law) which allows residents wishes to be adhered to most specifically in relation to NNC and wider planning committees. NNC can use the plan to deny developers applications if they are not conducive to the neighbourhood plan restrictions.
- iv. How much will it cost and how will it be paid.  
The Parish Council will apply for funding but will need to offer match funding of sorts, e.g. volunteer time, staff paid time, advertising materials.
- v. How much knowledge and experience does the Council have with Neighbourhood plans.  
the council will use a consultant to produce the plan in accordance with planning law and statutory legislation therefor ensuring that it is watertight and reflects the village's designated choices. A few local and highly recommended consultants have been shortlisted. The council are also meeting with other councils who have already completed their Plans for knowledge sharing
- B) Why is there no police speed camera on the Orlingbury Road/Hardwick Road?
  - i. Highways and police have been contacted by the PC. They advised that there was no suitable place to position a police car. LHPC has been in contact with Highways and advised them of two laybys on Orlingbury Road that are suitable.
  - ii. It was noted that the Hilltop speed limit was reduced from 60mph to 40mph because a resident called highways daily until it was changed.
  - iii. The Glenvale Park development has been identified as a potential risk that will lead to increased speeding in the village, reduced road safety and more traffic using the village as a thoroughfare.
- C) What has happened to the planning application phase 2 - Glenvale Park?
  - i. It has currently been re-submitted with amendments, but the amendments have been noted as unclear.
  - ii. Additionally, it was noted that the Chair of the Council is due to meet with the local MP to discuss the objections to the plans and to garner support for the objections until suitable road improvements have been implemented as per the original application agreement.

## 6. Reports from Ward Councillors

Apologies noted from Cllr Lora Lawman.

Clive Hallam wanted to extend the following to attendees:

*I've had the pleasure and honour to be involved with Little Harrowden since 2015 when I became your Wellingborough Councillor alongside Cllr Jennie Bone and then one of your North Northants Councillor's in 2021 and I've enjoyed working alongside numerous Parish Councils during this time.*

*I'm now retiring to Norfolk so won't be standing at the elections but still have other commitments locally so will watch your development with interest.*

*There have been numerous changes in the village during this time from housing development, pub and shop closures, increased traffic throughput, reduced bus services, school changes etc and I've tried to represent all village views wherever possible and spoken to many of your residents directly but outside this it's the individual challenges faced by residents where I've particularly been pleased to help, I won't go into detail but housing issues have been high on the list as well as the scourge of fly tipping, pot holes, speeding traffic, planning matters etc and specific challenges around Station Cottages and the industrial estate Cllr Blood has been involved with.*

*It's been good to see you make use of Cllr's Community grants, we are always pleased to see this benefit our villages and I wish you well with your neighbourhood plan initiative, hopefully my early advice is useful and your residents fully engage with the process, this is something essential to stand a chance to keep the village developing as residents want rather than be subject to just more speculative development although I do have environmental and general housing concerns at the proposed Government relaxing of Planning regulations*

*Delays to the A509 Isham bypass and further potential housing development north of Wellingborough need to be watched closely as these could affect the village significantly! but I'm pleased to see your Cllr's fully aware and on top of the situation! I'd certainly recommend engagement with the NNC Parishes forum and contact with your MP who I've found to be very approachable and proactive, your new NNC Cllr's will be able to help here.*

*As your chairman knows, I'm only on the end of the phone if ever I can help and when my conservative colleagues are hopefully successful, they have my number.*

*I wish you all well for the future* and thank you for your continued commitment to the village and friendship.

Cllrs Scott Brown and Vicki Jessop introduced themselves, their wards and gave an update on NNC news:

- £410million budget for NNC,
- Majority of spending is allocated to adult social care and education.
- NNC became a unitary authority so has gone through a huge amount of flux and associated problems
- Good services are now being delivered with a more joined up approach on provision.
- The salary bill has been greatly reduced through the amalgamation of departments and streamlining of NNC services.
- The biggest challenge during the change to unitary was employee retention but that has now been addressed by agreeing pay scales that reflect the quality of staff and their experience.
- It is likely that there will be further impacts on the council's administration with the new Reform party leading the Council.
- The Member Empowerment fund was outlined; it is available to all community groups in the area. Any voluntary group can apply. The application is only short and relatively simple. Residents are encouraged to apply but it was advised to wait a short while as this is only one grant fund available from a wide variety yet to be published by NNC.

A significant concern was raised by a resident (an advocate for children who are ill or identified as having SEN).

The resident confirmed that NNC has:

- Has been taken to court for failing ill children in their legal duties
- should not commend that it is a good council providing good services in Children's Provision
- confirmed that there is a lack of SEND provision in Northamptonshire.
- noted that planning restrictions and legislation has not allowed them to provide more specialist schools.

The resident advised that:

- SEND provision needs to improve and
- Be provided in house within the County rather than the Council relying on expensive external provision.
- Funding cuts ( previous government) have had a tremendous negative impact on children's services.
- Proper funding needs to be brought back into local government.
- 2026/7 funding will see a £20million funding gap.

Cllr Brown responded and agreed that huge reform needs to be made because annual 5%+ increases in Council Tax is not sustainable.

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

Printouts and download codes were available for the following report:

[https://littlearrowdenparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Parish-Organisation-Reports-Forum-06\\_05\\_25.pdf?fbclid=IwY2xjawKG7MlleHRuA2FibQIxMAABHqBMeMkHJSZDelfM\\_SLzCLxVsX4vZHAtfXC\\_drusQaqp\\_oArU0P6BJZnzkG47\\_aem\\_8FXhe6YITnKT0I2NxCQJMw](https://littlearrowdenparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Parish-Organisation-Reports-Forum-06_05_25.pdf?fbclid=IwY2xjawKG7MlleHRuA2FibQIxMAABHqBMeMkHJSZDelfM_SLzCLxVsX4vZHAtfXC_drusQaqp_oArU0P6BJZnzkG47_aem_8FXhe6YITnKT0I2NxCQJMw)

- Openings for parent governors are available so please would people volunteer to become a governor and support the school. It is a great school, very friendly with lovely children who choose to give back to the village. For example, they have decided to run fundraising events for the village.
- Village Hall asked for residents to support the hall; with huge increases in bills the need for support from villagers is crucial to keep the amenity open. It is a case of use it or lose it but more than that, it is about creating a closer community.
- There will be a Village Fete this year; a call out for volunteers to help plan the fete was made as well as to help on the day (19<sup>th</sup> July 2025). It was confirmed that the event will be joint and planned together to avoid overlap of activities but, due to time constraints, the church will run their own activities on church grounds whilst the village hall will run separate activities at the Hall.
- 2025 marks the 100<sup>th</sup> year of the Little Harrowden Working Men's Club. It's the only place left in the village for entertainment. Everything is free if you are a member and the membership fee is only nominal at £10/year (or 2.7p per day). The committee are hoping that the 100 year's celebration will happen in October and assured residents that the beer will be much cheaper although, sadly, not 100 years cheaper, especially with the new beer tax being introduced.  
It was noted that the Club can be hired free of charge because the club just takes income from bar takings.

- v. Several residents agreed that the residents of Little Harrowden should support their local venues.
- vi. A telephone box lending library volunteer thanked all residents for their support and the continued use of the facility and also thanked the Ward Councillor's for the award of the Member's Empowerment Fund a grant to refurbish the phone box. This job will be completed Spring 2025.
- vii. The indoor bowls activity was discussed. It was described as a great activity, especially in the winter with a friendly group of people, always there and ready with tea and cake on a Tuesday afternoon.
- viii. The Church explained that 2024/25 had been difficult because they were without a vicar. This has caused problems for the church, but lots of social committee volunteers have continued to work hard to raise the £15,000 for their share payable to the Diocese. Unfortunately, only £6000 was raised this year. However, it was celebrated that many other outreach, community and local events had still been supported. There are lots of activities to keep residents busy with the latest project being knitting hats for premature babies in Kettering General.
- ix. The Chair Keep Fit is a great activity for all levels of fitness and it was noted that there were lots of very fit octogenarians who many of the younger participants find it difficult to keep up with! For £3 you'll get coffee, tea, biscuits and exercise.
- x. 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

Questions were raised about how to get more people to volunteer and participate on events:

- The Parish Council will help to promote all the organisations and events and endeavour to nurture a closer community within the village.
- The Parish Council stated that it is striving to improve and increase communication with parishioners.
- A suggestion was made to run a PR campaign to increase confidence in the Council.

A resident requested that another annual village fayre be run, one that the whole village could enjoy:

- This request was generally supported .
- It was stated that a successful event requires a minimum of a 12month planning period .
- Sponsorship from local businesses would need to be sought.
- Village volunteers would be required.

General feedback given showed that residents felt that tonight was very rewarding and:

- the Parish Council is now more approachable
- this event was very much a two-way form of communication
- it now no longer feels like a 'them and us' situation.
- the neighbourhood plan feedback/forum events should be run along similar lines as the forum evening and be a whole village event like this cheese and wine evening.

**As there were no further questions the meeting was closed at: 21.34pm.**