

## Minutes of the meeting of Easton on the Hill Parish Council

**held on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 7pm in the Pavilion, The Drift, Easton on the Hill**

Present: Cllr Green, Cllr Holwell, Cllr Lawson, Cllr Mountain, Cllr Nicol (Chairman), Cllr Watson and Cllr Whileman.

Clerk: J Rice and members of the public: 5 - including two officers from Northants Police and a representative from Empingham Royals Football Club and two members of the public.

<b>24/154</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. To receive apologies sent to the Clerk.</b> There were apologies from Cllr McAllister (long-standing) and Cllr Woodman. Cllr Bradberry did not attend.
<b>24/155</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>  To receive all declarations of interest under the Council's Code of Conduct related to business on the agenda. <b>Reminder to members to update their register if necessary. (Members should disclose any interests in the business to be discussed and are reminded that the disclosure of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest will require that the member withdraws from the meeting room during the transaction of that item of business).</b> There were no declarations of interest made.
<b>24/156</b>	<b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</b>  <b>Arrangements will be made for the public to join the meeting. A max of 15 minutes will be permitted for members of the public to address the meeting on any item on the agenda.</b> <b>Chairman to remind Councillors of one of the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life.</b> The Chairman reminded the Councillors of the principle of objectivity. Mrs Ward queried if the residents had been made aware of the meeting and the proposal to discuss renting the facilities to other teams. The Clerk said the agenda had been published in the normal places and a specific message had been put on social media. The MOP also expressed a concern over other people/teams using the sports facilities, saying it is a playing field for the people of the village, and that for junior matches often the parents drop off and return making more traffic on the Drift. This was addressed by the Chairman, as has been raised on previous occasions. The representative from Empingham FC explained their desire to find new facilities for their junior teams and thought the village was a good fit for the ethos of the club. He explained he did not want to step on anyone's toes or upset anyone. They were keen to encourage local kids to play (they have one already) and would become Easton Royals if wanted. He further explained they do fundraising, charity events, raise grants and would appreciate an open-minded approach to playing sport and new teams. The Chairman explained the commitment with Wittering at present, and also Ketton's interest, and it was on the agenda to discuss later and thanked him for coming. K Cox handed out a paper of 2+ sides of A4 text about the football hire arrangements, however Councillors were unable to digest all of the information in time for the discussions or decisions. There was a long discussion at 160.2 about the issue.
<b>24/157</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</b>  To confirm as correct the record of the minutes of the last meeting held on 13 <sup>th</sup> January 2025, previously circulated. Chairman to sign. The minutes were agreed as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.
<b>24/158</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING from previous meeting. Strengthening standards survey done. Yu Energy contract started for Briers.</b> These were noted and also Cllr Nicol stated the position of the log would be deferred. The input from the members of the police force present was agreed to be discussed at this point, item 162.3, see below.
<b>24/159</b>	<b>GOVERNANCE, TRAINING AND FINANCE</b>  <b>159.1</b> <b>To receive finance report and internal checks until end of January 2025 and resolve any queries, herewith. To note further reduced level of reserves predicted and expenditure to still be carefully monitored in this last quarter.</b> The finance report was received and noted. The Clerk explained the position is still over budget and the level of reserves going into 25/26 will be only 10k (this does not take into account any VAT reclaim for cash flow or income from pitch hire as this is under review). She advised that the expenditure needs to be carefully monitored until the end of the year to avoid further reductions in the financial position. It was clarified that the new budget does allow for 4k of reserves to be built up if it is not needed elsewhere. Cllr Nicol is in the process of doing the checks again. <b>Action All</b>

Signed by Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

162.3	159.2	<b>To note feedback from new Cllr training and elections training. To note Cllr Bradberry training to be rebooked.</b> Cllr Whileman reported that the new Councillor training was helpful. It was noted that Cllr Bradberry's training needs to be rebooked in due course, to avoid a charge. <b>Action Cllr Bradberry</b>
	159.3	<b>To receive update on campaign for local Councillor elections in May 2025.</b>  <b>Agree any direct approaches to village groups and others and/or a flyer.</b> <b>Receive and note training summary and revisit numbers/points to consider, herewith.</b> A summary from the Clerk's training had been circulated late and the Clerk explained the key items. It was agreed to enlist two new bank signatories to try to avoid payments being late from May. Cllr Nicol stated he will do a flier and an article in What's on the Hill, plus Councillors are all encouraged to approach individuals about being a Parish Councillor. <b>Action All</b>
	159.4	<b>To note resignation of Cllr Bates and agree arrangements for recognition of service. (Vacancy not to be filled due to election, ink plan cancelled)</b> It was sadly noted that Cll Bates has had to resign and it was agreed that a gift/recognition/presentation will be arranged as appropriate in due course.
	159.5	<b>To note £173 given to the Parish Council from the shop collection box and resolve how to spend.</b> It was agreed that ideas should be considered by the elected Council in May 2025. <b>Action Clerk</b>
<b>24/160</b>	<b>PLAYING FIELD AND PLAYING FIELD WORKING GROUP (PFWG)</b>	
	160.1	<b>To receive, note and understand CCTV policies and operation, circulated.</b> These were received and noted. It was noted that should any incidents occur then footage can be examined and passed to the police or insurance company as appropriate.
	160.2	<b>To note any report from PFWG – no new meeting held. Update to include:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>To receive and note new proposal for pavilion/pitch hire costs for clubs using facilities, including cleaning and agree costs and usage.</b> Cllr Nicol's proposal was received and noted. He went through the history and principle of covering costs for the 25/26 budget and residents, and a desire to leave the finances in a healthy position. The proposal was for charges to change to £75 per match, plus £15 for opening up if required and plus £50 if they require cleaning from the Grounds Maintenance Contractor. The proposed agreement for cricket club hire would change to £250 pm to include utilities and an assumption of 3 matches pm plus the cricket matches would nearly cover the income assumed in the budget for 25/26. The principle of junior pitches was agreed for club and village use - there was a query raised by K Cox about the practicalities of fitting in a junior pitch. Principle objectives of covering at least £3150 planned income pa for 25/26, and moving to match by match pricing for both football clubs were proposed and agreed. A limit of a max of 9 matches in any one month was proposed and a principle of 40 matches pa by both clubs combined with an advance commitment from each club was agreed in principle. The cost of £75 per match was agreed to be applied from February, with a one match pw limit, either club, until a new agreement was in place for next season. As this was to be classed as ad hoc for both clubs, the alcohol should be removed by WPFC. A new proposal will be drawn up based on the above. <b>Action Cllr Nicol/PFWG/Clerk</b></li> <li>- <b>To note WPFC bills paid and resolve £100 to be paid for works done last year.</b> This was agreed for January however agreed as not appropriate for Feb and March now that the charge is changed.</li> <li>- <b>To note approach from Empingham Royals to hire the facilities, juniors, change name and resolve response.</b> The approach was noted (see above) and contact will be made once details had been agreed for next season. <b>Action Clerk</b></li> <li>- <b>To note any new repairs/works necessary and agree any expenditure. (Shelter strap.)</b> It was agreed that a new strap for the shelters could be installed. <b>Action Cllr Woodman</b></li> <li>- <b>To receive and note pest control quotes and decide on contract/arrangements, herewith.</b> It was resolved that the quote received from the existing contractor will be clarified and then can be agreed. <b>Action Clerk</b></li> <li>- <b>To receive and note bin emptying update and resolve action ie cancel DD.</b> The Clerk's report was received and noted. It was agreed that the direct debit for the pavilion will be cancelled as the service is suspended at present and the NNC contract will continue to be monitored. <b>Action Clerk/GMC</b></li> </ul>

Signed by Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

	160.3	<p><b>Health and safety - to note feedback and update on monthly play equipment and pavilion checks and agree any necessary new actions, new audit tbc.</b></p> <p>The Clerk reported that a mini audit was completed that day and a few actions will be listed and actioned. She advised that a professional should be employed to conduct a survey in due course.</p> <p>Action Clerk/GMC</p>
	160.4	<p><b>To note request for Forest School to hold fires in the Woodland area and resolve permission or not.</b></p> <p>It was agreed that small fires could be lit by trained staff during the months September to May. Action Clerk</p>
24/161	<b>PLANNING COMMITTEE (Cllr Lawson, Cllr Mountain, Cllr McAllister, Cllr Watson and Cllr Woodman)</b>	
	161.1	<p><b>To note latest feedback from the Planning Committee, and/or meeting if held.</b></p> <p>Cllr Lawson reported back from the meeting held prior to this one, for which minutes will be available separately.</p>
24/162	<b>REPORTS</b>	<b>FROM REPRESENTATIVES</b>
	162.1	<p><b>Checkers reports/village maintenance</b></p> <p>a) <b>To receive checker reports from Councillors and address any issues raised. Cllr Watson for February and Cllr Green for March</b></p> <p>The checkers reports were received and noted with no concerns.</p> <p>b) <b>To note any new reports of village maintenance, including grit bins.</b></p> <p>Cllr Lawson circulated a summary of the grit bins and their capacity. He will request some more salt from CIPS. Action Cllr Lawson</p> <p>c) <b>To note request for Parish Path Warden to join scheme and receive training and resolve who.</b> It was agreed that Cllr Woodman can become the official Path Warden and attend the training etc. Action Clerk/Cllr Woodman</p>
	162.2	<p><b>Village Hall</b></p> <p>1) <b>To note any update from Cllr Green, representative.</b></p> <p>It was noted there was no new update.</p>
	162.3	<p><b>Police Liaison Representative</b></p> <p>1) <b>To receive and note any update, Cllr Whileman.</b></p> <p>Cllr Whileman explained that the officers had agreed to attend a meeting and came tonight. They explained it is a low crime area with no regular patrols but that all and any activity should be reported eg if a crime has been committed it should be reported online or via 101, or suspicious activity reported direct to him, as it helps in prevention and linking up other activity/crimes. He explained that Northants Talking is a website residents can sign up to for alerts and more local information.</p> <p>Action Clerk to put out information.</p>
	162.4	<p><b>Traffic Working Group</b></p> <p>1) <b>To receive update from working group/Cllr Woodman on device.</b></p> <p>There was no new update.</p>
24/163	<b>ALLOTMENTS</b>	
	163.1	<p><b>To note Allotment Manager volunteer post is vacant and agree process to recruit. To resolve increase in tenancy costs for 26/27.</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the Clerk can do renewals for now and the post will be filled in due course, and that the cost of a full plot should rise by 50p/prorata for others.</p> <p>Action Clerk</p>
24/164	<b>TREES AND GREENS WORKING GROUP (INCL NATURE RECOVERY) (Cllr Green, Cllr Mountain, Cllr Holwell)</b>	
	<p>TO CLOSE THE MEETING FROM THE PUBLIC FOR REASONS OF COMMERCIAL SENSITIVITY FOR ITEM a)</p> <p>Members of the public left the meeting and the council discussed a)</p> <p>a) <b>To receive and note possible change of grass cutting quote, update and resolve action.</b></p> <p>TO OPEN UP THE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC - No members of the public returned.</p> <p>b) <b>To feedback on decision on situation above.</b></p> <p>It was decided to accept the renewed quote and conditions as discussed.</p> <p>c) <b>To receive and note feedback on nature recovery plan and Woodland area tree clearance and replanting.</b></p> <p>Cllr Holwell reported back on the Woodland Area clearance and planting plan. The feedback from the GMC on removal of trees was noted. It was further noted that a working party will be putting bird boxes on Saturday.</p> <p>d) <b>To receive any feedback and update from Trees and Greens Group.</b> There was no further feedback.</p>	
24/165	<b>COMMUNITY SUPPORT/ENGAGEMENT/ISSUES/VILLAGE GROUPS</b>	

Signed by Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

- To suggest and agree any specific items for March's What's on the Hill. It was confirmed that Cllr Nicol will do an elections special, as well as a normal Parish Council news piece. **Action Cllr Nicol**

<b>24/166</b>	<p><b>CLERK CORRESPONDENCE /INFORMATION TO NOTE:</b></p> <p>a) <b>To note feedback on defib refresher training.</b> It was agreed that a more efficient defib is needed and training could be done then.</p> <p>b) <b>To note Government's Remembering Covid day planned for 9/3/25 and resolve PC involvement.</b> This was discussed and it was decided that no local involvement was wanted.</p> <p>c) <b>To note request from resident for PC to adopt gully drains in the Briers as NNC refused.</b> It was agreed not to accept any responsibility for this. <b>Action Clerk</b></p> <p>d) <b>To note survey request on Climate and Nature Action...by 3/3/25.</b> This was noted.</p> <p>e) <b>Advice on Whatsapp messages forming part of FOI/Subject Access Request requests.</b> This was noted.</p> <p>f) <b>Details on "Chatty Bus".</b> These were noted.</p>
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<b>24/167</b>	<p><b>ORDERS FOR PAYMENT To agree payments to be made as follows;</b> It was agreed to pay the following invoices;</p>
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<b>167.1</b>	Clerk reimburse for HP ink plan shared with other PCs £8.57.	£8.57
<b>167.2</b>	Clerk reimburse for Microsoft package February, home office allowance, plus mileage	£5.99, £26, £5.40
<b>167.3</b>	HMRC employer NI payment and employee tax/NI payment February	£71.34
<b>167.4</b>	Yu Energy Briers street lighting bill as per contract, paid by direct debit, January/Feb	£tbc – new supplier
<b>167.5</b>	Yu Energy electricity for street lighting, paid by DD, January	£472.29 and £18.53
<b>167.6</b>	EDF Energy for pavilion usage charged to WPFC and Ketton by DD	£60.03
<b>167.7</b>	Village hall hire	£28
<b>167.8</b>	Signs for camera at PF plus credit from purchase error SD card for camera	£26.68 credit plus £tbc £15.99
<b>167.9</b>	Clerk salary/hours payable 28/2/25, £1030.02 less £33.80 tax and NI due - above	£996.22
<b>167.10</b>	Multipay card monthly fee and Unity bank charges, monthly	£3/£6
<b>167.11</b>	Grounds Maintenance Contractor invoice for January, labour and materials	£114
<b>167.12</b>	Mountain Recycling waste collection by DD if not cancelled	£tbc
<b>167.13</b>	NCALC training course, new Cllr	£57.60
<b>167.14</b>	WPFC for works done as per agreement appendix and invoiced previously	£100
<b>167.15</b>	Wave water bill for pavilion	£51.38
<b>167.16</b>	EDF Briers last lighting bill	£14.22

<b>24/168</b>	<p><b>RECEIPTS</b></p> <p>WPFC for hire/utility Ketton FC; £30,£100 plus elec PO collection donation</p>	<p>£360.66 Dec paid and Jan due, to be paid soon £314.35. Paid £173</p>
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<b>24/169</b>	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS</b> It was noted and agreed that the date of the next meeting is <b>10<sup>th</sup> March 2025</b> at 7pm and the <b>Annual Parish Meeting is on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March at 6.30pm with wine and nibbles. Clerk to send invites to village groups and reports from council working groups are to be done.</b> Next Planning Committee meeting is to be agreed, dependent on new applications.</p>
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