

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at 7pm in the Village Hall.**

Present were: Parish Councillors; Cllr Davey, Cllr Mitchell, Cllr Kaye, Cllr Stephenson and Cllr Garner.

Members of the public: 15 and the Clerk; Mrs Jenny Rice

1) **To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025.** The minutes were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

2) **To receive and note update reports from;**

a) **Ward Councillor, Simon Fairhall**, to be submitted. Ward Cllr Fairhall could not be present but submitted some slides summarised below: Simon is one of 3 Ward Councillors:

<u>Councillor</u> <u>Simon</u> <u>Fairhall</u>	<u>Councillor</u> <u>Helen</u> <u>Harrison</u>	<u>Councillor</u> <u>Jon</u> <u>Humberstone</u>
Oundle	Oundle	Oundle
Liberal Democrats	Conservative Party	Conservative Party

To contact us: [Simon.Fairhall@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:Simon.Fairhall@northnorthants.gov.uk)  
[Helen.Harrison@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:Helen.Harrison@northnorthants.gov.uk)  
[Jon.Humberstone@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:Jon.Humberstone@northnorthants.gov.uk)

But to enable us to make a Member Enquiry we need your:

**Name \* Address \* Email \* Phone Number**



Councillor  
Simon  
Fairhall

Oundle

Liberal Democrats



Councillor  
Helen  
Harrison

Oundle

Conservative Party



Councillor  
Jon  
Humberstone

Oundle

Conservative Party

I have attended as many Parish Council Meetings as I was able to. And a number of EotH events and clubs.

We supported the renewal of the village Defibrillators with a grant from the NNC Ward Empowerment Scheme. And supported the A43 30mph campaign. I am unable to attend tonight because I am hosting a 'Cluster Meeting' of 22 Parish Councils & Meeting representatives from across the Oundle Ward. I will at this meeting cite the work that the EotH Parish Council are doing to improve the Play provision in the village and the Village Survey as examples of good practice.

## Latest news from North Northants Council (NNC) Reporting

- There are proposals to change the Petition Scheme, which have undoubtedly come from the experience of the A43 30mph petition from last year. A lower limit for matters which affect a maximum of 2 Wards, consideration of visitors (along with live, work and study) as acceptable signatories and acknowledging interest of residents of neighbouring areas (not just WNC). And clarity that if the target is met the matter will be discussed at a Scrutiny Committee meeting.
- A refreshed Speed Management policy has been approved setting out the process to deal with these matters.
- There is a new Community Safety Plan 2026-2029 and plans are being made for a meeting with a Community Protection Enforcement Officer to consider matters here in the village.

## Information on reporting:

Report a street  
cleansing issue

Including emptying litter bins, litter picking, clearance of fly tips and sweeping on the public highway.



Report road and  
street problems

(blocked drains, potholes, obstructions for example)

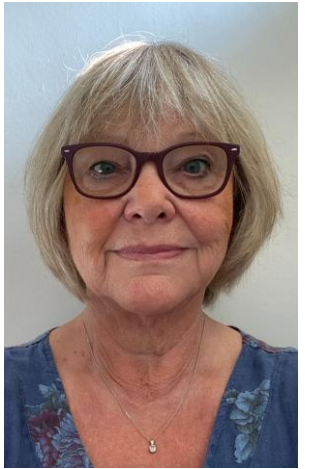


- b) **Parish Council Chairman, Aidan Davey**, including a finance report – see presentation.

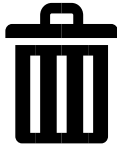


Annual Parish Meeting.pdf

Your Councillors



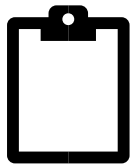
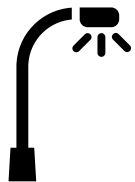
# Parish council's responsibilities and the community it serve



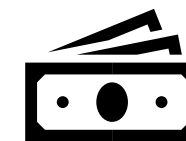
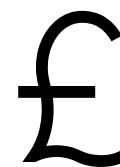
# Key Challenges



# Key Achievements and Activities



# Finance



Basic expenditure overspend (105% vs budget)

Insurance (112%)

- Additional assets insured

Training (149%)

- New Councillors

Lighting energy (118%)

- New LED lighting and contract

PF / Pavillion maintenance (120%) - Hire income offset £1.8k (166% vs budget)

Successful grants totaling £7.5k covered the projects this year

Project budget of £3.5k intact and flows through to general reserves

Expenditure: £51,450

Receipts: £55,350

**£3,900**

Cash balance: **£17,400**



# Governance and Council Operations



Attendance and participation

Changes in membership

Training undertaken

Audits, statutory duties & transparency requirements



# Community Engagement



Notices

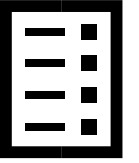
What's on the Hill

Facebook

Resident Survey



# Priorities for the Coming Year



Land registrations

Local plan review and engagement

Resident Survey – mandate to act



# Thanks and Acknowledgements

Our members of the public

Marion Shepherd, resident and campaigner

Jeff Davies + Nature Recovery

Group

Peter Nottingham, volunteer

Jenny Rice, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Simon Fairhall, Ward Councillor

Tim Nicol, resident and ex Chairman of the council

Your Councillors

Village Hall

ACC and KSFC sports teams

St John's Ambulance



# Committees and Working Groups

Trees, Greens & Nature Recovery

Traffic Working Group

Planning Committee



## Trees, Greens & Nature Recovery



# Trees, Greens & Nature Recovery – The Hawthorns



SSSI

Green hairstreak

Dingy

Grizzled skippers

Wildflower plugs, seed bombs, Gorse, Hazel

# Trees, Greens & Nature Recovery – Spring Close

Bird, Bug and Bat boxes

Pond margins - reeds

Trees and vegetation around the Polish War memorial

Kestrel box



# Trees, Greens & Nature Recovery - Top Green, Millenium garden, General areas



Bird, Bug and Bat boxes

Hedgehog houses

Trees and vegetation around the Polish War memorial

Cowslips



Traffic Working Group



# Traffic Survey Report

Location: Stamford Road, Easton on the Hill  
Description: Caution turning signpost outside number 52

Facing: Collweston

GPS:

What3Words///: rave.elect.champions

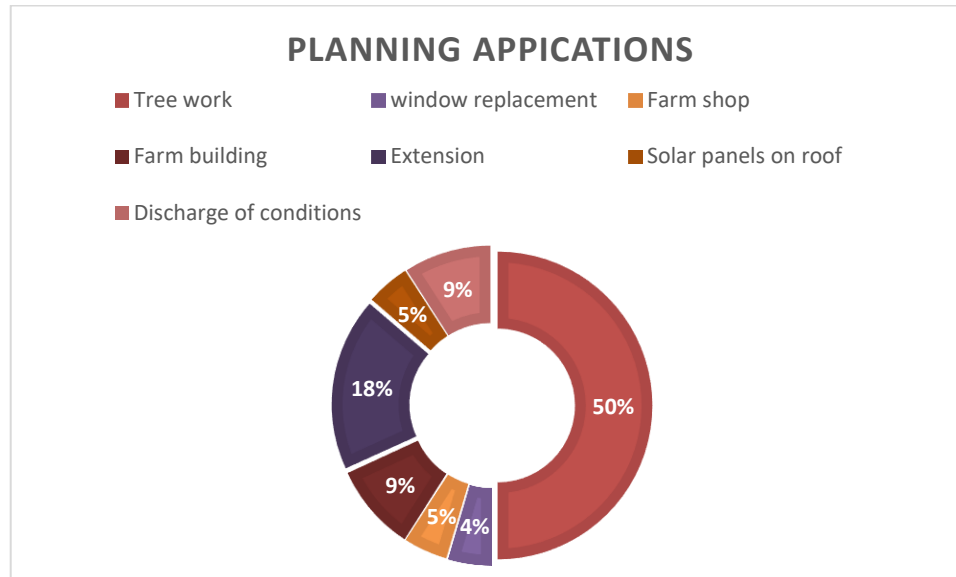
Date Up: 28/11/2025    Date Down: 05/12/2025



Number of vehicles in survey:			70660
Posted Limit: <b>40 mph</b>	Exceeding Limit <b>17777 ( 25 % )</b>	NPCC threshold: <b>46 mph</b>	At or Exceeding NPCC: <b>3317 ( 5 % )</b>
*85%: <b>42 mph</b>		Vehicle average:	38 mph
<b><i>Detailed information</i></b>			
<b><i>Motorbikes</i></b>		<b><i>LGV's</i></b>	
85%: <b>42 mph</b>	Count: 4735	85%: <b>41 mph</b>	Count: 3825
<b><i>Cars</i></b>		<b><i>HGV's</i></b>	
85%: <b>42 mph</b>	Count: 57053	85%: <b>42 mph</b>	Count: 5047



Number of vehicles in survey:			70906	
Posted Limit: <b>40 mph</b>	Exceeding Limit <b>40787 ( 58 % )</b>	NPCC threshold: <b>46 mph</b>	At or Exceeding NPCC: <b>6413 ( 9 % )</b>	
*85%: <b>44 mph</b>		Vehicle average: <b>41 mph</b>		
<b><i>Detailed information</i></b>				
<b><i>Motorbikes</i></b>			<b><i>LGV's</i></b>	
85%: <b>45 mph</b>	Count: <b>4028</b>	85%: <b>44 mph</b>	Count: <b>4056</b>	
<b><i>Cars</i></b>			<b><i>HGV's</i></b>	



- c) Other Parish Council committees and working groups (Trees and Greens incl Nature Recovery, Traffic Working Group, Planning Committee.)  
See above
- d) Recent resident survey results and feedback.

#### Headline Findings

- **137 responses** (down from 186 in 2015).
- **Village sentiment remains very positive:**
  - **NPS 49** (excellent, though slightly down from 53).
  - **90%** say the village is friendly.
- **76% support** reducing the A43 to 30mph.
- **97%** say the **Birch Tree Café** has had the most positive impact.

#### 😊 What Residents Like Most (2026)

- **Sense of community** – 26%
- **Local amenities** – 22%
- **Peaceful & safe** – 22%
- **Proximity to Stamford** – 16%

## What Residents Like Least

- **Traffic, speed, parking** – still #1 concern (31%)
- **Poor public transport** – 27%, up from 13% in 2015
- **Anti-social behaviour** – 7% (newly emerging issue)
- **Nothing / satisfied** – 16%

Public transport dissatisfaction has **doubled**, and 78% never use Call Connect.

## Improvements Since 2015

Most positively viewed upgrades:

- **Birch Tree Café** – overwhelmingly popular
- **Peace Gardens**
- **Playing area**
- **Wayfinding signs**
- **Fitness equipment**
- **Car park, cricket pavilion, football pitches**

## Transport & Highways

- **Strong support for A43 speed reduction** (76% total support).
- Preferred enforcement:
  - **VAS signs** – 94%
  - **Average speed cameras** – 84%
- **Potholes** are the **#1 open-text complaint** and the most emotionally charged issue.

## Community Safety & ASB

- Most report **none or a little**, but:
  - Issues occur mainly in the **village centre** and **playing field**.
  - **Evenings** are the peak time.
  - Main concerns: **vandalism (84%)** and **substance misuse (70%)**.
- **65% support CCTV**, though some worry about privacy and proportionality.

## Playing Fields: Usage & Tensions

Strongest theme in open comments:

- **External football teams dominate weekend use.**
- **Ketton Drift access track** is being damaged by vehicles.
- **Speeding on the bridleway** endangers walkers.
- Feeling that facilities serve **paying external users** more than residents.

A policy review is needed on income vs. resident access.

### 📌 **Community Priorities for 2026–2029**

Top priorities (ranked by residents):

1. **Traffic calming / A43**
2. **Community safety**
3. **Parking & access**
4. **Paths & crossings**
5. **Green spaces & biodiversity**
6. **Youth facilities**
7. **Events & volunteering**
8. **Allotments**
9. **Carbon footprint**

**43%** ranked traffic calming as their #1 priority.

### 🎯 **Final Summary**

Easton on the Hill remains a **high-satisfaction, community-minded village**. Improvements since 2015—especially the Birch Tree Café—are widely appreciated. However, residents want action on:

- **A43 speed reduction**
- **Potholes and road conditions**
- **Public transport**
- **Playing field access and external team use**

The survey provides a **clear mandate** for the Parish Council to act on these issues.

### 3) To receive and note reports from village groups:

#### a) The History Club – Ian Lawson

We recommenced our talks for this year on 16<sup>TH</sup> February 2026 which are on the first Monday of the Month [Feb, March, April, May, September, October and November. As ever the subjects are varied and this year include: The History of Peterborough Cathedral, Nene Valley Dresses and Donald Cambell and Bluebird. We currently have 51 members and an average audience attendance for our talks of 30.

Although we now have a website linked to the village's it is early days and there is a lot of work to do and build up the archive. We continue to help people with their enquiries. We try to encourage villagers to give us more details of village history and hope to record details of villagers we have lost in more recent times.

The annual membership fee is £10 which allows free admission to all talks and refreshments. If interested: Pay at talk or for BACS payments:

Account name: Easton on the Hill History Group Account number: 20309268 Sort code: 30 - 90 - 72

Ian Lawson, Chair History Group

#### b) The Bowls Club – Ian Lawson

It has not been a serious Bowls Club since Ken Rawson saved it from oblivion. With the loss of Ken we are planning to design a plaque to place on the clubhouse in his memory.

The green is not good enough to host visiting teams and most of the current players do not take the game too seriously! We have also introduced other activities at the club to add interest e.g. Pétanque [Boules] and Pole Frisbee. There is a net which can be used with our tennis and badminton racquets. Members frequently bring their own picnic and a BBQ is available.

We are hoping to link up with some ex-members of Oakham Croquet club who might start playing on a Thursday afternoon. If this works out croquet can be played on the green by Bowls club members.

At a recent committee meeting it was decided to keep the membership fee to £10 a year. This entitles members to turn up and use the facilities whenever they wish [subject to the occasional hiring out]. A programme of 'Club' days will be published shortly, and we are going to experiment with Friday Evenings and Saturday afternoons.

Training will be available for all activities.

If you would like to join the club our bank details are as follows:

**Lloyds Bank- Easton Bowls Club 30-99-50 27779868**

We encourage visitors to join us at this special location with the wonderful view over the village. Ian Lawson, Treasurer Easton Bowls Club

### c) The T21 Birch Tree Café Trust – Maggie Scott, Chair



The café continues to thrive though, like all hospitality businesses, we have been hit by rising costs in energy, staff, cost of goods etc. and it has become more of a challenge in recent months. We continue to raise funds for our activities programme for the young people for which we receive no external funding other than donations, this includes staff costs for supervision and cost of goods for the workshop, gardening, and cooking activities.

With this in mind, we are looking to expand what we can do for and with our team. We are considering having a car wash area, perhaps on a Monday when the café is closed or after 2pm when it is quieter. We are also considering offering dog walking and cleaning services – our team are excellent in this area having been well trained! They would of course be fully supervised. We would be interested to hear if this would be of interest in the village. While we would not charge, donations would be welcome.

The most exciting thing we have done this year is to purchase a property for supported living thanks to a generous donation. This has proved a tremendous success and the five residents have the shortest commute on record. The property also means our charity has sustainability for the future.

Finally, I would like to thank the residents of Easton for supporting our charity in so many ways, whether it be through volunteering, regular donations or visiting the café.

### d) The Garford Trust – Steve Forster

#### **Garford Trust update for Parish Meeting 27-Apr-2026**

By way of a quick reminder, the Garford Trust is a charity set up to support the educational needs of the village – originally in the 1600s by Richard Garford, prior to state funded schooling. Now, we provide educational grants funded by income from the former school and offer an additional community space to the village hall. We are 4 trustees and a couple of super volunteers and always on the look-out for more help!

The highlight of the year was the installation of solar panels and batteries. We successfully applied for a grant from Augean (via Grantscape) which will reduce our carbon dioxide emissions and also save money, allowing more funds for our grant giving budget.

On this theme, we ran our regular summer campaign to provide grants to village residents for educational purposes. Last year was one of the most successful campaigns in terms of number of applicants and grants awarded. We received 14 applications and awarded 23 grants, with total grants awarded in excess of £3,000.

With costs continuing to rise, including school transport, we hope to receive more grants requests than ever in our next summer grant campaign and also welcome any ad hoc educational grant requests to: [Garfordtrust@yahoo.com](mailto:Garfordtrust@yahoo.com).

The Trust continues to offer an additional space for hire in the village. Regular users include Stamford Physiofit, the Horticultural Society, Evergreen (led by T21) and we hosted other ad hoc events such as Gong Sound Baths.

## e) The Village Hall – representative

### **EASTON ON THE HILL VILLAGE HALL - Registered Charity No 272834**

Easton on the Hill Village Hall is a registered charity and is governed by a conveyance document and trust deed established in 1976. This report focuses on activities for the last twelve months up until 26th April 2026.

This last year has seen the hall usage increase slightly but with less hall managed events, LFL income shows a slight increase in line with this. Expenditure has increased slightly in line with inflation. Our financial year end is 30<sup>th</sup> April, and we will be able to report more fully then at our AGM.

Marketing has again been a major focus for the last 12 months. The Hall's website continues to provide an timely and accessible overview of bookings, events and facilities. It has been updated to reflect more recent images of the hall, and an updated page of the key regular events and activities at the hall, helping visitors to engage with what's on offer. In parallel, the Village Hall Facebook page has played an important role in promoting upcoming events. We have seen a steady gradual increase in followers, now at 400 users, with some of our posts and activity receiving up to 800+ views. Together, these channels have supported a consistent level of activity throughout the year, reinforcing the Hall's position as a welcoming venue for both Easton on the Hill residents and the wider surrounding community.

Following our pricing review and subsequent price increases in 2022, we have reviewed prices this year and agreed an increase which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026. The hourly rate for both villager and non-villager remains the same at £10 and £15 respectively but the sliding scale of fees has been removed. This has not had a great impact on our regular bookings, but parties and half day and full day events are now charged at the full hourly rate.

During the last year we only ran two hall managed events, a Christmas craft fair and tearoom and a Children's Halloween party, both were very popular and successful. Regular weekly bookings have remained static. We thank all our regular hirers and in particular our village groups including the History Group, Art Group, Winter Warmer/Summer Social and Parish Council. Our children's party business is very strong, and we have seen a further uplift in this business. We are very grateful for all bookings and thank everyone for their support.

Health and Safety remains a key priority. All the relevant H & S checks have been carried out and are recorded as required. Happily, there have been, to date, no incidents to report.

Following a successful appeal to raise funds for the automation of the clock workings and renovation of the Clock face the work has been commissioned. It will be completed in due course. We would like to thank all who donated so generously and we are planning an open coffee morning event to showcase the work and the Hall itself.

Further refurbishment took place this year and we have split the kitchen space in half to create a much-needed storage area for our tables and chairs. This has created more hall space and reduced any potential health and safety risk from slippage of the furniture.

Like other village groups we are actively looking for help to join the trustee group. We will shortly be advertising for a new Chair of trustees as well as other trustees to join the team.

We would like to thank all our Trustees and village supporters for their continued hard work, support and commitment to our lovely hall. We look forward to a busy year where the hall continues to build itself at the heart of our village community as a centre for socialising, meetings and village and local events.

## f) The Horticultural Society – Joy Osborne

### **Annual Report for the Parish Council:** Easton on the Hill Horticultural & Crafts Society

Date: April 2026

Reporting Period: 2025–2026

#### **Overview**

It is a privilege to present the annual report for the Society's 107th year. Our longevity is a testament to the vibrant community spirit within the village.

#### **Activities and Events**

The Society has delivered a varied programme this year, balancing high-profile speakers with practical local sessions:

- Educational Excursions: Successful visits were made to Burghley House and Nevill Holt, providing members with unique horticultural insights.
- Guest Speakers: We hosted a transformative evening with Fergus Garrett, which inspired members with fresh perspectives for their own gardens.
- Practical Talks: In addition to our larger events, we held an informative session on garlic cultivation, providing useful seasonal tips for our growers.
- Programme Coordination: We extend our sincere thanks to Beulah Smith for her meticulous work in organising this year's events; her dedication was central to their success.
- Annual Show: Under the leadership of Anne and Mandy, our Annual Show continued its tradition of excellence while introducing fresh ideas to keep the event exciting and relevant.

#### **Community Engagement & Projects**

- The Community Orchard: We have achieved the formal completion of this major project located within the church yard. Driven by the determination of Sam and Ken, who sadly passed away earlier this year, the orchard now provides a productive green asset for all parishioners.
- Village Bloom: We offer special thanks to Christine Lawson for her tireless work in maintaining "Patsy's Bike" in bloom, a cherished feature of our village.
- Local Participation: The Society was delighted to participate in the Village Gala and the Easton's Got Talent event, celebrating the wider creative talents of our community.

#### **Member Benefits and Outreach**

In 2025 our 91 members enjoyed benefits of early notification and member only events, subsidised seed links and a 'Strulch' initiative. We are also pleased to report that a grant application was successfully awarded this year, providing funding for educational grants in horticulture and crafts in the village.

#### **Financial Summary**

The Society is in a healthy financial position. My thanks go to John for his treasury management.

#### **Closing**

The Society remains dedicated to enhancing the beauty and communal life of the village. I would like to conclude by offering my sincere thanks to the Committee for their hard work and to our members for their continued support throughout another outstanding year.

#### **g) Friends of the Church – Eddie Smith**

Eddie Smith reported a big thank you to the Friends of the Church group, who are fantastic helping with church clean up days, lending library recently and he asked if more volunteers can enrol if they are able as the church is a crucial point and needs to be preserved due to its unique features, biggest instrument needs to be looked after, the churchyard and the Peace Garden too.

There was special thanks given to Glenis Woodman and Christine Lawson for maintaining “Patsy’s bike” which has pride of place on Millenium Green.

#### **4) To receive comment from residents of the village on any other parish matters of concern.**

Tim Nicol gave some information about the 18<sup>th</sup> Gala weekend which is this year celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Alex and Chinzi’s tenure at the Bluebell Pub. He explained it might be the last of this sound and light format. Also that 5k was raised last year and given out to local groups. They are in need of volunteers and a “wanted poster” will be out soon, with the Gala flyers, sponsored by the cricket team, Addida CC, thanks.

Ian Lawson gave an update on the floor at the Priest House needing 15k worth of repairs doing and he was asking for help from the council in approaching the Heritage people to give their support and plea for action to the project.

Jess Richards, Highways Community Liaison Officer for East Northants, was also present and explained her role is to go between the departments and get a reply to all Highway related queries. She will raise your query and will liaise to get the most relevant department to respond and will forward the reply to you. Jess further explained the new Highways Online Reporting Tool and offered to help anyone struggling to use it.

This was the end of the meeting and attendees then stayed for networking and refreshments.