



Painted by Rodney Ingram

Ecton Parish Council

Minutes of the **Annual Meeting of Ecton Parish Council** held in the Village Hall, High Street, Ecton on **Tuesday 19th May 2026** at 7.35pm. (A week earlier than usual).

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

Item No	
1204/2026	Election of Chairperson and Signing of the Acceptance of Office Form by the Chair Cllr D Dicks PROPOSED Ian Whittaker to remain as Chair SECONDED by Cllr J Fernley No further nominations were received. All in favour. It was RESOLVED that Cllr I Whittaker be appointed Chair for the year 2026/2027. Cllr I Whittaker signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.
1205/2026	Election of Vice Chair and Signing of the Acceptance of Office Form by the Vice Chair Cllr I Whittaker PROPOSED Cllr J Fernley as Vice Chair SECONDED by Cllr S Bell, no further nominations were received. It was RESOLVED Cllr J Fernley be appointed Vice Chair for the year 2026/2027. Cllr J Fernley signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.
1206/2026	To Receive Apologies Apologies were received from Parish Councillor C Adams and North Northants Councillor Ms V Jessop all had other commitments to attend. Mr A Sandhu was not in attendance.
1207/2026	Receive any Declarations of Interest Declarations of interest were received from Cllr N Bond ref agenda item 1215/26 D.
1208/2026	Parish Council Vacancies – Discuss any applications and Co-option on to the PC There is currently one vacancy for parish Councillor on the council. There have been no applications or expression of interest. Action: Clerk to continue to advertise the vacancy on social media and on the website.
1209/2026	Appointment of Councillor Responsibilities Councillors would continue with the following responsibilities: Cllr I Whittaker – Police, and VAS Signs, Cllr D Dicks – Notice boards and Grit bins, Planning -The PC as a collective, Cllrs D Dicks, J Fernley & N Bond – Bank Signatures, Cllr N Bond – Internal Audit Inspections. Cllr S Grisewood -Website The Clerk will act as the Lighting Representative. All were in agreement.
1210/2026	Agree dates of meetings 2026/2027 It was RESOLVED to agree to continue to hold meetings bi-monthly on the 4 th Tuesday of every other month. The following meeting dates for 2026/27 are as follows: 2026 – 28 th July, 22nd September, 24th November. 2027 – 26th January, 23rd March and 18th May. (Annual Meeting of the Parish and Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, being held a week earlier than usual).

1211/2026	Annual Review of all Policies and Procedures a. To review and re-adopt the following documents without amendment: <table border="0"> <tr> <td>• Code of Conduct</td><td>Complaints Procedure</td></tr> <tr> <td>• Data Breach</td><td>Data Protection</td></tr> <tr> <td>• Disability</td><td>Discrimination</td></tr> <tr> <td>• Equal Opportunities</td><td>Financial Regulations</td></tr> <tr> <td>• Freedom of Information</td><td>Grant Funding</td></tr> <tr> <td>• Health & Safety</td><td>Internal Controls</td></tr> <tr> <td>• Reserves Policy</td><td>Scheme of Delegation</td></tr> <tr> <td>• Social Media Policy</td><td>Standing Orders</td></tr> </table> Copies of all policies and procedures were circulated prior to the meeting for their annual review. It was RESOLVED to re-adopt them for another 12 months. b. To review and re-adopt the Archive and Retention Policy, following amendments. A copy of the updated Archive and Retention Policy was circulated prior to the meeting for annual review. It was RESOLVED to accept the updated Archive and Retention Policy. c. Adopt amended Asset Register A copy of the updated Asset Register was circulated prior to the meeting for annual review. It was RESOLVED to accept the updated Asset Register. d. To agree to review and adopt all Risk Assessments and policies A copy of the Risk Assessment and Risk Assessment Analysis and policies were circulated prior to the meeting for their annual review. It was RESOLVED to re-adopt the Annual Risk Assessment and Risk Assessment Analysis and supporting policies for another 12 months.	• Code of Conduct	Complaints Procedure	• Data Breach	Data Protection	• Disability	Discrimination	• Equal Opportunities	Financial Regulations	• Freedom of Information	Grant Funding	• Health & Safety	Internal Controls	• Reserves Policy	Scheme of Delegation	• Social Media Policy	Standing Orders
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1212/2026	To appoint NCALC as Data Protection Officer It was RESOLVED to appoint Northants NCALC as the PC's Data Protection Officer this year.																
1213/2026	Public Session a. Invitation to the public to address the council No members of public were in attendance. b. Invitation to Unitary Councillor to provide updating report North Northants Councillor Scott Brown was in attendance. Scott gave a brief update on things happening at NNC, The Highways budget has been doubled for this financial year, and the new Reform administrative team are running well. The Councillors Empowerment fund has now been abolished. This was the fund that paid for the Ecton Chair Pilates sessions. Both Regulatory Services and Planning departments are staffed well and performing well. No agreement has been made between NNC and WNC with regards to Ecton Residents being able to use the Ecton Household Recycling Centre. The introduction of food caddies will be rolled out by September. Cllr D Dicks asked will details of which items can go in the food caddies be distributed to parishioners? Scott will check.																
1214/2026	To receive and approve for signature the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on the 24th March 2026 It was RESOLVED the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Parish Council held on the 24th March 2026, having been previously circulated, were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair Mr I Whittaker.																
1215/2026	Financial Matters a. Agree Clerks Annual Pay increase from SCP Scale 27 £19.81ph to SCP Scale 28 £20.29ph																

	It was RESOLVED to agree the Clerks annual pay increase from scale LCP 27 at £19.81ph to LCP 28 £20.29 as of 1st April 2026. b. Agree whether to make an annual pension contribution to the Clerks pension of £180 It was discussed and RESOLVED to make a one-off yearly contribution to the Clerks personal pension scheme of £180.00. To be reviewed every year. All were in agreement. c. Discuss and agree renewal of Insurance Premium The PC previously signed up to a 3-year deal with Zurich Insurance. Last year's premium cost £561.52. This year's renewal price is out of the 3-year deal at a cost price of £1040.50. The Clerk obtained other quotes and provided Councillors with a comparison table and her suggestion to go with a 3-year deal with Hiscox Insurance at £780.60 per year for the next 3 years. No price increase for 3 years. It was RESOLVED to accept the 3-year deal with new Insurers Hiscox. d. Discuss and agree whether to make a grant donation to the closed churchyard maintenance costs Councillors discussed whether to support Ecton PCC with a maintenance grant for the closed churchyard. It was RESOLVED that once an application for financial assistance was received from them the PC would be happy to fund another £1500 this year again. All were in agreement. e. To approve payments to be made in May for outstanding invoices / accounts It was RESOLVED to approve payments to be made in May 2026 (Appendix A) via bank transfer. These payments were authorised online during the meeting via NatWest Bankline by Cllr J Fernley. d. To receive financial statement as at 19.05.26 agreed to the Bank Reconciliation The Clerk reported the Bank Balances to date as reconciled to the bank statement were as follows: Current Account £50.00, Reserves Account £39,006.27 less May payments of £1,864.62 = £37,191.65 This is broken down into £3,356.25 David Cross funds, £150.00 Playing Field Funds, £116 Chair Pilates Grant and £33,569.40 Parish Council Funds. Income received since March 2026 HMRC Vat Refund 2025/2026 £847.85 Precept 26/27 £16,335 Bank Interest £19.44 Financial reports were received for information. e. To receive update report reference David Cross Bequest No recent David Cross Expenditure has been made. The current balance in the account stands at £3,356.25
1216/2026	Audit – Year Ending 31st March 2026 a. To complete the YE procedure and Resolve to adopt the YE accounts as at 31st May 26 The Clerk has completed the year end accounts as at 31st March 2026, these were previously circulated prior to the meeting. It was RESOLVED to adopt the year end accounts as presented. b. To receive Internal Auditor Tina Charteress's report and Resolve to note and agree any actions NCALC Internal Auditor Tina Charteress has carried out her internal inspection of the accounts

	and processes for YE 31st March 2026. Her report was circulated to members prior to the council meeting and its contents noted at the meeting. These included the minuting of the agreed budget for 26/67. An observation that the new .gov website the PC is still under construction and doesn't currently have an Accessibility statement, some final documents still need to be loaded to the website. Mention was made that the PC will not be able to tick yes to the new Assertion 10 box on the AGAR this year. Members are aware of this due to the website not being fully complete. c. To receive report from the final internal financial inspection for the year end 31st March 2026 It was noted that the Councillor Ian Whittaker completed the final Internal Financial Inspection for the period end 31st March 2026 on the 7th April 2026 and found all receipts and payments have been recorded accurately. d. To Resolve and approve completion off the Certificate of Exemption & Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/2026 It was RESOLVED to agree the completed (Section 1) of the Annual Governance Statement for the year end 31st March 2026, which was circulated prior to the meeting. Section 1 was signed by the Clerk and the Chairman. It was noted that for the eighth year the Council will submit a notification of exempt status due to Parish Councils Income and Expenditure for 2025/2026 being under £25,000. All Councillors received copies of the documentation prior to the meeting. e. To Resolve and approve completion off Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/2026 It was RESOLVED to agree the completed (Section 2) Accounting Statements 2025/26 which was circulated prior to the meeting. Section 2 was signed by the Clerk and the Chairman. f. To confirm the date for the 30-working day period for the Exercise of Public Rights It was RESOLVED to agree the dates to display the Public of Rights Notice. The period to view the Parish Council accounts for the period end 31st March 2026 is between Wednesday 3rd June to Tuesday 14th July 2026 from 9am to 5pm. g. To appoint the Clerk as the Responsible Financial Officer It was RESOLVED to appoint the Clerk as the Responsible Financial Officer for the current year.
1217/2026	To discuss any correspondence received No correspondence has been received.
1218/2026	Village Services a Receive any update reports on the Playing Field The Clerk received notification of a slightly hazardous hole in the tarmac at the Playpark. This could be fixed with a bag of post mix b Receive updates and discuss any village maintenance matters inc fly tipping issues There were no areas of concern. It was noted, the Chairman Cllr I Whittaker and NNC Councillor Scott Brown will be attending an appeal meeting regarding the recent Highways Panel Group's refusal to lower the speed limit in Ecton. This appeal meeting is being held on May 21st.
1219/2026	Unitary Councillors Reports and discuss any items Receive an update on the new website – Cllr S Grisewood Councillor S Grisewood reported that the new website has most of its content uploaded now. All policies and most financials and available for viewing. The council's accessibility statement

	needs to be uploaded to help the council meet Assertion 10 requirements.
1220/2026	To note any matters arising from the previous minutes not covered by items on the agenda A request received by a parishioner in March to install a bench near the entrance to the fields at the end of West Street, was discussed at the March PC meeting and an alternative site of just above the Flats in West Street, under the Cherry tree, where once there used to be a bench was proposed by the PCC instead. This location has been turned down by the parishioner. Councillors discussed there are no other suitable locations for a new bench as other possible areas are on private property. Action: The Clerk will respond to the parishioner accordingly and also inform them that there are 3 benches in the playing field and churchyard that they could use. The Clerk has sent two emails to the Secretary of State Steve Reed (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) regarding the PC's serious concerns regarding the practical impact of the recent reorganisation of Northamptonshire's local authorities, specifically the division into North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire councils. The Clerk has not received any acknowledgment of the emails to date. Action: The Clerk will resend the correspondence via recorded delivery in the hope of receiving a response to our concerns.
1221/2026	Discuss any planning related matters including those not yet determined 26/01135/HFUL – Householder Planning Permission: Proposed single storey rear Extension to form habitable accommodation (ground floor bedroom and gym with ensuite) – 47 West Street, Ecton. NN6 0QF. This planning application doesn't breach any policies; Councillors had no comments to make and are happy to support this application. There have been no updates on the NNC planning portal website with reference to the amended planning applications at 2 Parsons Close. 25/02198/LBC & 25/02199/FUL. It was noted the boundary wall belonging / shared between to two properties "The Grange and 2 Parsons Close" has collapsed. Both of these properties are located within the Ecton Conservation Area. The wall has collapsed onto the High Street, the collapse actually happened a couple of months ago after a period of wet weather, and to date no works have taken place. Councillors are concerned of the safety aspects of the rubble being on the High Street. Action: The Clerk will contact NNC to see if an application to repair the wall has been submitted?
1222/2026	Discuss next steps on updating the Ecton Neighbourhood Development Plan – Set up a dedicated team Cllr J Fernley will make contact with the original Ecton Neighbourhood Plan Group to see if anyone would like to join the new group? Action: Clerk to make contact with Mike Haybyrne planning consultant to see if he is available to assist EPC again?
1223/2026	Parish Councillors reports and to discuss any items to be considered for the next agenda Nothing new to report.
1224/2026	Date of next meeting –Tuesday 28th July 2026 It was RESOLVED to hold the next ordinary meeting of the Parish Council on Tuesday 28th 2026 in Ecton Village Hall at 7.30pm.
	Close: The meeting ended at 8.50pm.

Signed byDate

Appendix A

1215/2026 Financial Matters

E. Review Financial Statement as at 19/05/2026 and propose payments. Monies must be paid out only in pursuance of statutory powers (SP) vested in the Parish Council. All paid under the General power of competence which was implemented in May 2025. **RESOLVED** balances as presented be accepted. **RESOLVED** the following accounts be paid.

Payment Method	Amount	Vat	Payee	Details
DD	122.12	5.86	Valda Energy	Street Lighting Costs April 2026
BT	384.02	0.00	Shirley Wong	Clerks Salary 1.5.26 to 31.5.26 22 hours @ LCP 27 £19.81pph Office & Broadband £35.42 Tax deductions £87.20
BT	90.02	0.00	HMRC	Employer NI Contribution £2.82 Tax S Wong £87.20
BT	180.00	0.00	Royal London	Yearly Pension Contribution
BT	668.56	50.45	Northants CALC	NCALC Membership YE 31.3.27 Internal Audit Service 27 Data Protection Officer
BT	318.00	53.00	Hayeswood Landscapes	Grass Cutting in the village
BT	144.00	0.00	Ecton Village Hall	Room Hire May 25 to Mar 26
BT	80.00	0.00	Shevolution	May 26 – Chair Pilates
BT	780.60	0.00	Arthur J Gallagher Insurance	Liability Insurance from 1 st June 2026

Total value of payments £2,767.34

To note approved payments made out of meeting in April by the Clerk using delegated powers

Payment Method	Amount	Vat	Payee	Details
D/D	47.00	0.00	ICO	Data Protection Licence Fee
D/D	148.17	7.06	Valda Energy	Street Lighting Costs March 2026
BT	422.18	0.00	Shirley Wong	Salary 28.2.26 to 31.3.26 24.4 hours @ LCP 27 £19.81pph Office & Broadband £35.42 Tax deductions £96.60
BT	106.55	0.00	HMRC	Employer NI £9.95 Tax S Wong £96.60

Total value of payments £723.90