



Draft Minutes of the General Meeting of Spratton Parish Council

17th February 2026 at Spratton Village Hall, Spratton at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Cllrs: McDonald-Walker (Chair), Beynon, Young & Vellam.

CLERK: Alan Youel.

APOLOGIES: Cllrs: Marshall, Ashton, Gaywood & Matts.

PUBLIC: 5 members of public in attendance.

251.25 Resolution to approve apologies for absence

On the proposition of the Chair, seconded by Cllr Young, it was **RESOLVED:** to approve apologies for absence received from Cllrs Marshall, Ashton, Gaywood & Matts.

252.25 Members' declaration of interest in items on the agenda

None.

253.25 Public Forum

Cllr Christine Ware – West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) Update

- The **WNC Local Plan consultation** is currently open. Hard copy available to view at Brixworth Library. Particular attention was drawn to **Chapter 10** covering rural areas.
- Spratton has a draft allocation of 54 dwellings within the proposed plan. The Naseby Ward total allocation is 193 dwellings, including Spratton; Welford has a draft allocation of 51 dwellings and Brixworth 242. Allocations are based on a formula calculation.
- A **"Call for Sites"** exercise is underway. Village definitions for settlement hierarchy are included within the consultation documents.
- Allocated sites indicate landowner interest, not guaranteed planning approval.
- The **Plan period runs to 2043**. The process has been delayed by approximately six months due to the formation of the new authority and changes to Government housing targets. The next stage is expected to be completed by the **end of December**, after which the draft plan will proceed to the Planning Inspectorate. Councils and individuals are encouraged to submit comments.
- A **judicial review** regarding housing allocations is being investigated by some councils.
- The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** is also currently out for consultation. Neighbourhood Plans will need to be reviewed in line with both the NPPF and the emerging Local Plan. WNC is currently aligning three existing Local Plans.
- **Public exhibitions** are being held locally, with the nearest at **Long Buckby**. Cllr Ware confirmed she would be willing to attend a local meeting in Spratton and provide any support requested.
- **Budget update:** The proposed council tax increase has been amended from 4.99% to 4.95%. Proposed green bin charge increases have been reduced from £80 to £69 (currently £60). Proposed parking charges in market towns have been scrapped. The budget will be considered at Full Council on **26th March**. Opposition groups have submitted budget amendments.
- **Highways:** Ongoing issues with potholes and blocked drains were acknowledged. A drive-round has been requested with the relevant portfolio holder. Residents were encouraged to continue reporting defects to WNC. A meeting with the **Environment Agency** is scheduled, and Cllr Ware will raise drainage concerns.
- **WNC litter bins** within the parish can be reviewed if defective and should be reported to WNC.

- A resident raised concerns regarding potholes on Smith Street. Some repairs have been undertaken; however, further defects remain.
- A resident queried the removal of yellow litter bins at the Recreation Field.
- A resident who attended the **Brixworth Local Plan exhibition** noted that while village confines were shown, specific housing numbers and site locations were not clearly identified. It was noted that the **Call for Sites** and the **Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA)** provide further detail.
- A resident sought clarification on the **Local Plan process**, noting that the previous **Neighbourhood Plan** had been managed solely by the Parish Council. Councillors confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan would require review in line with the emerging NPPF and Local Plan. No external funding is currently available, and any review would therefore require Parish Council funding. The resident further questioned the management of potential landowner interests of Parish Councillors and possible conflicts of interest.

254.25 Approval of Minutes

On the proposition of Cllr Beynon, seconded by Cllr Young, it was **RESOLVED**: to approve minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 20th January 2026.

255.25 Resources

Bank balances, Bank Reconciliations, Receipts and Payments report to 31st January 2026, and confirmation of internal controls checks: The finance checks were completed by Cllr Beynon. The bank statements and bank reconciliation statements were approved by council and signed. It was resolved to approve all the finance papers.

On the proposition of the Chair, seconded by Cllr Beynon, it was **RESOLVED**: to approve payments February to March 2026.

On the proposition of the Chair, seconded by Cllr Young, it was **RESOLVED**: to note receipts February - March 2026.

256.25 Planning

Planning Applications to consider and make resolution:

<u>2026/0316/LDP</u>	North House 25A Smith Street Spratton NN6 8HW Land off Holdenby Road Spratton NN6 8LB	Lawful development certificate (proposed) for conversion of double garage into single garage, a home beauty treatment room and toilet with replacement of double garage door with single door and insertion of window. – <i>Decision refusal.</i>
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257.25 Cemetery Condition and Upkeep

The Clerk provided an update following the memorial stability testing report from Memsafe:

- St Andrew's Churchyard** – All memorials passed inspection.
- Brixworth Road Cemetery** – Three memorials required immediate action and were laid flat.
- East View Cemetery** – Eleven memorials require attention and have been signed and banded.

Council considered the quotation received from Memsafe for rectification works to failed memorials.

On the proposition of Cllr Young, seconded by the Chair, it was **RESOLVED**: to accept the quotation and engage Memsafe to undertake rectification works to 12 failed memorials at a cost of **£147.50 per memorial**.

The Clerk reported that one quotation had been received for rabbit-proof fencing at East View Cemetery, to be installed inside the existing hedge, at a cost of **£6,117.50 ex VAT**.

It was noted that the hedge is situated very close to certain grave spaces and that care would be required during installation.

On the proposition of the Chair, it was **RESOLVED**: to seek further quotations for rabbit-proof fencing and to defer the matter for future decision.

258.25 St Andrew's Churchyard Wall – Condition and Proposed Works

Cllr Beynon provided an update on the condition of the main churchyard wall following the inspection report from PRP Ltd.

It was noted that water erosion is occurring from the pavement side of the wall, and that Highways may be contacted to support potential remedial measures.

On the proposition of Cllr Beynon, it was **RESOLVED**:

- a) To obtain quotations for repairs to the eroding section of wall.
- b) To obtain quotations for the removal of vegetation from coping stones and the re-bedding of stones in lime mortar.
- c) To obtain quotations for an initial topographical survey of the wall, including the installation of fixed monitoring targets (galvanised steel bolts drilled and resin-fixed), to enable accurate future monitoring of structural movement. Indicative costs could be £600 to set up, £300 after

Cllr Beynon to forward appropriate contractor details to Clerk.

It was further agreed that:

- The Clerk will contact Josie Flavell at Brixworth to request any details of heritage asset stonemasons.
- Cllr Beynon will investigate wall monitoring options and provide details to the Clerk to enable quotations to be obtained.
- The Clerk will contact the PCC to inform them of the Council's decisions and potential works to be undertaken.

259.25 IT Policy

On the proposition of Cllr Young, seconded by Cllr Beynon, it was **RESOLVED**: to adopt the IT Policy for Spratton Parish Council.

260.25 Publication Scheme

On the proposition of Cllr Young, seconded by the Chair, it was **RESOLVED**: to approve the Publication Scheme.

261.25 GDPR Policy

On the proposition of Cllr Young, seconded by Cllr Beynon, it was **RESOLVED**: to approve the GDPR Policy.

On the proposition of Cllr Young, seconded by Cllr Beynon, it was **RESOLVED**: approve Privacy Notice (website) <https://www.sprattonpc.org.uk/home/privacy-policy>

262.25 Grants and Donations Policy

On the proposition of Cllr Young, seconded by the Chair, it was **RESOLVED**: to approve the updated Grants and Donations Policy and revised Grant Application Form.

263.25 Asset Register

The Clerk reported additions to the Asset Register, including the boundary fencing at Roly Banks, the stock-proof gate at Roly Banks, and new defibrillators.

On the proposition of Cllr Young, seconded by the Chair, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the updated Asset Register.

264.25 Communication

The Clerk provided an update on the new Parish Council Facebook page, which includes an automatic feed of news posts from the Parish Council website.

265.25 Annual Parish Meeting

The Chair outlined the purpose of the Annual Parish Meeting as a celebration of local societies, memberships, clubs and organisations within the village.

On the proposition of Cllr Young, seconded by Cllr Beynon, it was **RESOLVED**: that the Annual Parish Meeting will be held on 21st April at Spratton Village Hall, commencing at 6.00pm.

266.25 Churchyard, Cemeteries and Open Spaces – Mowing/Maintenance Issues

- a) **Village Handyman** – The Holly and Yew bushes in the Churchyard have been cut.

On the proposition of Cllr Young, it was **RESOLVED**: to request that the Village Handyman attend East View Cemetery to level certain graves. The spoil arising from this work may be used to fill rabbit holes, and the levelled areas will then be re-seeded.

- b) **Cemetery Issues**: It was reported some ferreting has been carried out in the area.
c) **Mowing/Maintenance Issues**:

The Clerk had supplied a suggested contract for the grounds maintenance contract with **R&G Grounds** for the period **2026–2028**.

The Chair suggested additional clause at point 6 that incorporates practical concerns raised: *"To operate all equipment in a safe and legal manner, taking care to minimise damage to the existing cemetery, including grave surfaces, ornaments, flowers, and decorations. Appropriate equipment and mowing methods should be used to avoid excessive wear or disturbance, and all work should meet a standard acceptable to the Parish Council."*

On the proposition of the Chair, seconded by Cllr Beynon, it was **RESOLVED**: subject to additional clause at section 6, to approve the grounds maintenance contract with **R&G Grounds** for the period **2026–2028**.

267.25 Community Issues

- a) **Defibrillator checks**: Complete as of 10th February 2026.
b) **Highway Safety**: Potholes and drain clearance issues to be reported via FixMyStreet.

268.25 Consultations Requiring a Response

- a) To consider a response to the Annual Parish Consultation Survey organised by Kier Transportation on behalf of West Northamptonshire Council Highways. The closing date for responses is 31 March 2026.

Cllr Ashton circulated a suggested response by email prior to the meeting for Council's consideration.

Cllr Young observed that the Parish Council does not generally attend Kier drop-in sessions, which are their standard communication platform, and therefore was not necessarily in agreement with the proposed response. Concern that lack of attendance may be misinterpreted as poor communication from Kier. It was noted that Kier do engage when approached directly and would likely attend a Parish Council meeting if formally invited.

The Chair advised that a Highways representative had previously attended Parish Council meetings, which is no longer the case. Previously, highway representatives visited regularly, provided updates, and were familiar to the council. This level of personal engagement has reduced significantly. There remain outstanding highways and drainage issues within the parish.

On the proposition of the Chair, seconded by Cllr Beynon, it was **RESOLVED**: that the Clerk submit the Council's response to the consultation in accordance with the suggestion provided by Cllr Ashton.

It was further **RESOLVED** that the Chair will prepare a summary of the current condition of drainage along the church wall, drainage issues along Brixworth Road, and other highways concerns. This summary will be forwarded to the Clerk, who will write to Kier on behalf of the Council, copying Cllr Ware into the correspondence.

- a) To consider response: Consultation on the fresh draft of the **West Northamptonshire Local Plan**. This consultation is a key opportunity for Parish Councils to review and comment on proposals that will guide future development across West Northamptonshire. [You can read more about the draft plan and how to participate in the consultation here.](#)

Consultation closes: **27th March**. Roadshows are being held across the area; the closest for the parish is **Long Buckby** on **4th March 3–7:30 pm at the Community Centre**.

Cllr Ware offered support for any local meeting as required. **Chapter 10** highlighted as particularly relevant for rural areas. Current call for sites information on WNC website. Need also to consider emerging NPPF.

Difficulty locating the plan online was noted; the plan is accessible via the **West Northants Council website** under current consultations.

Cllr Young highlighted possible confusion regarding the distinction between the **Spratton Neighbourhood Plan (NHP)** and the West Northamptonshire Local Plan.

Clerk advised that WNC may expect parish councils to deliver growth targets (e.g., **54 houses for Spratton**) through Neighbourhood Planning without government funding, following funding for neighbourhood plans being removed.

Cllr Young noted that WNC's **five-year housing land supply (5yr-HLS)** is not robust.

Clerk pointed out development outside parish boundaries may be permitted more easily if the five-year housing land supply is not met, invoking a **presumption in favour of development**.

The Chair emphasised requirement for **village sustainability**: small family homes to retain local children and support schools. Suggested development could include **infrastructure improvements** (e.g., roundabouts, traffic management, community facilities, sports halls) to benefit the parish.

Members stressed the importance of engaging with **landowners with a vested interest** in the village rather than external developers.

On the proposition of **Cllr Young**, it was **RESOLVED:** to carry forward to the next meeting for a final decision on the parish council's response.

269.25 Date of next meeting

17th March 2026, Meeting of the Parish Council.

Meeting closed: 20:40

Signed: