



Minutes of the General Meeting of Spratton Parish Council

20th January 2026 at Spratton Village Hall, Spratton at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Cllrs: Marshall (Chair), Ashton, Beynon, Young, Gaywood, Matts & Vellam.

CLERK: Alan Youel.

APOLOGIES: Cllr: McDonald-Walker.

PUBLIC: 3 members of public in attendance.

232.25 Resolution to approve apologies for absence

On the proposition of the Chair, it was **RESOLVED:** to approve apologies for absence received from Cllr McDonald-Walker.

233.25 Members' declaration of interest in items on the agenda

To receive:

Pecuniary: Cllr Matts 240.24, (Landowner)

Nonpecuniary: Cllr Matts 236.25, (Neighbour/resident)
Cllr Ashton 236.25, (Member of Rec Committee)
Cllr Gaywood 236.25, (Member of Rec Committee)
Cllr Vellam 236.25, (Member of Rec Committee)

234.25 PUBLIC FORUM:

- Cllr Christine Ware – West Northamptonshire Council Update

- The **WNC Local Plan** was considered by the Planning Policy Committee on **8 January 2026** in preparation for **Regulation 18 consultation**, which is expected to be published on **26 January 2026** with an **8-week public consultation period**. The housing numbers currently included are draft only. The plan period runs to **2043** and will require close scrutiny, with particular attention drawn to **Chapter 10**.
- **Training** relating to the Local Plan is available for councillors and clerks on **10 February 2026**.
- The **WNC budget consultation** is currently open. Key headlines include:
 - A proposed **4.99% council tax increase**.
 - A **33% increase in green bin charges**.
 - Introduction of parking charges in **Towcester, Brackley and Daventry**.
- The **Cabinet Member for Children** has recently changed. **£11.6 million overspend**, which is continuing to rise.
- An update has been requested regarding the **second A5199 traffic survey**; results have not yet been published.

- A resident spoke on a **non-agenda item**, raising concerns regarding freedom to walk locally and suggesting that some previously used walking routes have been restricted.

- Cllr Young read a statement from the **Village Hall Committee**, confirming details relating to the **recent fire at the Village Hall**.

235.25 Approval of Minutes

On the proposition of the Chair, seconded by Cllr Young, it was **RESOLVED**: to approve minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 18th November 2025.

236.25 Grant Application

Cllrs Gaywood, Vellam and Ashton declared an interest in this item, left the room, and took no part in the discussion or voting.

The Council considered a revised grant application from the **Recreation Committee**, noting that **no Recreation Committee accounts had been supplied** with the application.

On the proposition of the Chair, seconded by Cllr Young, it was **RESOLVED**: to **approve a grant of £1,888.24** to the Recreation Committee. It was further noted that the Council would consider a **review of the Grants Policy**, and that **future grant applications must be accompanied by the applicant's accounts or financial statements**.

237.25 Resources

Bank balances, Bank Reconciliations, Receipts and Payments report to 31st December, and confirmation of internal controls checks: The finance checks were completed by Cllrs Matts & 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 Matts, it was **RESOLVED**: to receive and approve accounting statements to 31st December 2025.

On the proposition of the Chair, seconded by Cllr Matts, it was **RESOLVED**: to approve payments December 2025 - February 2026.

On the proposition of the Chair, seconded by Cllr Young, it was **RESOLVED**: to note receipts December 2025 - February 2026.

238.25 Planning

Planning Applications to consider and make resolution:

<u>2025/4968/FULL</u>	37 Holdenby Road Spratton NN6 8JD	Single storey rear extension and erection of front box dormer – <i>No comments</i> .
<u>2025/5048/FULL</u>	Land off Holdenby Road Spratton NN6 8LB	Amendment to scheme approved under application no. WND/2022/0835 to demolish and replace existing barn on the same footprint. Upgrades to existing access track and vehicle crossover - <i>No comments</i> .
<u>2025/4927/FULL</u>	11 Yew Tree Lane Spratton NN6 8HL	Replacement of all windows and one door (excluding annex) - <i>No comments</i> .
<u>2025/5287/FULL</u>	Eastleigh 7 High Street Spratton NN6 8HZ	First floor rear extension. <i>No comments</i> .

239.25 Council Address

Council considered the official Council mailing address as displayed on the Parish Council website. The

Clerk advised that, subject to agreement, the Village Hall could provide a suitable location for official correspondence.

On the proposition of Cllr Gaywood, it was **RESOLVED**: that the Clerk contact the Village Hall Committee to enquire about the possibility of installing a Spratton Parish Council mailbox on an external wall.

240.25 Cemetery Condition and Upkeep

Cllr Matts declared an interest in this item, left the meeting, and took no part in the discussion or voting.

The Council considered a report from the Clerk on the current condition of the cemetery and discussed the issue of rabbit activity and its impact on the site.

On the proposition of Cllr Ashton, seconded by Cllr Gaywood, it was **RESOLVED**: to adopt the latest national government guidance on the control of rabbits.

On the proposition of the Chair, it was further **RESOLVED**: that the Clerk obtain quotations for rabbit-proof fencing and seek information and quotations relating to rabbit pest control measures.

241.25 Biodiversity Duty – Environment Act 2021 (Section 40)

The Council considered a report from the Clerk outlining the Parish Council's duty under Section 40 of the Environment Act 2021. The Council also considered the proposed Biodiversity Policy and accompanying Biodiversity Report, prepared in order to meet this statutory duty.

The Council noted that the proposed documents provide a proportionate approach appropriate to the size, scale, and responsibilities of Spratton Parish Council.

On the proposition of the Chair, seconded by Cllr Beynon, it was **RESOLVED**: to adopt the Biodiversity Policy and Biodiversity Report for Spratton Parish Council.

242.25 Implementation of Assertion 10 (Practitioners' Guide 2025)

The Clerk explained the new additional assertion requirement introduced in relation to the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

On the proposition of Cllr Ashton, seconded by Cllr Young, it was **RESOLVED**: to confirm that the Council has considered Assertion 10 and any recommendations necessary to ensure compliance with digital governance standards.

243.25 IT Policy

Carried forward.

244.25 Communication

The Council considered the use of social media to improve communication with residents and to provide timely information about Parish Council activities. Facebook was considered an appropriate platform for this purpose.

The Council noted that a legacy Spratton Parish Council Facebook page exists but is currently inaccessible. It was agreed that any Parish Council Facebook page should operate with comments disabled,

automatically publish content directly from the Parish Council website, and be linked to the *Spratton – Let Us Know* community Facebook page.

On the proposition of the Chair, seconded by Cllr Ashton, it was **RESOLVED**:

- that the Clerk be authorised to either regain access to the existing Spratton Parish Council Facebook page or create a new official Parish Council Facebook page; and
- that Cllr Matts support efforts to regain access to, or arrange the removal of, the legacy Spratton Parish Council Facebook page.

245.25 Exclusion of Press and Public

On the proposition of the Chair, it was **RESOLVED**: that, pursuant to **Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960** and having regard to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the **Press and Public be excluded** from the meeting for agenda item **246.25**.

246.25 Tender – Grounds Maintenance

The Council considered, in closed session, the responses received in relation to the Grounds Maintenance contract.

On the proposition of the Chair, seconded by Cllr Young, it was **RESOLVED**: to **approve the methodology for assessment of tender submissions**, as proposed and demonstrated by the Clerk.

Cllr Matts declared an interest in one of the tendering contractors, being the **landlord of that contractor**, left the room, and took no part in the discussion or assessment relating to that submission.

On the proposition of Cllr Gaywood, seconded by Cllr Young, it was **RESOLVED**: to **award the Grounds Maintenance contract to R&G Grounds** and to authorise the Clerk to notify all the tenderers and enter into the contract.

The meeting was then **re-opened to the Press and Public**.

On the proposition of Cllr Ashton, it was **RESOLVED**: to **suspend Standing Order 3(x)** in order to allow the meeting to continue.

247.25 Churchyard Cemeteries and Open Spaces Mowing/Maintenance Issues (if any):

- a) **Village Handyman**: No update.
- b) **Cemetery Issues**:
 - a. **East View Cemetery – Condition**
The Clerk reported that complaints regarding the condition of East View Cemetery are being received on a weekly basis. The Clerk has responded to correspondents advising that the Council is aware of the issues and is actively considering and agreeing appropriate actions.
 - b. **Plaque Enquiry – East View Cemetery**
Clerk updated Council regarding an enquiry relating to the installation of a plaque at East View Cemetery. Relevant information, including applicable regulations and costings for memorial installation, has been provided to the enquirer. The Clerk reported that the enquirer subsequently indicated an intention to proceed with installation without permission or payment.
- c) **Mowing/Maintenance Issues**: *None*.

248.25 Community Issues

a) **Defibrillator Checks**

Defibrillator checks were confirmed as complete as of **7 January 2026**.

Cllr Ashton updated Council that new defibrillators have been installed, warranties extended, accessory packs included, cabinet dents removed, units cleaned, and new signage applied.

b) **Highway Safety**

a. **Smith Street Steps – Streetlighting Request**

Cllr Ashton updated Council on a resident request for the installation of additional streetlighting at the steps on Smith Street. Following consideration, Council agreed that additional streetlighting would not be appropriate and the request was declined.

b. **Dangerous Parking**

The Clerk updated Council on reports of dangerous parking received. The Clerk has signposted the requestor to West Northamptonshire Council as the appropriate authority.

249.25 Consultations Requiring a Response

a) **Draft Active Travel Strategy, Draft Mobility Hub Action Plan and Draft Rail Action Plan**

Cllr Ashton provided an update and outlined the proposed response to the consultation. Council noted that specific connectivity requirements relevant to Spratton were not adequately addressed within the draft documents.

On the proposition of the Chair, it was **RESOLVED**: to delegate preparation and submission of the Council's response to Cllr Ashton, including the addition of examples of specific local requirements.

b) **West Northamptonshire Council – Draft Budget Proposals 2026/27**

Council considered whether to submit a collective response to the consultation, which closes at midnight on **Tuesday 3 February 2026**.

On the proposition of Cllr Young, it was **RESOLVED**: that councillors should submit individual responses to the consultation.

c) **Northants CALC Snapshot Survey – Local Planning Authority Satisfaction**

Council considered the NCALC snapshot survey seeking parish and town councils' views on their Local Planning Authority (West Northamptonshire Council or North Northamptonshire Council). The closing date for responses is **31 January 2026**.

On the proposition of Cllr Young, it was **RESOLVED**: to delegate preparation and submission of the Council's response to the Clerk.

d) **Kier Transportation Annual Parish Consultation Survey (Highways)**

Council noted the annual parish consultation survey organised by Kier Transportation on behalf of West Northamptonshire Council Highways, with a closing date of **31 March 2026**.

Cllr Ashton agreed to consider the consultation and provide an update at the next meeting.

e) **West Northamptonshire Local Plan – Upcoming Consultation**

The Clerk updated Council for information only, advising that documents relating to the forthcoming consultation on the revised draft West Northamptonshire Local Plan are now available in advance of the formal consultation period opening.

250.25 Date of next meeting

17th February 2026, Meeting of the Parish Council.

Meeting closed: 21:40

Signed:  17/02/2026