

Minutes
Annual Parish Meeting

This meeting is an opportunity for parishioners to meet with Councillors and hear from village organisations. The meeting is arranged by the Parish Council for the public to attend and express any concerns or opinions on local matters.

Tuesday 21st April 2026
in Spratton Village Hall
Spratton

Meeting commenced 6.00pm.

2601. Jane Marshall as Chair welcomed all to the meeting. The Chair explained the status of the meeting **not being a Parish Council** meeting but a meeting of the local government electors of the parish itself, where residents have the opportunity to raise and discuss matters affecting the community.

2602. The Chair called for any comments or questions on minutes from APM 1 April 2025.

On the proposition of the Chair, seconded by Gary Ashton, it was **RESOLVED**: to approve minutes of Annual Parish Meeting 1 April 2025.

2603. The Chair delivered the Parish Council Chairman's report, giving an update on activity of Parish Council over the previous year and future plans.

This has been another busy and productive year for the Council, with a strong focus on maintaining parish assets and supporting the local community.

The Council has met regularly throughout the year, considering a wide range of matters affecting the parish. Councillors continue to give their time voluntarily and remain committed to representing residents and ensuring sound decision-making.

We have maintained strong governance arrangements and successfully met all audit requirements during the year.

Over the past year, the Council has delivered a number of important projects and initiatives:

- Completion of **boundary fencing works at Roly Banks / the Recreation Ground**, including the installation of a new access gate, improving both security and usability
- Undertaking **memorial safety testing** across all sites, including **East View Cemetery, Brixworth Road Cemetery, and St Andrew's closed churchyard**, ensuring public safety and compliance with our responsibilities
- Agreement of a **new grounds maintenance contract**, helping to secure quality and value in the upkeep of parish areas
- Awarding of **significant grant funding to the Recreation Field Charity** to support ongoing grounds maintenance

- Providing grant funding to the **Table Tennis Club** for the installation of a new outdoor table tennis table
- Making a **financial contribution towards rural bus services**, supporting important transport links for residents

These achievements reflect the Council's continued commitment to maintaining essential services and supporting the wider community.

The Council remains in a stable financial position. Careful budgeting and monitoring have allowed us to deliver these projects while managing increasing costs.

The precept has been set with consideration for residents, whilst ensuring the Council can continue to meet its obligations.

The Council continues to maintain parish assets, including open spaces and cemeteries. Safety and proper upkeep remain key priorities in all areas of our work.

Engagement with residents remains important. The Council welcomes feedback and values the input of parishioners in helping to shape decisions.

I would like to thank:

- My fellow councillors for their continued commitment and hard work
- The Clerk for their professionalism and support throughout the year
- Local organisations and volunteers who contribute so much to village life
- Residents for their engagement and support

The Council will continue to focus on maintaining services, supporting community initiatives, and addressing future challenges as they arise.

We remain committed to ensuring that Spratton continues to be a well-maintained and thriving village.

2604. The Chair introduced reports from Local Authorities & Parish Organisations, advising questions can be raised at 2605 on conclusion of receipt of all reports.

1. Spratton History Society report – report delivered.

- a. The Society remains active with 36 members, alongside regular attendees from outside the village. During the year, five speaker meetings and a summer guided walk in Northampton took place.
- b. The Society maintains a popular website and a well-kept archive of photographs, documents, and genealogical records, and continues to respond to family history enquiries.
- c. Members carry out regular maintenance of the Lt William Rhodes-Moorhouse VC stone, lay a wreath on Remembrance Sunday, and work with Pocket Park volunteers to honour First World War graves.

- d. The Society promotes local history through involvement with the Northamptonshire Heritage Forum and has expanded its online presence, including a Facebook page with over 200 followers.
- e. Its publication on the history of Spratton Primary School received a county award and remains available for purchase

2. Spratton Girlguiding Report - report delivered.

- a. It has been another positive year, with Brownies increasing from 10 to 15 members, Guides remaining steady at 16, and Rangers growing from 5 to 9. Support from new leaders is needed to sustain this growth.
- b. Members have taken part in a range of activities, including joint events and trips with the wider division. Thanks were expressed to Spratton Town Charity Land for their grant support.
- c. A member has been selected to represent Northamptonshire on a trip to Tanzania, and further trips are planned for 2026.

3. Recreation Committee Report – Julian Gaywood delivered report.

- a. It has been a productive year, with a focus on site maintenance, governance improvements, and ensuring the recreation ground continues to benefit the community. Progress has been made in strengthening governance through trustee training and reviewing procedures.
- b. The charity remains in a stable financial position, with approximately £11,000 in funds. Income has been supported by the football club, licence fees, and a donation from the Community Club. Expenditure has focused on essential maintenance, alongside efforts to secure grant funding.
- c. Significant work has been undertaken at the playground, including repairs and equipment improvements, supported by a new monthly inspection regime. No accidents have been reported.
- d. Ongoing maintenance across the site has included fencing, hedgerows, and general upkeep, supported by a Parish Council grant. Plans are also being developed for a Memorial Arboretum.
- e. Repairs to the skate park are nearing completion, and further funding opportunities are being explored. The site continues to be well used by local groups and residents.
- f. Challenges remain, including funding larger projects, managing maintenance, and encouraging volunteers. Priorities for the coming year include playground safety surface replacement, progressing the arboretum project, and continued improvements to governance and community engagement.
- g. Thanks were expressed to all volunteers, with particular appreciation to Gary Ashton for his significant contribution.

4. Spratton Village Hall Report – report delivered.

- a. Progress continues on the roof repair project, with planning permission approved in December 2025. Quotes have been obtained for the removal of the existing asbestos roof and replacement with tiles at a cost of approximately £39,000. Two further quotes are being sought before

proceeding with grant funding applications. It is hoped that the project will be completed by the end of 2026.

- b. Work has also been undertaken on the exterior of the building, including repairs and replacement of outside panelling and the installation of new external doors.
- c. Thanks were expressed to Spratton Town Charity Land for their grant support. A Cooperative Community Grant was also received in 2025, specifically to support improvements to the rear external area of the hall. Work completed to date includes replacement of the back door and clearance of the area.
- d. Appreciation was extended to all volunteers who have given their time to clear and improve the tarmac area at the front of the hall.
- e. Wi-Fi has now been installed as part of a scoping exercise to assess demand and usage.
- f. The Committee is currently seeking additional volunteers to support its ongoing work.

5. Café Doris Report - David Bennett delivered report.

- a. It has been an excellent year, supported by a team of 13 volunteers. The café achieved a turnover of approximately £13,000 and has continued to support local charities.
- b. The café also sells bread on behalf of 'the Good Loaf' charity, with between 30 and 40 loaves sold each week.
- c. Recent improvements include the installation of a new point of sale system, supported by Spratton Town Charity Land, and the addition of new bar stools.
- d. Looking ahead, the café is planning to sponsor a new churchyard notice board and is working towards achieving full charitable status, with a new constitution to be introduced this year.

6. St Andrew's Heritage Society Report - David Bennett delivered report.

- a. The Society continues its work maintaining and preserving the fabric of the 12th-century medieval church.
- b. A successful concert was held last year, and a further concert is planned for October.

7. St Andrew's PCC Report - David Bennett delivered report.

- a. It was reported that Reverend Allison will be leaving beginning of June, after which the parish will enter a period of interregnum.
- b. The church building remains in good condition, with ongoing maintenance of the fabric. Generous donations have been received to support this work.
- c. Planned improvements include upgrades to WC facilities, repair or replacement of the carpet, and general ongoing improvements to the building.

8. Ward Councillor Report – Cllr Christine Ware delivered report.

- a. She expressed that it has been an honour to represent the 11 parishes within the Naseby Ward at West Northamptonshire Council since May 2025, Spratton being the largest.

- b. Since her election, she has attended 42 Parish Council and Parish Meetings. She extended thanks to Cllr Jonathan Harris (Brixworth Ward) and FOCUS team member Tony Nixon for attending meetings on her behalf when scheduling conflicts arose.
- c. Cllr Ware has attended six West Northamptonshire Council meetings since the May elections, along with one extraordinary meeting held in March.
- d. She has been a member of the Non-Strategic Planning Committee since December 2025 and has attended six meetings to date. In addition, she has attended a Democracy and Standards Committee meeting and now serves as a substitute member, and also substitute member on the Adult Social Care, Health and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, attending two meetings in this capacity. She has also attended four Cabinet meetings as an opposition councillor.
- e. Cllr Ware has been appointed by West Northamptonshire Council to serve on two outside bodies: Spratton Town and Charity Trust and Clipston School Charity. She expressed her gratitude to the trustees of both organisations for their warm welcome and support in helping her settle into these roles.
- f. Her casework has been wide-ranging, with a particular focus on rural transport, including local bus services and the infrastructure required to support a positive public transport experience.

9. Table Tennis Club Report - report delivered.

- a. It has been a successful year for the club, with strong support from the community.
- b. Fundraising began in 2025 for an outdoor table at the Recreation Ground. The response was very positive, with donations of approximately £620 received, alongside a £750 grant from the Parish Council, enabling the purchase of the table and associated equipment. The outdoor table has proved to be a popular addition to the village.
- c. In October 2025, an application was made to Spratton Town and Charity for funding towards an indoor table, resulting in a grant of £488.
- d. Membership has increased to 16, with weekly sessions taking place. New members are always welcome.

10. Spratton CE Primary School report - report submitted.

11. Spratton Town and Charity Land report - report submitted.

12. Spratton WI report - report submitted.

13. Photography Group report – report submitted.

2605 Public Questions and Discussion

The Chair opened the floor for questions and discussion on the reports presented and other matters affecting the community.

- 1. Cllr Ashton noted that difficulties in attracting volunteers had been raised at the previous meeting and suggested that the Parish Council could consider hosting a volunteering event to promote opportunities and support local organisations. The Chair agreed this was a worthwhile idea and confirmed that it would be given further

consideration. Cllr Ware added that National Volunteers' Week, held in the first week of June, could provide a suitable opportunity, potentially at the Village Hall.

2. A resident, John Hunt, commented that newcomers to the village may wish to become involved in community activities but may not be aware of opportunities or may have limited time. Providing clearer information on how to get involved could help improve engagement.
3. Concerns were raised regarding the condition and maintenance of village paths and verges. It was noted that grass cutting and weed treatment appeared inconsistent, with specific reference to Holdenby Road and the churchyard. Concerns were also expressed regarding the use of weed spraying, particularly in areas where it may impact wildlife and natural flora.
4. The Chair advised that the Parish Council would work with its contractor to review these issues.
5. John Hunt, speaking on behalf of the Climate Action Group, highlighted the importance of environmental considerations, including the preservation of wildlife. He encouraged the Council to consider how best to balance maintenance requirements with supporting biodiversity. It was noted that it was important that the village was tidy for the Open Gardens day on 14 June.

2606. No Other Business

2607. The Chair thanked all for attending and delivering reports.

Meeting closed: 18:50

Signed:

Dated:

Chairman
Spratton Parish Council