

THIRSTON PARISH COUNCIL

At the Parish Council Meeting held in the Coquet Room, Felton Village Hall on Wednesday 29 October 2025.

Present: Cllrs Day, Green, F Hoyle and S Hoyle
The Parish Clerk in attendance – Mrs L Hamlin
3 Members of the Public in attendance

47 Co-option of New Councillor – Samuel Hoyle was coopted onto the Parish Council and the relevant paperwork was completed by Sam and the Clerk. Sam has a bachelors degree in Earth Sciences, giving him a solid understanding of local ecological issues and the ability to interpret environmental impact data. This enables him to offer informed views on land use matters, particularly concerning pollution of the River Coquet.

48 Apologies for Absence – Cllr Royal & CC Sanderson

49 Declarations of interest in items on the Agenda – None

50 Presentation by Sam Thistlethwaite (ST) from ICP re proposed anaerobic digester

Greenacre Energy (a new company with no record of this work) is the firm who are planning to develop the anaerobic digester just off the A1 on land between the Woodland Burial Ground, Eshott Airfield and the A1 – along the Wintrick Road, a site comprising 24 acres. This site was chosen due to the easy access to the A1, access to local farm stock and access to the grid network. The digester will be using agricultural feed, ie slurry and agricultural crops, not commercial waste. The AD will produce gas to be put into the grid to supply 7,000 homes, 10,000 tonnes of Biogenic CO2 to be used in industrial processes and solid matter to produce bio-fertiliser to be used by farms. The plant will have up to 7 full time jobs and 110% biodiversity net gain which will help to achieve NCCs 2030 net zero target.

The largest structures on site will be the dome structures – directly adjacent to the woodland burial ground, to include that the turning circle for the tractors with trailers right next to the burial ground, as are the slurry stores for animal faeces. Water tanks to be installed at the furthest point away from the burial ground, these water stores are there because the whole site of 24 acres will have a concrete base which changes the drainage and runoff in the area. The question was asked if the AD does have to be in this location, can these structures be swapped over so that there is less impact on the burial ground as the water tanks would then be closest to the burial ground with the numerous vehicle movements being at the furthest point away and this could be a possibility but also looking at various bunding to alleviate the noise and views from the burial ground.

Concerns were raised about the smells produced from the slurry etc coming into and being held on site. The PC was informed that there should not be a smell from the site. However, materials will be brought into site in open-topped vehicles so if they are smelly, in theory, they should be put directly into the system to alleviate any smells.

Access to the site will be along Wintrick Road beside the recycle bins. It was raised about the issue of traffic blocking this junction especially when holiday traffic has cut through Felton/West Thirston due to A1 being slow and this was raised in the press the previous day by CC Sanderson stating this junction is dangerous. ST stated they are in the hands of Northumberland Highways on this issue but he is sure something could be put in place to mitigate any holds ups of traffic coming off the A1 not being able to turn directly into the access road. There will be full transport statement/survey provided with the application which will look at historic traffic movements in the area along with routes into the site, ie via West Thirston and Felton. This will cover all months of the year and there is a lot of information out there following all the surveys undertaken for the A1 dualling. It would also look at physical state of road network to see if it is suitable for vehicle movements. Again, it would be down to NCC to look at restrictions on roads used to see if suitable. Tonnage changes seasonally and the vehicles involved are not necessarily HGVs, farm tractors with trailers will be accessing the site. It is also seasonal. In July and September there would be 150 two-way movements a day (ie 300 vehicles movements in and out of site per day), the rest of the time there would be 37 two-way movements a day (74 in and out per day) plus 24 movements a day from cars for staff. ST could not provide detail on the CO2 movements out of the site and stated that the digestate would probably be back filled into the vehicles bringing waste onto site. When questioned about back-loading and whether there would be a need for fertiliser when offloading waste ST did state that he did not have figures to provide this information to hand.

THIRSTON PARISH COUNCIL

When asked what locations farmers would be coming from ST could not provide this information as to how far they would be travelling to off load at the site but stated it was a Northumberland facility for Northumberland farms.

There is a flare on site but is only for emergency or if there is a build up of gas should they not be able to get supplies off site. NCC also were keen to understand this in relation to emissions from the site in relation to the SSSI near to the site. The water from the site is put in the system for cleaning and the water held in the tanks is from water run off and would not have any contaminants that therefore would affect the land. The process are is sited on concrete so no contamination can permeate into the land.

Other sites had been looked at but in terms of accessibility this site was the best site identified along with the demand for the agricultural feedstock and having a connection to the gas network. The question was asked what the benefits are for residents of the parish from having this facility and ST stated there were no direct benefits. It was raised that this was being sited beside existing businesses but of no benefit to those businesses or the community and ST agreed this was the case. However, there are the wider benefits of meeting renewable energy requirements. The company will potentially contribute to projects in the village if asked and local farmers will benefit. A question was raised about jobs on site and ST stated there would be operational managers however there would be one or two labour/driver type roles that could be filled by local people. In terms of noise it is quite a passive operation, the vehicle movements around site would produce noise. There will be no seasonal workers as the site runs 24/7 and will be constantly operational. A lot of the lighting will be motion sensor lighting for the site during winter and night time working. Plans have slipped due to Environmental Screening questions raised by NCC, specifically re air quality, so now looking at submitting planning application towards the end of the year. Various reports need to be drawn together including a visual impact assessment to see how this will look in terms of area around woodland burial site. Hopefully these will be ready in next 6-8 weeks. A request was made to receive copies of reports for other sites and ST stated he would forward these onto the PC. The Company currently does not have any operational sites but are proposing one in Devon, the site at West Thirston and one in North Yorkshire.

There is as AD at Cockle Park which is only a few miles from West Thirston so is there a demand for two ADs in such close proximity? ST stated yes to this but did not give any further information. There is no breakdown as to the amount of each material coming on site but a ball park figure is given to the operator but ultimately is subject to what is available at the time. The materials being brought in are heavily subject to monitoring.

What happens to the surplus CO2? ST stated there is little surplus but it can be stored in canisters should there not be an immediate need for it and ST stated he was 100% certain none would go for use on fracking sites.

ST is happy to come back to a PC meeting with Greenacres once the application is submitted.

51 Public Questions (max 5 mins per person) – None

52 The minutes of the meeting on 25 September 2025 were approved as a true record.

53 Matters Arising therefrom:

1) Matters arising there from (excluding outstanding actions in relation to NCC)

- a) Felton Cemetery Joint Committee – Policies and Procedures update – to be reviewed at November FCJC meeting
- b) The Helm bus stop – NCC is progressing this with Arriva
- c) Parking at Pumpkin Pie – propose a meeting with owner to progress ideas in the New Year. Councillors reported that the parking situation has improved over the past few weeks.
- d) FCJC Invoice details – no information as yet.
- e) New website and email address – Clerk has signed up to the new site – more details from providers to follow in next few weeks.
- f) Burgham Road resurfacing request – this has been added to the LTP instead of the light on The Peth.

2) Long-term Outstanding issues being addressed by NCC - None

54 Report by County Councillor Sanderson

We have just finished our consultation on the Budget and our new Corporate Plan which will outline our plans for the County for the next four years.

THIRSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Responses to our online consultation almost reached 2000 which is the most we have ever had and there is a great deal of positivity about what we are doing.

I have also attended a number of meetings with Parish and Town Councils across the County finishing last night with a meeting with Berwick Town Council.

There remains a big issue around finding £20 million saving without cutting frontline services while at the same time retaining the spend on new school builds and continuing free town centre car parking. We will get there but it gets harder every year.

Amble new school is progressing well and we have just agreed a £64million scheme for the Berwick schools.

Closer to home I have written to Highways England who run the A1 about the rat run issue again and still await their ideas to help us on that.

And I have also asked again - as I have a number of times over the past ten years - for lighting at the West Moor junction.

As always please let me know if I can help with anything, and best wishes.

55 Report back from Meetings and Representations on behalf of TPC

Cllr Hoyle attended the LPT working group meeting and sat at a table with Richard McKenzie of NCC. Cllr Hoyle raised the following:

- Burgham Road – NCC to request S106 from Cussins to go towards road resurfacing
- Non-slip surface on narrow bank – criteria must be a safety priority and to identify this on LTP (Clerk has done this)
- Double Yellow outside Pumpkin Pie – to enable safety for oncoming traffic and it is at an area where one footpath ends and crosses over the opposite side of road, also current parking causes issues for wheelchair access. Too late for LTP so Clerk to raise with CC Sanderson.

Clerk

Cllr Day reported back on Cemetery Committee Meeting. Discussions are ongoing in relation to reducing costs and increasing income. Suggestions are increase fees to bring in line with Local Council and other cemeteries; speak to stonemason to site headstones in greater foundations to stop tilting of headstones which require ongoing costs; mapping of graves and identifying relative and contact them to see if wish to maintain the graves; discuss with grounds man as to what work could be shared with volunteers to reduce costs. A new promotional leaflet will be produced in the New Year.

56 Potential Projects

a) Footpaths/Rights of Way – None

b) Landscaping – None

c) Short term / Medium term / Long term projects –

- Village gateways – Awaiting a response from NCC as to whether gateways can be installed at two locations into West Thirston. Clerk to chase a definitive answer and if NCC do not agree with the locations then project to be stopped,
- Bus shelters – the bus shelters have been painted by the WI. Thanks have been given via facebook and will be included in The Bridge Newsletter. A question will be put to residents in The Bridge as to what information they want to see in the bus shelters.

57 To report on any planning decisions:

25/01854/ADE - Pumpkin Pie – Retrospective application for signage and fencing - WITHDRAWN

25/01853/FUL - Pumpkin Pie Childcare Ltd – retrospective for construction of timber fencing and 1no fascia sign - WITHDRAWN

25/02915/PRUTPO - The Old Mill Stable Drive Eshott – PERMITTED

25/02967/PRUTPO - Rose Cottage Eshott – tree works - PERMITTED

25/02984/LBC - Old Farm House West Thirston - Listed Building Consent for like for like replacement of roof tiles, stone coping and chimney stacks due to weather damage - APPROVED

Planning applications pending:

24/01531/VARYCO - Eshott Heugh Paintballing Site – variation to a number of conditions following detailed drainage report

25/02376/FUL - Eshott Hall Refurbishment and alterations to Grade II Listed Eshott Hall including alterations to walled garden, conversion of existing outbuilding to gym and health studio, erection of

THIRSTON PARISH COUNCIL

4no. wellness cabins, erection of night sky appreciation cabin, erection of 14no. 1 bedroom timber framed guest accommodation cabins and 1no. 2 bedroom timber framed guest accommodation cabins, erection of support cabin for wild swimming, creation of a new vehicular car park and all associated infrastructure

25/02672/LBC - Eshott Hall - LBC for proposed external and internal alterations to Grade II Listed Eshott Hall, in addition to alterations to the former stable block and stable block buildings

25/03086/LBC - Old Manse Cottage West Thirston - alterations to the bathroom

25/03389/PRUTPO - Chapelside House Eshott Village – Tree works

25/03599/HEGRMN - Land East Of Wintrick Farm - Hedgerow Removal Notice: Removal of one section of hedgerow totalling 190m - The County Ecologist has been consulted on this application due to the impact that the removal of the hedge will potentially have on the surrounding habitats. Once their comments come back (due by 29.10), they will state whether or not biodiversity net gain (BNG) is required in this particular instance and if so, it will be implemented as a condition on the decision notice.

25/03660/FUL – West Moor Plantation - Creation of a wooden framed outbuilding for a garage and gym space, conversion of a double garage to a utility, downstairs WC, downstairs bedroom and en-suite, and enclosure of the boiler, 2 doors for external access, creation of 3 windows and addition of 2 dormers on the west facing aspect of the roof

Planning Issues:

Felmoor Park – Entrance lighting and signage – no further action being taken.

25/00928/screen – Anaerobic Digester Environmental Impact Assessment – it has been determined by NCC that no EIA is required.

58 Requested Agenda Items:

- Defib Machine – The battery required replacement so the machine was temporarily decommissioned on The Circuit and note sent out on facebook. Battery has now been replaced and those required have been informed.
- Draft Budget – Auditor has also been included in circulation and raised a couple of questions but they were answered by the Clerk to his satisfaction. Budget was agreed and the precept to remain at £10,750.
- Policies to be reviewed/adopted – Publication Scheme with approved, Public Participation was approved, Standing Orders – there were no requirements for changes due to not including one stipulation in the Public Participation Policy agreed on.
- Dates for 2026 meetings – 5 Feb, 26 Mar, 7 May, 18 Jun, 6 Aug, 24 Sep, 5 Nov, 17 Dec.
- Speed monitoring data request – the data has been circulated. In summary the last surveys NCC carried out in West Thirston were last year at The Peth and next to the nursery.

TS/24/41 - **B6345 The Peth**, Felton. 23/08/2024 - 05/09/2024.

Northbound: Ave Daily Vehicles – 897, Average Speed - 29.8mph, 85th Percentile - 34.7mph

Southbound: Ave Daily Vehicles – 1367, Average Speed - 28.6mph, 85th Percentile - 33.6mph

TS/24/65 - **Outside Pumpkin Pie Nursery**, West Thirston. 08/11/2024 - 16/12/2024.

Eastbound: Ave Daily Vehicles – 522, Average Speed - 21.3mph, 85th Percentile - 26.2mph

Westbound: Ave Daily Vehicles – 570, Average Speed - 23.3mph. 85th Percentile - 28.3mph

TS/25/52 - **B6345 East Thirston**. 04/10/2025 - 23/10/2025.

Eastbound: Ave Daily Vehicles – 505, Average Speed - 34.4mph, 85th Percentile - 41.3mph

Westbound: Ave Daily Vehicles – 549, Average Speed - 32.7mph, 85th Percentile - 38.6mph

For information, the 85th percentile is that speed at which 85% of vehicles are travelling or less, while the remaining 15% of vehicles will be travelling above that speed.

Within a 30mph speed limit, the 85th percentile is required to be a minimum of 35mph for enforcement to be considered by the police. This criteria has been met for the East Thirston survey and NCC have forwarded a copy of the results to Northumbria Police for their records, requesting that they enforce the speed limit when they have the resources available to do so. NCC state the cables on the road on The Peth are not theirs.

THIRSTON PARISH COUNCIL

59 Correspondence:

- NCC – LTP workshop slides for circulation - circulated
- NCC – Free trees available – information to be put in The Bridge and facebook – no closing date Clerk on the information so might be too late for next bridge edition.
- Northumbrian Water – information letter re survey works – NWL are carrying out investigation work to help reduce the impact of storm overflow discharges. A survey team from Mantank will be carrying out Connectivity and Impermeable Area Surveys on NWL's behalf, starting from 3 November 2025 for four weeks. These surveys will help NWL assess the condition and performance of their existing sewerage network. The project will separate run-off water from sewage to stop the run-off water entering the sewage system thereby preventing over-capacity of the Felton sewage works and preventing raw sewage entering the River Coquet. The Felton pumping station and Swarland Fence are being looked at as well. Cllr Day will be updated on works on a monthly zoom call and updates will be provided by NWL in The Bridge newsletter.
- Request to undertake verge works improvements at Bockenfield Layby – clearing of layby at Crematorium entrance and to plant 50+ trees and wild flower area. NCC has given permission for this work to be undertaken.
- Email from resident re Pumpkin Pie application – requesting amendment details – details sent by application subsequently withdrawn
- Email informing PC of a Directors termination at Northumberland Aviation – sender has been informed that this has no bearing on the operations of Eshott Airfield
- Community Awards - celebrate the people of the Region that epitomise the spirit of belonging - circulated
- Phone call re recycling bin filled with general rubbish – reported to NCC
- NALC News - circulated
- CAN News - circulated
- Groundwork Newsletter - circulated

60 Finance

- (a) **Financial Summary** was reviewed with no issues and the current balance stands at £16,630.71 TPC funds and £2,052.19 FCJC totaling £18,682.90. The balance was reconciled with the bank statement and Cllr S Hoyle signed the statement to confirm this. Clerk looked into the Link Account seemingly provided by Lloyds which is interest only with 3.99% rate and up to £4k can be deposited. The only account available is an interest account which would pay about £3 interest over the year so it was felt it was not worthwhile.
- (b) **Payments** - The following list was put before members for approval:

Payments approved at this meeting:		
SC	Lloyds Bank Service Charge x 2	£8.50
SC	L Hamlin Salary 26 September – 24 October – 4 weeks	£413.20
IB227	L Hamlin expenses Weekly Allowance 5 x £1 (£5.00) Paint for bus shelters - £29.00 McAfee subscription - £89.99 Defib replacement battery - £279.65	£403.64
IB228	Gallery 45 – Room Hire	£26.25
IB229	LA Topping Services – Field of Hope	£80.00

- (c) **Income** – None

61 Urgent Items –

Narrow Bank needs sweeping to remove debris and to avoid people slipping

Clerk

- 62 Items for next agenda** – None but contact the Clerk if anything to be added before next agenda is circulated.