

THIRSTON PARISH COUNCIL

At the Parish Council Meeting held in the Long Room, Gallery 45 on Thursday 26 March 2026.

Present: Cllrs Green, K Fenwick, F Hoyle and W Royal
The Parish Clerk in attendance – Mrs L Hamlin

92 Apologies for Absence – Cllrs J Day and S Hoyle, CC Sanderson

93 Declarations of interest in items on the Agenda – None

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

95 The minutes of the meeting on 5 February 2026 were approved as a true record.

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

- a) The Helm bus stop – Due to the fact that the existing parking areas on the A1 are used by trucks for overnight stops National Highways will not allow these to be used for bus stops so unless funding can be sought for new bus stops the Helm stop will have to be continued to be used for caravan parks, zoo, airfield and crematorium. Arriva are trying to pick up and drop off in these locations when the parking areas are free of HGVs.
- b) Parking at Pumpkin Pie – The latest newsletter send to parents/carers has included a reminder about parking and being courteous to residents. Staff parking is still an issue as filling the road with staff as opposed to using the car park.
- c) Bleed Kit beside Defib – Pictures of this have been sent to FPC with a request as to where they are with looking into these. Cllr Hoyle stated the question had been raised as to why we need one. Cllr Royal stated it would be used for severe falls or road traffic accidents until ambulance arrives.
- d) Machine Meet – Event notification form – NCC has not received any paperwork. Planning state it is not something they deal with. SAG (Safety Advisory Group) are responsible however they cannot enforce people to send in event notices. Clerk has forwarded contact details to SAG so they can speak direct to the airfield.
- e) Statutory definition of a school – NCC planning are still stating that the nursery is classed as a school – there has been no response from the NCC highways. If this is a school then yellow zigzag lines can be installed at this site. Clerk to pursue the zigzag lines and contact GS about this. Clerk
- f) Website update – the website is live, I have deleted all info off the old site with the exception of informing of the new website and email details. Email is up and running and Clerk has contacted all relevant bodies but it is taking some time to get updates. Only about 6 emails received so far but old email still functioning with a notice of new details.
- g) Recycle bins by Wintrick Road – The green “rubbish” bin has been removed but this is still not stopping the filling of bins with general waste and flytipping in this area. There is very little that NCC can do other than install their cameras again which there is a waiting list for. Hopefully once house glass collection is introduced at the end of the year these bins will be removed.
- h) The Peth – Decaying leaves – after numerous complaints from residents and reminders to NCC this area was properly swept.
- i) Road surface down The Peth - NCC has instructed work in the area
- j) Pot holes in the New Bridge – NCC has instructed work in the area
- k) Acro barrier supports – NCC bridge team responsible for this and they are speaking to the design team to undertake works.
- l) Kings Garden Party – The application from the PC was successful and Cherry Hambrook has been invited to attend the Garden Party. Clerk to ascertain if she is accepting the invitation. Clerk

97 Report by County Councillor Sanderson

We agreed our 26/27 Budget meeting a week or so ago with only one voting against - with cross party support agreeing with some useful amendments.

Normally these budget meetings are very tortuous and difficult so it was great to have agreement amongst us.

The front line services remain protected along with free town centre car parking and some new initiatives.

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98 Report back from Meetings and Representations on behalf of TPC

Town and Parish Council Spring Conference:

- The Council has two free services that might be of interest: (1) a person will come out to coffee mornings (or similar) and help people with tech (phones, computers, hearing aids, etc.); and (2) a person will come out and run exercise classes. I have contact details if anyone is interested.
- The council has a service to put up bus timetables at bus stops. £100 for printed timetable and a Perspex-fronted box.
- The Community Governance Review (Stage 1 consultation happening at the moment) is largely about parish councils that wish to change their boundaries, change their name, or change the way they work with neighbouring PC's (e.g. grouped parishes with a single PC). At stage 2, they will recommend changes to PC based on suggestions from PCs in stage 1. I don't think it is relevant to us.
- Rob Murfin talked about future changes in housing. The national government has increased the housing targets for city and county councils and reduced the reasons that housing developments can be refused. The previous NCC target was 625, the new target is 1672; however, NCC has been running at about 1200-1500 houses per year for the past 10 years and so it won't be such a large change for us compared with other areas. Rob doesn't think it will have much effect on Thirston because there are towns in the county that want more than their share of housing (e.g. Berwick and Blyth). Rob made the following points:

- Because there will be fewer reasons for refusing housing, the Local Plan and Neighbourhood plans will become more important (should we consider reviewing our Neighbourhood plan). Clerk to investigate what the changes to refusing housing are and review the NP in relation to changes. Clerk
- Rob wants to put effort into planning a strategy for housing in the county, so that communities can shape the strategy rather than developers

Cllr Hoyle stated that the British Pilgrimage Trust is classifying various walks and this needs to be reviewed to see if St Oswalds Way is one of these walks and more emphasis in NP on St Oswalds Way should be included. Clerk

Cemetery committee (10/3/26):

- This year's budget is significantly underspent, largely because of the dry summer last year and the wet winter (resulting in less grass growth and hence less cutting)
- We agreed slight changes to budget categories to make accounting easier in Scribe software – no change to overall financial values, just a combination of some categories.
- FPC will ask clerks to confirm their (newly published) electoral rolls to check whether the % used for apportioning payments from PCs is still accurate. – Clerk has submitted the figures to FPC.
- FPC wishes to put a proposal to PCs to apportion some of the cost of Scribe software to the Cemetery budget – the cost of TPC would be £23.66 for this year. It was agreed this was acceptable. Clerk to relay to FPC. Clerk
- We reviewed the Cemetery pages of the FPC website and agreed they looked good
- We reviewed the map of the cemetery, the scans of the registers, and the electronic register. The map and scans of registers will go on the FPC website. We agreed that the scans represent a true and accurate representation of the registers. On this basis, the Clerk will enquire about lodging the old register books with the Northumberland Archive.
- We reviewed the new draft cemetery information leaflet (for funeral directors and the public). Some changes are needed.
- We reviewed the section of the FPC risk assessment that relates to the cemetery. FPC will share this for PCs to review.

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99 Potential Projects

a) Footpaths/Rights of Way – None

b) Landscaping – None

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

- Bus shelters – Install signage to include taxi firm numbers, QR code for bus timetable and Clerks contact details for any problems. Clerk still to action this.

Clerk

100 To report on any planning decisions:

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

Planning applications pending:

25/04301/FUL - Land To West Of Longdyke - Erection of 4 small glamping pods and 1 shepherd's hut lodge for holiday use (year-round operation) – no objections

26/00130/ADE - Pumpkin Pie Childcare Ltd – Advertising Signage – objections submitted. There are a number of support letters all stating the same word for word support so obviously all have been sent a request by the applicant for support.

26/00018/LBC - Old Manse Cottage, West Thirston – Bathroom transformations – no objections.

26/00434/FUL – Eshott Home Farm - Erection of new agricultural building, ancillary to existing steading, to provide additional storage capacity for agricultural machinery and livestock – no objections

26/00437/FUL - The Limes, The Pipistrelles, Eshott - Enlarge existing first floor bedroom window opening for new French doors. Demolish existing ground floor bay window pitched roof for new insulated flat roof construction and external balcony to rear with structural glass balustrade – no objections.

26/00364/LBC - The Old Manse West Thirston - Installation of 4no. CCTV cameras and 2no. Ring Doorbells – No objections

26/00916/FUL - 3 Beech Avenue Burgham Gardens - Rear single storey conservatory/extension – no objections.

Planning Issues:

Eshott Airfield – no variation to the application in relation to treatment plant as yet.

High Park Farm Appeal (24/02540/FUL) - APP/P2935/W/25/3375680 – nothing further to report.

Pumpkin Pie signage and fencing – response from Enforcement Officer – no action can be taken when a live application is in place.

Anaerobic Digester – Concerns were raised that septic tank waste might be taken into this proposed plant. It should be a proper treatment facility like the one in Horsley. Cllr Green to ascertain what facility the Eshott tanks are taken to.

Cllr
Green

101 Requested Agenda Items:

- Leak in Narrow Bank – this leak has appeared again and it was reported to NCC to investigate. Awaiting a response as to what work will be undertaken. It was agreed this needs digging up and fully investigating. There have now been 3 injuries that the Clerk knows of due to the leaking water freezing – residents should be encouraged to submit a claim to NCC which would ensure that problem is sorted once and for all.

Clerk

- IT Policy – this has been circulated prior to the meeting. It was agreed to adopt this policy after a couple of minor amends.

Clerk

- Incoming correspondence – All correspondence should come directly to the Clerk. If councillors are contacted individually can they please ensure that the person is referred direct to the Clerk or email forwarded to the Clerk stating to the sender that all correspondence should be sent direct to the Clerk.

- Traffic Monitoring Equipment – there were two sets of monitoring strips put on the road out of West Thirston to the A1 and one set along the single track to Wintrick. The Clerk checked and this was no NCC equipment so it is probable in relation to traffic monitoring for the proposed anaerobic digester. Obviously any monitoring should be undertaken during the periods of July and September when the anaerobic digester will be at its busiest as will the road to the A1.

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102 Correspondence:

- NCC - Environment and Climate Fund - to support community projects – Forwarded to Felton CAN and CRAG.
- NCC - Stage 1 Community Governance Review (CGR) - Public Consultation – notices have been put in the noticeboard and the PC has submitted their response.
- NCC - Joint Castle Morpeth and North Northumberland Community Partnership Meeting – information circulated, meeting had no relevance to our parish this time.
- NCC – Joint Conference at County Hall presentation slides - circulated
- NCC – Libraries consultation – deadline 13 April – circulated – Clerk to put on facebook. Clerk
- Northumbrian Water – Felton Environmental Improvements meeting – Cllr F Hoyle to attend (online). Clerk to check and resend meeting link. Clerk
- Age UK Scams Awareness talk – Scams and Scones – the Clerk has arranged for a public meeting to take place on Tuesday 19 May 10.30 – 12 in conjunction with FPC. Age UK has a small amount of money for coffee/tea and scones (hence the name) but would like the Clerk to source someone to make 40-50 cheese scones. Clerk thought the WI might be able to help or try to get a deal from the Running Fox. Clerk to contact WI to see if they can make scones or if not approach the Running Fox and also see who would be available to help on the day – maybe someone from FPC as TPC Clerk not available. Clerk
- Email North East War Memorial Project Donation request – this was discussed at the Cemetery Committee meeting and it was agreed not to donate.
- Keep Britain Tidy – big Spring Clean event – this was forwarded to Felton CAN.
- Email re flytipping on Wintrick Road – a sofa seat was left, NCC has collected it.
- Email re blocked right of way at Blackbrook Farm – Airfield works resulted in this being blocked. It has since been removed.
- Email re damage to fencing at Blackbrook Farm – Airfield works resulted in damage to the fence and this is still ongoing.
- Email re car charging points - The Felton Surgery would like to reclaim the parking spaces outside the old surgery building. Suzanne Beddow has been talking to the council about moving the electric car charging points. Apparently, the council has given the impression that there might be an opportunity to move them in the coming months at the same time as when they take back over the operation of them from a private company. Cllr Day told Mrs Beddow that he thinks this is highly unlikely given the cost of moving them. He also informed Mrs Beddow that we looked into having EV charge points in West Thirston but there was nowhere suitable.
- Emails re machine meet and Event notification form – Discussed under matters arising.
- Emails re FJCJ records – circulated but it was agreed this is a matter for FPC to deal with.
- NALC, CAN and Groundworks newsletters – circulated.

103 Finance

(a) **Financial Summary** was reviewed with no issues and the current balance stands at £11,821.46 TPC funds and £2,052.19 FCJC totaling £13,873.65. The balance was reconciled with the bank statement and Cllr Fenwick signed the statement to confirm this.

(b) **Payments** - The following list was put before members for approval:

Automatic Payments since last meeting:		
SC	Lloyds Bank Service Charge x 2	£8.50
SC	L Hamlin Salary 12 February	£413.20
	L Hamlin Salary 12 March	£413.20
DD	ICO – Data Protection Fee	£47.00

Payments approved at this meeting:		
IB233	L Hamlin expenses	
	Weekly Allowance 14 x £1 (£14.00)	
	DD for email address 12 March – 11 April (£2.99)	£88.28
	Viking Direct Paper (£26.29)	
	Solvelt It Support (£45.00)	

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The Clerk will have to amend the salary direct debit from 9 April 2026 and make a one off small payment via expenses claim to cover the pay increase from 1 – 8 April. DD to change on 9 April to £419.60 from £413.20 to cover Clerks increase in pay.

(c) **Income** – HMRC VAT reclaim - £188.14

104 Urgent Items –

Clerk asked if anyone knows what the situation is with The Bridge Magazine. Cllr Royal stated printer issue but will hopefully get an update at a meeting next week.

Cllr
Royal

Cllr Hoyle stated there will be traffic control in place on 1 April for tree works which will mean single traffic outside Thirston House all day. Clerk to put a notice on facebook.

Clerk

Cllr Fenwick raised concerns that some second property owners are now renting to local councils specifically for childrens social care as opposed to housing in secure units. This is partly due to it being lucrative to second property owners and also with new government legislation on second properties this can be a more appealing route for property owners. Need to be alert to any properties submitting planning application for chance of use to HMO (House in Multiple Occupation). It is not NCC who is at fault but they are grossly underfunded and this is one way of tackling the situation of lack of secure unit facilities.

105 Items for next agenda – Year end accounts

Chairman closed the meeting at 8.50pm

Date of Next meeting: 14 May 2026 after Annual Parish Meeting