

THIRSTON PARISH COUNCIL

At the Parish Council Meeting held in the Long Room, Gallery 45 on Thursday 5 February 2026.

Present: Cllrs Day, Green, F Hoyle and W Royal
The Parish Clerk in attendance – Mrs L Hamlin
1 Member of the Public in attendance

77 Co-option of Councillor – Kate Fenwick was coopted onto the Parish Council and the relevant paperwork was completed by Kate and the Clerk.

78 Apologies for Absence – Cllr S Hoyle, CC Sanderson

79 Declarations of interest in items on the Agenda – None

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

81 The minutes of the meeting on 18 December 2025 were approved as a true record.

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

- a) The Helm bus stop – No further progress. Clerk
- b) Parking at Pumpkin Pie - Covered under Item 84 report back from meetings.
- c) 20mph through West Thirston – This was approved by NCC on 3 September and will come out of the 2025/26 LTP budget. It does not however cover The Peth but has been extended to cover the full length of properties to the edge of West Thirston.
- d) Bleed Kit beside Defib – awaiting more information about funding for this. Clerk to send picture of kit to Felton PC. Clerk
- e) Abandoned Vehicle – this has now been removed
- f) Meeting Date Change – The Clerk proposed moving the May meeting to the end of April however the PC is legally required to have a meeting in May, new date to be 14 May. Clerk
- g) Bockenfield Layby bin – NCC is not replacing this bin due to it being misused.
- h) Lighting request in West Thirston – NCC stated that the PC would have to pay for this – I relayed this to the resident and they responded to state they would be fine without a light.
- i) Road widening of road up to High Park Farm – The Clerk tried to find where the member of public was referring to but could not find anything. Cllr Royal stated that he had seen the area and there is gravel at the side of the road where drainage has been installed with the works that NCC have undertaken along this stretch of road.

Long-term Outstanding issues being addressed by NCC - None

83 Report by County Councillor Sanderson

Our budget meeting is next week which marks the result of a lot of work. The government have sensibly given Councils a three year spending plan so it means we can budget services more easily over a longer period.

However the stark facts are that we have received funding of just over £13million for 3 years at a time when inflation and staff costs will rise by far more than that EVERY year.

If agreed next week Council Tax will increase by 4.99/5%

2% goes straight to Adult Social Care leaving 3% for NCC - problematic when inflation is running at 3.7%

Nevertheless, because we began preparation of our planned spending over a year ago this will lead to savings internally in terms of efficiency and service cost saving.

I do not want to see compulsory redundancy if at all possible so we began, some months ago, a voluntary redundancy offer.

We are also "investing to save" in two increasing cost areas of SEND and Cared For children and older adults, and we will be building or buying extra accommodation to save the often eye watering costs of using external providers - a Cared For child often cost us £1000s per week.

The pleasing result of a lot of work is that we plan to continue key frontline services, free town centre car parking, keeping the Leisure services untouched, our new schools building programme including a new school for Amble well on now, and a lot more in terms of jobs and the environment. For example we are keeping our Environment and Climate Fund at £50,000 and entries are open now.

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We have had to increase the costs of some of the charges primarily at railway station car parks to match the Network Rail and Northern car parks at Morpeth, Alnmouth and Berwick. But we will keep the first hour free at our Country Parks.

I had the meeting about the West Moor junction with National Highways - they have finally agreed to do some work there although not as much as I wanted - and we continue to lobby about signage to reduce rat run traffic.

Finally, the decision report has been signed off for West Thirston speed measures.

84 Report back from Meetings and Representations on behalf of TPC

Eshott Airfield

A meeting was held with Ryan Soulsby (NCC), Darren Davis (Airfield), Cllr Green and the Clerk as previously agreed that a meeting would be held every 6-months. DD stated the airfield has no plans for any changes going forward. The following were raised:

Situation with regard to treatment plant that should have been installed by August 2024 according to planning conditions. A discussion took place as to whether this is required and a discussion to take place with the ecologist as more environmentally friendly to keep the system that is in place and working well.

Machine Meet starting up again – DD stated that nothing was agreed as yet. (See correspondence for subsequent update)

MOD – could the conditions attached to weight restrictions be modified to add “MTOW” to the size of aircraft to avoid any ambiguity in the size of any MOD helicopters coming into airfield. DD stated they should not be coming in unless there is an emergency and it had taken some time for this to filter through to the MOD so there should not be any further instances of MOD landing at airfield.

Operating Hours – previous condition stated no machinery or other airfield activities over 44 decibels allowed to use airfield outside hours of 9am to 7pm. This was changed to allow aircraft to move around 24/7. Residents have complained about planes being moved at 7.30am every morning til around 8am and then silence til after 9am. It was suggested conditions changed to state no aircraft movement outside 8.30am to 7pm. It was agreed that this would be amended to 8am – 7pm.

In relation to the two condition changes airfield to submit a variation of conditions application.

DD was asked for clarification in relation to trial flights v pleasure flights. DD explained that the CAA does not refer at all to “pleasure” flights, they do not use this term. All the flights offered by Eshott are Trial Flights and are fully compliant in accordance with CAP1653 (Introductory Flights Guidance) eg qualified commercial pilot with valid flight instruction rating.

The proposed anaerobic digester was discussed and DD stated that it would encroach into the flight splay which widens at the end of runway and if an application is submitted CAA will be consulted.

Pumpkin Pie

Background and current application - A previous application was submitted which incorrectly combined both the boundary fencing and the signage into a single proposal. The fencing element has been resolved separately and confirmed by the Council as not requiring planning permission. A fresh and standalone application for advertisement consent has therefore been submitted in respect of the signage only, and this application is currently open for consultation.

Parking and highways - Parking in the vicinity of the nursery has been discussed previously with NCC and PC. There have been no recent formal complaints raised directly with the nursery, nor have any enforcement concerns been identified by the Highway Authority. We can also confirm that NCC Highways has raised no objection to the current advertisement consent application, and the proposal is not considered to give rise to any highway safety issues. Notwithstanding this, and as discussed, Pumpkin Pie Childcare will provide clear parking advice and instructions for all parents and carers via its website and newsletter. This guidance will encourage considerate drop-off and pick-up behaviour, and parents and carers will be reminded of this advice on a quarterly basis to reinforce expectations and promote good practice. To this end a newsletter going out this weekend will include a reminder on respectful parking.

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Fence -The boundary fence has been reviewed by NCC and confirmed as not requiring planning permission. We therefore understand this matter to be resolved from a planning perspective.

Signage –The current application relates solely to modest, non-illuminated signage intended to assist parents, carers and visitors in identifying the nursery clearly and safely. We would ask that Parish Councillors consider the signage in two distinct parts: 1. The lettering / text, and 2. The pumpkin logo and share views with the Planning Officer on this basis.

The signage remains in place as the planning process was not being followed. Now an application has been submitted NCC cannot insist the signage be removed and PP were advised that they did not have to remove it by the new consultants and that PP should not have written to residents stating they would remove it as this was not required.

The Clerk raised the issue of the floodlights in the car park shining into residential properties and suggested the lights could be hooded to alleviate this issue. Lights were left on overnight during the Christmas period and seemingly this was an external contractor who forgot to switch them off. The nursery is now closing at 5.30pm so lights should be switched off by 5.45pm. The question was raised as to whether the lights needed planning permission. The Clerk has requested clarification from NCC on this issue. PP planners state permission is not required.

Pumpkin Pie Childcare is a valued local facility serving families within West Thirston and the surrounding area, and we remain keen to maintain a positive and open dialogue with the Parish Council.

One final comment in the meeting was that Lucy and the staff at Pumpkin Pie wanted to relay that they do not feel supported by the residents and do not feel welcome. The PC responded to state that the only feedback from locals that they have received is very supportive of the nursery it is just that the parking and vehicles turning in the road and driveways is an annoying consequence of a successful business. Cllr Fenwick suggested that a document should be sent to new parents/carers in relation to the parking situation and the Clerk stated this was suggested at the meeting however PP felt it would be information overload. Cllr Fenwick stated she would speak to PP about this.

Cllr
Fenwick

85 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

86 To report on any planning decisions:

None

Planning applications pending:

24/01531/VARYCO - Eshott Heugh Paintballing Site/Cheviot View – variation to a number of conditions following detailed drainage report - NCC Highways still have issues with this application that the applicant is responding to

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)

26/00130/ADE - Pumpkin Pie Childcare Ltd – Advertising Signage – this was discussed and agreed that there is no need for signage. The nursery is the only sizable business premises in West Thirston. Parents/carers will already know where the nursery is as they have had to register there. The black lettering, though not ideal, is sufficient to alert people to the building, there is no requirement for a large orange pumpkin which is not in keeping with the area. The forest school that ran there this summer located the building by using What3Words. This is an easy way for parents and emergency services to locate it. Clerk to send an objection letter.

Clerk

26/00018/LBC - Old Manse Cottage, West Thirston – Bathroom transformations – 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.

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Planning Issues:

- **Eshott Airfield** – Covered under Item 84 report back from meetings.
- **High Park Farm Appeal** (24/02540/FUL) - APP/P2935/W/25/3375680 – Further information has been added to the appeal in relation to the applicant raising issues with the objections being submitted stating objectors have been coordinated or canvassed into submitting their objections. Also the applicant has attached the missing addendums from the report in relation to traffic survey. The Councillors dispute that objections were coordinated or canvassed. Felton PC and Thirston PC requested to be included in the consultation as this application is not in their parishes but would have an impact on the residents of the parishes. No doors were knocked on – word of mouth made people aware of this application. Disagree with wording “alleged misrepresentation” there is a misrepresentation of highway conditions as the people who live in the vicinity can attest to as they have first hand experience of what the traffic conditions are as opposed to a planning consultant sitting in an office out of the area.

In relation to the traffic survey addendum the figures are incorrect. Firstly according to the survey over 24 hours there were only two buses recorded on the Peth out of the 28 buses that would have passed through the village that day (14 buses each way). The columns in the excel spreadsheet do not add up. There were questions raised on the types of vehicles being correct recorded. Nationally there are 76% cars v 17% vans on the UK roads, in this survey the vans outnumber the cars 10:1. These points bring doubt into the validity of this survey. It was felt the data from Tim Speed Consulting or even the recent traffic monitoring data from NCC would serve as a more accurate depiction of the traffic situation at present. Clerk to send another objection based on the above.

Clerk

- **Pumpkin Pie signage and fencing** – NCC planning stated “I had originally understood that the fencing had been amended but I now appreciate that this was not the case and I’m sorry for this misunderstanding. After discussing the matter further with Rob Wilson who is the enforcement officer dealing with this, we believe the fencing falls under Permitted Development and does not require planning permission. This is because the nursery is treated as a ‘school’ under the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO). Schools have slightly different rules compared to residential properties – they can put up fences up to 2 metres high adjacent to a highway, as long as they don’t obstruct it. These rules apply whether the site is in a conservation area or not”. Cllr Day stated that at the meeting with NCC Highways when “zigzag” lines outside the nursery were proposed NCC Highways stated this was not possible as the nursery is not classed as a school. Clerk to raise this with NCC and also ask for the statutory definition of what is a school.

Clerk

- **Proposed Anaerobic Digester** – No application received by NCC to date.

87 Requested Agenda Items:

- **CRAG Delegate** – Since Mrs Clarehugh resigned from the PC there is a need to appoint a second TPC delegate to CRAG. Cllr S Hoyle has agreed to be the named delegate as long as he can attend meetings virtually.
- **New website** – As per new legislation the PC needs a .gov website and .gov email address. The Clerk has populated the new website with PC minutes, financials, audits and Annual Parish meeting minutes dating back to 2018; policies and procedures and neighbourhood plan documents. There will be one generic email for the Clerk only and Councillors emails will not be publicised. The Clerk would like to ascertain if the Councillors are happy to have their phone numbers added to the site along with picture. All Councillors stated they wanted their names only to be on the website. Also on the current website there is a page providing links to other sites – the Clerk has not yet worked out how to add links but has requested help on this. The current site has details of businesses and community groups which is difficult to keep updated as there are constant changes which the Clerk is not informed of however it does appear to be of benefit to people so will include. Cllr F Hoyle suggested just providing hyperlinks to the relevant group and the Clerk will look to do this where possible. Also Cemetery minutes can be hyperlinked to Felton PCs new website.
- **Grit Bin at top of narrow bank** – A report was received that this was running low, it is still not on the report it site for NCC as it is not owned by them but they have filled it, they just keep having to be reminded.
- **Recycle Bins** – numerous complaints have been received again about the rubbish being left in this area. The Clerk requested that the large green rubbish bin be removed as this is

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encouraging people to dump their rubbish here and it was agreed some time ago to only have bottle banks here. NCC agreed to this however the bin is still in situ and again overflowing. It was also reported that one of the issues could be that holiday lets could be one of the problems as a discussion was overheard about this in the village stating that those renting Airbnb had to dispose of their own rubbish at the end of the stay.

Clerk

- New planters on the bridge – Cllr Day has identified that these planters need replacing and has agreed to purchase them. The Clerk stated this was fine as there is plenty of ring fenced money for these and costs within the amount for the Clerk to approve.

Cllr Day

88 Correspondence:

- NCC – Liaison Working Group presentations and links - circulated
- Information Commissioner’s Data Protection Renewal Notice – this payment of £47 (reduced due to paying by DD) will be taken from the account at the end of February for the PC Data Protection fee.
- Correspondence re current HGV movement along narrow road by High Park Farm – The information has been relayed to the Planning Inspectorate in relation to the applicant currently using the C117 to service his existing burner with hundreds of tons of grass in very large tractors and trailers at present which will make this road more difficult for other users even before the movements for this new proposed site it taken into consideration. Clerk to check the data against the latest appendices as the figures submitted by the applicant do not tally with the true picture.
- Emails re ditch works at South High Moor – various emails from a resident here chasing NCC on the ditch works which were delayed due to the weather and questioning the specifications of the works. It would appear that both NCC and the resident are now happy with the final works.
- Emails re machine meet – emails received in relation to the proposed machine meet at Eshott Airfield, a two day event for car and bike enthusiasts to attend, being arranged by Eshott Airfield Café. The Clerk forwarded the NCC event notification requirement to the Airfield and they have stated they will comply. The member of public who has raised concerns has requested that the PC pursue this to ensure it has been submitted along with the relevant documents required. The Clerk to check with NCC nearer the event to ensure relevant information has been submitted.
- NALC News – circulated
- CAN News – circulated.

Clerk

Clerk

89 Finance

(a) **Financial Summary** was reviewed with no issues and the current balance stands at £12,515.22 TPC funds and £2,052.19 FCJC totaling £14,567.41. 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 18 December	£413.20
	L Hamlin Salary 15 January	£413.20
DD	Mr & Mrs Bates – Defib electricity payment	£50.00

Payments approved at this meeting:		
IB233	L Hamlin expenses Weekly Allowance 8 x £1 (£8.00)	£8.00

Defer

The Clerk proposed that the payment be deferred until the next meeting.

(c) **Income** – None

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90 Urgent Items –

- The Peth – decaying leaves – Clerk to arrange for these to be removed by NCC as a slip hazard. Clerk
- Road Surface down The Peth – the centre line where the white line normally is has eroded away and is a danger to cyclists and motor bike users as well as pulling cars into this channel – needs resurfacing. Clerk
- New bridge over river – pot holes have appeared along the white lines and these need repairing. Clerk
- The arco barrier (black and white chevron) has 2 or 3 rotten wooden posts that need replacing – if this was to be hit by a vehicle it would collapse. Clerk

91 Items for next agenda – None

Chairman closed the meeting at 9.10pm

Date of Next meeting: 26 March 2026