

THIRSTON PARISH COUNCIL

At the Parish Council Meeting held in the Long Room, Gallery 45 on Thursday 18 December 2025.

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

63 Apologies for Absence – CC Sanderson

64 Declarations of interest in items on the Agenda – None

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

66 The minutes of the meeting on 29 October 2025 were approved as a true record.

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

- 1) Felton Cemetery Joint Committee – Policies and Procedures update – Cllr Day reported that at the last meeting it was discussed that there is a clause in the Terms of Reference that states any expenditure outside the budget needs to come back to the PCs before it goes ahead. This is to be raised every year at the AGM. It was also stated that this should be made aware to any new Committee members.
- 2) The Helm bus stop – still waiting on feedback from NCC on their meetings with agencies Clerk
- 3) Parking at Pumpkin Pie – Parking buddies are still not being used and staff are not looking to see if there is parking available in the carpark and just parking on the road side. Clerk to look to set up a meeting with Pumpkin Pie owner in the New Year. Clerk
- 4) FCJC Invoice details – Cllr Day confirmed that this invoice is correct and due to the gravedigger's poor invoicing and having to be chased to submit invoices.
- 5) The Clerk was asked when is 20mph going to be implemented in West Thirston as signage has now been removed. Clerk stating it is still going through the process at NCC. Also the question was raised about the 30mph into the village and down The Peth and if this was due to not being allowed to reduce speed from 60mph down to 20mph [*Clerk checked this after the meeting and there is no rule against this reduction*]. Clerk

Long-term Outstanding issues being addressed by NCC - None

68 Report by County Councillor Sanderson

CC Sanderson sent the following report by email:

I have a further meeting with Highways England in three weeks to try again to persuade them that some illumination is needed at the West Moor junction and for some signage to reduce the amount of traffic using the rat run route.

County wide we have agreed to roll out an improved recycling scheme. In a nutshell it will provide an extra bin with a dark red top for cardboard, paper and fibre of that kind. In addition we will be asking residents to put glass into their blue bin. This ought to make things easier to recycle glass rather than go to a bottle bank, and the total scheme is aimed to improve our recycling rate by around 5%. For anyone that has not got space for another bin then we will be asking them to contact us to see if we can find a solution. This is due to start by around this time next year but we will be keeping everyone in touch as things move forward. Meanwhile we are rolling out the food waste collection too but not in our area yet.

Budget time is well upon us and we are trying to find £20m in savings which is not easy - we held a large scale consultation recently with town and parish councils and an online consultation which resulted in almost 2000 replies which is very helpful - potholes and pavements remain very important whilst residents welcome the environment areas like green spaces, cut grass, litter picking etc and want more investment in parks on top of the work we have already done.

In Morpeth we have a pretty serious situation around parking spaces especially at busy times so we are looking to see what we might be able to do around the old Riverside site. We are determined to keep town centre car parking free of charge along with protecting our front line services but we think that the Budget will move money from rural county councils to places like Birmingham and Manchester..

Please remember to get in touch anytime - I may not be able to attend meetings but I am very much wanting you to get in touch if I can help.

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69 Report back from Meetings and Representations on behalf of TPC

Felton Cemetery Joint Committee:

Cllr Day reported that a new information sheet will be produced in the New Year with some changes and new charges. Charges have been increased by 50% from April for burials and plots (to include 50 years maintenance). Cost comparisons show that FCJC would be slightly higher than other cemeteries but lower than County Council run ones. Relatives can purchase the rights to place a plaque on a grave, on a bench or on the cemetery wall. The option of planting trees has been discounted as this has a cost and maintenance implication. Electronic mapping of graves is being produced. Proposals are being put in place to set up a friends of the cemetery group to help with maintenance and a new advert will be going out in the New Year for a new cemetery clerk.

Cllr F Hoyle asked about the 50 years maintenance and how this will affect existing burial plots. Cllr Day thinks this just started in 1970's so not many graves outside the 50 years as yet. Cllr F Hoyle stated in Bermuda relatives pay \$100 a year for maintenance then after 100 years remains are moved elsewhere and graves re-used. Cllr Day stated this had not been looked at but a discussion had taken place about an annual maintenance charge but was discounted but could be revisited.

70 Potential Projects

a) Footpaths/Rights of Way – None

b) Landscaping – None

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

- Village gateways – NCC are not keen for planters to be placed in the proposed locations so remove this item from the agenda.
- Bus shelters – Awaiting responses from the request in the bridge mag as to what should be displayed in the bus shelters. Full update from WI under correspondence

71 To report on any planning decisions:

25/03086/LBC - Old Mase Cottage West Thirston - alterations to the bathroom – REFUSED. The application has provided insufficient information in relation to the historic fabric of the heritage asset prior to development

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

25/03599/HEGRMN - Land East Of Wintrick Farm - Hedgerow Removal Notice: Removal of one section of hedgerow totalling 190m - APPROVED

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 ensuite, 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 - APPROVED

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 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 - APPROVED

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 - APPROVED

Planning applications pending:

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

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) – The Clerk explained where this site was and it was agreed there were no objections.

Planning Issues:

- **Eshott Airfield** – The Clerk has contacted NCC due to a number of issues. Building installed without planning where approval had been given retrospectively for another building with

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"enhanced species rich grassland planting" where this building is now sited. The treatment plant has not been installed and this should have been in place in August 2024. The MOD had three helicopters some of which were over the 5700kg weight limit if fully loaded however NCC did not see fit to add MTOW to the wording which leaves the airfield open to stating the helicopters were within weight. Clerk suggested the new operators might be open to changing some of the conditions on the previous application to include MTOW and also previously aircraft were not allowed to move around site outside the hours of 9pm to 9am and this was removed by previous operators and now aircraft start up at 7.30am every morning which is disturbing to residents. It was agreed the Clerk would try to arrange a meeting with NCC and Airfield in the New Year. Clerk

Cllr Royal asked for information on the crash that took place recently. The Clerk stated that the Chronicle has mis-reported this incident as being on the Tuesday and flying before 9am. The incident happened at the weekend during normal flying hours and it was a loss in engine power and the pilot successfully landed the plane in the middle of a field with no damage or injury. A member of the public asked if it was a trial flight or a pleasure flight. It stated in media that a lady was on the flight with her family hence thinking it is a pleasure flight which is not allowed from an unlicensed airfield. The Clerk to look into this. Clerk

- **High Park Farm Appeal (24/02540/FUL) - APP/P2935/W/25/3375680** – A draft letter has been drawn up and it was agreed to insert some information on the historic landslip issue and concerns about the weight at the site potentially causing stability issues and that a geological report should have been commissioned. A member of the public raised the issue that the Planning Inspectorate website will be down on Saturday for maintenance and residents should be made aware of this – Clerk to post a message on facebook. Clerk
- **Pumpkin Pie signage and fencing** – NCC has confirmed that the fencing has been amended and is considered permitted development. NCC has been informed another application is being prepared for the signage. If this is not forthcoming then the nursery will be told to temporarily remove the signage until an application is received. After discussion it was agreed that this remaining fencing does not comply with planning regulation in relation to fencing in a conservation area. Clerk to contact NCC to raise this issue again and also remind them that of the letter send in April by the owner stating removal of the signage would be taking place. Clerk
- **Proposed Anaerobic Digester** – The consultant has confirmed this application will not be submitted before Christmas as originally thought. Clerk

It was agreed that following the lack of knowledge by residents of the High Park Farm application that a summary should be put on facebook of key elements of PC meetings and link to minutes to ensure residents are up to speed on relevant issues. Clerk

It was also suggested that a discussion group could be set up for future issues – ie anaerobic digester application.

72 Requested Agenda Items:

- Bandage unit beside Defib unit – it has been suggested that a unit be installed, the owner of the wall where this would be sited is fine with this in principle but would like to see what the unit looks like first and size. Funding would be from the Fair money. Clerk has contacted FPC who have details about this but have received no response. Cllr Royal also stated that repairs are required to the wall where the defib is houses and owner will contact PC if defib needs to be decommissioned when this work takes place.
- Battery replacement for speed signs – Battery needs replacing at the East Thirston end of the village. This is not covered under the maintenance contract and the Clerk gave approval for this to be replaced at a cost of £188.56 plus vat. Awaiting installation of new battery.
- Abandoned Vehicle – There is an abandoned vehicle in Bockenfield layby. It has a notice stating broken down however it has been there for over 5 weeks now. NCC state they need to leave it longer due to notice in window, police state it is an NCC issue. The GOVT website states the car is taxed and valid MOT however the description colour does not match the car. It is causing issues as HGVs are moving across the road to avoid it and blocking the entrance for vehicles trying to get off the A1. This has been relayed to NCC but they state they cannot take action. Cllr Royal asked when the MOT and Tax runs out as this might speed up with removal. [Clerk checked this after the meeting and MOT in April and Tax in August 2026].
- Budget for 2026/27 – The Clerk used the wrong figure for the Cemetery contribution. This has now been rectified and will change the funding held at the end of 2026/27 by just under £500

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which will still leave a balance of one years precept being held which is the recommendation of NALC.

- 7 May meeting date – Clerk requesting that this meeting to be changed to either the week before or the week later as Clerk will be away on this date. The week before was preferred. Clerk to email Councillors with the date so they can check diaries and confirm availability.

Clerk

73 Correspondence:

- NCC - Castle Morpeth Community Partnership 17/11/2025 invitation - circulated
- NCC - Community Governance Review presentation – circulated
- NCC - Joint Town and Parish Council Conference - Thursday 5th March 2026 – Up to two attendees able to go and Clerk to register names.
- NCC - Public Spaces Protection Order for the control of dogs – consultation circulated
- NCC - Northumberland Design Code - We want to know about your neighbourhoods – The Code will set requirements for developers for the design of future development - circulated. Deadline date 9 January. Poster received which will go in noticeboard and put link on FB.
- North of Tyne Local Nature Recovery Strategy - draft - open for consultation deadline 9 Jan
- Elected Members Prevent Handbook and Prevent Induction Handbook - circulated
- Email Re the order to revoke the A1 in Northumberland – Consent given – circulated
- WI update on A1 bus shelter - this shelter could do with another coat of paint in the spring. There appears to be enough paint left in the tub, if the PC are happy, the WI are happy to keep and use this next year, we can confirm dates this in the spring. The committee has a list of members who are willing to be on a rota quarterly, to sweep out leaves and debris from the shelter. Litter which may have accumulated nearby may also be removed. Any debris collected will be taken by them and disposed of alongside their own wastebin collection. Grass verge cutting from the end of last year and this year, has moved back from the original cutting position we planted. The oxeye daisies and knap weed is in there but now gets cut back. The yellow rattle managed to have two seasons but couldn't see any this year. The original daffodils, snowdrops and primroses keep popping up and hopefully the extra daffodil bulbs and primroses planted earlier this year will flourish too. When we initially met with Thirston councillors, we agreed to have an ongoing planting regime with wild flowering planting to established patches of plants, we will continue with the planting during 2026. We did attempt to define the tarmac space as agreed, but found the tarmac lifted too, so decided to leave well alone. The bus stopping area on the north side of the carriageway was problematic to plant up. We could not get anything into the ground before it fell away into the hedge line, which in reality means we are unable to achieve anything on that side of the road. It was agreed this is a job well done by WI.
- Emails from resident of South High Moor re ditch works – resident was copying TPC into email chasing for work to be undertaken. NCC has confirmed that works will take place January 2026 weather permitting. The Gulley will be piped North into the existing ditch via the verge, this is the most cost effective method and causes the least amount of disruption.
- Email request from East Thirston resident re speed monitoring results – Clerk provided these.
- Emails raising issues not previously replied to re FCJC – This has been referred to FPC.
- Email re Bockenfield layby bin – This bin has been missing now for a couple of months and NCC has still not replaced it. Litter is now strewn around the layby which is not a good look for the businesses serviced by the layby. Clerk will chase up.
- Email and WhatsApp message re military helicopter at Eshott Airfield – reported to NCC.
- Email re mud on road from farm vehicles – complaint received re mud on road at East Thirston end of village. It is the farmers responsibility to clear the road of mud and Clerk to pursue.
- Phone call request re dropped kerb – Clerk met with resident and put a request into NCC. NCC installed two sets of dropped kerbs and also resurfaced the footpath from the bus stop at the top of the Peth to the kerbs. There is still a hole near this work that has not been filled which causes issues with wheelchair but NCC will full this asap. Clerk sent a thank you email to NCC due to the speed and workmanship of this request.
- Blue Spirit - mental wellbeing of young people in Northumberland – donation request – no donation made.
- NALC - Online Zoom Training Courses for Councillors – circulated.
- NALC News – circulated.
- CAN News – circulated.

Clerk

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- Groundwork Newsletter – circulated.

74 Finance

(a) **Financial Summary** was reviewed with no issues and the current balance stands at £15,703.37 TPC funds and £2,052.19 FCJC totaling £17,755.56. The balance was reconciled with the bank statement and Cllr S Hoyle signed the statement to confirm this.

(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 25 October – 20 November – 4 weeks	£413.20
IB230	L Hamlin expenses Weekly Allowance 7 x £1 (£7.00) Felton Village Hall Hire (£22.50) Wreath (£30.00) Wine for Auditor (£9.75)	£69.25
IB231	John Hood Landscaping	£474.00
IB232	FPC – Cemetery (£1260) and Rec Field (£500)	£1760.00

(c) **Income** – None

75 Urgent Items –

Email received after agenda issued requesting a light to be installed in West Thirston between Pumpkin Pie and entrance to Thirston House as dark and pavement hard to see in dark. Clerk to raise the question with NCC. Cllr Hoyle also suggested there may be a way of siting something over her wall – possibly using solar battery if not viable to install a light due to having to dig up the path that has just been relayed.

It was raised that there appears to be widening of the road up to High Park Farm with hardcore and has this been done with any permissions? Clerk to investigate.

76 Items for next agenda –

Chairman closed the meeting at 8.55pm
Date of Next meeting: 5 February 2026