

THIRSTON PARISH COUNCIL

At the Annual Parish Council Meeting held in the Long Room, Gallery 45, Felton on Thursday 25 September 2025.

Present: Cllrs Day, Green, Hoyle and Royal
The Parish Clerk in attendance – Mrs L Hamlin

32 Co-option of New Councillor – Defer to next meeting.

33 Apologies for Absence – None

Mr Cruden has resigned from the Parish Council and the Clerk will undertake the necessary paperwork to advertise this vacancy.

34 Declarations of interest in items on the Agenda – None

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

36 The minutes of the meeting 31 July 2025 were approved as a true record.

37 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 the November meeting then circulated to all PCs for adoption.
- b) The Helm bus stop – The manager of Ashington depot has replied to the PC stating drivers are instructed to pull into the layby just past the zoo for safety. Sometimes this is not always possible if there are vehicles parked there. We will send out a reminder to all drivers on this service. Arriva responded to NCC stating they are picking up at The Helm and sometimes at the layby beside the zoo. They asked if there was any possibility of a designated stop at the zoo.

The Clerk reported Residents from Burgham Park have requested the bus drives past Burgham for pick up now this is expanding and if this is not possible can the bus stop at the layby by the Zoo entrance as this is easier to access than at The Helm and would be used by Burgham residents as opposed to driving.

The Clerk asked CC Sanderson to investigate with Highways whether the layby by the zoo can be converted into a bus stop and the one going North bound just past the Burgham entrance could also be converted into a bus stop. Especially as the Bockenfield layby is designated as a stopping place for vehicles and these options would save on costs of building designated safe bus stops. CC Sanderson to look into this.

CCS

- c) Parking at Pumpkin Pie – the Clerk asked questions and made the suggestions to NCC with the following response:
 - Parking buddies - these were delivered to the nursery last November – Clerk to see if NCC can enforce their usage as the nursery did agree to this at the meeting on site.
 - Staff directing traffic during busy periods - Not a good idea, staff aren't qualified to manage / direct traffic. This may potentially cause more problems, and if an accident occurred who would be at fault?
 - Red route - not a viable option I'm afraid.
 - Designated drop off bay - may be worth exploring, but where would this be sited?
 - Use of land for additional parking - in principle I don't have a problem with this idea, I'm not sure how staff would feel about potentially parking in a farmers field during winter months though.

Clerk

Clerk

NCC don't think any additional parking restrictions will be of any real benefit. Ideally need to encourage nursery staff to car share if possible, or simply encourage them to use their car park better. The space outside could potentially be used for dropping of children. It was suggested that the nursery be moved to the land originally designated for the doctors surgery. This would be a more appropriate location and would move the nursery back into Felton where it originated from.

Clerk

- d) Riverside Parking in Morpeth – The Clerk contacted CC Sanderson with the suggestion of have a two story car park. Certainly one to think about because we need a lot more parking spaces there. Will feed it into the discussion although the current idea is to be able to have

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- a clear view from the top of the Market Place down to the river and greatly improving the area.
- e) Northumberland Call for Sites – NCC are principally interested in sites for Housing, Industrial and business employment uses. Also site for minerals, town centre uses such as retail, offices, leisure, serviced tourist accommodation, and community facilities; Biodiversity or other environmental enhancement schemes. Deadline 30 September. It was agreed some sites in the area need environmental protection and this should be relayed to this call – all land/sites around St Oswalds Way. Clerk
 - f) Website and Email changes to comply with regulations in 2026 – covered under Requested Agenda Items.
 - g) FCJC Invoice details – Clerk has requested details from Felton Clerk and Cemetery Chairman, awaiting the details. Clerk
 - h) Felton defib machine – Mr Fields has agreed to look after this machine.
 - i) Speeding restrictions request at West Moor – NCC has confirmed that speeds would not be reduced in this area however the residents have been asked if they would like speed monitoring in place and the Clerk has not heard anything more from them.
 - j) Speeding restrictions request at East Thirston – NCC confirmed that 20mph would not be put in place and speed monitoring was suggested. The resident then requested speeding islands like the ones in and out of West Thirston. NCC stated this was not possible.
 - k) Bin for Burgham Park Development – Cussins has stated the residents would have to contact Kingston Properties Services once they adopt the site and it would be up to KPS as to whether they wish to install them.

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

38 Report by County Councillor Sanderson

Apologies for not making a meeting for a while but as you know you can always contact me. NCC has had an election and I am grateful to be elected to Felton as well. Conservatives got the largest amount of seats. I continue to be Leaders and there is no coalition. NCC is now embarking on the budget. £20m savings are needed this year and over 3 years a total of £70m savings. This is extremely difficult but wish to protect front line services. We have good quality parks, leisure centres and free parking in town centres. There will be a new school in Berwick, working on Amble school. We need to invest in super schools. Northumberland line is running well, so well we need new carriages, but this is a decision that is made by the Secretary of State. Written to request them and also to state how deeply upset everyone is by the decision re the A1. Met with National Highways in early May to come up with ideas on the rat run NH has done nothing which is disappointing considering the money being saved by not dualling the A1. NCC are currently looking at options. Secretary of State for Department of Science and Technology announcing A1 growth zone for North East based in Newcastle and Northumberland. £10m data centre at Cambois. A fund has been set up for new industry and businesses in Northumberland. Hope there will be a consensus in political parties for the budget.

Cllr Royal asked if speed bumps can be installed through the village and CCS stated these are often not liked by residents however would need to see the affect of the 20mph limit before any further works can take place.

39 Report back from Meetings and Representations on behalf of TPC

Cemetery Committee Meeting

The new Clerk for FPC was in attendance. The Clerk has put using Scribe for the accounts and setting up a separate bank account on hold. Discussions re strategy for Cemetery are moving forward. Only 1/10th of income is covering costs so income needs to increase and costs decrease. However there are no plans to increase the precept amount for the forthcoming financial year. Looking into the possibility of some funding due to the Napoleonic War stone bench and it was suggested Committee speak to Mrs George of the History Society who may have information on the bench.

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Remembrance Service – discussions have taken place to making it longer this year in this important 80th anniversary – Chairman to speak to Mr Skelton.

A second work day was undertaken to reduce costs. With the dry weather grave stones are tilting and moving – grave relatives needs to be contacted to see what they wish to have done with the graves but some contact details are lacking. Mapping and database of graveyard to be undertaken. Cllr Royal suggested installing a QR code at the entrance of the Cemetery for donations.

Battle of Britain

Cllr Day attended this event and laid a wreath for the PC along with the RAF x 4, CCs Sanderson and Thorne. About 100 people were in attendance.

40 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

- Bus shelters – the bus shelters have been power washed by NCC. The WI is requesting that the PC purchase the paint for the shelters. Paint is just a standard masonry paint – colour to be decided by PC and also does the PC want the Thirston shelter painted as well. Cllr Day will measure the shelters to work out amount of paint required and Clerk to purchase. It was agreed that both shelters should be painted. Clerk to put an item in The Bridge to see what information residents want to see in the shelters.

Clerk

Clerk

41 To report on any planning decisions:

24/02540/FUL - High Park Farm – Resubmission of plans for Change of use of agricultural building to a facility to dry paper pulp to produce animal bedding to include feeder, drum, burner, stack installation and control room. – REFUSED fails to demonstrate that safe and suitable access can be achieved for all users and does not adequately mitigate the impacts of increased vehicle movements on the local transport network.

25/00765/LBC - Thirston New House Farm - LBC for internal works to include addition of ensuite bathroom (and associated SVP), thermal upgrades to roof and general redecoration works.

Replacement of 4no. conservation rooflights - APPROVED

25/01523/REM - Eshott Heugh, Paintballing Site (known as Cheviot View) - Leisure Complex – this is a reserved matters application for when you already have outline planning permission but need to submit more detailed plans for approval – REFUSED insufficient parking provision

25/02118/LBC – Old Manse Cottage West Thirston LBC for replacement windows – APPROVED and then WITHDRAWN

25/02336/FUL - Bywell Shooting Ground – Field Shelter - APPROVED

Planning applications pending:

24/01531/VARYCO - Eshott Heugh Paintballing Site – variation to a number of conditions following detailed drainage report – no objections

25/01854/ADE - Pumpkin Pie – Retrospective application for signage and fencing. This plan has been amended in relation to the fencing and advertising remains in place. Lots of support coming from people who do not live in the vicinity but obviously whose children currently attend the nursery – objections submitted.

25/01853/FUL - Pumpkin Pie Childcare Ltd – retrospective for construction of timber fencing and 1no fascia sign – as per comments above. These are basically the same application. Concerns have been raised with NCC that the owner has stated removal of the orange pumpkin back in April and it is still in place on both applications. There has previously been a situation in the parish where CMBC has approved a plan without noting additional items being on the plan that were subsequently approved by default. It was noted that a number of residents, including those directly beside the nursery have not received any notification of the plans. Clerk to relay this to NCC. – Objections submitted

Clerk

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

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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 – no objections

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 – no objections

25/02915/PRUTPO - The Old Mill Stable Drive Eshott – tree works – no objections

25/02967/PRUTPO - Rose Cottage Eshott – tree works – no objections

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 – no objections

25/03086/LBC - Old Manse Cottage West Thirston - alterations to the bathroom – no objections

Planning Issues:

Felmoor Park – Entrance lighting and signage – still no action from NCC on this. However it would appear that all the blue lighting is no longer an issue.

25/00928/screen – Anaerobic Digester Environmental Impact Assessment – second request submitted to NCC for an Environmental Impact Assessment to be undertaken as there is no mention within the further information of this site being directly adjacent to the woodland burial ground.

42 Requested Agenda Items:

- New website and email addresses – the Clerk looked into other providers following information from another Clerk however it is no cheaper and therefore continue with the decision to use the NALC recommendation. Clerk
- Burgham Road – residents have requested that this road be property resurfaced and repaired, the road is breaking up in a number of locations and the fact that building trucks for the Cussins site are using the road along with the damage caused during the horse trials does not help. This road is now also used as a rat run when the A1 North is stationary with cars using A697 to avoid queues and cars cutting off the A1 the A697 when going south. Clerk also to contact NCC on this issue. Clerk

43 Correspondence:

- NCC – Local Transport Plan – information on changes – circulated - changing to three priorities for over the next 5 years as opposed to asking annually.
- NCC - 2026-27 Local Transport Plan Programme requests –
 - 1) Extra street light on The Peth - unable to include this in the programme. It can be reconsidered for future programmes if still a priority
 - 2) Anti-slip surface on the footway on the hill in West Thirston - issue has been formally recorded and will be taken into consideration during the development of future planned maintenance programmes. Area Maintenance teams will continue to monitor the situation and undertake any necessary minor works to ensure the area remains safe.
 - 3) Footway resurfacing from the garage to the farm, West Thirston - issue has been formally recorded and will be taken into consideration during the development of future planned maintenance programmes. Area Maintenance teams will continue to monitor the situation and undertake any necessary minor works to ensure the area remains safe.Leave as is unless the Clerk can find a field for parking for nursery staff and then could request hard standing in this location instead of the street light. Clerk
- NCC - meeting for all Town and Parish Councillors re Budget and Corporate Priorities
- NCC - CGR - Parish Pre Consultation Questionnaire – Clerk to response state no changes required. Clerk
- NCC - Polling District and Polling Place Review 2025 – Clerk to respond stating TPC happy with the Felton Village Hall venue as there is no alternative within Thirston Parish. Clerk
- Chairmans meeting arranged by Bywell Parish Council – Cllr Green was unable to attend but minutes of the meeting will be forwarded onto TPC.
- Planning Inspectorate – Order to revoke the A1 in Northumberland: Morpeth to Ellingham Development Consent Order 2024 – representation was made stating TPC did not agree with this however it if does go ahead can money be put into making the junctions safer.

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- HEAT new link - Energy support and debt advice from The Wise Group – wanting referrals from TPC – It was agreed not something we should be promoting as not a free service.
- The Circuit – defib machine potential use – the defib was checked and had not been used.
- 2 x emails inviting PC to the 85th anniversary of the Battle of Britain at Bockenfield woodland burial – TPC attended this event and laid a wreath.
- Email re shooting on the runway at Wintrick – this was reported to planning and the police. NCC stated they would look into the fact this has happened on more than 28 days so planning permission required. Also shooting was taking place in the vicinity of powergrid workers.
- Email re Thirston Parish News in The Bridge Aug/Sept issue – a member of the public has stated the Chairmans report contains unsubstantiated and damaging accusations against them, they have reported this to the police and the external auditors. They asked who published it, who wrote and submitted it and when was the content agreed. The Clerk responded to state the Chairmans report is always published in The Bridge Newsletter.
- Emails re audit queries relating to Felton Parish Council and Joint Cemetery – circulated and noted.
- Email from Cllr Francis asking for an informal induction session for new councillors to FCJC – no induction session took place.
- Email – copied in: requesting update on enforcement action for Airfield treatment plant – circulated.
- Emails – copied in: numerous emails re pilots breaching flying hours – circulated
- Email re pumpkin pie signage not yet being removed – addressed in planning (41)
- Numerous emails – Helicopter at Airfield on 9 August low flying & touchdown on private land – circulated and noted. This was a helicopter that was giving experience flights which landed on none airfield property. The airfield addressed the matter with the pilot.
- Numerous emails – Helicopter based at airfield breaching planning conditions – a helicopter is being housed at the far end of the runway in an area that is designated not to be used as a runway in the planning conditions. When it has rotors running the rotors are over adjoining land – NCC has opened an enforcement case as this is being breached.
- Email re help with house name change – The Clerk has looked into this with NCC who are waiting for a response back from the Post Office as there is already a property known as The Birches less than five miles away from proposed property for a name change.
- NALC AGM information – Saturday 15th November, 10:00am at County Hall Morpeth
- NALC News – Circulated
- CAN News – Circulated
- Groundwork Newsletter – Circulated

Finance

- (a) **Financial Summary** was reviewed with no issues and the current balance stands at £18,049.22 TPC funds and £2,052.19 FCJC totaling £20,101.41. The balance was reconciled with the bank statement and Cllr Royal signed the statement to confirm this.

Clerk to look at the Link Account provided by Lloyds which is interest only with 3.99% rate and up to £4k can be deposited.

Clerk

- (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
IB225	L Hamlin Salary and Expenses 40 hours at £20.66 (826.40) Home working allowance of 8 weeks (£8.00) Battle of Britain Wreath (£30.00) Stationery (ink cartridges) (70.99)	£935.39
IB226	HMRC Employer NI payments	£61.42

Note – no cemetery payments have been made yet due to no invoices being issued. The full invoice will be forthcoming in the next few weeks.

- (c) **Income** – NCC Precept £5,375.00

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- (d) Clerk's Salary – Cllr Hoyle proposed to help with budget and monthly PAYE that the Clerks salary be paid on a regular basis (every 4 weeks totaling £413.20) which is easy to do due to the amount paid per week being the same and then only claim expenses at PC meetings. This was agreed and the Clerk to arrange the setting up of this via a direct debit.

Clerk

45 Urgent Items –

NCC – Proposed 20mph zone in West Thirston – It was agreed that the PC should ask that the 20mph is blanket coverage and to find out what area is covered for Felton PC as if Main Street is 20mph then it would mean crossing the bridge into Thirston would have a speed increase which does not make sense.

Clerk

JKW has not been treated yet. Clerk to contact contractor.

Clerk

46 Items for next agenda –

Draft Budget

Dates for 2026 meetings

Some Policies to be reviewed

Chairman closed the meeting at 9.30pm

Date of Next meeting: To be Confirmed