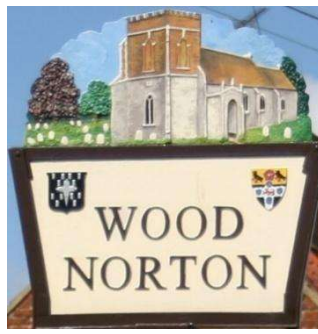




Wood Norton Parish Council

Chair: Marcus Crowe Parish Clerk: Joanne Madders clerkwoodnortonpc@gmail.com

Minutes of Wood Norton Parish Council Ordinary Parish Meeting **held in the village hall at 7.30 pm, Wednesday 18th March 2026**

Present: Cllr Marcus Crowe (Chair), Cllr John Jennings, Cllr Tim Lidstone-Scott, Cllr Tess Morley, Cllr Lorraine O'Keefe, Cllr Jean Johnson, Cllr Daniel Coe and District Cllr Mike Hankins.

Clerk: Joanne Madders

Members of the public: 52

The Chair changed the order of the agenda due to Steve Collin from Norfolk Wildlife Trust being in attendance and speaking to the members of the public present.

2026/21 Introduction from Steve Collin, representative of the Norfolk Wildlife (Owners of Manor Farm, Wood Norton). Taking questions from the floor to answer or to take away for consideration.

Steve Collin introduced himself and explained that Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) had just purchased Manor Farm. He gave a brief outline of the plans but stated they were not finalised. NWT will not be using the land for farming but turning it into a nature reserve. This will be a semi natural habitat with grasslands, they hope to restore the beck, maybe restore Norton Wood and make the site wildlife friendly. The funding used to purchase the farm (Natural England Nutrient Mitigation scheme) stipulates there must be no agricultural input. NWT will not be expecting coach loads of visitors, and the site will be split into zoned areas.

Question from public – We are concerned over road access. Many roads into the village are single access, narrow with no passing places.

Steve – The design will be looking at access and car parking and will take into account traffic through the village. The car park location is undecided but could be off Twyford Road. NWT do not want to negatively impact the village.

Question from public – How will dog walkers and horse riders be able to use the single track roads safely if more traffic?

Steve – The design could incorporate paths off the road rather than on the road.

Question from public – There are no buses in the village. Will NWT be expecting people to walk from a bus stop?

Steve – We understand there is no bus stop in the village.

Question from public – How will the site fund itself?

Steve – The current agreement stipulates that no houses are allowed to be built for the length of the agreement, 125 years, so no development is allowed. Apart from a car park it must only be a nature reserve.

Question from public – We are thrilled that NWT have bought the farm. How many visitors do they see at Foxley?

Steve – It is very seasonal. At Bluebell time it is very popular. NWT don't actively advertise but during this time the car park capacity is often reached. Manor Farm won't immediately have a speciality so only the summer months are likely to attract visitors.

Question from public – Dogs are not allowed at Foxley – what about here?

Steve – NWT only allow dogs in some locations. The site will be zoned so dogs may be allowed in certain areas but not all, and there may be seasonal restrictions such as when there are ground nesting birds.

Question from public – Disappointed that Twyford Road will be a car park.

Steve – NWT do not anticipate hordes of visitors, there will be no visitors centre or coffee shop. There may be a flurry at the start, and those interested in birds, but it will not resemble some of the bigger NWT sites such as Cley. NWT will manage the traffic if they ever host an event.

Question from public – What is happening with the farm buildings?

Steve – These will be sold to help fund the project.

Question from public – How long until visitors will start arriving?

Steve – NWT do not expect much to happen before the autumn. Natural England sign off is required and lots of surveys need to be worked on. The final plans should be available in about 6 weeks.

Question from public – What about lighting and light pollution?

Steve – There will be no lighting. This also helps protect the bats.

Question from public – How big will the car park be?

Steve – If schools and groups come, they will arrive in coaches so it will be big enough for a coach to turn around it. This may be about the size of 15-20 cars.

Question from public – What kind of species are you hoping to see back on the farm?

Steve – Grasslands will need to establish then high nectar species first such as butterflies, bees, hover flies and ground nesting birds. When they start to scrub up there may be the possibility of grazing but this is to be discussed. This would be low level conservation grazing such as native breeds of cattle or maybe Dartmoor ponies. The areas are undecided at the moment but it could be beneficial. It would be low level.

Question from public – What about natural tree regeneration and fencing?

Steve – Fencing the site would be too expensive.

Question from public – What about the beck regeneration project?

Steve – There are already lots of ponds, hedges and trees plus it features a green corridor down the middle. Bends may be put in and leaky logs. NWT plan to make a more natural look to the beck river.

Question from public – Will you be planting trees?

Steve – Some but not many. These would be native, local leaf. Norton Wood will hopefully be restored.

Question from public – Will there be deer management?

Steve – No. NWT are confident this will not be needed.

Question from public – Will trees be planted by volunteers?

Steve – School parties, youth groups and volunteers usually help plant.

Question from public – There has been speculation of salmon fishing in the beck.

Steve – Unlikely that we will see salmon although seatrout are coming up as far as Stiffkey now. The source of the beck may be coming from the community orchard. Spring fed streams are rare. There are gravel beds still intact in the beck which will encourage spawning fish.

Question from public – Are NWT using local contractors i.e. Rivers Trust?

Steve – Not at the moment. They are using their own consultancy NWS.

Question from public – Could walking rights be exchanged for volunteering?

Steve – There will be trails. Volunteers will be required for a number of tasks such as recording species, litter picking, etc. Horses may be allowed in certain zones but this has not been confirmed.

Question from public – Will there be any paid jobs?

Steve – No. There won't even be a car parking warden or a hut at the car park for collecting money.

Question from public – Will there be a warden?

Steve – No. Foxley is less than 5 miles away. There will be a Reserve Manager, but they won't be on site every single day.

Steve closed by saying NWT are excited about the project and encouraged the public to keep an eye on updates. They will be using drones for imagery recording to track progress. Steve will return to the village to meet with residents again when there is anything to update and is happy to offer guided walks over the summer.

The public left at 8.05pm but 3 remained as observers until the end of the meeting.

The Chair changed the order of the agenda due to District Cllr Mike Hankins being in attendance.

2026/22 To receive reports from the County Councillor and District Councillor.

County Cllr Steffan Aquarone was not in attendance.

District Cllr Mike Hankins presented his report which had also been emailed prior to the meeting:

Stibbard Ward March report.

Anglian Water.

We are expecting an update from Anglian Water to the questions we raised in February on water capacity and river pollution, the update is scheduled for Wednesday 18th March.

Mobile Connectivity.

We have now had meetings with BT and all the mobile service providers, introducing them to challenges residents experienced with mobile coverage issues across the district with the aid of a mobile coverage map, following NNDC recent survey mapping the coverage by parish council.

You will not be surprised to learn that Wood Norton reception is classed as very poor, one of three pcs in Stibbard Ward the others being Kettlestone Swanton Novers. with Hindolveston classed as poor and Fulmodeston , Stibbard and Ryburgh classed as adequate.

Vodafone and 3 are running trials on an alternative connectivity system for areas not accessible by mast technology. In partnership with AST Space, they plan to introduce a satellite service for "not spots "

Trials will be carried out this summer, and if successful this provider is aiming at coverage of all of Norfolk by April 2028 but could be sooner.

The remaining networks have agreed to revert with their improvement plans.

NNDC Local Government Elections.

Elections will now be held in May for Norfolk County Council across all wards, there are 11 County Councillors across North Norfolk, details of nominated councillors, polling stations, will be notified in due course, in the normal way.

NNDC has agreed to fund £53k of additional food bank support to help to mitigate some of the cost-of-living impacts of the Iran War.

NNDC has announced the closure of the staffed Connect facility in Fakenham from April this year.

Mike Hankins.

District Councillor

District Cllr Mike Hankins left the meeting.

2026/23 To consider accepting apologies for absence.

None.

2026/24 To record Declarations of Interest from members on any item to be discussed.

None.

2026/25 Minutes:

a. To discuss any matters from the minutes not listed on the agenda. (For information only).

Anna Clarke, Community Housing Enabler, will be attending the July meeting.

b. To approve and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 21st January 2026.

Resolved to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record. The Chair signed the minutes.

2026/26 Parishioner open forum

Not required.

2026/27 The Chair/Clerk to provide an update on any information, actions or correspondence since the last meeting.

i. Wood Norton Heritage Conservation (email 9/2/26)

Councillors decided against milestone maintenance.

ii. Free Support for Self-Funding Older Adults in Your Parish (email 9/2/26)

Noted.

iii. Norfolk ALC Council Email requirements (email 11/9/26)

Noted.

iv. Norfolk ALC Newsletter (email 17/2/26)

Noted.

v. Norfolk ALC Non-intimate stalking event by Norfolk & Suffolk Victim Care (email 24/2/26)

Noted.

2026/28 Finance.

a) To receive the current financial position.

The Chair/RFO advised the following:

Community A/C £2,379.63. 5 transactions noted since the last meeting.

Community (Defib) A/C £908.70. No transactions since the last meeting.

Business Premium (Village sign) £1,414.04. Interest received since the last meeting £3.57

Business Premium (Investment) £4,738.69. Interest received since the last meeting £11.97.

c) To approve payments to be made:

i) Clerk's home working allowance, £48 Approved

ii) Village Hall Hire for bird box day, £27 Approved

iii) Year 9 Defib emergency phone, £72 inc VAT Approved

2026/29 To review recent planning applications:

Not required.

2026/30 To review the Standing Orders following the Clerk's recent amendments

Councillors resolved to approve the Standing Orders subject to the Clerk making any amendments required to ensure the policy is gender neutral. The Clerk will check to make sure all policies mentioned within the Standing Orders have been adopted.

ACTION: Clerk

2026/31 To receive an update on Norfolk Police OP Radium

The Chair has been in contact with Sgt Burton who has noted that Wood Norton would like to be involved. The operation was triggered recently in the Great Yarmouth area.

2026/32 To receive an update on VETS (including renewals).

Cllr Lidstone-Scott is still waiting to hear back from Community Heartbeat Trust to remove names and numbers before any further action. The renewal has still not been received yet.

2026/33 To discuss defibrillator training

VETS can provide training but are proving to be unreliable. The village hall has organised first aid training on 15th April which includes defib training. Cllr Morley will approach the trainer to find out more about standalone defib training.

Wood Norton Charitable Trust has agreed to fund the defibrillator for another 10 years.

2026/34 To receive an update regarding Information Commissioners Office.

The Clerk completed a self-assessment on the ICO website. Councillors agreed to register with the ICO. A discussion was held regarding section 31 of the Standing orders and how this would comply with GDPR law. The Clerk will investigate further.

ACTION: Clerk

Councillors agreed to personalise the NALC model data protection policy and bring to the next meeting for approval.

ACTION: Chair/Clerk/Cllr O'Keefe

2026/35 To receive an update on drainage issues.

The chair read out his recent correspondence with the County Councillor regarding the problems on Foulsham Road. Highways have now accepted responsibility and have agreed to make the necessary repairs; however, time and budget constraints mean no date has been set. The County Councillor said he may have some funding he could contribute.

2026/36 To receive an update on highways issues

The potholes on Hall Lane have been repaired.

Concerns were raised regarding rope pins on the grass bank outside a local property. The Chair and Clerk will contact the property owners. **ACTION: Chair/Clerk**

New road signs/street names have been installed around the village.

2026/37 To receive a report on the Family Bird Box Day which took place on 21st February.

The event was well attended with all 18 boxes being made and taken away. The Chair thanked all those who were involved in organising the day and donating supplies.

2026/38 To receive an update on the replacement of the village seat sign.

No progress but Cllr Lidstone-Scott has been chasing.

2026/39 To discuss letter from resident – Hilary McGregor

The letter was discussed. Village hall signage had been discussed at a previous meeting, and it was decided that the parish council could not justify the expense of additional signage. Councillors feel the signage in the village is adequate and sat nav directions are usually accurate. The village hall could put a temporary sign out when there is an event.

The parish council are not responsible for salt bins on private property so councillors were unable to comment on the second and third point.

The Chair and Clerk will reply to communicate the parish council's response. **ACTION: Chair/Clerk**

2026/40 To review the Action Plan

Cllr O'Keefe reviewed the action plan and current points were discussed. Cllr Lidstone-Scott will complete the safety inspections and risk assessments. **ACTION: Cllr Lidstone-Scott**

2026/41 To receive a report on village litter pick which took place on 14th March

The Chair thanked all those who attended. It was a successful morning.

2026/42 To discuss any other urgent Items.

None.

2026/43 To receive any items for inclusion on the next Agenda

Seat on village sign, Defib training, Defib renewal cost, Data Protection Policy, Standing Orders.

The next meeting, including the AGM, will take place on Wednesday 20th May at the earlier time of 7pm.

Meeting closed 9.30pm

Signed as a true record of the meeting of Wood Norton Parish Council held on 18th March 2026

Signed by the Chair.....