

North Marston Parish Council

Clerk to the council: Mrs Jan Brandon - Email: northmarston@gmail.com. Telephone 07933 624147

(DRAFT) MINUTES

Meeting of North Marston Parish Council

Tuesday 9th December 2025 at 8.00pm in the Village Hall

160/25 Present and Apologies

Present: Councillors Mordue, Hill and Du-Plessis, Buckinghamshire Councillor, Phil Gomm, Jan Brandon, Clerk and one member of the public.

Apologies for absence had been received and were accepted from: Councillors Hogbin-Mills, Tanner, Newman and Boyt.

161/25 Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

Open Forum for Parishioners

(Under adjournment – 20 minutes total, 3 minutes per person speaking and to include the 100 Club Draw Christmas Double Prize Draw for December 2025).

A member of the public commented that the contact details for the various local clubs and organisations are not visible on the website, meaning that prospective new members may not know who to contact. The Clerk advised that she will email the clubs to ask them to review the information they submitted for the new website and, where necessary, provide their contact details to Councillor Tanner, the site administrator.

100 Club Draw results (drawn by a member of the public):

1st Prize No.17 - £60 - Pete Butler

2nd Prize No.41 - £40 - Mike Brandon

3rd Prize No. 62 - £20 - Jim Forsyth

162/25 Buckinghamshire Council Update Councillor Phil Gomm gave the following updates:

1. The large area of subsidence on Quainton Road, opposite Shepperd's Close, is scheduled to be repaired in the early part of next year, possibly in March.
2. Councillor Gomm suggested that a local team be formed to walk the local footpaths and identify any damaged bridges and stiles.
3. Following several complaints from residents that some farmers are not defining footpaths, Councillor Gomm encouraged them to contact him if farmers are not clearly maintaining footpaths across fields, including defining routes and flattening soil so that paths are easily visible and accessible.
4. Councillor Gomm encouraged the Parish Council to have a representative present at Community Board meetings, many of which are now held online. The Clerk is currently the delegated representative and has attended in person locally when possible; however, it would be beneficial for a councillor to attend when the Clerk is unable to do so. The Community Board is pleased to be helping The Shop towards the cost of signage.
5. There is an ongoing public consultation by the Fire Authority regarding proposed cuts to the Fire Service in Buckinghamshire. These proposals include the disposal of some fire appliances in Buckingham and Aylesbury. Councillor Gomm encouraged residents to engage with the consultation, noting that further cuts are unacceptable given the increased risk of fire associated with BESS and solar installations in the area. While a new rural fire engine will be based in Buckingham, this is a smaller appliance and would not be capable of dealing with large-scale fires.

6. To support farmers and the local economy, a motion was passed at Buckinghamshire Council's Full Council requiring that all produce at council and parish council organised events be sourced locally, including food and drink from local producers, unless specific dietary or cultural requirements make this impractical.

163/25 Minutes

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 11th November 2025, were approved and signed.

164/25 Planning – No notifications had been received at time of agenda issue.

165/25 Appointment of new Parish Clerk

To receive the interview panel's recommendation and to resolve the appointment of the new Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

RESOLVED: The Parish Council approved the appointment of Chloe Collins as Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. The outgoing Clerk will prepare and send the letter of appointment, and Councillors Mordue and Tanner will review the NALC contract and arrange for it to be sent to Chloe for signature. It was also agreed that the outgoing Clerk's contract be extended up to and including 5 January 2026, to allow extended coverage and a handover day and walk around the village with the new Clerk on 5 January.

166/25 Land to the North of Quainton Road

The Chairman advised that although the legal dispute itself has been closed, the costs submitted by the Respondents in connection with the case have been assessed by a costs lawyer for legitimacy and proportionality. If a settlement cannot be reached, the final decision on costs will be made by a judge. The boundary between the Parish Barn and the adjoining parcel of land remains in dispute and is being addressed by the respective legal representatives of the parties involved in consultation with the Parish Council.

167/25 Compliance with Assertion 10 – Cllr Tanner

There were no updates in Councillor Tanner's absence, other than work on this is continuing.

168/25 First Aid Training – The outgoing Clerk, Jan Brandon, volunteered to continue organising the certified First Aid training course at the Village Hall early next year. The twelve available places, offered at a 50% subsidised cost by the Parish Council, have all been provisionally booked by residents who attended the defibrillator training. If there is sufficient interest, the Parish Council may organise an additional course later in the year.

169/25 Property and Community Facilities

To receive relevant updates and agree on any actions relating to:

1. Village Hall
 - (i) Agree Village Hall Committee

RESOLVED: Without the need to establish a formal committee, it was agreed that Councillor Mordue and the outgoing Clerk, Jan Brandon, would be available locally to oversee matters relating to the Village Hall. This would include attending contractor visits and passing on information to the new Clerk and/or the Parish Council regarding maintenance issues or other work requiring attention. Also, to show prospective hirers around the hall or to meet with contractors when the Clerk is unable to do so, as she does not live in the village.

The new Clerk will be responsible for overseeing the online bookings process and all related matters.

Floor polishing

RESOLVED: The Clerk to ask PRA Randles for a quote to clean and varnish the floor.

(ii) Purchase of mugs to replace cups and saucers

RESOLVED: It was agreed that the Clerk would look for mugs suitable for commercial use.

Coloured mugs were the preferred option and to purchase 60 was agreed.

(iii) Possible replacement of key safe with Smart version

RESOLVED: Councillor Mordue to purchase and install a new Smart key safe which can be controlled by an app on a mobile phone by the Clerk. This will improve security allowing the code to be changed on a regular basis.

2. Shop storage area

(i) Payment to Cover Electricity Costs for 2025–26

The Clerk has issued an invoice for the Shop's contribution towards electricity costs for use of the storage area behind the Schorne Room.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to follow up, as payment has not yet been received.

(ii) The Shop also requested permission from the Parish Council to mark a disabled parking bay in the car park.

RESOLVED: The Parish Council approved the request.

3. Progress on Wi-Fi – Councillor Mordue has this in the pipeline.

4. Play Area – no updates received in Councillor Newman's absence.

5. Village Pond and Parsnip Pond – no updates, other than Councillor Hogbin-Mills has removed some of the bullrushes from Parsnip Pond – they are not native and become invasive, sapping the pond of water.

6. Defibrillators – The Village Hall defibrillator has had its battery replaced, and replacement pads are due in January. These have been purchased and given to Christina Hutson to place in the cabinet. All other defibrillators have been checked and are ready for emergency use.

Users of the sports field are reminded not to park in front of the defibrillator on the side wall of the pavilion, and not to place bins or heavy parking cones in front of it, as this recently blocked access for emergency status checks and cleaning and would block access in an emergency.

7. 170/25 Environment and Highways

To receive updates and agree any actions on the following:

1. Highways:

Any new or resolved road issues:

The kerb weir drain High Street/Church Street junction: The recent heavy rainfall caused a lot of flooding from High Street along Portway in a torrent of water. The weir drain on the corner of Church Street at the junction with High Street was almost completely blocked by the new road resurfacing last year and has not allowed water to drain away effectively ever since. The Clerk did write to the LAT about this last year, but no remedial works were carried out.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to email the LAT about this again. Councillor Gomm is aware and will also mention it to him.

Parking: Residents are asked not to park on grass verges because of the damage this causes e.g. at the junction of Gibbings Close.

MVAS – Councillors Mordue and Tanner are still working on retrieving data to share with Councillor Gomm and TVP.

Street lighting – no issues reported.

Bus shelters – no updates

2. Grass and Hedges – contract with Blades ends at the end of March.

The Parish Council is considering extending the current grass and hedge cutting contract for a further six months under the existing terms. This would allow the new Clerk time to settle into her role before going out to tender for the next contract.

RESOLVED: The outgoing Clerk to write to the Parish Council's contractor, Simon Brown of Blades, to ask if he would be agreeable to this extension under the existing terms.

171/25 Projects

To receive updates, discuss, and agree any actions on the following:

1. Replacement windows for the Village Hall and repair of Schorne Room window

RESOLVED: The Parish Council will apply for Planning Permission for UPVC double-glazed windows in foil-wrapped wood effect (dark ash) with Minster glass and faux leaded lights, in keeping with the building's character. Given the high cost of repairing the Schorne Room window (approximately £500-£600), the Council agreed not to carry out repairs at this time, and instead to wait until the replacement windows are fitted. It was noted that this project may take some time to complete due to the planning process.

2. Replacement of posts around the Village's upper and lower greens

Update: As instructed, the Clerk has requested a quote from Richard Tattam for the replacement and installation of the current posts. Richard has indicated he will prepare the quote as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: The Clerk will follow up with Richard Tattam to ask whether he would prefer the posts to be purchased from UK Timber and for him to carry out the installation only. Additionally, the Clerk will ask him to provide a quote for clearing Footpath No.4 between Elmers Meadow and Gibbings Close, which has become very overgrown.

3. New streetlight opposite the Sports Field entrance – Cllrs Mordue and Hill

This remains outstanding. Concern was expressed regarding the dark evenings and the associated Health and Safety risks for children using the sports field.

4. Encouraging Wildlife / Aylesbury Vale Wild Project – Cllrs Hogbin-Mills and Du-Plessis

Update: The Clerk has purchased the seeds as previously instructed; however, the soil is currently too cold and hard for sowing.

RESOLVED: The seeds will be stored on the Village Hall shelves until early spring, when conditions are suitable for sowing.

173/25 Finance

1. To agree the budget for 2026–27

RESOLVED: As the budget had only recently been completed and sharing it in advance of the meeting had not been possible, with only three councillors present it was agreed to defer approval of the budget to the January meeting.

2. To agree the Precept for 2026–27

RESOLVED: Since the budget must be approved before the Precept request, agreement of the Precept was also deferred to the January meeting. The Clerk reminded members that the Parish Precept request must be submitted by the new Clerk by the 31 January 2026 deadline.

3. To agree a 5% Village Hall rental increase for the Preschool

The hourly hire rate for the Preschool was last increased in April 2024.

RESOLVED: To increase the hourly hire rate by 5%, effective 1 April 2026, to £7.10 per hour.

4. To agree a new three-year Streetlighting contract with SSE – unmetered supply

RESOLVED: The Parish Council approved a new three-year streetlighting contract with SSE Energy for £3,020.00 over three years, commencing 8 December 2025 and ending 30 November 2028.

5. To approve the following banking access changes:

- Removal of the outgoing Clerk from online banking and app access as soon as practicable, ensuring that no payments are disrupted.

RESOLVED: Approved.

- Addition of the new Clerk as an authorised user for online banking and app access, with authority to set up payments but not to authorise them (unless permitted under Standing Orders).

RESOLVED: Approved, with the proviso that the Parish Council may move its accounts to Unity Bank on the advice of the incoming Clerk. Councillor Mordue will investigate further.

7. To approve Receipts and Payments

RESOLVED: The following Receipts and Payments were approved, including a late invoice payment to James Radcliffe for petrol for the sports field mower of £31.73 plus £5.29 VAT.

Receipts and Payments of Accounts

Payments made on behalf of the Parish Council

Tesco Mobile – parish phone contract - £8.57, no VAT

Blades – November grass cutting - £882.40, £147.07 VAT

HP Instant ink – printer ink contract (DD) – £6.49, £1.08 VAT

Law Group LLP – Costs Lawyer Points of Dispute QR - £900.00, £150.00 VAT

Law Group LLP – Solicitor's fees - £888.00, £148.00 VAT

Defibrillator Pads VH - £53.99, £9.00 VAT

Amazon – Defibrillator and Keep Clear signage - £18.59, £3.12 VAT

Payments to be made on behalf of the Parish Council

Clerks Salary for November - £***. ** no VAT

HMRC – Clerk's PAYE tax - £***. **

Employers N.I £**. **

Office Reimbursement for October £26.00, no VAT

Village Hall

Payments made on behalf of the Village Hall

VALDA Energy – Electricity VH & SR November – In credit, no payment taken

Anglian Wave Water – 9th August to 8th November - £150.54, no VAT

Lovell's Fuels – Oil delivery 500 litres - £288.18, £13.72 VAT

JR Plumbing – Annual boiler service - £127.50, £21.25 VAT

Katherine Wetherall – VH cleaning November – £225.00, no VAT

Payments received on behalf of the Village Hall

Schorne Preschool – VH rental for Autumn Term (invoiced & paid early as Clerk leaving) £3,000.30, no VAT

Jan Brandon – MADS VH hire banked via Post Office - £288.00 cash (from Jennifer Heffer)

Sportsfield

Payments Received on behalf of the Sportsfield

Gordon Bowden – Remaining Granmarstonbury proceeds - £3,245.50, no VAT

Payments made on behalf of the Sportsfield

Gordon Bowden – Reimbursement for pest control survey and subsequent work - £594.00, no VAT

NM School Association – 50% share of total Granmarstonbury proceeds for joint event - £3,881.58, no VAT

Lanes Landscaping – supply of materials for sportsfield fencing - £300.00, £60.00 VAT

CH HJ Beckett – Labour fencing at sportsfield - £370.00, no VAT

Anglian Wave Water – Pavilion 9th August to 8th November - £33.62, no VAT

Rebecca Parker – invoice 1150 Cleaning pavilion November - £93.50, no VAT

VALDA Energy Ltd – Electricity Oct - £72.68, £3.46 VAT

Rebecca Parker -Marvellous Marigolds October cleaning - £76.50, no VAT

Late invoice: James Radcliffe for petrol for the sports field mower of £31.73 plus £5.29 VAT.

Payments to be made on behalf of the Sportsfield

000873 100 Club 1st prize £60.00, no VAT,

000874 100 Club 2nd prize £40.00, no VAT,

000875 100 Club 3rd prize £20.00, no VAT

174/25 Date of the next meeting:

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **Tuesday, 13 January 2025 at 8.00 pm in the Village Hall**. It was noted that this would be the first meeting supported by the new Clerk, **Chloe Collins**.