SYWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman Cllr John Amos
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Sywell Parish Council
held on **Thursday 20th March 2025** at **7:30pm** at The Aviator, Wellingborough Road Sywell,

In attendance: Cllrs John Amos (Chairman), Elizabeth Brown, John Shenfield, Nanette Muttock, Fiona Ingram, Philip Bletsoe-Brown
Clerk: Maureen Holliday

180/24 **PUBLIC SESSION:**

181/24 **APOLOGIES:** to receive and accept apologies for absence. **None**

182/24 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/DISPENSATION REQUESTS –** Councillors are reminded that if they have either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or other interest in any of the agenda items then they should declare the interest and withdraw from the debate or meeting as appropriate. None

183/24 **RECEIVE CHANGES TO REGISTRABLE INTERESTS (if any) None**

184/24 **RESOLVED TO SIGN & APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING** Thursday 9th January 2025 and were signed by the Chairman.

185/24 **NORTH NORTHANTS COUNCILLORS – Cllr Scott Brown** provided a full report to the Council. **Appendix II**

186/24 **CHAIRMAN, CLERK and COUNCILLOR REPORT** on items not on the agenda (verbal).

187/24 **RESOURCES: RESOLVED** to approve the following (a to h)
Documents in Meeting Papers.

a) **Bank Balances at 28 February 2025**: Current Account: £ 1,069.81
(Traffic Calming Funding) Reserve Account: £ 74,705.56

b) **Income received since last meeting**: NNC Mowing Grant £362.75

c) **Receipts & Payments: Budget Summary, Bank Rec for year to March 2025** tabled

d) **To approve payments made at and between meetings Appendix** 1

e) **Cllr Fiona Ingram to confirm result of Internal Audit** Reported no issues found following spot-check examination**.**

f) **Annual Parish Meeting –** to discuss and approve arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting. Agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting will be held before the Parish Council meeting on 8th May.

18824 **PLANNING: Resolution** to agree responses and actions.

a) **New Applications:** Circulated.
NW/25/00007/FUL 107 Overstone Road Sywell Removal of conservatory and erection of a single storey extension, for use as an additional bedroom. No Observations

b) **Awaiting Decision:**

c) **Applications Decided:**
NW/24/00346/OUT 41 Ecton Lane Sywell. Outline planning application for a proposed Self-Build Dwelling with All Matters Reserved Aside from Access. Withdrawn
NW/24/00674/FUL 112 Overstone Road Sywell: Change of use from Dwelling (use class C3) to church (use class F.1f) with associated parking and landscaping. Refused

d) **Planning applications and matters since publication of the agenda** (applications notified by BCW received prior to the meeting will be considered)

e) **Other Planning Matters**:

i) **Buildings and Field, Wellingborough Road, adjacent to old village of Sywell. FOI request submitted to NNC.** Investigation Reference WC/2024/00050 Awaiting response from the case officer Mr Chris Neal. The Clerk reported that is has been exceptionally difficult to get an enforcement officer to follow through and respond to this enquiry and the enquiries from members of the public. Contact details provided by NNC following a FOI request for information have failed.
Action: Clerk to follow up again and Cllr Scott Brown offered to follow up on the correspondence submitted to NNC.

ii) **Green Hill Solar Park –**
Launch of Targeted Consultation from 13 March - 10 April 2025
Consultation has been circulated to all villages around the location.
Following the public consultation, Green Hill Solar Farm Limited is launching this targeted consultation to gather input on specific proposed changes and provide an update on Green Hill Solar Farm (the "Scheme"). As previously outlined, the Scheme will comprise the construction, operation (including maintenance), and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic (PV) energy-generating station and energy storage system within the administrative boundaries of West Northamptonshire Council, North Northamptonshire Council, and Milton Keynes City Council.
The proposed changes are transport-related and are for ensuring sufficient land is available to facilitate vehicle access to the sites and the cable route corridor. The land may be required for traffic management measures during the construction, operational or decommissioning phases.
There are 25 changes in total to the scheme boundary, and they are situated along Broughton Road, Kettering Road, Red House Lane, Moonshine Gap, Highfield Road, Mears Ashby Road, Earls Barton Road, B573, Station Road, A509, Easton Lane, A510 and A428.
The environmental team has assessed the changes and concluded that they do not introduce new or materially different significant environmental effects compared to the preliminary information already presented.
Detailed maps showcasing these boundary changes are available in our updated brochure and online materials.
Action: Clerk to arrange for copy notification to be placed in the village newsletter.

189/24 HIGHWAYS, MOWING AND MAINTENANCE: **Resolution** to approve items (i to v) further action or response.

Village Maintenance, Traffic Calming and Speeding in the Village:

i) **Traffic Calming/CIL money (Overstone Leys).** Works are now completed, NNC has reviewed the spend and the remaining funding against the original decision is £20,840.64. Council discussed and agreed to apply to use some of the funding to replace a streetlamp in the old village that was damaged but never replaced some years ago. Cllr Scott Brown also suggested enquiring into the possibility of using funding for a village bus service. **Action:** The Clerk will make enquiries and also follow up on the initiative by Moulton Minibuses to provide a shopping service.

ii) **Lengthsman Report from Peter Clayton. The report was gratefully received by the Council.**
The village has a number of Pothole issue's some of which will be repaired at the end of this month, but most are scheduled repair end of April 2025 or before. The road markings at Mears Ashby Road & Ecton Lane are scheduled repair end July 2025 or sooner. An urgent issue was reported & repaired by the Council within 10 days and a warning of the problem was put on Facebook
A number of gullies on Holcot Lane/Ecton Lane/Mears Ashby Road have had leaves removed from grid tops and the drain on the Holcot/horseshoe roundabout should be cleaned by the Council this month.

A report was made to Anglian Water with reference to a loose Fire Hydrant Cover opposite the notice board on Webbs Lane it took them a number of days to investigate, and the reply came back "sorted" however the cover flipped, and a vehicle ran over it pressing the cover against the valve and causing a pipe fracture. The work took over 36 hours to repair with water being switched off to houses & the Aerodrome for a time. At this position (according to the engineer) the main water artery that feeds Ecton Lane, Stonelea/Westlea and the Aerodrome.

Another issue with Anglian Water is a drain cover opposite Hall Farm Gate on Wellingborough Road. A report was made (to the Council) by a member of the public in late October about the condition of the drain cover and cracks around the grid, next to it. According to the Council the cracks around the grid and the drain cover are the responsibility of Anglian Water. I put a report in to them and they responded, "cannot find a problem". I have taken some pictures and will re-submit a report.

Yet again our local bus service has become unreliable owing to roadworks at Overstone Leys would like to know why we pay a Council tax which supports a rural bus service, but we don't get one.

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iii) **Street lighting** Update on Street lighting repairs and replacements**.** The 2 new streetlamps have been fitted in Sywell Village at a cost of £1,500. Council to agree on reinstatement of the missing lamp in Sywell Village. 2 repairs in Overstone Road are still being chased for repair. Payment for the new lamps will not be made until repairs are carried out. Council agreed to reinstate the missing lamp. **Action:** Clerk to enquire about funding and arrange to reinstate.

iv) **Other Highways matters to be discussed.**

a) The Wombles have requested 2 further safety signs. **Action** Clerk to arrange.

b) A village resident suggested placing double-yellow lines on the roadway leading to the entrance to Webbs Lane. The Clerk met with the Highways representative of NNC on site and at the office in Kettering to discuss the possibilities and limitations of the suggestion. Council agreed to progress agreement with Highways for a section marked to prevent parking too near to Webbs Lane, opposite Ecton Lane. **Action** Clerk to establish parking opportunities/limitations.

190/24 ELLIOTT PARK: Consider Report, Proposals and Actions. Discussion on outstanding issues and **Resolution** to accept reports and actions.

a) To receive a report from the Clerk and Chairman regarding refurbishment

The Clerk reported on the purchase of the basic materials to carry out the fitting of new fencing to contain the play areas. The materials have been sourced and paid £2,211.37 with delivery promised on 21 March. An Installation estimate of £3,000 was agreed. The installation company have stated that the works should be completed half-way through April. A considerable amount of preparation and layout planning work is required.

b) To receive a report from the Committee.

Cllr Brown reported that the fencing around the field is failing but it was not considered essential to immediately embark on replacement.

Cllr Bletsoe-Brown agreed to investigate a solution to the problem of water draining down into the play area.

Cllr Bletsoe-Brown agreed to lift and transport the Wicksteed roundabout away to enable maintenance of the woodwork to be carried out.

191/24 Elections 2025 – to receive information from the Clerk.

Cllr Nomination Papers were provided to Councillors for completion and returned for the Clerk to deposit with NNC before the closing date of 1 Apr.

It was agreed to identify potential Cllr candidates to be approached after the elections.

Action: Clerk to arrange appointment with NNC to deposit the papers. Also, to publicise for Cllrs, particularly to the Primary School.

192/24 TRAINING and Advice Sessions:

There are currently many, mainly on-line, training courses and advisory sessions, particularly on the subject of changes to planning regulations. Many are at short notice. Clerk granted permission to attend where felt necessary.

193/24 URGENT MATTERS FOR REPORT ONLY (Notified to the Chairman before the meeting)

194/24 DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING –8 May 2025 7:30pm, Village Hall, Sywell

Signed Chairman Date : 8 May 2025

Future meetings 2025: 8 May, 10 July, 11 Sept, 13 Nov

Appendix I Payments made at and between meetings

			Inc VAT	VAT
15-Jan-25	Tomato Energy	Power	-31.20	-1.49
23-Jan-25	Gigaclear PLC	Internet Village Hall	-36.00	-6.00
23-Jan-25	Tomato Energy	Power	-446.25	-21.25
27-Jan-25	SLCC	Training	-108.00	
31-Jan-25	Unity Bank	Service charge	-6.00	
03-Feb-25	GOCARDLESS	Securifire CCTV monitoring	-31.86	-5.31
24-Feb-25	Gigaclear PLC	Internet Village Hall	-36.00	-6.00
24-Feb-25	Tomato Energy	5552848785	-191.45	-9.12
24-Feb-25	CPRE	Membership	-60.00	
28-Feb-25	Unity Bank	Service charge	-6.00	
10-Feb-25	Tomato Energy	5149732832	-31.13	-1.48
03-Mar-25	GOCARDLESS	Securifire CCTV monitoring	-31.86	-5.31
05-Mar-25	SLCC	Practitioners conf 1 day only	-192.00	-32.00
05-Mar-25	Sywell Village Hall	Meeting Room Hire 2024/5	-199.50	
05-Mar-25	Sywell Old School	Rent for Hall 2025	-500.00	
06-Mar-25	Envirobuild	EB-2025001119 Elliott Park	-2653.64	-442.27
07-Mar-25	Tomato Energy	5891914543	-28.14	-1.34
10-Mar-25	Tomato Energy	5922948925	-172.90	-8.23
18-Mar-25	Parish Online	Website	-76.80	
18-Mar-25	Autela Payroll	Payroll Services	-102.33	
			-4941.06	-539.80

Payments Approved at the meeting:

18-Mar-25	HMRC PAYE	475PQ00822792	-170.21
24-Mar-25	Gigaclear	C301522	-36
25-Mar-25	Tomato Energy		-32.70
25-Mar-25	Tomato Energy	39910	-34.38
31-Mar-25	Park Landscapes	Mowing 1667	-366.00
31-Mar-25	SLCC	VAT Guide	-31.00

Councillor S. Brown – Monthly Report

Budget Update
The **annual budget** has been approved, ensuring that we meet our **legal requirement** of producing a **balanced budget**. Key highlights include:

- **Total Budget**: £400 million
- **Breakdown by Directorate (2025-26)**:
  - **Children & Education**: £89.2m
  - **Adults, Health Partnerships & Housing**: £164.3m
  - **Public Health & Communities**: £9.6m
  - **Place & Economy**: £78.1m
  - **Enabling & Support Services**: £43.7m
  - **Corporate**: £15.8m
- **Council Tax Changes**:
  - **4.99% increase** in core council tax, plus **2% for adult social care**, adding an **extra £11m per year** to the budget.
  - **Band D property** now: **£1,827.06 per year** (£35.14 per week).
  - **Council Tax Support Scheme** retained at **25%**.

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- **Capital Programme (£208.5m over 4 years)**:
  - **£59.3m** for Highways
  - **£36.6m** for Housing Stock
  - **£27.9m** investment in Schools
  - **£8.1m** for Facilities for Disabled Residents
  - **£2.6m** for EV Infrastructure

- **Forecast Budget Deficit**:
  - **2026/27**: £33m
  - **2027/28**: £53m
  - **2028/29**: £73.6m

While we are currently in a **stable financial position** with strong reserves, we face ongoing economic risks affecting **citizens, businesses, and the Council itself**.

Community & Events

- **Children's Mental Health Week**: A series of events with local partners highlighted mental health issues and showcased council support services available for children and families.
- **International Women's Day**: Coincided with a full council meeting. For the second year running, our **top leadership team** (Chair, Deputy Chair, CEO, Monitoring Officer, and Deputy Monitoring Officer) was **entirely female**—a proud moment for North Northamptonshire!
- **Local Elections – 1st May 2025**:
  - Ensure you're **registered to vote**.
  - **Nominations for candidates are now open**.
  - **Council Leader Jason Smithers** will **not** be seeking re-election.

Important Public Warning – QR Code Scam

⚠️ **QR codes have been fraudulently placed on some pay-and-display parking machines**.
⚠️ **North Northamptonshire Council does NOT use QR codes for parking**.
⚠️ **If you see one, DO NOT use it!**

Open Consultations (Have Your Say)

- **Health & Wellbeing Strategy** – Closes **13th March**
- **Local Transport Plan** – Closes **23rd March**
- **Rural Health & Wellbeing Needs** – Closes **25th March**
- **Draft Housing Strategy** – Closes **11th April**
- **Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment** – Closes **6th May**
- **Traffic Regulation Orders** – Closes **31st March**

Available Grant Funding

💰 **NN Decarb Business Grant Scheme**

- Grants of **up to £10,000** (covering **up to 50%** of project costs).
- **Deadline:** 31st March

💰 **Community Grant Funding**

- Grants of **up to £5,000** to **improve community life** and encourage **resident involvement**.
- **Deadline:** 31st March

Final Thoughts

Our **financial position remains strong**, but we face **rising costs** and future funding gaps. As always, I encourage residents to **engage with consultations**, **apply for available funding**, and **stay alert to scams**. Please reach out if you have any concerns or suggestions.

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