



NORTHCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL  
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## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF NORTHCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

12<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 7.00 pm at Social Centre, Bell Lane, Northchurch, HP4 3 RD

### Members Present:

Cllr M Capozzi                      Chair  
Cllr M Somervail                Deputy Chair  
Cllr N Pocock  
Cllr S Hughes  
Cllr C Syers  
Cllr P Dix  
Cllr Pringle                        Arrived at 19.03

Also, present Mrs U Kilich and three members of the public.

### 70/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence  
There were no apologies of absence to record.

### 71/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To declare an interest linked to any item on the agenda  
There were no declarations of interest to record.

### 72/25 Public Participation is allowed 15 minutes

Julie Battersby, a Northchurch resident, highlighted that Berkhamsted Town Council has recently consulted on a draft Neighbourhood Plan. She expressed concern that the plan does not identify the wildlife corridor along New Road near the Berkhamsted boundary, which forms an important link between the Berkhamsted East–West wildlife corridors. This corridor runs through one of the few continuous green routes crossing the railway line and connects with the canal wildlife corridor.

It was also noted that the preparation of a Northchurch Neighbourhood Plan under the Localism Act 2011 would help align and support inter-related planning policies between Northchurch and Berkhamsted, many of which are already set out in the Local Plan. She explained that a Neighbourhood Plan would provide additional benefits to the Northchurch community, which has a strong interest in preserving and enhancing the character of the area. These benefits include improved recognition and protection of wildlife corridors, support for the development and enhancement of green spaces, and the conservation of important habitats, including the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation and the Chiltern National Landscape.

It was noted that Neighbourhood Plans are referenced in the revised National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) and carry legal weight in influencing local planning decisions. When aligned with Local Plan housing requirements, a Neighbourhood Plan can provide strong grounds for resisting inappropriate development where the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

Julie requested that Northchurch Parish Council consider developing a Neighbourhood Plan broadly aligned with the format used by Berkhamsted Town Council and offered her assistance in helping to prepare it.

**Action Plan:**

To establish the grant funding available and identify the level of external support required to deliver the Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Pringle suggested that Northchurch Parish Council invite individuals with a range of relevant backgrounds and skills to support the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

**73/25 MINUTES**

- a. To approve the minutes of the meeting of the.
  - Full Council Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2025  
Resolved, proposed by Cllr Capozzi, seconded by Cllr Hughes to approve the Minutes of the meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2025 as a true and accurate representation of the meeting. Unanimously agreed.
- b. Matters arising from previous meetings that are not included as agenda items below  
Nothing to report.

**74/25 REPORT FROM BOROUGH/COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

To receive a report from Borough/County Councillors  
Cllr Pringle reported on the following in her capacity as a Borough Councillor

- Application: 25/03092/MOA  
Proposal: Construction of up to 200 residential dwellings (Use Class C3) with a new access from Shootersway, including public open space, biodiversity enhancements, landscaping, surface water drainage, and associated infrastructure.  
Address: Land South of Shootersway, Berkhamsted, HP4 3FB, Hertfordshire  
  
Councillor Pringle has called in the application for consideration by Northchurch Parish Council and recommended refusal. The application will be discussed at the upcoming Planning Committee meeting.
- Councillor Pringle also advised members that a Green Community Grant is available, with a closing date of 23 January 2026. The grant supports projects relating to climate change, environmental initiatives, and wildlife corridor enhancements. Councillor Pringle intends to apply on behalf of the Council. Cllr Pringle proposed that NPC explore the possibility of seeking a grant funding for wildlife corridor to link the ancient hedgerows in Bell Lane with the canal, Rush Meadow and other local areas.
- The rotten fruit tree behind the bus stop at Darrs Lane had been removed and the surrounding debris cleared away.

Cllr Smith-Wright reported on the following in her capacity as a County Councillor

- Speed and Volume survey that was commissioned in October 2025.  
New Road is classified as a Rural Road so scores lower than an urban road outside a school. Most drivers were driving below 30mph, the review suggests that

it would be a good place to have a 20mph. The Locality budget for 26/27 has been used, however, this can be part funded from the Locality budget for 27/28 and shared with Northchurch Parish Council. There is a possibility that this comes under HCC 20mph scheme.

- Speed Management Survey is out for consultation, Cllr Smith-Wright encouraged members to complete Hertfordshire County Council's Speed Management Survey, which is intended to inform the County Council's consideration of potential speed management measures and changes across the county.

It was noted that increased participation would help ensure that local views from Northchurch are represented. Northchurch Parish Council agreed to advertise the survey to residents, including via the parish website and other appropriate communication channels.

- Recreation Ground Zebra Crossing - The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LSWIP) is currently in draft form. The adoption process will be undergone in 2026. It has been agreed this crossing is currently in the right place and so their proposal would be to upgrade rather than relocate this.
- Cllr Smith-Wright has funded a grit bin for Valley Road

#### **75/25 CHAIR'S REPORT/CORRESPONDANCE RECEIVED**

- a. Cllr Capozzi to thank Trish Pocock for her services - Cllr Capozzi thanked Trish Pocock for her service for over 25 years.
- b. Bulbourne December 2025 Report
- c. Neighbourhood Plan Wildlife Corridors (received 22/12/2025) – discussed under 72/25 Public Participation
- d. Requests for grit bins from members of the public -There have been several requests for the grit bins which have been directed to Herts County Council.
- e. Requests for refill the grit bins which belong to NPC – There have been requested to refill the grit bins which have been refilled by Sunnyside Rural Trust.

#### **76/25 CLERKS REPORT (verbal)**

- a. To produce action list and comments – the Clerk updated Councillors on outstanding items that are under progress or have been completed.
- b. To update on latest news from DBC

#### **77/25 ROAD SAFETY**

- a. An update from County Councillor C Smith-Wright – covered under 74/25

#### **78/25 OPEN SPACE**

Cllr Capozzi informed members that T G Garden Maintenance had removed a fallen tree at the recreation ground.

Cllr Capozzi sought members' agreement to proceed with the removal of the skate ramp at an approximate cost of £500. Members unanimously agreed.

Abacus has completed remedial works to the area surrounding the trampoline; however, concerns were raised regarding the standard of the work previously undertaken by Proludic.

Cllr Capozzi confirmed that photographs had been taken and that the matter would be raised with Proludic.

**79/25 ALLOTMENT**

Nothing to report

**80/25 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES**

- a. Cllr Capozzi proposes to approve the YTD Summary for December 2025  
Resolved, proposed by Cllr Capozzi, seconded by Cllr Pocock to approve the YTD Summary for 2026. Unanimously agreed.
- b. Cllr Capozzi proposes to approve the bank reconciliation, receipts and payments for December 2025  
Resolved, proposed by Cllr Capozzi, seconded by Cllr Somervail to approve the bank reconciliation receipts and payments for December 2025. Unanimously agreed.
- c. Cllr Capozzi proposes to approve the Precept for 2026/27 at £49822.00 which represents a 7.69% increase from 2025/26  
Resolved, proposed by Cllr Capozzi, seconded by Cllr Pocock to approve the Precept for 2026/27 at £49822.00 which is 7.69% increase of 2025/26. Unanimously agreed.
- d. Cllr Capozzi proposes to approve the General Reserves Policy in line with Practitioners Guide.  
Resolved, proposed by Cllr Capozzi, seconded by Cllr Pocock to approve the General Reserves Policy. Unanimously agreed.
- e. Cllr Capozzi proposes that NPC get monthly contract for the council telephone for £10 or less a month which can be paid by Direct Debit.  
Resolved, proposed by Cllr Capozzi, seconded by Cllr Hughes to get a monthly contract for the NPC telephone on Direct Debit. Unanimously agreed.

- 81/25 Exclusion of Press and Public:** To RESOLVE that under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded for the remainder of the meeting, because it is likely that publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution, arising from the nature of the business proceedings.  
Nothing to report.

**82/25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026 at 7.00 pm Social Centre Bell Lane Northchurch HP4 3 RD

The meeting concluded at 20.12