

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Northleach with Eastington Town Council held in the Westwoods Centre on 10 September 2025, 7pm

Present: Cllrs Terry Morley-Blackwell (Chairman), Gina Blackwell, Brian Hulcup, Matt Jackson, Laura Kirkby, Caroline Saunders, Jules Russell (arrived item 126), Michael Seath, and Andrew Wellman

In Attendance: Pauline Rigby (Town Clerk), County Cllr Paul Hodgkinson and a member of the public

124. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Cllrs Byron Hadley.

125. Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation

Cllr Wellman declared an interest in the planning application at 1 Lane Cottages, due to a family connection.

126. County and District Council reports

Cllr Paul Hodgkinson reported that:

1. The Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process is continuing. A letter has been received from the Minister confirming the timetable. County and district councils will vote on their preferred options in November 2025, which will then be submitted to Government. The Government makes the final decision, which is expected in June 2026. Elections to the new shadow unitary authority are scheduled for May 2027, with the new council taking over following the abolition of existing councils in May 2028. He has doubts that this is achievable in such a short time, but it remains the current timetable.
2. The timetable for Pulham's 855 bus service has been improved. Residents are encouraged to make use of the service to ensure its long-term viability.
3. Concerns have been raised with Highways regarding the 20mph speed limit project in Northleach. It had previously been reported that the speed survey and preparatory work were progressing, but there has since been little communication. Local signage remains in disrepair, despite assurances that this would be resolved in the spring.
4. County councillors were given a tour of the A417 Missing Link scheme. Up to 500 people are working on site at any time. Much of the road surface is already laid, though not visible from the existing carriageway. Provided the project stays on track, sections of the new road may open from spring 2026, with full completion scheduled for February 2027.
5. The County Council is introducing a new grant scheme, providing each councillor with £20,000 to spend on community projects over the next two years. Provisionally called the Grassroots Neighbourhood Fund, it will prioritise health and wellbeing.

Cllr Hodgkinson asked if there were any questions about the public toilets. Cllr Jackson asked whether the district council would consider providing a subsidy for running the toilets. He replied that they were awaiting a proposal from the Town Council.

127. Public Participation

A member of the public commented on roadside parking blocking views of the traffic lights.

128. Confirmation of Minutes

128.1 To confirm and sign the minutes of the ordinary meeting on 9 July 2025.

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of 09 July 2025 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

128.2 To confirm and sign the minutes of the extraordinary meeting on 10 July 2025.

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of 10 July 2025 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

128.3 To confirm and sign the minutes of the extraordinary meeting on 4 August 2025.

The Clerk advised that numbering needed to be corrected.

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of 4 August 2025 with amended numbering be confirmed and signed as a true record.

129. Co-Option: To co-opt a new Councillor.

It was agreed to exercise the council's discretion to accept a second application outside the published process. Neither candidate was able to attend the meeting.

It was proposed that the first applicant be co-opted but the motion failed to carry.

It was RESOLVED that Valerie Glynn be co-opted as a Town Councillor.

130. Planning & Licensing:

130.1 It was noted that the consultation period on the planning applications had expired.

Comments had been submitted to the following applications under delegated authority:

App. Ref	Address	Proposal
25/0037/CWREG3	Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service The Fire Station West End Northleach Cheltenham GL54 3HF	To install two electric vehicle charge points at the rear of the building and one at the front, to support vehicle charging
25/0039/CWS73M	Farmington Stone Quarry, Farmington, Gloucestershire, GL54 3NZ	Variation [sic] of conditions 3(Appealed Plans) and 4(Importation) relating to planning consent 24/0042/CWS73M dated 19/12/2024
25/02073/FUL	Cats Abbey Hall Northleach Cheltenham GL54 3QD	Erection of Garden Room
25/02537/AGFO	Land Between Northleach And Eastington, Eastington Gloucestershire	Prior notification for the erection of a timber shed for the housing of a water pump and the addition of a concrete pad for the housing of a water storage container
25/02393/FUL	1 Lane Cottages High Street Northleach Cheltenham GL54 3EU	Dropped kerb, vehicular crossover and partial boundary wall demolition with an EV charging point
25/02489/LBC	Northleach Court High Street Northleach Cheltenham GL54 3PQ	Amendment to approved rooflight on extension A, single storey social space (retrospective)

130.2 App Ref: C/25/01055/STC

Applicant: Nutty Roaster-Northleach

Trading site: A429 Main Road, Layby between Mill End and Bibury junction Southbound

It was RESOLVED to comment that public safety should be given due consideration, particularly in relation to the number of trading vehicles, the size of the site, and the speed of the adjoining road.

131. Impact of Second Homes and Holiday Lets

A response to the Council's letter had been received from Cllr Layton.

It was RESOLVED that the matter be passed to the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, to ask them to research St Ives policy as recommended, and consider if similar provisions can be incorporated into the local Neighbourhood Plan.

132. Highways

132.1 Request for a 20mph zone across the town.

Gloucestershire County Council had requested expressions of interest in 'Community 20s'. On the advice of the Ward Councillor, the Clerk had submitted an expression of interest noting that the council decision to request a 20mph zone was in January 2023.

132.2 Drainage and gully works on the Market Place in October

Cllr Jackson introduced this item. Drainage works to improve water flow on the Market Place and improve access for buses are scheduled for 6th to 15th October. The Market Place will remain open, though access to the front of Budgens may be temporarily affected. He is liaising with Highways and the Shop manager to try and minimise disruption.

Action: Cllr Jackson to liaise with residents of the Chapel, Red Lion, and Market House.

He also reported that gully clearance will take place on 14 October at specified locations including the Market Place, Peep, The Green, Mill End and Town Row; and no-parking notices will be issued. The catch pit near Millstream Cottages will be cleared twice yearly.

133. Market Place Improvements

To consider recommendations from the Working Group on the scheme drawings prepared by Rappor.

Cllr Jackson had prepared a summary of the group's output. The layout selected appeared to provide the greatest number of parking spaces. The design is difficult, needing to balance safety and circulation while retaining parking. It was noted that only one revision opportunity remains, and the council wished to make the most of this opportunity.

Key points discussed:

- **Pedestrian Movement:** Current design does not provide safe pedestrian movement from Doctors Lane to the Black Cat. Proposed solutions include a raised table crossing at Doctors Lane and a removable bollard by the Black Cat Café. Additional crossings were suggested near the Cotswold Stores and on the west side of the Market Place.
- **Traffic Flow:** Concerns were raised about circulation within the Market Place, and access to the Market Place from the west and potential congestion on the High Street, especially with buses. The north entrance onto the Market Place needs widening so cars could turn in. Congestion on the High Street might be an issue with cars trying to recirculate.
- **Bus Stops:** Moving bus stops to the north end of the island would be beneficial. A bus layby could be created within the island to improve traffic flow along the High Street.

- **Parking and Safety:** Safety concerns remained about parking adjacent to seating areas. Bollards or barriers may be required to protect pedestrians. It was emphasised that parking should be maximised wherever possible, by adding spaces in front of the Cotswold Stores (while reducing the length of the bus clearways) and near the war memorial. Time-limited parking was noted as the only practical solution for improving turnover.
- **Accessibility:** The new disabled bays by the Post Office and in front of the Sherborne met with approval. An additional disabled bay by the pharmacy was proposed, instead of the loading bay. Dropped kerbs would also be required for accessibility. Concerns were raised over access to the disabled parking spaces on market days.
- **Loading bays:** The loading bay by the pharmacy to be removed. A new loading bay at the side of the Cotswold Stores was discussed, to formalise the informal use of the space.
- **Market impact:** Three parking spaces were considered insufficient for hosting a market; it would be necessary to close off a much broader area at the top of the Market Place.

It was RESOLVED to share the feedback with Rappor.

134. Northleach Public Conveniences:

To report back on meetings with CDC Cllr Paul Hodgkinson and CDC Deputy CEO on the options available to the town for the future operation of the public toilets:

Option A: the district council continues to operate the toilets and introduces charging, or

Option B: the town council takes over full ownership and operation of the toilets to keep them free at the point of use, with the associated costs added to the precept;

and agree to explore the practical arrangements of Option B with the district council.

- 134.1 The council received a report on meetings with CDC Councillor Paul Hodgkinson and the CDC Deputy CEO regarding options for the future operation of the public toilets. The report outlined the current costs of operating the public toilets and points for discussion with the district council. It was observed that local control of the asset may be desirable.

It was RESOLVED to explore the practical arrangements of Option B with the district council. The same four councillors who attended the initial meetings will take the matter forward.

- 134.2 To agree the form of public consultation on the future of the toilets, setting out options.

Some draft survey questions had been circulated for comment. It was noted that the aim is to understand residents' preferences before making a major decision. Members discussed the format of the questions, considering whether to use yes/no responses or only freeform answers. It was noted that it is important to distinguish between a consultation and engagement, so that people do not assume the process is binding.

It was RESOLVED to have some form of public engagement.

Following a lengthy discussion over the wording of the preamble and survey questions,

It was RESOLVED to approve the survey questions, noting that the charge to use the toilet would be 40p if run by the district council, that the district council is being abolished [by local government reorganisation] so the future of the public toilets is uncertain, and to phrase the survey in a way that it is clear that the results are not binding on the Town Council. The Town Clerk was given discretion to finalise the wording of the survey.

135. Mowing Contract 2026-27

It was RESOLVED to delegate detailed examination of the document to the Property & Premises Management committee (PPMC).

136. Remembrance 2025

136.1 To confirm arrangements for the ceremony at the War Memorial on Sun 9 November.

The Town Clerk reported that a road closure application had been made. It was agreed that the Chairman would lay a wreath on behalf of the council, re-using the straw wreath with crochet poppies. Volunteers were requested for marshalling the road closure.

136.2 To agree a donation to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

It was RESOLVED that a donation of £120 would be made to the Poppy Appeal.

137. Finance:

137.1. To receive the bank reconciliation to 31 August 2025.

Cllr Jackson had verified and signed the bank reconciliation.

137.2 To receive the budget monitoring report for the year to date.

The report was received. No questions were raised.

137.3 To authorise the payment of accounts as per the schedule.

A new invoice had been received from Rappor of £3,240.

It was RESOLVED to add this invoice to the payment list and the payments be approved.

138. Conclusion of Audit 2024-25:

138.1 To note that the notice of conclusion of audit has been published. This was duly noted.

138.2 To consider the external auditor's report.

The auditor's report was received, with no matters giving cause for concern. The Chairman requested it be recorded that Council congratulates the Clerk on achieving a 'clean' audit.

139. Committees: To receive minutes of committee meetings.

Minutes of the Finance Committee on 22 July had been published.

It was noted that the PPMC minutes of 28 July were not yet available.

140. Correspondence:

140.1 Invitation to service of licensing of the Rev. Charlie Styles on Thurs 11 Sept, 7:30pm.

140.2 Report from Acting Inspector Philippa Moore, Gloucestershire Police.

Cllr Kirkby reported that she attended the Police Councillor Advocacy meeting, which takes place every six months. Matters raised by neighbouring parishes included that 11 shops in Bourton on the Water had been targeted with fake £50 notes. A newsletter summarising key takeaways will be issued in a format suitable for publication on the Council's website.

140.3 Sherborne Arms Farmer's Market postponed to 2026.

141. To receive item for future meetings

To be added: Teen Shelter (Cllr Saunders).

142. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 8 October 2025, 7pm in the Westwoods Centre

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:30 pm.

Signature of the Chairman on approval of the minutes: _____

Payment schedule of 10 September 2025

Date	Supplier	Service	Amount
07-Jul	Wordfence	Website firewall	£ 112.31
10-Jul	GRCC	Membership	£ 25.00
15-Jul	BuyABattery	Batteries	£ 31.47
16-Jul	Everflow	Water rates	£ 39.31
16-Jul	Northleach Playgroup	Grant draw down	£ 1,033.00
16-Jul	Cellar Supplies	Bar stock	£ 106.21
21-Jul	Zen Internet	Broadband & Voice	£ 40.80
21-Jul	CartridgeSave	Printer ink	£ 67.30
22-Jul	BrightHR	HR support	£ 24.30
22-Jul	Microsoft Ireland	365 Business Basic	£ 55.20
23-Jul	Garry Evans	Window cleaning	£ 30.00
25-Jul	Staff costs	Payroll July	£ 4,466.28
30-Jul	Amazon	String, pouches, beakers	£ 32.94
30-Jul	Screwfix	Cable ties	£ 18.49
30-Jul	Broadleaf Services	Bench installation	£ 732.00
31-Jul	Defib Shop	Defib and cabinet	£ 1,746.00
31-Jul	Northleach PCC	Donation	£ 500.00
31-Jul	McCracken & Son	Ground maintenance	£ 1,527.30
31-Jul	Grundon	Waste collection	£ 161.51
03-Aug	Parish Online	Mapping software	£ 120.00
03-Aug	Smarty	Mobile phone	£ 6.00
04-Aug	EDF Energy	Westwoods electricity	£ 183.81
04-Aug	Cotswold District Council	Land searches	£ 411.10
05-Aug	Nisbets	Bin bags	£ 43.17
09-Aug	PKF Littlejohn	Limited assurance review	£ 756.00
11-Aug	Sweetfuels / NWF	Heating oil	£ 644.62
13-Aug	DM Payroll	Payroll services 1H25	£ 108.00
15-Aug	Everflow	Water rates	£ 34.92
18-Aug	Probate Registry	Search fees	£ 3.00
18-Aug	A&E Fire & Security	Fire alarm, extinguisher service	£ 324.02
19-Aug	Leafield Environmental	Indoor recycling bin	£ 340.80
21-Aug	Zen Internet	Broadband & Voice	£ 40.80
22-Aug	BrightHR	HR support	£ 24.30
25-Aug	Staff costs	Payroll August and backpay	£ 5,260.51
28-Aug	Rappor Consultants	Transport planning support	£ 3,240.00
31-Aug	Brian Brazington	Meadow cut	£ 462.00
01-Sep	Smarty	Mobile phone	£ 6.00
01-Sep	EDF Energy	Westwoods electricity	£ 152.40
01-Sep	CIA Fire & Security	Alarm annual service charge	£ 115.20
05-Sep	Amazon	A4 copier paper	£ 22.75
	TOTAL PAYMENTS		£ 23,048.82