

NORTHLEACH WITH EASTINGTON TOWN COUNCIL Property & Premises Management Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2025 at 7pm

Committee Members Present: Cllrs Andrew Wellman, Gina Blackwell, Byron Hadley, Brian Hulcup, and Terry Morley-Blackwell

In Attendance: Pauline Rigby (Town Clerk), Jan Blake (wildflower survey volunteer) and Tim Barter (advisor, arrived during minute 12)

1. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllr Jules Russell.

2. To received declarations of interest

Cllr Morley-Blackwell declared an interest in the allotments as a prospective tenant.

3. To confirm minutes of the previous meeting

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous committee meeting held on 22 July 2025 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record.

4. To review committee expenditure versus budget to date.

A report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The Clerk highlighted the budget remaining in the town and playground codes.

PART A: BURIAL AUTHORITY

5. To adopt a memorial inspection policy.

A draft policy had been circulated. Following discussion, it was agreed to amend the policy:

- To rename the document 'Memorial Safety & Inspection Policy'.
- To add in clause 4.3 "and social media".
- Clause 7.7 to read "If a memorial is derelict and beyond repair, a photographic record should be made and the Council may then remove the memorial, giving notice to any known relatives or interested parties in accordance with LACO 1977."

It was RESOLVED that the policy as amended be adopted.

6. To consider a quotation for memorial repairs.

The Clerk was asked to seek more quotes and investigate any funding for Polish graves.

It was RESOLVED to proceed with the quote from Just Memorials of Cheltenham of £2,036 ex VAT to repair six memorials, but ask them to leave the kerbs in situ.

7. To review update from CDS on Garden of Remembrance project and agree next steps.

A total project estimate had been received but it lacked detail. Members discussed meeting with landscapers for more detailed quotes. The project would be delivered in stages, starting with the hard landscaping this year and adding other elements later, when income started to come in. Examples of forms of memorialisation could be provided for public reference.

It was RESOLVED to source quotations for just the hard landscaping.

PART B: PROPERTY & PREMISES

8. Allotments: To review and agree allotment charges for 2026-27.

A report had been circulated with proposals for changing the fee structure to improve fairness by removing historical discrepancies in banding.

It was RESOLVED to accept the recommendation to adopt a three-band fee structure based on plots sizes from September 2026, charging £16 for the smallest allotments, £18 for medium, and £20 for the largest.

9. Annual wildflower survey: To receive the survey results.

A short presentation was received from Jan Blake on the results of this year's wildflower surveys. The season had been unusually dry. All verges were surveyed except one next to Potter Walk. Several new species were observed, including old grassland meadow species, indicating that the habitat is developing positively. In total, 20 different species of grasses were recorded. She also observed that a large patch of nettles and thistles, present in previous years, had not reappeared, which is consistent with reduced nutrient levels.

Committee discussed adding wildflower seeds next season. Concern was raised that members of the public are becoming discouraged by the limited floral display to date, and that seeding sooner may help generate support. It was noted that the scheme was only in year two while Cotswold Glorious Grasslands (CGC) recommends seeding after three years allowing more time for nutrient levels to drop further. It was confirmed that seeding sooner would not destroy existing flora, and there was no need to use herbicides, but the wildflowers may not thrive while nutrient levels remain high.

The idea of "verge guardians" was raised, with volunteers taking responsibility for managing individual areas. It was suggested that the grassiest areas (for instance, verges adjacent to Potter Walk and on West End opposite Jubilee Row) would particularly benefit from raking and scarifying, followed by the addition of local wildflower seed. It was noted that if seed is sown, the areas should not be cut immediately afterwards so that flowers can establish.

It was RESOLVED to obtain local wildflower seed from Glorious Cotswold Grasslands, calculate the required square metre coverage, and aim to establish a group of volunteers to undertake additional mowing, close cutting, raking, and sowing of the seed next season.

10. Mowing: To agree any amendments to the grounds maintenance specification and tender documents for recommendation to Full Council. (Referred from Full Council).

The committee discussed grounds maintenance and agreed the following points:

1. The top edge of the playing fields is not being strimmed, resulting in bramble growth – this should be addressed.
2. Wildflower verges to be removed from the mowing maps.
3. Webbs Court to be removed from the mowing map.
4. Crail View to come off the wildflower verge maps.
5. Hedge by the shed to be added to the Westwoods map.
6. Break the contract into smaller lots to encourage applications from smaller contractors.

It was RESOLVED to recommend the above actions to Full Council.

11. Play Equipment:

- (a) To receive routine inspection reports and consider any further actions arising.

Ward Road findings:

- Cracks in the beams: The Clerk was asked to raise this issue with Sovereign.
- End of balance beam is wobbly: It was agreed to monitor and report if gets worse.

KGV Playground findings:

- It was noted that the picnic table at the KGV had been mended.
- Also, that the gate has been misadjusted by persons unknown.

The Clerk was asked to seek further advice on response to risk.

Cllr Hadley left at this point in the meeting.

- (b) To consider repairs to surfacing under the swings and zipwire platform.

Various quotes had been sourced. It was agreed that the highest priority is cableway followed by the basket swing. The Clerk was asked to seek additional quotes for topsoil and turf under the cableway platform. Given the value of the quotes for new wetpour, it would be necessary to request additional budget from Full Council or include the work in the budget for the next financial year.

- (c) To consider providing additional benches in the play park(s).

It was RESOLVED to purchase the Queen Elizabeth II Balmoral bench from Cyan Teak Furniture at cost of £400 ex VAT plus delivery to be installed in the KGV Playground.

It was further RESOLVED to purchase the Earth Anchors wheelchair accessible picnic table at a cost of £669 ex VAT plus delivery and installation (Ward Road Playground).

It was RESOLVED that the duration of the meeting be extended until 9:45pm.

12. River Leach: To consider site report from Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust on river management and wildlife enhancement and agree actions arising.

A report had been received from Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust recommending ways to manage the river for the benefit of nature and the community. They recommended rotational cutting of the river bank, and engagement with community about the proposed management regime. Following further debate, it was agreed to review this again later.

13. Street signs: To report damaged street signs to Cotswold District Council.

The Clerk explained that the district council has changed its process and will now only accept reports of damaged street signs from parish councils, not from members of the public.

It was RESOLVED that authority be delegated to the Clerk to submit these reports.

14. Trees: To consider quote for pleaching the trees outside The Antelope.

- (a) To consider a resident's offer of two sapling oak trees.

It was RESOLVED to accept the offer, and to plant the oak trees on Hamilton Meadow.

Tim Barter volunteered to plant the trees.

- (b) To consider future management of the trees outside The Antelope.

Highways had made a tree works application to reduce these trees, so it appeared this was being taken care of. The Clerk was asked to write to the resident giving an update.

15. Waste bins: To consider resident's suggestion to provide dog poo bag dispensers.

This item was deferred.

16. Warden Proposal: To receive an update from the working party on how the 'Parish Warden' proposal might be taken forward.

Cllr Wellman had circulated a proposal.

It was RESOLVED to set up the Parish Warden Group and take the proposal to Full Council and encourage councillors to volunteer as wardens to help launch the scheme.

17. To receive items for future meetings (for information only).

To be added: Compost bin in churchyard, plus deferred items.

18. Date of Next Meeting

The next committee meeting is due to be held on Monday 24 November 2025.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9:45 pm.

Signature of the Chairman on approval of the minutes: _____