

## **Bainton & Ashton Annual Parish Meeting**

**Held:** Thursday 23 April 2026, 7:00 pm

**Venue:** Reading Room, Bainton

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### **1. Welcome and Context**

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming residents, councillors, and representatives of village organisations. It was noted that the Annual Parish Meeting is a statutory forum for parish electors rather than a formal Parish Council meeting, providing an opportunity for reflection on the past year and for residents to raise matters of concern or interest.

Attendees gave consent for the meeting to be recorded to assist in preparing accurate minutes. Written reports from several organisations were tabled and will form part of the formal record.

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### **2. Clerk Transition**

The meeting formally noted the resignation of Jenny Rice after seven years' service as Clerk. Her contribution was recognised as significant, particularly in supporting the council through administrative change and in securing external funding, including grant support for local projects.

Tony Henthorn was introduced as the newly appointed Clerk, bringing experience from neighbouring parishes and local publications. This continuity of local knowledge was noted as an important asset to the council.

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### **3. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from representatives of community organisations and elected members, including those involved in environmental work and the Good Neighbours Scheme. It was noted that written contributions would be included where available. Cllr Taylor was unable to attend.

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### **4. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 May 2025 were available via the parish website.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record.

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## **5. Ward Councillor Report – Cllr Kevin Tighe**

Cllr Tighe provided a wide-ranging update, placing local matters within the broader context of national policy and structural change.

### **Local Government Reorganisation**

The Government's direction towards larger unitary authorities was discussed, with an anticipated implementation date of 2028. The proposed scale—serving populations of around half a million—was noted as a significant shift away from more localised governance.

Concern was expressed that decision-making may become more remote from residents, reinforcing the importance of parish councils as the most immediate and accessible tier of local democracy.

### **Financial Context**

The council's financial position was described as stabilised, with a balanced budget achieved for the first time in at least a decade. This reflects a broader national picture in which local authorities have faced sustained financial pressure since the early 2010s.

### **Local Delivery**

Works across the ward were described as steady but incremental, including:

- Path resurfacing
- Drainage and gully maintenance
- Fly-tipping enforcement

While individually modest, these were recognised as cumulatively important to maintaining the quality of the local environment.

### **Traffic and Highways**

A detailed speed analysis has been undertaken across the ward, with mapping of desired speed limits. This evidence-based approach reflects an increasing reliance on data to support highway interventions.

### **Travellers' Site**

The ongoing Barnack case remains with the Secretary of State's Inspector, with a decision expected in May. The outcome remains uncertain.

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## **6. Community Policing**

The introduction of PC McSparron as neighbourhood officer was welcomed. His visible presence in the village was noted positively, particularly regarding speeding concerns.

A ward surgery was confirmed for 26 April, providing residents with an opportunity for direct engagement.

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## **7. Allotment Association**

The Association reported a year characterised by both challenge and strong community response.

A significant water leak—believed to be linked to earlier infrastructure works—resulted in substantial costs to the Association. Responsibility was not accepted by the water company, requiring allotmenters to fund and install new pipework themselves. This was achieved through volunteer labour, demonstrating strong local resilience.

Seasonal conditions were noted to be increasingly variable, with early flooding followed by rapid drying—reflecting broader climatic patterns that affect land use.

The Association continues to function not only as a growing space but as a social hub, with events reinforcing community cohesion.

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## **8. Nature Recovery and Environmental Work**

Although representatives were not present, ongoing work was acknowledged as a significant and growing part of parish activity.

This includes collaboration with regional organisations and large landowners to align local efforts with wider landscape-scale environmental strategies. The parish's role within the John Clare Countryside initiative was noted as particularly significant in this regard.

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## **9. Buttercross Club**

The Club reported stable membership across several villages and celebrated its 40th anniversary, underlining its long-standing role in local social life.

Its programme of talks, outings, and charitable contributions reflects a traditional model of rural mutual support and social engagement, which remains highly valued.

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## **10. Reading Room**

The Reading Room continues to demonstrate strong usage and financial sustainability.

With over 50 events and a 15% increase in booked hours, it serves as a central hub for a wide range of activities—from fitness classes to cultural events.

The balance between income generation and community accessibility was recognised as a key ongoing consideration.

Future developments discussed included:

- A community film club
- Revival of informal social events
- Expanding provision for younger residents

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## **11. St Mary's Church – Detailed Report**

The report illustrated the complexity of maintaining a historic rural church in a modern context.

### **Buildings**

Three strands of work continue:

- Investigation into structural movement
- Ongoing minor repairs
- Development of a servery and toilet facilities

These improvements are intended to ensure the building remains viable as both a place of worship and a community asset.

The contribution of Churchwarden Nigel Clough was highlighted as central to the progress of this work.

### **Worship and Community Life**

The church maintained a full programme of 51 Sunday services alongside key seasonal services. This continuity is notable given the wider challenges facing rural ministry.

Special services—particularly those engaging with nature and community themes—have proved effective in broadening participation.

### **Events and Social Role**

Events such as the Primrose Festival and Family Day continue to serve both financial and social purposes, reinforcing the church's role within the wider village.

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## 12. Poor's Charity

The Charity's report offered insight into the evolution of historic charitable provision.

While the Reading Room continues to provide a stable income base, rising operational costs reflect broader economic pressures.

A notable concern remains the lack of grant applications, despite available funds. This highlights a recurring issue in rural communities: need may exist, but is not always visible or declared.

The Charity's origins in earlier systems of poor relief were implicitly referenced, raising the question of how such institutions can adapt to modern community needs.

Discussions continue regarding potential future burial provision, though no immediate requirement has been identified.

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## 13. Traffic and Road Safety

Traffic management remains one of the most consistently raised concerns within the parish.

Evidence suggests that the 20-mph limit has had a measurable impact on average speeds, though compliance is not universal.

There was a strong sense that:

- Visibility of enforcement is as important as enforcement itself
- Physical measures may ultimately be required

The work of the Traffic Group, particularly its data-gathering, was recognised as critical to advancing this issue.

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## 14. Flooding, Drainage and Sewage

Flooding was identified as an increasing concern, likely linked to changing weather patterns and infrastructure pressures.

Responsibility is shared across multiple bodies, but the meeting emphasised the continuing importance of **individual household responsibility**, particularly in maintaining ditches and boundaries.

It was observed that a single blocked drainage point can have disproportionate consequences—an issue long recognised in rural management.

A proposal was made to reissue guidance to residents, reinforcing collective responsibility.

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## **15. Planning and Development**

The Local Plan continues to progress, with limited direct development proposed within the parish itself.

However, concern was expressed about cumulative impacts from surrounding areas, particularly regarding traffic.

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## **16. Antisocial Behaviour**

Issues at Highfield Road were discussed, with ongoing police involvement.

Measures introduced to date appear to have had some impact, though concerns remain about displacement to nearby areas.

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## **17. Finance Summary year ending 31/3/26**

### **Income in 2025/26**

Total income received during the year: **£47,643**

This included:

- **£15,807** — Parish Precept (local council tax contribution)
- **£25,000** — External Grant Funding
- **£6,836** — VAT reclaim, interest and other income

The **£25,000 grant** supported major improvement works within the parish.

### **Expenditure in 2025/26**

Total expenditure during the year: **£52,098**

This included:

- **£4,991** — Staff costs
- **£46,986** — Project and operational expenditure
- **£0** — Loan repayments

Most spending is related to **planned improvement works funded by grant income.**

## **Year-End Balances**

### **As at 31 March 2026**

Total funds held: **£11,427**

These balances are held in the Council's bank accounts and have been independently reconciled.

## **Reserves and Future Plans**

Of the closing balance: **£8,827 is held as earmarked reserves for:**

- Village asset improvements
- Asset management works
- Environmental and maintenance projects
- Councillor training
- Future parish projects

Remaining **General Reserve:**

**£2,600**

This supports routine running costs and unexpected expenditure.



## **A Significant Year for Investment**

During 2025/26 the Council:

- ✓ Received **£25,000 grant funding**
- ✓ Completed improvement works
- ✓ Supported a clerk transition period
- ✓ Continued investment in parish assets

This explains the higher income and expenditure compared with previous years.

## **✓ Financial Governance**

The Parish Council operates under:

- Approved annual budgets
- Financial Regulations
- Independent internal audit
- Annual external audit procedures

All financial records comply with the requirements of the **Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)**.

## **18. Chair Report**

### ***Membership and Governance***

During much of the last year the Parish Council was functioning with only 4 council members of the PC. Earlier this year we were very pleased to welcome Neil Smith from Ashton. Neil volunteered to join us and was duly co-opted.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our Clerk, Jenny Rice, who has continued to bring a wealth of experience to the role and has provided excellent legal, procedural, and financial advice to ensure the smooth running of the Council.

Jenny has now resigned from her post after 7 years of fantastic service to our community. She has shown a huge commitment to our work, always going above and beyond to support us all. I want to personally thank Jenny for her support to me in my role as Chair of the PC.

A particular notable achievement has been Jenny's leadership in securing a grant for the project to improve the toddler play area such that we now have new equipment and a lovely space for young children, parents and carers.

The PC has been through a recruitment process to recruit a new Clerk. I am pleased to welcome Tony Henthorn to the role of Parish Clerk to Bainton and Ashton PC. Tony lives in Helpston and also clerks for Helpston, Maxey and Sutton PCs, in addition to being editor of the Village Tribune. We are very fortunate to have secured Tony as our Clerk, and I'm sure he will do an excellent job.

To support the general work of the PC we have 3 residents working groups:

These are **Traffic and Speed Reduction**, **Nature Recovery** and **Planning**. We would like to thank those residents who are members of these groups, and their support their community and the work of the PC.

## **Parish Issues and Council Action**

### **Speeding Traffic in Bainton.**

During the year 20mph traffic calming measures were installed in Bainton. This was implemented by Peterborough City Council, who are the Highways Authority, and the work was funded by the Parish Council.

In addition, two Auto Speed Watch cameras were purchased and installed by the PC to add to the existing mobile MVAS camera, both to record speeds and act as a deterrent.

Work continues to analyse the data obtained so far, and discussions continue towards Cambridgeshire Constabulary formally adopting the Speedwatch system.

It's already clear from the data gathered by the Auto Speed Watch cameras that there has been considerable reduction in traffic speeds through the village.

The Traffic Residents Group continues to work closely with the Parish Council and will make recommendations to us. Cllr Taylor and Cllr Gibson are the PC representatives on this group.

### **Traffic Calming Across the Barnack Ward**

The PC are also working with other local parishes across the Barnack Ward to develop measures which would reduce speeding, not only within but between villages.

However, despite agreement from all parishes across the Barnack Ward, we have yet to have any progress by PCC on action to reduce speeding across the Ward.

Meantime Cllr Kevin Tighe, our Barnack Ward Councilor, is working with all the Ward Parishes and PCC to support this initiative.

On behalf of the PC, I'd like to thank the residents traffic group led by Rob McNeish and Clive Haylett on their continued hard work to push forward the implementation of the speed reduction measures.

We know that a range of complementary calming measures are most effective in reducing speeding traffic and these options are being researched by the group.

### **Churchyard and Burial Site.**

Rev Gary has alerted the PC that the churchyard will soon become full, and therefore unable to accept further burials.

The interment of ashes remains possible.

The PC held a public meeting to explore options for burial sites. The PC does not own any land where this may be possible. As there was a very low attendance at the public meeting, and residents have not expressed preferences for a new burial site, the PC decided not to pursue the matter further at this stage.

To set up a new burial site would also be a considerable challenge for our very small PC, not least in securing funding and land. We have been advised that PCC would not assist us as there are already sufficient burial sites available across the Peterborough area.

The PC policy is that if land could eventually be secured, a Green Burial Site and Community open space would be of benefit to residents.

### **Bainton Play Area**

The PC secured funding of £25,000 from Augean Landfill to refurbish and improve the play area. This includes 4 new pieces of equipment, a playhouse and trim trail. Thanks again to our Clerk Jenny for securing the grant and liaising with residents. This is now completed and in use.

### **Planning**

The parish council's response to planning applications has been coordinated once more this year by Cllr Martin Lucas. Following a suggestion by resident Mr. David Hare, an informal working group was set up to assist Martin.

### **The Local Plan**

Peterborough City Council is required to undertake an update of its Local Plan up to 2043. We are currently at stage 2 of the planning process, following a call for land for potential development.

In our Parish the only submission is by Plants Eggs. This site has been identified as having the potential to develop up to 18 homes. Locally there is further development proposed for Helpston and Glinton, but much of this is opposed by local residents' groups.

The land already owned by Homes England, to the north of Castor and adjacent to Castor Hanglands National Nature Reserve, is once again being proposed for several thousand houses. This would have an impact on traffic in our locality as well as environmental damage to the countryside.

PCC are currently consulting on the draft plan and residents are encouraged to comment on the plan if they wish. Parish Councilors attend consultation meetings on their behalf.

The timescale for consultation on the Local Plan has been extended and is now likely to be concluded in the Autumn when the next stage will be published.

### **Anti-Social Behavior on High Field Road Ashton.**

Cars have been parking along the length of the road, particularly towards the south end. The stops are usually for no more than an hour, occur mostly during the day, and usually involve solitary men.

Although there may be times when the drivers are simply taking a break, there have been reported incidents of inappropriate behavior, including deliberate exposure.

Passing residents have made reports to the police and members of the PC have met with officers of our local neighbourhood team. The police tell us that they have increased patrols in the area at the request of the PC.

As a footnote, the continued parking on the verges has created several large compacted barren areas which are having a real impact on the integrity of the area as a County Wildlife Area.

With the support of Cllr Kevin Tighe, I have had several meetings with PCC officers to discuss this problem.

As a first step the decision was made by PCC to place No Parking signs and County Wildlife Site signs along High Field Road to attempt to deter parked cars. The signs were put in place in October.

We have an agreement that these measures will be reviewed during the Summer 2026 to determine if they have helped and if any further action is necessary.

Unfortunately, there would seem to be additional cars with solitary men parking on the verges at Southey Woods. This is in Ufford Parish in the Barnack Ward.

### **Flooding in Bainton and Ashton.**

Potential flooding and water management remains an issue for Bainton and Ashton. Cllr Martin Lucas represents the PC at regular meetings with relevant agencies. This means that those agencies are much more aware of issues that we face and able to act more quickly and effectively than before.

The proper dispersal of surface water is the joint responsibility of Peterborough City Council, Anglia Water, and the Welland Internal Drainage Board. It's also the responsibility of local residents and landowners to ensure that ditches on their property boundary are properly maintained. The PC have supported a resident who has once more experienced sewage backing up to the property on Ufford Road.

Anglian Water, our MP Sam Carling and Cllr Kevin Tighe are all aware of this issue and trying to support a solution. Peterborough City Council have also been contacted to make them aware of the issues.

Following requests from the Parish Council, a representative of the Welland Internal Drainage Board came along to a meeting with residents and the PC. Anglian Water Board were also contacted regarding the over flowing drains and steps have been taken by them to improve the drains. Apparently the major problem is the increasing levels of surface water and new housing development.

BAPC are very happy to report that given the number of agencies involved we have been able to secure regular meetings with all involved agencies, so that the problems experienced by Bainton and Ashton can be discussed and hopefully actions agreed.

## **Projects**

### **John Clare Countryside - Nature Recovery Working Group.**

Local efforts to protect the natural environment are coordinated by our Nature Recovery Group made up of residents and chaired by Julie Stanton. Particular thanks are due to both Julie and Cliff Stanton for their exceptional expertise and commitment.

The PC has a 10 year Nature Recovery Plan. The Nature Recovery Group has continued to meet to work to deliver our plans and to co-ordinate with the 19 Parishes that are part of the John Clare Countryside Project lead by the Langdyke Trust.

The JCC project plans and delivery strategy have been updated to reflect recent developments, notably the formal involvement and endorsement of the large local estates of Milton, Burghley and Walcott.

The PC is represented by Cllr Susie Lucas in the John Clare Countryside Steering Group, which is comprised of representatives from the Langdyke Trust, The Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Nene Park Trust, and Peterborough Environmental Trust.

We have also worked with the Church to organise the annual Primrose Festival.

### **Restoration of the Sheep Wash**

The PC has obtained grants totaling four thousand pounds from the Langdyke Trust and Milton Estates to fund the refurbishment of the Sheep Wash. Our thanks to both organisations.

I am pleased to report that under the supervision of Julie and Cliff Stanton the work is now complete to remove brambles and two more seats are now in place.

Work is also underway to improve the proximate habitat through planting and steps to encourage wildlife. A new information sign is currently being commissioned and we believe that this area is a pleasant place for residents to visit and sit.

### **Good Neighbor Scheme**

This continues to develop across the Peterborough Local Parishes and includes volunteers from Bainton and Ashton ready to support residents. We recognise their work and thank them for their practical commitment to our community.

Susie Lucas is the local vice-chair and a trustee.

## **Regular Meetings Attended by Parish Councillors**

Barnack Ward Meeting  
Rural Peterborough Good Neighbor Scheme  
JCC Steering Group  
Parish Councils Liaison Group  
Nature Recovery Working Group  
Traffic Working Group  
Allotment Association  
Police Liaison  
Church Liaison  
PC Planning meetings  
Ufford Liaison

## **In Conclusion**

Firstly, my sincere thanks to my fellow parish Councilors for their hard work and practical commitment to supporting our community.

I would like to thank all the residents who take part in our Parish Working Groups. Their input contributes hugely to the work of the PC.

Thanks also to those many residents of Bainton and Ashton who work with the PC and other village groups to try and make our Parish a great place to live.

Now...after 10 years as a Parish Councilor and 7 as Chair it is time for me to resign.

It has been a rewarding experience to serve on the PC and work with our Clerk, fellow Councilors, and residents to strive to improve our community and deal with issues and concerns.

I have always valued hearing your views, your ideas, and your concerns and have welcomed residents' attendance and participation in our meetings. I have sought to establish a culture of openness and transparency and work to the highest standards in public life on your behalf.

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I would like to particularly thank my fellow Councilors, our outgoing Clerk Jenny Rice, Cllr Kevin Tighe and the residents working groups for all their support and hard work. After serving for 3 years, Cllr Martin Lucas is also resigning from the PC. I would like to thank Martin for his hard work and support for the community.

This means going forward the PC will have only 3 councilors from a constitution of 5. So we urgently need to appoint 2 new Councilors to the PC. Your current PC are all residents of Ashton so volunteers from Bainton are particularly welcome!  
With all good wishes for the future.

Thank you.

Susie Lucas Bainton & Ashton Parish Council Chair 23rd April 2026

## **19. Governance and Future Capacity**

The resignations of both the Chair and Councillor Lucas were noted as significant moments for the council.

With the number of councillors reduced, the need to recruit new councillors was described as urgent.

At the same time, the strength of community working groups was highlighted as a positive model supporting council capacity.

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## **20. Closing Remarks**

The Chair thanked all attendees, contributors, and volunteers, recognising that the strength of the parish lies in the collective effort of its residents.

The meeting closed with refreshments and informal discussion, reflecting the continued importance of social connection alongside formal governance.