

Selflessness – Integrity – Objectivity – Accountability – Openness – Honesty - Leadership

Harlestone Parish Council

Executive Officer/Clerk to the Council: Paul Thomas – clerk@harlestonepc.org - www.harlestonepc.org

Members of the Council are hereby summoned and members of the public and press are invited to attend the meeting of Harlestone Parish Council. This meeting may be recorded, but such activity must not impede the conduct or business of the meeting.

19:30 on Wednesday 7th October 2026
Harlestone Village Institute NN7 4EH

MINUTES 001

683. Attendance and Apologies from Councillors

Council to formally resolve to approve reasons for non-attendance.

- Cllr Sarah Stock (Chairman)
- Cllr Claire Marshall (Vice Chairman)
- Cllr Sue Flynn
- Cllr Alastair West
- Cllr Susie Holland
- Cllr Toni Perryman
- Cllr Rupert Knowles
- Cllr Philip Williams

Cllr Name	Reason for Absence	Approved (Yes/No)
Cllr Holland	Annual Leave	Yes
Cllr Perryman	Unwell	Yes

- Councillors unanimously approve

684. To receive Declarations of Interests by members and applications for Dispensation by the council

Members are requested to make any declarations of personal or prejudicial interests, in line with the 2020 code of conduct, relating to items on this agenda.

- No declarations offered by the councillors

685. Approval of the Minutes from the previous meeting(s)

The distributed and published minutes from the previous meeting(s) of the parish council.

- The Council unanimously agrees that the Minutes are a true and accurate account.
- The Chairman signs the Minutes.

686. Public Time for Comments by Members of the Public

Whilst parish council meetings are open to the public, contributions are limited by standing orders to allow only invited/scheduled guests or councillors to contribute. However, there is a section in each meeting when the Chairman suspends standing orders to hear any members of the public who wish to address the parish council.

Members of the public should address their representation through the Chairman of the meeting. This time is limited to 15 minutes and three minutes per contribution unless requested otherwise by the Chairman and/or councillors. This is in line with Standing Orders of 2020, Standing Orders will then be reinstated to allow the Council to resume its meeting and discussion items.

Two members of the public in attendance

Sam Williams (Althorp) gave his apologies

Flooding Concerns & Water Management

- A parish resident raised concerns regarding the November 2024 floods, questioning landowner maintenance, culvert clearance, and works done by Northampton Golf Club. Many residents in the parish had lost property, vehicles and now have excessive insurance.

  The Chairman clarified that Northampton Golf Club sits on land owned by Northampton Golf Club land trustees rather than the Althorp Estate.

- Hydrology findings indicated that dredging silt from the golf club lake would not have prevented flooding due to the sheer volume of water from two successive heavy rainfall events.

- Nearly £500,000 has been allocated by the Environment Agency for flood mitigation schemes in Harlestone.

- Mitigation plans include installing leaky dams, establishing water storage bunds near Park Farm Barns, increasing capacity in golf course water bodies, and rebuilding the collapsed A428 wall with an overflow levelling section before Christmas.

- Chairman to publish all the reports including the hydrologist report on the parish website.

687. Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Due to WNC deadlines, it can be necessary to submit comments before the next council meeting, in this situation Councillors submit comments to the Clerk by email and the comments are submitted under delegated powers.

- 2026/0677/FULL (amended scheme)
  Spring Cottage, 63 Duston Road, Upper Harlestone NN7 4EH
  Replacement of 3 wooden windows and one door to UPVC (Retrospective).

  Comments submitted to WNC:
  Previous objection relates to the materials and colour of the windows. Support is dependent on adherence to the Harlestone Neighbourhood Plan design guidelines, policy H1.

- The council reviewed an amended application for replacement UPVC windows at Spring Cottage; original council objections remain unchanged.
  No further comments

- 2026/3682/TCA
  119 Nobotle Road, Upper Harlestone NN7 4EL
  T2 Birch – fell to ground level in respect of proximity to adjacent building

- No observations

688. Road Safety issues and strategy

Requested by Cllr Holland

- Council to consider the options to deal with an increase of traffic through Upper Harlestone
- D.Kuss (Road Safety Liaison) to join us at the November meeting and share the latest collected data on the Safer Roads speed camera project.
- Funding is available through the Road Safety Fund, grants up to £5k can be used for items such as vehicle activated signs. Email: funding@northantspfc.gov.uk

- MOP: the roads and now dark in the early evenings and this makes them more dangerous for pedestrians and dog walkers etc.

- Cllr Stock has written to Highways regarding the volume and speed of the traffic through Upper Harlestone.
- Council discussed the need to close the access road to UH at Cotherstone Lodge, Cllr Stock to contact Cllr Daniel Lister.
- Clerk to get a quote for 2 x Tracsis monitors at either end of UH and speak with Matt/Helen (Police/Highways) for a data check. Contact Ellie Yeates (Police) re a grant for village gateways.

689. Notice of conclusion of audit

Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2026

- Council to acknowledge the External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2025/2026
- (please see appendix A)

- The external auditor (PKF) issued an unqualified limited assurance opinion on Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR, confirming proper practices were met.

- An "other matter" was raised regarding Regulation 15 compliance: the period for the exercise of public rights commenced on June 3, 2026, but the AGAR was formally approved on June 17, 2026. Next year's public rights window must commence strictly after council approval.

690. Remembrance Sunday – 8th November 2026

- Proposal to order a wreath (S137)
- Nominate a member to lay the wreath on Remembrance Sunday.

- Clerk to order a wreath circa £60
- Cllr West to lay the wreath

691. Proposal for a community electricity scheme

Cllr Knowls will brief the council on the potential to install ground-mounted solar panels on the North half of the playing field to generate electricity for use in Upper Harlestone.

- Council to note this project could only go ahead with endorsement from the Estate (as landowner), and would be subject to community consultation to assess appetite and acceptability. The project must get conservation consent and, as the land currently has a Local Green Space designation which preserves the area for recreational use, a change of use application would be required.

- Cllr Knowles has put together information and documents to update the council on this proposal, council appreciates the work done.

- Discussions on a proposed community agrivoltaics solar scheme on the playing fields concluded that Althorp Estate does not support using the fields, as they are running their own small-scale solar pilot project. Furthermore, grant deadlines require a feasibility study submission by November 12, making the project unfeasible under the current rolling lease.

- Council would be interested in seeing the Althorp project details.

Items to be noted by the council

- Actions and Projects document update
  Document reviewed and updated

- Fish & Chips at the HVI October to March: 1st Friday of the month (January 2nd Friday)

- Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Section 257
  Public Bridleway (KP1) in the parish of Harpole
  No observations

- 2026/2633/HH Meryl Cottage, Upper Harlestone, erection of a summer house – Approval Granted

- Appeal under section 78 2025/0057/MAO
  Appeal Decision Hearing held on 1 July 2026 Site visits made on 30 June & 1 July 2026 by J Smith MRTPI an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State Decision date: 07 September 2026 Appeal Ref: 6004385 Land at Harlestone Road/York Way, Northants NN5 6WQ
  The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
  The appeal is made by Rebecca Mitchell of Barwood Development Securities Ltd against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council. The development proposed is outline application for up to 100 new homes (all matters reserved except access) (both open market and affordable) including vehicular access to York Way and new pedestrian linkages; sustainable drainage measures; a visitor car park; new public open space and landscape/biodiversity enhancements.

  Regarding the housing development appeal, the council expects a reserved matters application to outline details such as building stone and layout; social housing requirements are expected to be 10% under Northampton related development area policies rather than 40%. Anticipated developer funding includes approximately £20,000 to £25,000 in CIL funds and £41,000 in Section 106 contributions earmarked for recreation ground improvements.

- Work being progressed by Althorp
  Request to cut back the pathway from the well near the clapper bridge and round the back of Cooches Farm.
  Replanting of the hedgerow at the HVI from water leakage work.

- "People's Climate Emergency" Screening on Wednesday 28th October at the HVI
  Cllr Knowles has arranged a screening of the climate and environment video.

- Chairman to prepare a community newsletter bulletin summarising the flood mitigation progress, reporting blocked drains and gullies via FixMyStreet.

- Cllr Williams to write a brief paragraph about village flood wardens to be included in the chairman's upcoming newsletter bulletin.

692. Financial Update from the Executive Officer

The schedule of payments has been circulated and published with the agenda. The finances to be approved and items for payment authorised. EO to update the council on the monthly bank reconciliation and finances. The payment schedule to be agreed by the council and signed by the EO and Chairman

Schedule of Payments								
No	**Power**	**Payee**	**Description**	**Inv Date/No**	**VAT No**	**VAT**	**Total**	✔
103	*LGA 1972 s101*	BT Village Institute	Broadband	Direct Debit	245719348	£10.17	£65.05	✔
104	*LGPSR 2014 s1 2013/2356*	Pension	Employee + Employer's	Direct Debit	N/A	N/A	£75.83	✔
105	*LGA 1972 s112 (2)*	Staff Salaries	Autella Payroll	25th	N/A	N/A	£846.52	✔
106	*LGA 1972 s112 (2)*	HMRC	P32 PAYE Tax	Monthly	N/A	N/A	£319.36	✔
107	*LGA 1972 s111*	Everflow	Playing Fields Water	5877881	N/A	N/A	£35.05	✔
108	*Highways Act 1980 s96*	LGG Ltd	P and Q mowing areas	51	N/A	N/A	£400.00	✔
109	*Highways Act 1980 s96*	Northampton Services	A to L mowing areas	Monthly	N/A	N/A	£350.00	✔
110	*LGA 1972 s111*	Eon Next	Electricity - Playing Fields	BD2-0021	559097889	£5.42	£113.90	✔
111	*LGA 1972 s111*	Npower	Electricity - Street Lighting	IN16471721	559097889	£2.32	£48.70	✔
112	*Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014*	PKF	External Audit Fee	SB20262742	440498250	£63.00	£378.00	✔
115	*LGA 1972 s111*	EON Next	Playing Fields Electricity	Direct Debit	559097889	£1.43	£30.06	✔
116	*Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s29 LGA 1972*	Nat Allotment Society	Membership	S21320	1212930	£14.00	£84.00	✔
117	*Highways Act 1980 s96*	AA Landscapes Ltd	Harlestone Institute	10793	753727413	£28.00	£168.00	✔
118	*Highways Act 1980 s96*	AA Landscapes Ltd	Harlestone Village Green	10794	753727413	£26.00	£156.00	✔
119	*Highways Act 1980 s96*	AA Landscapes Ltd	Harlestone Churchyard	10797	753727413	£40.00	£240.00	✔
⃠	*LGA 1972 s111*	Unity Trust Bank	Monthly Charge	Monthly	N/A	N/A	£7.00	⃠
			Sub Total				£3,317.47	
Payments made by the Clerk								
113	*Highways Act 1980 s41*	Amazon (Lengths-man)	Gallup Weedkiller	01.10.2026	727255821	£6.67	£39.99	✔
114	*LGA 1972 s111*	Amazon (Office)	Office Labels	30.09.2026	727255821	£1.17	£6.99	✔
			Clerk's Office				£46.98	
			Total		**VAT**	£198.18	£3,364.45	
						Previous Month's Unity Statement		✔

Payment Schedule

- Council unanimously agrees the payment schedules and the monthly finance updates.
- The Chairman/RFO and Financial Controller signs the payment schedule.

Signed: Chairman .....

Signed: RFO/Clerk ..... *Signed: Financial Controller* .....

- Note: Chairman/Clerk completed the internal check and there are no issues to report.

- Late incoming invoices added: 116 to 119 were reviewed and accepted by the council.

- Budget tracking reviewed across the first six months (April 1 to September 30) showed all budget pots within the financial limits apart from category 10 (legal advice) exceeded its £5,000 budget by £3,340 due to planning matters brought on by the Barwood Planning Application.

Unity Trust Bank Accounts			
Current Account (872)	£ 6,329.04	*Account (898)*	£ -
Reserve Account (885)	£ 53,220.88	*Total Accounts*	£ 59,549.92

Confidential Area
(Council item – No Public or Press)

693. To approve the 2026-2027 Local Government, Pay Award to the Clerk's Salary

The Local Government Association (LGA), acting on behalf of the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services, has announced that agreement has been reached on the 2026 pay award for local government employees. The settlement provides for a 3.3% increase in pay rates and allowances with effect from 1 April 2026. The agreed pay award covers the period from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027, and employers are being encouraged to implement the increase as quickly as possible.

- Current SP19 £16.62ph (increase to £17.17ph)
- To commence: 1st April 2026

- Clerk to adjust the payroll records to reflect the additional contracted hour per week through the Autella paperwork.
- The council approved a 3.3% salary settlement increase.
- Cllr Stock proposes, Cllr Flynn seconded, Council unanimously approves.

Meeting Schedules 2026-2027
19:30 at the Harlestone Village Institute

		Jan	No Meeting
Wed	3	Feb	2027
Wed	3	Mar	2027
Wed	7	Apr	2027
Fri	5	Mar	Annual Meeting of the Parish
Wed	5	May	Annual Meeting of the Council
Wed	2	Jun	2027

Wed	7	Jul	2027
		Aug	No Meeting
Wed	1	Sep	2027
Wed	7	Oct	2026
Wed	4	Nov	2026
Wed	2	Dec	2026

The Chairman closes the meeting at: 21:50

Dated: 13th September 2026

Signature: *Paul.O.R.Thomas esq*

Executive Officer/Clerk: Paul OR Thomas

Signature: ……

Chairman: Cllr Sarah Stock

HMPC comply with the Race Relations Act 1976 and Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1988
Nolan Principles: Selflessness I Integrity I Objectivity I Accountability I Openness I Honesty I Leadership

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2025/26

In respect of **Harlestone Parish Council – NH0117**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2026; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2025/26

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

We note that the smaller authority did not comply with Regulation 15 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as it failed to make proper provision during the year 2026/27 for the exercise of public rights, since the approval date was after the start of the period for the exercise of public rights. As a result, the smaller authority must answer 'No' to Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2026/27 and ensure that it makes proper provision for the exercise of public rights during 2027/28.

3 External auditor certificate 2025/26

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2026.

External Auditor Name: **PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP**

External Auditor Signature: PKF Littlejohn LLP Date: 23/09/2026

Lengths-man Report

Contracted monthly hours		13		Hours Worked	-10.5
Balance from previous month		-25.75		Balance	-23.25
Task Description					Hours
1	A428/New Road vision splays mowed				-1
2	Car Park Acco Drain clearance				
3	Blacksmiths Yard weed killer and speed camera				
4	Litter Pick - Harlestone Road, Church Lane to New Road				-1
5	Litter Pick - Harlestone Road to Glebe Lane bus stop				
6	Weed Killer - Rugby Road Path				-1
7	Litter Pick - Golf Lane and Path				-0.5
8	Glebe Lane entrance and bench strimmed				
9	Village Nameplate Installation				
10	Notice Board @ England Cottage installation				
11	Litter Pick - Port Road, UH				
12	Wall opposite the Old House, vegetation clearance, leaves from the A428				
13	Railway Cottage Vehicle Activated sign removal and refit				
14	Church Lane to Glebe Lane litter pick				
15	Port Road litter paick				
16	Mowing: New Road to entrance of the Firs				-1.5
17	Weed Killer - Lower Harlestone				-1
18	UH Barn and verge clearance				-4.5
19					
20					
21					