

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF NORLEY PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY
20th MAY 2026 FOLLOWING THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

PRESENT AT THE MEETING: Councillors: Deryn O'Connor (Chair), Steve Bakewell, Gerald Brown,
Sally Cornelissen, Tony Duff, Terry Harvey and Liz Robinson

Councillor Gillian Edwards - Ward Councillor – Cheshire West and Chester Council

Gaynor Hawthornthwaite (Clerk)

The members of the public were welcomed to the meeting.

Prior to the Norley Parish Council Annual meeting, the following Annual Parish reports were presented at the Annual Parish Meeting and circulated to the Parish Council:

1. Norley Parish Council
2. Norley Community Organisations Trust (JNCOT)
3. Norley Village Hall
4. Norley Wildlife Group
5. Norley School
6. Cheshire West and Chester Ward Members

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cheshire West and Chester Council - Ward Councillor Lynn Stocks and Norley Parish Councillor Ann Crawford.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no interests declared

3. PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN FORUM

Members of the public raised concerns about traffic management during the Delamere Forest concerts, particularly the use of Hatchmere Crossroads as a drop-off and pick-up point. They asked whether stewards could be stationed there before and after each Forest Live event to discourage this activity.

The Parish Council continues to meet regularly with Forest Live to raise issues on behalf of local residents, including the need for a traffic management plan for Whitefield Car Park on concert evenings. Last year, Parish Council representatives attended Hatchmere Crossroads with the PCSO and subsequently raised concerns with Cheshire West and Chester Licensing regarding taxi licences for the Delamere Forest events.

Concerns were also raised about speeding on Blakemere Lane and whether measures could be introduced to reduce traffic speeds. The Parish Council continues to pursue traffic-calming and speed-reduction measures at various locations in the village, including clarification of the road classification for Blakemere Lane.

4. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor O'Connor was elected as Chair for 2026/27. This was unanimously agreed. Councillor O'Connor accepted the position of Chair and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

5. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

Councillor Bakewell was elected as Vice Chair for 2026/27. This was unanimously agreed. Councillor Bakewell accepted the position of Vice Chair and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

6. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES AND OFFICERS

- All members of the Council to be members of Planning Committee to review planning applications in between Parish Council Meetings.
- Councillor O'Connor to remain as the Neighbourhood Plan representative.

- Councillors Cornelissen and Robinson to remain as the representatives for the Village Hall.
- Councillor O'Connor to remain as School Governor at Norley C of E School
- Councillor Brown to remain as the Data Protection Officer.
- Councillor Harvey to remain as the Common Land representative.

7. REVIEW OF WORKING PRACTICES/MEETINGS 2026/27

The policies are to be reviewed in April and the budget will be reviewed in November, prior to considering the Precept Request in January.

The 2027 PC meetings dates to be approved at the November PC meeting.

Action – Clerk to note for agenda.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NORLEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 13th April 2026

These were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

9. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF NORLEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 13th APRIL 2026

- **Update from United Utilities**

As a representative was unable to attend the PC meeting, Councillor O'Connor read out an update that had been provided:

"In terms of a project update, works at the Hatchmere crossroads continue to progress well, and the closure remains on track to be lifted on 9 June. We are continuing to engage with those most directly affected. Our most recent community drop-in session took place at the Carriers Inn on 5th May, where we welcomed around 10 local residents.

Planning for Section 2, covering Station Road and Blakemere Lane, is ongoing. At this stage, construction is not expected to begin until early 2027, and further details will be shared in due course."

The PC would like to see the pavements and road in the areas of the works to be completely re-surfaced and will continue to follow this up as well as any feedback/complaints that the PC receive.

- **Cheese Hill Works**

The improvement works to the junction have now been completed.

The PC are continuing to liaise with CW&C Highways about the changes to the road and await information relating to the full safety audit and whether the yellow lines on Cheesehill Lane can be re-painted as they are quite worn.

- **Sandycroft Meadows**

Discussions on the potential option for a memorial orchard on part of the meadow that will benefit the community are ongoing.

- The **Norley Housing Needs Survey** and the 2026 Parish Council policies have been published on the Norley PC website.

10. COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH UPDATE

The details of the Speed Indicator Device data and fixed figures for March 2026 (Before Hatchmere Crossroads closure) had been circulated to the PC prior to the meeting and are to be published onto the PC website.

The following speed indicator device data was received and noted:

In summary:

Vehicles continue to speed excessively through Norley. Data was not available to download from School Bank.

Ashton Road (Exit Speed) - 37.8% (4,442) of vehicles exceeded the 30 mph speed limit. 17.4% (3,700) of vehicles exceeded the prosecution speed limit of 35 mph. **The maximum peak speed was 58.9 mph.**

Blakemere Lane (Peak Speed) - 55% (12,549) of vehicles exceeded the 30-mph speed limit. 16.2% (3,700) of vehicles exceeded the prosecution speed limit of 35-mph. **The maximum peak speed was 69.1-mph.**

Delamere Road (Exit Speed) - 56.7% (17,175) of vehicles exceeded the 30-mph speed limit, 23% (6,993) of vehicles exceeded the prosecution speed limit of 35-mph. **The maximum exit speed was 62.4 mph.**

Fingerpost Lane (Peak Speed) - 17.8% (2,161) of vehicles exceeded the 40-mph speed limit, 1.9% (229) exceeded the prosecution speed limit of 46-mph. **The maximum peak speed was 61 mph.**

Norley Road (Exit Speed) - 8.1% (2,098) of vehicles exceeded the 30-mph speed limit, 2.7% (711) exceeded the prosecution speed limit of 35-mph. The average speeds are low due to the closure of Norley Road. **The maximum exit speed was 57.8 mph.**

School Bank (Peak Speed) - it was not possible to download the data from the School Bank SID.
Auto Speedwatch

The Auto Speedwatch device has been operating on Blakemere Lane for approximately two months. Over that period 44 vehicles were detected exceeding the prosecution speed limit of 35-mph towards the road closure at Hatchmere Crossroads which is approx. 300m away. One vehicle was travelling at 50-mph and repeat offenders have been identified. Approx. 80% of vehicle registrations were identified by the device.

The next step is to transfer the device to School Bank. There will be a small charge to reconfigure the device.

The PC are to follow up with PCSO Neil Flanagan dates for arranging speed monitoring and speed enforcement.

Action – Councillors O'Connor and Brown to follow up to obtain a response from Cheshire Constabulary about PCSO Flanagan and the involvement of PCSO's in CSW .

11. **PLANNING**

The following planning applications had been received and circulated for comments since the April 2026 meeting:

- **26/01173/S73** - Barn at Low Farm Post Office Lane Norley Northwich: Conversion of agricultural building to two dwellings, addition of detached garage and new access on to School Lane. -Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) and 3 (materials) of 24/03166/S73.
- **26/00879/FUL** - Burgess Cottage Moss Lane Crowton Northwich WA6 8PD: Erection of detached garage and new access. Garage conversion and single storey extension (including removal of existing conservatory).
- **26/01138/FUL** - Crofton Cottage Fingerpost Lane Norley Northwich WA6 8LD: Erection of outbuilding (as approved 20/04010/FUL and 23/01819/FUL)

Any PC comments to be sent to the Clerk.

12. **CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE**

An email of thanks had been received from St John's Church and Norley Hilltop Play Area following the PC approval of their small grant applications.

The following had been received since the April 2026 meeting:

CW&C

- Town and Parish Connections Online Meeting: Planning - 22nd May 2025 6pm to 7pm

Chalc

- Bulletins and training dates
- Local Government Boundary Commission for England - communication materials
- Seizing the opportunities for Cheshire and Warrington: Message from Nick Walkley, Interim Chief Executive

Parish Councillor Vacancy

Following the notice in the Norley News there have been two expressions of interest in the Parish Councillor vacancy.

13. **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

Approval of 2025/26 Annual Audit Return

- Completion of Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26: The PC considered and voted on points 1-8 of the Statement in Section 1, which was approved, and the form was signed by the Chair and the Responsible Financial Officer.
- Completion of Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26: The PC considered the Statement in Section 2, which was approved, and the Chair and Clerk signed the form.
- **Certificate of Exemption**
After consideration of the Certificate of Exemption, the PC agreed that as the PC annual gross income and annual gross expenditure for 2025/26 did not exceed £25,000, the PC wished to certify themselves as exempt from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Small Authorities) Regulations 2015. The form was signed by the Chair and the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer.
- **Approval of 2025/26 Accounts**
The end of year accounts were received and approved.

Balance brought forward	45685.24
Receipts	15375.74
Payments	20593.68
	<u>40467.30</u>

Bank Balances	
Deposit Account	6531.00
Unity Savings Account	29178.85
Unity Current Account	4757.45
	<u>40467.30</u>

Balance Carried Forward	<u>40467.30</u>
-------------------------	-----------------

Approval of Internal Auditor's Report 2025/26

The PC are to review the Internal Auditor's Report for 2025/26 outside of the meeting and report back to the July PC meeting.

Action – Councillors O'Connor, Bakewell and Clerk to follow up the Internal Auditor's report outside of the PC meeting.

Action - Clerk to return the Certificate of Exemption to the External Auditor and to arrange for the 2025/26 Annual Internal Audit Report, Annual Governance Statement, Annual Accounting Statements, Certificate of Exemption and the Exercise of Public Rights Accounts to be displayed on the PC website and noticeboard.

Appointment of Auditor for 2026/27

It was agreed that JDH Business Services Limited should be asked to complete Norley PC internal audit for 2026/27.

Action – Clerk to notify JDH Business Services Limited

Approval of Payments

The following were approved for Bacs payments:

- Reimbursement payment of land registry search – Mrs G Hawthornthwaite - £7.00
- Room Bookings PC Meetings May 2025 to April 2026 at NCK Centre – 9 Meetings - £270 – St John's Church Norley PCC
- Payroll for last 3 months - £57.60 – Rose Rowland and Co Ltd

- April Website Maintenance and Development – Rabbit Digital - £26.25
- Chalc Membership for 2026/27 - £419.20
- Completion of Internal Audit 2025/26 – JDH Business Services Ltd - £418.80
- Scheduled SID Maintenance in April 2026 – Rock Graphics - £144.00
- Auto speedwatch Unit Relocation – Autospeedwatch Limited - £58.20
- Reimbursement to David Robinson for Rock Salt for the Village Hall Grit Bin - £26.40

The following was noted:

- following the PC's successful application for funding from the Ward Members Budget for a grit bin for Norley Village Hall for the quote of £370. The invoice received was £348 (gross). It was agreed that the remaining £22 should go towards the purchase of rock salt for £26.40 for the grit bin.
- As one of the set of pads in the defibrillator at the village hall had expired before the 20th May PC meeting, it was agreed, outside of the meeting, to order a replacement from the Defib warehouse for £88.74.
- The PC had followed up an alternative supplier for the PC web hosting and support. The support provided by IONOS is to be cancelled and the automatic IONOS Direct Debit payments are to be cancelled.

Quarterly Audit Check

The Clerk had provided the 2025/26 accounts paperwork to Councillor Brown to complete the quarterly audit check.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following were reported:

Councillor Harvey referred to the extra mileage that he has incurred for the detour he has had to make during the road closure on Blakemere Lane and is following this up with United Utilities.

The PC asked if there was any impact on local businesses during the Blakemere Lane road closure.

Councillor Cornelissen asked if the PC were aware of any outstanding planning applications on Norley Lane, in Crowton. The PC were not aware of any applications.

Due to the fact that CW&C had still not responded about the requirement to add the cutting of the verge at the top of Town Farm Lane to their schedule the PC had paid a private contractor to carry this out. This may need doing again and if so PC Cornelissen will arrange.

Councillor Duff mentioned that he was disappointed that a representative from United Utilities was not in attendance at the PC meeting as part of the continued dialogue with the PC during the road closures. There is still an issue with motorcycles driving across the grassed area and pavement, the pedestrian route, in the area of the roadworks on Blakemere Lane.

Councillor O'Connor

- A Land Registry Search was carried out to establish if the cobbled land area outside the Haulage Yard was part of the Highway or private land. This will be checked with CW&C Highways.
- Environment Agency have confirmed that they are to proceed with the installation of the dipwells at Flaxmere in June.

Councillor Bakewell is continuing to follow up the outstanding planning applications in Norley that are awaiting a decision.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting **Monday 22nd June 2026 at 7 pm at the NCK Centre.**

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.