

NORTON- IN-HALES ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

13/5/2026

Chairman's Report

I am pleased to present my report as Chairman of the Parish Council to the Annual Parish Meeting.

From the Parish Council's perspective, this year has been steady on a day-to-day basis, most matters have been resolved, and the finances of the Council are in good heart. The big project for the year has been the redevelopment of the children's playground, the fund raising is now nearly complete, planning permission has been applied for, and we have selected a preferred supplier, hopefully, in the autumn we will see a new playground on the playing field for the children to enjoy. A very big 'thank you' must be given to the playground group who have worked tirelessly to bring this to fruition, they had the vision and have raised the money to make it possible, thank you to all of them

The major issue that comes to me, rightly so, is the state of the roads, the potholes are getting bigger and deeper and no one repairs them, We were told at the last Parish Council meeting that Shropshire Council had appointed a new contractor to repair minor roads and all will be well , I'm afraid things are not well, we have not seen any one for the last 2 months do any repairs. Parishioners report them on Fix

My Street as requested to no avail. It is becoming a serious situation and some one will get hurt

Looking a bit further afield, yet again I have very serious concerns about Shropshire Council finances, we had a new council elected last year but the financial situation is still dire, the situation cannot be changed overnight. As I understand it, they have facilities in place to fund the budget going forward, but it means borrowing from central government and will need repaying at some point. Something needs to happen centrally to sort the issue of social care, it consumes 80% of the budget.

There are discussions going on about Shropshire Council devolving some of their services that the council perform back to the Parish and Town Councils. It is early days, Church Preen Parish Council, south of Shrewsbury is running a pilot this year, I understand the roles they have taken on include street cleaning, mending minor potholes, grass cutting. We will watch this space. There are meetings taking place in North Shropshire, shadowing the Council's plans and trying to work out what the impact will be for the Parishes.

The next two points may well have an impact on our Parish Council in the future

I understand that there are discussions taking place about the amalgamation of Counties to form a Mayoral Authority for the West Midlands.

There is also a discussion document out from central governments about its ideas and plans for 'Neighbourhood Governance' which currently does not necessarily see Parish and Town Councils playing a central role in local decision making. These could lead to significant changes as to how communities make decisions and are run. We will watch this space.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank my fellow councillors for all their support and commitment on the Parish council over the last year making Norton a great place to live. I would like to personally, and on behalf of the Council thank Melanie, our clerk, for all her expert guidance, unstinting support and work over the year, without you I fear we would be in a mess, thank you

Peter Eardley

Chairman

Norton in Hales Parish Council