



NORTHILL PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Representing Northill, Upper and Lower
Caldecote, Ickwell, Thorncote, Hatch, Budna
and Bells Brook

Issue 65

Autumn 2025



Northill Parish Council extends its sincere thanks to Wrighton & Barker, the local company commissioned to clean the Ickwell War Memorial. Their expert restoration work has beautifully revived this important village landmark, revealing once again its fine detail and craftsmanship.

War memorials hold a special place in our communities, serving as lasting tributes to those who gave their lives in service. Caring for them is an act of remembrance and respect that connects generations.

We are proud to see the Ickwell War Memorial looking its best once more — and grateful for the many kind comments received from residents who are delighted with the result. The restoration has been completed in time for our Remembrance Service on Sunday, 9th November, and we warmly encourage everyone to join us in paying tribute to those who served and sacrifice

Parish Cemeteries

Our parish cemeteries are places of peace, reflection, and remembrance — where families and friends can visit to honour their loved ones in calm and beautiful surroundings.

Northill Parish Council recognises the importance of these spaces within our community and is committed to ensuring they remain well cared for, dignified, and accessible to all.

Over recent months, both the Caldecote and Northill cemeteries have benefited from a series of improvement works designed to enhance their appearance and usability.

New pathways have been commissioned to make it easier and safer for visitors to move around the grounds, particularly during the wetter months. Each site has also undergone a general tidy-up and maintenance programme, including hedge trimming, grass cutting, and attention to boundary areas, helping to preserve the calm and respectful atmosphere that these places deserve.

At Caldecote Cemetery, we are especially pleased to report the completion of a new access ramp, which provides smoother and safer entry for those with limited mobility or using wheelchairs and walking aids. This improvement reflects our ongoing commitment to making all parish facilities inclusive and welcoming for every visitor.

The Parish Council regularly reviews the condition of its cemeteries to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the community.

Future maintenance and small-scale improvement projects are being planned as part of our long-term care strategy, ensuring that these cherished sites remain peaceful resting places for generations to come.

We extend our thanks to parish councillors, contractors, and volunteers whose hard work and care help keep these cemeteries looking their best throughout the year.

FUNDING

Funding Support Available from Northill Parish Council

Did you know that Northill Parish Council has funding available to support local projects, groups, and initiatives that benefit our community?

Each year, the Parish Council sets aside funds to help local organisations, volunteer groups, and residents deliver projects that enhance life across our villages — from community events and environmental improvements to sports, heritage, and wellbeing activities.

If you're part of a community group, sports club, or environmental project, or are organising a one-off event that benefits local residents, you may be eligible for financial support. Grants are typically awarded for projects that:

- Enhance or protect our local environment and heritage
- Promote wellbeing and community spirit
- Improve village facilities or public spaces
- Encourage participation, inclusion, or volunteering

Applications should be submitted by 30th June, however, some funding is still available for this financial year, so now is an ideal time to get in touch if you have a project in mind.

Applications are considered throughout the year, and we're always keen to support initiatives that make a positive and lasting difference in our parish

For more information on eligibility and how to apply, please contact the Parish Clerk:

- clerk@northillparishcouncil.gov.uk
- 07743 021131
- www.northillparishcouncil.gov.uk

Let's work together to support and strengthen our parish community — one great idea at a time!

Protecting Our Local Green Spaces

Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) is taking new steps to protect much-loved green spaces from future development through its emerging Local Plan.

The Local Plan will guide the long-term future of the area – shaping where new homes, jobs, transport links, leisure facilities, and community spaces are located. One of the strongest messages to come out of public engagement so far is that residents want to see local green spaces safeguarded for future generations.

To achieve this, CBC is introducing Local Green Space (LGS) designations. These designations will give additional protection to areas that are particularly special to local communities – whether for their beauty, tranquillity, recreational value, or contribution to wildlife and biodiversity.

It's worth noting that existing village greens are already protected by law, but this new designation could extend protection to other valued open areas within the parish that don't currently have formal safeguarding.

Why It Matters

- Protects valued green spaces from inappropriate development
- Provides places for exercise, play, and relaxation
- Supports wildlife habitats and biodiversity
- Helps reduce environmental damage and flood risk

How You Can Get Involved

Town and parish councils are now gathering evidence and suggestions for areas that could be put forward as Local Green Spaces.

Northill Parish Council will be discussing this at upcoming Full Council meetings, and we welcome suggestions from residents about potential sites that could be considered.

If you have an idea for a local green space that you believe deserves protection, please email your suggestion to:
clerk@northillparishcouncil.gov.uk

CBC has confirmed that a formal public consultation on the proposed Local Green Space sites will take place next year, giving everyone the opportunity to comment before final decisions are made.

The Beauty and Care of Our Parish Trees

Trees are an essential part of our parish landscape — from the graceful oaks of Ickwell Green to the shady sycamores of Caldecote. They bring beauty and character to our villages, provide habitats for wildlife, improve air quality, and help create a sense of calm and continuity. Looking after them is both a privilege and a responsibility, and the Parish Council takes this duty very seriously.

Every year, the Parish Council arranges for a professional tree survey to be carried out across all council-owned land. In addition, we conduct our own quarterly risk assessments to monitor tree health and safety. From these inspections, we prioritise necessary maintenance work to ensure that our trees remain safe, healthy, and well cared for.

So far this year, the following work has been arranged or completed:

Ickwell Green

- An oak tree underwent a sonic tomography scan to assess the extent of internal decay. The results recommended a height reduction, which has been arranged. Another oak on the Green has had a large branch removed for safety reasons.

Northill

- At the Pond: removal of a Lombardy Poplar suffering from advanced decay. Yew trees have been carefully cut back to encourage healthy regrowth and maintain sightlines.

Caldecote

- Reduction of a mature sycamore to improve light to a resident.
 - Removal of a dead tree on Caldecote Green.
- Reduction of another nearby tree and removal of several unruly saplings to preserve the open character of the Green.

Tree maintenance is an ongoing process that ensures our parish greens and open spaces remain safe and beautiful for generations to come. We are fortunate to live among such a rich variety of trees — and with thoughtful care and attention, they will continue to thrive and define the natural charm of our villages for years ahead.

Manor Place Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) – A Better Outcome for Residents

Earlier this year, Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) proposed a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for Manor Place, which would have introduced double yellow lines along the entire length of the road. Understandably, this proposal raised concerns among residents about parking restrictions and day-to-day access.

With the help of our Ward Councillor, Paul Daniels, Northill Parish Council has worked hard together with Central Bedfordshire Highways Department to secure a more balanced and practical outcome that considers both road safety and residents' needs.

As part of the consultation process, parties reached out to the local school for its views, since the main purpose of the proposed restrictions is to improve safety and traffic flow during school drop-off and pick-up times. The Headteacher responded, expressing serious concerns about dangerous and inconsiderate parking, speeding, and blocked driveways, noting that these issues occur almost weekly despite regular reminders to parents and requests for support from CBC's parking teams. The school stressed that *"doing nothing is not an option"* and called for a long-term solution to ensure the safety of all highway users.

As is often the case with such consultations, responses tend to focus on opposition or requests for changes rather than general support. However, after further discussion with CBC and local representatives, a revised plan was agreed.

Under the final scheme, double yellow lines will now be placed only at the junction corners rather than along the full length of Manor Place. This approach strikes a sensible balance — helping to maintain safety and visibility at key points around the school, while avoiding unnecessary inconvenience to residents outside of school times.

Northill Parish Council would like to thank Cllr Paul Daniels, the school, and the residents of Manor Place for their input and cooperation in reaching this improved outcome.

CPR and Defibrillator Training at Northill Village Hall

A CPR and defibrillator training course was held on Thursday 4th September at Northill Village Hall, organised in partnership with the East Anglian Air Ambulance (EAAA). The session was well supported by parish councillors Richard Mauldin and Keith Bennett, who helped with front-of-house duties.

The course provided attendees with essential life-saving skills, including how to perform CPR and use a defibrillator. These skills could make a critical difference in an emergency, helping to start the “chain of survival” before professional emergency services arrive.

The Parish Council was delighted to receive a letter of thanks from EAAA, highlighting the confidence and knowledge gained by participants. EAAA also acknowledged the generous donation of £290 from the residents collected on the night, which will support further CPR training in local communities and provide 24/7 critical care to seriously injured or unwell people in the region.

Northill Parish Council would like to thank everyone who attended and contributed to the course and encourages all residents to consider learning these vital skills to help save lives.

Reporting Parish Issues – Help Keep Our Villages Tidy!

If you spot a problem around the parish – such as potholes, damaged signs, blocked drains, fly-tipping, or broken streetlights – please report it directly via FixMyStreet.

This online service sends your report straight to Central Bedfordshire Council, ensuring it reaches the right team quickly and can be tracked from start to finish.

You can report an issue in just a few minutes by visiting:

 www.fixmystreet.com

Using FixMyStreet helps keep a clear record of what's been reported and avoids delays in passing information through multiple channels. Together, we can help keep our parish safe, clean, and well maintained.

New Village Gateways

Northill Parish Council is pleased to announce that white village gateways have been commissioned for several key entrances to our villages. These will be installed at:

- Bedford Road into Northill
- Thorncote Road into Northill
- Warden Road into Ickwell
- Caldecote Road into Ickwell
- Biggleswade Road into Upper Caldecote

Each gateway will sit alongside the 30 mph speed limit signs, displaying the village name and a reminder for drivers to “Please drive carefully.” We believe these gateways will be a positive addition to the parish, enhancing safety and creating a welcoming sense of place.

Benefits of Village Gateways

Village gateways provide several benefits that improve safety and quality of life in rural communities:

Traffic Calming: Gateways can reduce vehicle speeds by 4–5 mph, helping to prevent accidents and save lives.

Enhanced Environment: They improve the visual appeal of roads and the surrounding environment, particularly in rural areas.

Community Identity: Gateways mark the presence of a settlement, strengthening local identity and fostering a sense of community.

The Parish Council is proud to support initiatives like these that make our villages safer, more attractive, and more welcoming for residents and visitors alike.

PLANNING UPDATE

By Councillor Andy Field-Webber

Northill Parish Council Planning Committee normally meet on the first Tuesday of every month to ensure that we put forward a recommendation to Central Beds Council (CBC) on every planning application made within the parish. Over the last two years we have considered over 150 applications.

We use this newsletter to highlight to the readership what we consider to be some of the more interesting applications, as well as updating progress on earlier applications and other planning matters

A summary of some of the recent recommendations made by Northill Parish Council Planning Committee to Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) appear below. Full details of these particular applications and all other applications can be found at

<https://plantech.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/PLANTECH/DCWebPages/AcolNetCGI.gov>

Twin Trees Thorncote Road , Northill, Biggleswade SG18 9AG CB/25/02439/FULL—An application for the demolition of an existing respite building and the erection of a single storey equine reception area and habitable accommodation for a temporary period of 3 years. It was resolved to approve this application

Shyre Cottage, 10-11 Ickwell Green, Ickwell, Biggleswade, SG18 9EF CB/25/02916/FULL—An application for the erection of a detached garage and associated works

After careful discussion, NPC resolved to object to the proposal on the grounds of its detrimental impact on the street scene.

While NPC appreciates the overall concept and understands the desire for improved facilities at the property, the proposed siting of the garage, in its opinion is positioned too far forward. It would appear visually intrusive and unsympathetic to the historic character and setting of Ickwell Green.

UPDATE: The day after this application was considered a revised application was submitted which will be on the agenda for the next meeting on 4th November.

Planning Update (cont.)

Woodside Caravan Park Plot 3, Thorncote Road, Northill, SG19 1PT
An application for the continued use of land as a permanent Gypsy & Traveller pitch and the siting of two additional static caravans

It was resolved to agree in principle to this application, subject to the usual licensing conditions.

NPC has reached out to CBC for further clarification on this application as it is unclear why 'continued use' is being sought. It is also noted that a previous condition attached to plot 3 limits the total number of caravans to three with only one of them being static.

Other Planning Matters

Land adjacent to The Grange, Grange Lane, Lower Caldecote
CB/25/01678/FULL

This application is for use of the land for the creation of 7 residential pitches each pitch containing 1 mobile home, 1 touring caravan, 1 day room and associated works.

The CBC Development Management Committee will be meeting on 22nd October 2025 to determine this application Northill Parish Council will be using its 3-minute slot to oppose this application.

Over the last decade, CBC have refused all residential applications of any type in Lower Caldecote on the grounds of lack of infrastructure and being an unsustainable location for new housing,

Land North of Budna Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire CB/25/00867

This retrospective application is for the creation of hard standing and the erection of fences and gates around the field.

The application was refused and has now gone to appeal. Northill Parish Council and our Ward Councillor Paul Daniels are maintaining an active dialogue with CBC on this matter

Water Capacity and Planning in Northill Parish

Northill Parish Council continues to monitor water treatment capacity closely as part of its planning responses. Concerns have been raised with local councillors and MPs about the limitations of the Biggleswade Water Recycling Centre (WRC), which currently has no additional capacity to accommodate further wastewater flows.

The Parish Council has been informed that, while Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) recognises these concerns, it cannot commit to halting all future development until capacity is increased. CBC has, however, undertaken to engage with developers to explore possible solutions.

Developers themselves have a clear incentive to avoid building homes in areas where sewage infrastructure is already under pressure, as this can affect the desirability and long-term sustainability of their developments.

Parish Council Approach

To ensure a consistent and environmentally responsible response to planning applications, Northill Parish Council's approach to wastewater and planning is now as follows:

- **New Builds:** Any application for new housing that would increase wastewater flow will be objected to on the grounds of insufficient capacity at Biggleswade WRC.
- **Extensions or Minor Developments:** For house extensions or smaller projects that include additional toilets or bathrooms, the Parish Council will request that CBC consult with Anglian Water before granting approval.

To date, CBC has responded that the increase in wastewater from individual small extensions is minimal and that Anglian Water does not need to be consulted on such applications.

However, the Parish Council remains concerned that, cumulatively, multiple small developments could have a significant impact over time — for example, 50 small extensions could equate to the wastewater load of 25 new homes, which Anglian Water is currently objecting to due to lack of capacity.

Water Capacity cont.

To be clear, if the Planning Committee has no other concerns over an extension, it would not recommend refusal solely on wastewater grounds.

However, it will continue to request that CBC consult with Anglian Water and will maintain an audit trail of these requests. Should a significant number of approvals proceed without consultation, the Council will review its position and consider next steps.

Standard Parish Response

“This property falls within the catchment of the Biggleswade Water Recycling Centre (WRC), which currently does not have capacity to accommodate additional wastewater flows.

Anglian Water has previously stated that further connections to this WRC present environmental risks, including deterioration of water quality and potential breaches of environmental legislation.

As there is no committed investment or funding allocated for upgrades at Biggleswade WRC under AMP7 (2020–2025) or AMP8 (2025–2030), Northill Parish Council considers that any development which increases wastewater flow is unsustainable at present.

We therefore request that the planning authority seek clarification from Anglian Water, as they are not a consultee at this level of application.”

This approach ensures a fair, transparent, and environmentally responsible process for all planning applications in the parish, helping to protect both residents and local infrastructure.

Planning Contributions – Help Us Shape Community Improvements

When new housing developments are approved, developers are often required to contribute funds toward local infrastructure and community facilities. These contributions are called Section 106 (S106) monies, and they are intended to help offset the impact of development and benefit the wider community.

Northill Parish Council has an opportunity to influence how future S106 funds are used — but we need your help. We're starting to think ahead and would love to hear your ideas for community improvements that could be delivered with these funds. Examples might include: Electric vehicle charging points: Enhancing or creating footpaths and cycleways: Improvements to playgrounds and open spaces: Community meeting spaces or facilities: Safety or accessibility improvements—Please contact clerk@northillparishcouncil.gov.uk

Preserving Our Parish Heritage

Northill Parish is fortunate to have many listed buildings that reflect our rich local history and architectural heritage. These buildings connect us to the generations before us and help define the unique character of our villages.

Sadly, one such building — the 16th-century South Barn in Ickwell — has recently collapsed after years of neglect. This historic structure was an important reminder of our rural past, and its loss highlights how vulnerable our heritage can be without proper care and maintenance.

The Central Bedfordshire Council Conservation Department is aware of the situation, and we hope that steps can be taken to preserve what remains and to prevent further losses in the future.

Protecting our listed buildings is a shared responsibility. If residents have concerns about the condition of any listed or historic building in the parish, they are encouraged to report it directly to the CBC Conservation Department, <https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/44/planning/666/quick-guide-to-planning/5> By taking action early, we can help safeguard these precious landmarks for generations to come.

Speeding in the Parish – How You Can Help

Speeding remains one of the most common concerns raised by residents across the Parish of Northill. Whether it's through Ickwell, Northill, Upper or Lower Caldecote, or Hatch and Thorncote Green, many people have reported vehicles travelling too fast through our villages — posing risks to pedestrians, cyclists, and other road users.

The Parish Council continues to work with Central Bedfordshire Council, Bedfordshire Police, and Community Speed Watch volunteers to promote safer driving and identify problem areas.

However, we rely heavily on residents to report incidents and help build an accurate picture of where speeding is most persistent.

How to Report Speeding

If you witness regular speeding or have specific concerns about a road or location, please report it directly to Bedfordshire Police via their online form:

 www.beds.police.uk → *Report* → *Road traffic incident* → *Speeding concerns*

Alternatively, you can call 101 (non-emergency) to share details.

You can also register your interest in joining or supporting the Community Speed Watch scheme, which allows trained volunteers to monitor vehicle speeds in approved locations and pass information to the police for follow-up.

Working Together for Safer Roads

The Parish Council regularly raises residents' concerns with local authorities and continues to explore measures such as improved signage and village gateways.

By reporting issues and promoting responsible driving, we can all play a part in making our villages safer, calmer, and more enjoyable places to live.

What is a Parish Council? What is a Councillor? What Does the Parish Council Do ?

Northill Parish Council plays a vital role in supporting our local community and shaping the place we live. But what exactly does the Parish Council do?

The Role of the Parish Council

Parish councils are the first tier of local government – closest to the community and often the most accessible. Northill Parish Council covers the villages of Northill, Ickwell, Upper & Lower Caldecote, Hatch, Thorncote, Brook End & Budna and is responsible for a wide range of local matters, including:

- Reviewing and commenting on local planning applications
- Managing and maintaining community assets such as noticeboards, bus shelters, cemeteries, greens and public spaces
- Supporting local initiatives and events
- Providing grants to community groups
- Representing parish interests to Central Bedfordshire Council and other bodies
- Helping to maintain the character and wellbeing of our villages

What Does a Parish Councillor Do?

Parish councillors are elected or co-opted volunteers who work together to make decisions for the benefit of the community. They attend monthly council meetings and take part in discussions on local issues, projects, and funding decisions. Some councillors may also sit on committees or take on specific areas of interest.

You don't need any special qualifications – just a genuine interest in your community, some time to give, and a willingness to listen, learn, and contribute.

Being a councillor can be a rewarding way to give back, influence local decisions, and help shape the future of our parish.

There is one vacancy on the Parish Council. If you are interested please email clerk@northillparishcouncil.gov.uk

