

Appendix A

Cosgrove Parish Council – Chair’s Report 2026

Cosgrove Parish Council like a number of Parish Councils in the country are functioning with less councillors than the parish requires. With only two thirds of the nine seats occupied you will understand that it’s a tough position to fill. The positive that comes through is that with the highly professional support of our clerk, the few regular volunteers, your councillors continue to demonstrate commitment, determination and with teamwork are keeping our village as good as we can hope for.

With vacancies for three councillors, I appeal to interested members of the community to come forward and declare an interest in taking up the vacant seats. You can do this by attending a few meetings, view the proceedings and deciding if you’re interested. I realise that it’s not for everybody but you may have a skill that the community can benefit from.

Recently our Parish Council clerk, Jenny Evans, achieved her Certificate in Local Council Administration, CiLCA qualification. During her time working on the qualification, Jenny has worked hard to compile a multitude of Policies and Procedures that each Parish Council is required to have in place to demonstrate and support the way it works.

All approved Policies and Procedures can be viewed on Cosgrove Village website at www.cosgroveparishcouncil.gov.uk.

In February we gathered together along with past Parish Councillors and previous clerk, Derek Everett, to celebrate Tony Bracey’s 50 years as a Parish Councillor in Cosgrove. Tony joined the Parish Council in 1975 and still holds a strong interest in the well-being of the village.

Our village website has had a makeover during the winter months. With the help and assistance of a volunteer from the village we have made it easier to find what you’re looking for.

Items of interest and updates from WNC are added to the News page and members of the community who register their email address on the website receive automated email alerts to help prevent them being missed. We can’t see who has registered, so I encourage everyone who’s not getting the notifications to check the website and register your email address. You won’t be bombarded but may find out something that benefits you or your family.

The Playing field has had the fence realigned, utilising the space better. Work is ongoing to place the items that are now outside the fence inside the fenced area. A picnic bench is also ready to be installed, that will provide youngsters with space to sit and have snacks and refreshment.

If you wish to be involved in progressing the work required, please let a member of the Parish Council know.

Meadow View cemetery is being prepared for use with the Environment Agency expected to approve use very soon. While we await that, the overgrowth at the top side has been cut back.

A replacement tree with a large root ball has been planted in the far lower corner, replacing the tree received from the Queen’s Canopy Award, that sadly didn’t take. The required hedge inside the metal fence is becoming more

established and should now be able to survive the attraction of the grazing cattle. That will be monitored during the coming months.

The streetlamps in Orchard Close have been repaired recently by a contractor engaged by the Developer. Cosgrove Parish Council are pursuing a refund from the Developer, who WNC had previously failed to locate and hold to task, when the Parish Council used our contractor to repair the lights after Orchard Close was almost placed in complete darkness. It is expected that these lamps will be adopted by the PC once the previous repair cost to us has been met by the Developer.

In a small community, I recognise the efforts and time of residents who quietly do what they can to keep our village as safe and tidy as it can be.

Litter and dog mess is unpleasant and totally unacceptable, but difficult to prevent. To those that remove it, your efforts are greatly appreciated.

A small group are working towards improvements to the Playing Field and equipment, while another group work extremely hard analysing large planning applications, and assessing the impact on the community and locality.

Our Speed Indicators are downloaded regularly to provide us with accurate information on traffic movements in the village. Most results are pleasing, but as many know the exceptions are beyond belief.

A grant was approved earlier this year for the purchase of a handheld speed detection device, so we may see the volunteer team out performing speed checks and where necessary, requesting education for potential offenders.

The planters on Bridge Road are now providing a welcome to Springtime with a pleasant display of daffodils and tulips among the perennial herbs. We look forward to them and the village sign having a nice show of blooms throughout the warmer months, as well as an additional planter to be located on the opposite diagonal.

Thank you to those of you who have responded to our consultation which was attached to the invitation to this evening. We are still collecting replies until the end of April, so if you have not already done so, please take the time to let us know your views.

I close my annual report with a thank you to everyone that gives their energy and time for the benefit of the Community and wish you well in continuing all that you do.

David Smith
Chair, Cosgrove Parish Council

Appendix B

Annual Financial Report to the Annual Assembly of the Parish on 15 April 2026

The balances in the bank as at 31 March 2026 totalled £44,967, including £15,000 in a 95 day notice account. This attracted £972 interest in the financial year ending 31 March 2026. We intend to place an additional £15,000 into this account. Our Fixed Assets total just under £59,000

Income in 2025-2026 totalled £41,802. The Precept (funding from WNC) made up £28,280 of this. We received £5,650 from Cadent Gas for the long-term lease that we grant them for the gas governor on the playing field. Other income came from the burial ground (£1,625) and the annual mowing grant from West Northants Council of £999. We also claimed back £4,316 from HMRC under the VAT reclaim scheme. At the end of the financial year there was a £747 VAT reclaim outstanding.

Expenditure totalled £40,742. Apart from the Clerk's salary, the most expensive items were grass mowing at £7,642, street lighting at £2,026, dog waste collection £1,025. This year we drew down on our earmarked reserves by £ 12,471 for work in both burial grounds, the playpark and street light repairs.

We spent £1,141 on Section 137 expenditure (expenditure on any purpose which is in the interests of, or to the benefit of the area or its inhabitants). This was almost three times as much as we spent in 2024-2025. If you have an idea for a village project, then please let us know.

We spent £1,850 on a second flood report in connection with the proposed warehouse development at Furtho Pit.

The Parish Council have developed a Grant Awarding Policy. We have a budget of £1000.00 set aside for the coming financial year and welcome applications from local groups. Details of the grant scheme can be found on our website.

The annual internal audit will take place tomorrow and the external audit process happens over the summer. Audit reports are published on the website. Monthly financial reports and details of BACS payments are also published on the website regularly as part of the Minutes of meetings. The annual budget and our financial regulations can also be found on the website. Cosgrove Parish Council aims to be transparent in all its financial dealings.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank the Parish Council for all their support over the past year and to echo David's plea for three more residents to put themselves forward to become Parish Councillors. Your village needs you.

JM Evans
Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer

13 April 2026



Appendix C

Cllr. Ian McCORD



Independent Councillor for Deanshanger & Paulerspury Ward
West Northamptonshire Council

Report to Cosgrove Parish Council

I would like to begin by thanking David Smith and all fellow Parish Councillors for their support and cooperation throughout the year. Having active and effective parish councils across the ward makes the role of District Councillor considerably easier and more productive. I would also like to record my thanks to Jenny Evans for her continued help and support.

Earlier in the year it was a particular pleasure to join Tony Bracey in celebrating his remarkable achievement of fifty years of service as a Parish Councillor. Such long-standing dedication to public service is rare and deserves recognition. On behalf of residents across the ward, my sincere congratulations and thanks to Tony for his service to the community.

West Northamptonshire Council

Turning to matters at West Northamptonshire Council (WNC), the most significant development during the past year was the local elections and subsequent change of political control from Conservative to Reform. Reform won 41 of the 76 council seats in May last year; since then, three councillors have become independents, one Labour councillor has joined the Liberal Democrats, and one councillor has resigned, resulting in a by-election now underway.

Setting aside party politics, it is the actions and direction of the Council that matter most. One of the earliest decisions taken by the new administration was to end WNC's commitment to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030. I had consistently argued that such a commitment must either be fully funded or realistically aligned to available resources. Where funding was not available, the Council should do what could practically be delivered. I therefore supported the ending of an unachievable commitment.

The main strategic document adopted by the new administration closely resembles its predecessor, with largely revised wording rather than a substantive change of direction. Similarly, the most recent budget could plausibly have been produced by the previous administration. The council tax increase of 4.75% and higher green bin charges continue WNC's long-standing approach of maximising available levers since its formation.

The new administration has faced a steep learning curve. Cabinet members have generally dealt reasonably well with several major issues, particularly those relating to development pressures around Northampton and the management of council housing through Northampton Partnership Homes.

MK Hotel and Asylum Accommodation

The MK Hotel is one of three hotels in the district currently used to house asylum seekers. In my view, this is an inappropriate location, being immediately adjacent to a major road. There have been reports of issues associated with this use, although distinguishing established facts from social media exaggeration can be difficult.

The widely reported Epping Forest court case did not, however, address planning matters. WNC has taken legal advice and sought clarification from the Home Office, although no response has been received. The Council's approach is to establish whether the permanent occupation of hotel rooms by people who have no other residence means that the building is no longer operating as a hotel and therefore requires a different planning permission or a formal change of use.

Promoted by Ian McCord, home address: 52 Moorend Road, Yardley Gobion, Towcester, NN12 7UF
Tel: 0774 006 7378 email: Ian.McCord@WestNorthants.gov.uk www.IanMcCord.com

INDEPENDENT - For YOU, not THEM

Planning Matters

Planning issues continue to dominate my case load. Across the ward there are currently applications for:

- 220 houses in Old Stratford
- Three major applications in Deanshanger for 174, 190 and 67 houses,
- An application for 26 homes in Paulerspury

An appeal for 23 houses in Potterspury was allowed recently but WNC did their best to sabotage the appeal to ensure it was lost. The behaviour of the Planning Department in relation to this application was reprehensible.

Planning Committee granted permission for the 60 Bed Care Home in Deanshanger in March.

In addition, there are the long-running quarry and landfill proposals at Paulerspury, solar farm at Potterspury / Yardley Gobion and the Furtho Pit warehouse application affecting Cosgrove and Old Stratford. The latter may finally reach committee "next month", although this has been said several times before.

More recently, the Hesketh family has submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Opinion request. This is a precursor to a full planning application. Their proposals include the redevelopment of the racecourse land encompassing the existing stands, stables and car parking, with a mixed-use scheme comprising leisure facilities, a hotel, conference facilities and approximately 300 homes. They are also proposing a development of around 2,800 homes in Paulerspury Parish, located between the Towcester Relief Road and Cow Pastures Lane.

An EIA Scoping application formally asks the Council to confirm which topics must be covered within a future Environmental Impact Assessment—such as traffic, flooding and landscape impact—and whether the scope should be broadened.

Local Plan

WNC has recently closed consultation on its latest draft Local Plan, following the April 2024 version. After the General Election, the Government revised the method of calculating local housing need, increasing WNC's housing requirement by approximately 20%. As a result, the April 2024 draft is no longer sufficient. The revised January 2026 draft includes roughly 10,000 additional homes, with the plan running to 2042.

The core strategy of the plan directs most growth towards Northampton, Daventry and Brackley, but it also proposes housing allocations for larger villages. Within this ward, the proposed allocations are:

- **Deanshanger – 168 homes**
- **Old Stratford – 102 homes**
- **Potterspury – 73 homes**
- **Yardley Gobion – 55 homes**
- **Paulerspury – 49 homes**

These figures are minimum allocations. The policy is intended to apply from 1 April 2025, and any planning permissions granted for sites mentioned earlier should be deducted from these totals.

The plan also proposes approximately 1,400 additional homes beyond the existing Towcester South Sustainable Urban Extension, currently under construction. These would be located at the A43 end of Towcester, south of the Relief Road. Even with only around half of the existing development completed, the current traffic impacts on the A5 are already apparent; additional development on this scale will inevitably worsen congestion.



Employment Land

The Shacks Barns and Furtho Pit sites are proposed for reallocation as employment land. By comparison, a similar site in the Daventry area is subject to a 10,000 square metre floorspace cap, whereas no such restriction is proposed locally. Greater consistency within the Local Plan would be welcome.

The previously identified need for a roundabout on the A508 appears to have been quietly dropped, and WNC continues to describe the area as being of poor ecological quality, despite substantial evidence to the contrary.

Five-Year Land Supply

A recent planning appeal decision removed approximately 1,900 homes from WNC's five-year housing land supply. This is likely to result in increased speculative planning applications, with the Council having far less ability to resist them. The most recent application for four dwellings on Stratford Road explicitly relies on this reduced land supply as the reason to grant permission outside the village confines – it is not self build.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes clear that where a local authority cannot demonstrate a deliverable five-year land supply, there is a presumption in favour of granting planning permission for sustainable development in order to restore it.

I expect there will be many of these coming our way right across the district.

Appendix D

Cosgrove Housing Need Survey Overview

Survey Distribution and Response Rate

A housing need survey was carried out by Midlands Rural Housing In July 2025. A questionnaire, accompanied by a covering letter, was sent to 276 residential properties within the parish via Royal Mail. The aim was to gather information regarding the local housing requirements. Of those contacted, 80 responses were received, which represents an overall response rate of 30%. 57 responses were paper copies returned via freepost.

Identified Housing Need and Required Homes

Nine respondents indicated that either they or a member of their household needed an alternative home. Following a thorough assessment of these responses, it has been determined that seven new homes are necessary to fulfil the requirements of those who participated in the survey. Details regarding the specific types of housing and tenure required can be found in Table 1, which presents a summary of the findings.

Property Type	Social Rent	Shared Ownership	Open Market	Totals
1 bed bungalow	1	-	-	1
2 bed bungalow	-	-	1	1
2 bed house	1	2	-	3
3 bed house	-	1	-	1
5 bed house	-	1	-	1
Totals	2	4	1	7

Limitations in Housing Need Assessment

Out of the nine respondents who indicated a need for alternative housing, two could not be included in the analysis. This was due to the absence of essential information required for a proper assessment of their housing needs. Without any personal details provided, it was not possible to contact them to verify their circumstances. As a result, these cases remain unassessed within the survey findings.

Barriers to Moving

The most reported obstacle preventing individuals from relocating was the absence of appropriately sized or suitably designed housing options. Many respondents highlighted that the existing housing stock does not meet their specific needs, either in terms of the number of bedrooms, accessibility features, or the general type of property required. This lack of suitable choice has made it difficult for households to move, even when a change in their living situation is necessary.

Emerging Household Needs

Among the households that participated in the survey, 29 currently have children residing at home. These children represent potential emerging households, which may contribute to increased demand for additional housing across a range of tenures in the coming years. As they reach adulthood and seek independent accommodation, the need for suitable homes to meet their requirements will likely grow, underscoring the importance of planning for future housing provision within the parish.

Community Support for Affordable Housing

A total of 74 survey respondents provided feedback regarding their support for a small development of affordable homes intended for individuals with a local connection. The responses revealed a perfectly balanced division of opinion, with half of the participants expressing support and the other half indicating opposition to such a proposal. This even split demonstrates that views within the community are divided on the issue of developing affordable housing to meet local needs.

Community Attitudes Toward Mixed Housing Developments

Survey participants were also asked whether their support for a development of affordable homes for people with a local connection would continue if a small number of market homes were included in order to meet local housing needs. The results showed that only nine respondents indicated they would remain supportive under these circumstances. This suggests that the inclusion of market homes alongside affordable housing may significantly reduce the level of support for such developments within the local community.

Use of Housing Register Data

To ensure a comprehensive assessment of local housing need, WNC was requested to supply data from the housing register. This approach served two essential purposes. Firstly, it allowed for the inclusion of individuals who may not have responded to the survey but are nonetheless registered and identified as needing housing. Secondly, it provided a means to cross-check and avoid the duplication of cases, ensuring that those who participated in the survey and reported their registration status were not counted twice.

It is important to note that applicants on the housing register do not have their local connection verified until they reach the stage of being shortlisted for a property. During this assessment, it was found that none of the individuals identified as in need of social housing reported being currently registered. Furthermore, there were no additional housing register applicants to be considered for this analysis.