

**Woodton Parish Council**  
**Chairman's Report 2025/2026**

**Councillors** – Kay Mason Billig continues as our County Councillor, as well as being Chair of Norfolk County Council. We would like to thank her and, in particular, our two District Councillors, Brendon Bernard and Chris Brown, for their support and advice over the last year.

**Development & Planning** – The increase in development and plans that have been submitted for even further house building, has been the main focus of this year. Apart from the 50 houses currently being built in Church Road, plans being considered include 8 further houses also on Church Road, some opposite the Kings Head pub, and single houses on Sunnyside and The Street. Highway issues and the strain on our road system are paramount together with the constant worry of prospective flooding implications.

**East Pye Solar Project** – This extensive project, yet to be finalised at the planning stage, continues to worry residents and the impact this, and the disruption caused by the installation of vast numbers of panels and the cabling routes, will have on the village. The Parish Council, although supportive of renewal energy in principle, continue to highlight the concerns on behalf of residents.

Again, I would like to thank our Vice Chairman for all her hard work and for keeping a very keen eye on all matters relating to planning issues. A big task in itself.

**Finance, Budget & Precept** – It is a constant battle to keep the precept as low as possible without restricting investment in projects too much. However, we have had no alternative but to increase the precept to £15,845.00 for the forthcoming year due to general increases in costs and insurance premiums. This is something we do not take lightly. Budgeted income/expenditure is calculated at £15,923.00.

As of 31 March 2026, the General Fund stands at over £8,000.00, which is considered a satisfactory level in line with the auditor's recommendation. The Parish Council also holds £8,080.50 in earmarked reserves.

The Instant Access Savings Account continues to earn valuable interest helping to boost funds.

**Awards** – The Winter Pressure Grant of £500.00 was again available to us enabling Christmas food and supply parcels to be distributed to 27 households.

**CIL Funding** – Over the year this very useful pot of money has been used to repair the zip wire and pay for the materials needed by the probation services to carry out tasks in the village. More CIL funds of £14,069.94 have recently been received as a result of development and the Parish Council have agreed in principle to donate a considerable amount of this tranche to the Village Hall to help with their refurbishment work. A further larger sum will follow in April 2027 related to the house building on Church Road.

**S106 Funds** – These funds have been used to replace the gates at Ravens Den, repair the perimeter fencing at the Forest School, replace wooden edging in the Wood and carry out repair work to the Village Hall car park.

**Speeding & Cameras** – Several instances of vandalism to the speed cameras and the stealing of batteries have occurred this year. The police positioned their black box on Hempnall Road

in August 2025, but the data collected did not unfortunately warrant further action by the force at this time. The equipment is hugely expensive, and after one insurance claim, the Council are having to consider what route to take on this matter as further claims will ultimately reflect on a further unavoidable increase to the precept. This would obviously affect the pockets of every local resident.

Two instances of people, and in once case a child, narrowly avoiding injury outside Woodton Primary School have been reported despite the 20mph sign operating outside the school at drop off and collection times.

We await, and will welcome, the enforcement of a reduced speed limit in Church Road following the completion of the development there and hope this will improve the safety on this very busy road.

**Community Wood & Ravens Den** – The annual celebrations of Christmas, Easter and Halloween continue to be hugely popular and enjoyed by many people of all ages. Thanks go to the hard work and enthusiasm of the volunteers who organise these events on behalf of the village.

The woods have looked particularly spectacular this spring as planting matures and through a generous legacy from the late Harry Clark there will shortly be a carving of a barn owl situated there in his memory. The balance of his legacy will be used to help fund the annual events, all of which Harry supported during his life.

At last, after some five years, the transfer of the final strip of land previously held by South Norfolk District Council has been agreed.

**Flooding** – Although no major instances of flooding have occurred this year, we are all aware of the impact the development projects might have on the village should significant rainfall occur, as it has done in the past few years.

**Newsletter** – This twice yearly circulation has continued to prove popular being handed out to all households in both Woodton and Bedingham. In this way it reaches those, in particular, who do not have email communication and, therefore, do not receive copies of the Village News sent out monthly by the Hempnall Group of churches. We are particularly grateful to the local businesses who have generously sponsored both the Spring and Autumn editions for 2026, thus keeping costs down from the Parish Council budget.

**Village Hall** – The Village Hall does not belong to the Parish Council, but a charity. However, with two councillors involved with the extensive projects and plans for this valuable village asset, it is worthy of a mention. Their own report will outline what has been achieved, and what is planned for the future, but my thanks go to those who have given so much time and effort into achieving much that has been happening over the last six months. Grants and outside funding are needed to proceed but we hope the contribution from CIL funds will go a little way towards this expenditure.

**Yard Sale** – This took place in September with many houses taking part. The proceeds of refreshments in the Village Hall have been a useful boost to their funds, and another sale is planned for 4<sup>th</sup> July this year.

**Woodton United Charities** – We value the important link and relationship between the Charities, but their new constitution no longer requires a member of the Parish Council to be a trustee.

**People on Probation** – The people on probation continue to spend time in Woodton every three or four months which has made a big difference to jobs to be done around the village. This year they have painted the outside of the village hall, painted railings in various locations, replaced wooden edging in the Community Wood and continued with the constant job of bark spreading.

**Litter, Dog Bins & Signs** – There are new dog signs throughout the village, but we are constantly having to remind dog owners to clear up after their dogs as there is still a problem on the footpaths in both Woodton and Bedingham.

**Finally** – The workload of the Parish Council seems to increase every year and 2025/26 has been no exception. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Parish Councillors for their time, hard work, and enthusiasm, all given voluntarily, as we tackle the variety of tasks that come our way. However, Yvonne Wonnacott, our excellent clerk deserves special mention for her support and efficiency in carrying out her role which becomes more involved and complicated as regulations and compliance matters increase. So, a big thank you to her.

May 2026