

## **Parish and Town Council Election Re-charges**

### **Background**

Following the May 2025 elections, we've been reviewing the way the cost of elections is recharged to town and parish councils. We are aware the cost of elections is a concern for parishes and we've taken steps to manage these costs, including:

- Reviewing the number and location of polling stations;
- Minimising the number of expensive mobile polling stations;
- Reviewing staffing ratios in polling stations; and
- Re-procuring printing and software contracts to ensure value for money.

### **Why are we consulting?**

Unfortunately, some costs such as printing, postage and staffing are subject to inflation which means the financial pressure on councils continues to grow. After recharging parishes for the 2025 elections, the effective subsidy provided by West Northamptonshire Council was in excess of £100k. We have reviewed the system of recharging parishes to ensure it is fair and equitable and have developed proposals for consultation. We are keen to hear views from the sector on future options for recharging. We are consulting now so parishes have notice of any changes ahead of the next scheduled elections in 2029.

### **Contested elections**

Firstly, we are not proposing to make any changes to the charges for contested elections. These will continue to be shared with parishes where contested elections take place for the following elements:

- Poll Cards (share);
- Postal votes and ballot papers (whole cost);
- Polling station hire (share);
- Polling station conversion pack for shared elections (whole cost);
- Polling station staff and Polling Station Inspectors (share);
- Count staff (actual hours, whole cost); and
- Returning Officer Fee (whole cost).

While these costs can add up to a relatively significant sum for each parish or town council that has a contested election, the Council will not recharge other elements of shared elections, including:

- Postal vote opening;
- Ballot box preparation;
- E-learning for staff training;
- Ballot box receipt;
- Transport;
- Count venue hire charge and count security;
- Count equipment (stationery, counting boards, furniture hire, count booklet);
- Verification of ballots; and
- Overheads including payroll, IT support, communications etc.

## **Parish and Town Council Election Re-charges**

Parish by-elections that do not coincide with other elections will be charged at full cost, subject to consultation with the clerk.

### **Uncontested elections**

An uncontested election is a scheduled election that does not proceed to a poll. This occurs when the number of candidates is the same or fewer than the number of seats to be elected. The Council has historically recharged a nominal sum for uncontested elections; currently the Returning Officer fee of £28 plus £16 per parish ward. Provision to include a share of poll cards costs has been included in the calculation but these costs were not passed on following the 2025 elections.

The current model does not reflect the actual cost of uncontested elections, which require significant time and/or financial overheads relating to processing nominations, the preparation and proofing of notices, printer setup fees (proofs must be checked and signed off before it is known if an election will be contested), officer time monitoring parishes that remain inquorate towards the end of the nomination period, as well as the Returning Officer fee.

We have drafted a range of options for recharging parishes for uncontested elections. A brief summary of each option is included below. All of the options achieve the same outcome in terms of the total amount recharged to parishes, but this is arrived at through a different calculation in each case.

#### **Option A**

Option A is an administrative fee of £225 per parish, with an additional £50 per parish ward. There would be no share of the poll card cost in this scenario. This level of fee is broadly in line with the practice at many other authorities. Under this model each parish is treated the same regardless of size, which means the model does not account for the differences between parish electorate or precept.

#### **Option B**

Option B sets the administrative fee at £90 per parish, with an additional £30 per parish ward. To make up the difference in the total amount recharged, it proposes parishes pay 10% of the poll card cost. It is noted that many authorities recharge ~50% of poll card costs by default. It is understood poll cards are not strictly mandatory for parishes and parishes will have a view about this. However, this is arguably more equitable as it means the smaller parishes incur a lower cost than under option A.

#### **Option C**

Option C retains the fee at the current level of the Returning Officer fee for uncontested parishes (currently £28 with the additional fee of £16 per parish ward). It proposes that parishes are recharged 15% of the cost of poll cards. The charge to each parish is

## Parish and Town Council Election Re-charges

proportional to the electorate and so smaller parishes will continue to pay a relatively small fee (as fewer poll cards are issued) with larger parishes paying a larger fee.

An example of the uncontested fee for each scenario for three different sizes of parish/town councils is set out below:

	<b>Option A</b>	<b>Option B</b>	<b>Option C</b>
<b>Parish A (electorate 240, no wards)</b>	£225	£104.71	£50.06
<b>Parish B (electorate 9,799, 2 wards)</b>	£275	£720.58	£944.87
<b>Parish C (electorate 20,225, 4 wards)</b>	£375	£1419.59	£1939.59

A full estimate for each parish and town council in West Northamptonshire is set out at the end of this document (note the estimate is based on current poll card costs).

### Next Steps

We are asking councils to consider the options set out above and respond to us via a feedback form. In order to ensure sufficient time for parishes to consider the consultation, it will run until 10 April 2026.

[Link to submit feedback](#)

**Parish and Town Council Election Re-charges**

Parish Council	Electorate (as at 1 Dec 2025)	UNCONTESTED ELECTION COSTS OPTION A				UNCONTESTED ELECTION COSTS OPTION B				UNCONTESTED ELECTION COSTS OPTION C			
		Poll Cards (£) (0%)	Admin fee (covers nomination checking & processing, notices etc..)(£)	Additional fee for each parish ward (£)	Total Cost (£)	Poll Cards (£) (10%)	Admin fee (covers nomination checking & processing, notices etc..)(£)	Additional fee for each parish ward (£)	Total Cost (£)	Poll Cards (£) (15%)	Admin fee (covers nomination checking & processing, notices etc..)(£)	Additional fee for each parish ward (£)	Total Cost (£)
Abthorpe PC	259	0	225	0	225	15.87411	90	0	105.87	23.811165	28	0	51.81
Arthingworth PC	207	0	225	0	225	12.68703	90	0	102.69	19.030545	28	0	47.03
Ashton PC	318	0	225	0	225	19.49022	90	0	109.49	29.23533	28	0	57.24
Aston le Walls PC	240	0	225	0	225	14.7096	90	0	104.71	22.0644	28	0	50.06
Aynho PC	492	0	225	0	225	30.15468	90	0	120.15	45.23202	28	0	73.23
Badby PC	555	0	225	0	225	34.01595	90	0	124.02	51.023925	28	0	79.02
Barby and Onley PC	1026	0	225	50	275	62.88354	90	30	182.88	94.32531	28	16	138.33
Billing PC	6690	0	225	150	375	410.0301	90	90	590.03	615.04515	28	48	691.05
Blakesley PC	406	0	225	0	225	24.88374	90	0	114.88	37.32561	28	0	65.33
Blisworth PC	1432	0	225	0	225	87.76728	90	0	177.77	131.65092	28	0	159.65
Boddington PC	559	0	225	50	275	34.26111	90	30	154.26	51.391665	28	16	95.39
Boughton PC	2006	0	225	0	225	122.94774	90	0	212.95	184.42161	28	0	212.42
Brackley Town Council	12174	0	225	150	375	746.14446	90	90	926.14	1119.21669	28	48	1195.22
Brafield-on-the-Green PC	501	0	225	0	225	30.70629	90	0	120.71	46.059435	28	0	74.06
Braunston PC	1427	0	225	0	225	87.46083	90	0	177.46	131.191245	28	0	159.19
Brington PC	379	0	225	50	275	23.22891	90	30	143.23	34.843365	28	16	78.84
Brixworth PC	4234	0	225	0	225	259.50186	90	0	349.50	389.25279	28	0	417.25
Bugbrooke PC	2221	0	225	0	225	136.12509	90	0	226.13	204.187635	28	0	232.19
Byfield PC	1017	0	225	0	225	62.33193	90	0	152.33	93.497895	28	0	121.50
Castle Ashby PC	78	0	225	0	225	4.78062	90	0	94.78	7.17093	28	0	35.17
Chacombe PC	518	0	225	0	225	31.74822	90	0	121.75	47.62233	28	0	75.62
Chipping Warden and Edgcote PC	476	0	225	0	225	29.17404	90	0	119.17	43.76106	28	0	71.76
Church and Chapel Brampton PC	631	0	225	50	275	38.67399	90	30	158.67	58.010985	28	16	102.01

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Clipston PC	547	0	225	0	225	33.52563	90	0	123.53	50.288445	28	0	78.29
Cogenhoe and Whiston PC	1142	0	225	50	275	69.99318	90	30	189.99	104.98977	28	16	148.99
Cold Ashby PC	234	0	225	0	225	14.34186	90	0	104.34	21.51279	28	0	49.51
Cold Higham PC	244	0	225	0	225	14.95476	90	0	104.95	22.43214	28	0	50.43
Collingtree PC	1333	0	225	50	275	81.69957	90	30	201.70	122.549355	28	16	166.55
Cosgrove PC	516	0	225	0	225	31.62564	90	0	121.63	47.43846	28	0	75.44
Creaton PC	396	0	225	0	225	24.27084	90	0	114.27	36.40626	28	0	64.41
Crick PC	1811	0	225	0	225	110.99619	90	0	201.00	166.494285	28	0	194.49
Croughton PC	581	0	225	0	225	35.60949	90	0	125.61	53.414235	28	0	81.41
Culworth PC	319	0	225	0	225	19.55151	90	0	109.55	29.327265	28	0	57.33
Daventry Town Council	20225	0	225	150	375	1239.5903	90	90	1419.59	1859.38538	28	48	1935.39
Deanshanger PC	2985	0	225	0	225	182.95065	90	0	272.95	274.425975	28	0	302.43
Denton PC	568	0	225	0	225	34.81272	90	0	124.81	52.21908	28	0	80.22
Duston PC	12662	0	225	100	325	776.05398	90	60	926.05	1164.08097	28	32	1224.08
East Farndon PC	254	0	225	0	225	15.56766	90	0	105.57	23.35149	28	0	51.35
East Haddon PC	582	0	225	0	225	35.67078	90	0	125.67	53.50617	28	0	81.51
East Hunsbury PC	7178	0	225	0	225	439.93962	90	0	529.94	659.90943	28	0	687.91
Evenley PC	467	0	225	0	225	28.62243	90	0	118.62	42.933645	28	0	70.93
Everdon PC	274	0	225	0	225	16.79346	90	0	106.79	25.19019	28	0	53.19
Eydon PC	358	0	225	0	225	21.94182	90	0	111.94	32.91273	28	0	60.91
Far Cotton and Delapre CC	7559	0	225	0	225	463.29111	90	0	553.29	694.936665	28	0	722.94
Farthinghoe PC	316	0	225	50	275	19.36764	90	30	139.37	29.05146	28	16	73.05
Farthingstone PC	155	0	225	0	225	9.49995	90	0	99.50	14.249925	28	0	42.25

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Flore PC	1103	0	225	0	225	67.60287	90	0	157.60	101.404305	28	0	129.40
Gayton PC	396	0	225	0	225	24.27084	90	0	114.27	36.40626	28	0	64.41
Grange Park PC	3150	0	225	0	225	193.0635	90	0	283.06	289.59525	28	0	317.60
Great Houghton PC	534	0	225	0	225	32.72886	90	0	122.73	49.09329	28	0	77.09
Great Oxendon PC	267	0	225	0	225	16.36443	90	0	106.36	24.546645	28	0	52.55
Greatworth and Halse PC	689	0	225	50	275	42.22881	90	30	162.23	63.343215	28	16	107.34
Greens Norton PC	1237	0	225	0	225	75.81573	90	0	165.82	113.723595	28	0	141.72
Guilsborough PC	567	0	225	0	225	34.75143	90	0	124.75	52.127145	28	0	80.13
Hackleton PC	1553	0	225	50	275	95.18337	90	30	215.18	142.775055	28	16	186.78
Hannington PC	224	0	225	0	225	13.72896	90	0	103.73	20.59344	28	0	48.59
Hardingstone PC	2022	0	225	0	225	123.92838	90	0	213.93	185.89257	28	0	213.89
Harlestone Manor PC	443	0	225	0	225	27.15147	90	0	117.15	40.727205	28	0	68.73
Harlestone PC	355	0	225	0	225	21.75795	90	0	111.76	32.636925	28	0	60.64
Harpole PC	1804	0	225	0	225	110.56716	90	0	200.57	165.85074	28	0	193.85
Hartwell PC	1469	0	225	0	225	90.03501	90	0	180.04	135.052515	28	0	163.05
Helmdon PC	722	0	225	0	225	44.25138	90	0	134.25	66.37707	28	0	94.38
Holcot PC	323	0	225	0	225	19.79667	90	0	109.80	29.695005	28	0	57.70
Hollowell & Teeton PC	320	0	225	50	275	19.6128	90	30	139.61	29.4192	28	16	73.42
Hunsbury Meadows PC	1870	0	225	0	225	114.6123	90	0	204.61	171.91845	28	0	199.92
Kilsby PC	1080	0	225	0	225	66.1932	90	0	156.19	99.2898	28	0	127.29
King's Sutton PC	1778	0	225	0	225	108.97362	90	0	198.97	163.46043	28	0	191.46
Kingsthorpe PC	17463	0	225	250	475	1070.3073	90	150	1310.31	1605.46091	28	80	1713.46
Kislingbury PC	1060	0	225	150	375	64.9674	90	90	244.97	97.4511	28	48	173.45

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Lampton and Hanging Houghton PC	196	0	225	0	225	12.01284	90	0	102.01	18.01926	28	0	46.02
Lilbourne PC	338	0	225	0	225	20.71602	90	0	110.72	31.07403	28	0	59.07
Litchborough PC	277	0	225	0	225	16.97733	90	0	106.98	25.465995	28	0	53.47
Little Houghton PC	367	0	225	0	225	22.49343	90	0	112.49	33.740145	28	0	61.74
Long Buckby PC	3496	0	225	50	275	214.26984	90	30	334.27	321.40476	28	16	365.40
Maidford PC	155	0	225	0	225	9.49995	90	0	99.50	14.249925	28	0	42.25
Maidwell with Draughton PC	283	0	225	0	225	17.34507	90	0	107.35	26.017605	28	0	54.02
Marston St Lawrence PC	154	0	225	0	225	9.43866	90	0	99.44	14.15799	28	0	42.16
Middleton Cheney PC	3164	0	225	0	225	193.92156	90	0	283.92	290.88234	28	0	318.88
Milton Malsor PC	617	0	225	0	225	37.81593	90	0	127.82	56.723895	28	0	84.72
Moreton Pinkney PC	341	0	225	0	225	20.89989	90	0	110.90	31.349835	28	0	59.35
Moulton PC	4173	0	225	0	225	255.76317	90	0	345.76	383.644755	28	0	411.64
Naseby PC	613	0	225	0	225	37.57077	90	0	127.57	56.356155	28	0	84.36
Nether Heyford PC	1284	0	225	0	225	78.69636	90	0	168.70	118.04454	28	0	146.04
Newbottle and Charlton PC	396	0	225	0	225	24.27084	90	0	114.27	36.40626	28	0	64.41
Newnham PC	479	0	225	0	225	29.35791	90	0	119.36	44.036865	28	0	72.04
Northampton Town Council	91,033	0	225	1000	1225	5579.4126	90	600	6269.41	8369.11886	28	320	8717.12
Norton PC	314	0	225	0	225	19.24506	90	0	109.25	28.86759	28	0	56.87
Old PC	386	0	225	0	225	23.65794	90	0	113.66	35.48691	28	0	63.49
Old Stratford PC	1811	0	225	0	225	110.99619	90	0	201.00	166.494285	28	0	194.49
Overstone PC	2020	0	225	0	225	123.8058	90	0	213.81	185.7087	28	0	213.71
Overthorpe PC	150	0	225	0	225	9.1935	90	0	99.19	13.79025	28	0	41.79
Pattishall PC	1179	0	225	0	225	72.26091	90	0	162.26	108.391365	28	0	136.39

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Paulerspury PC	901	0	225	0	225	55.22229	90	0	145.22	82.833435	28	0	110.83
Pitsford PC	581	0	225	0	225	35.60949	90	0	125.61	53.414235	28	0	81.41
Potterspury PC	1234	0	225	0	225	75.63186	90	0	165.63	113.44779	28	0	141.45
Preston Capes PC	170	0	225	0	225	10.4193	90	0	100.42	15.62895	28	0	43.63
Quinton PC	169	0	225	0	225	10.35801	90	0	100.36	15.537015	28	0	43.54
Ravensthorpe PC	546	0	225	50	275	33.46434	90	30	153.46	50.19651	28	16	94.20
Roade PC	2610	0	225	0	225	159.9669	90	0	249.97	239.95035	28	0	267.95
Rothersthorpe PC	360	0	225	0	225	22.0644	90	0	112.06	33.0966	28	0	61.10
Scaldwell PC	232	0	225	0	225	14.21928	90	0	104.22	21.32892	28	0	49.33
Shutlanger PC	248	0	225	0	225	15.19992	90	0	105.20	22.79988	28	0	50.80
Sibbertoft PC	284	0	225	0	225	17.40636	90	0	107.41	26.10954	28	0	54.11
Silverstone PC	2211	0	225	0	225	135.51219	90	0	225.51	203.268285	28	0	231.27
Spratton PC	928	0	225	0	225	56.87712	90	0	146.88	85.31568	28	0	113.32
Staverton PC	439	0	225	0	225	26.90631	90	0	116.91	40.359465	28	0	68.36
Stoke Bruerne PC	308	0	225	0	225	18.87732	90	0	108.88	28.31598	28	0	56.32
Stowe Nine Churches PC	211	0	225	0	225	12.93219	90	0	102.93	19.398285	28	0	47.40
Sulgrave PC	343	0	225	0	225	21.02247	90	0	111.02	31.533705	28	0	59.53
Syresham PC	706	0	225	0	225	43.27074	90	0	133.27	64.90611	28	0	92.91
Thorpe Mandeville PC	142	0	225	0	225	8.70318	90	0	98.70	13.05477	28	0	41.05
Tiffield PC	312	0	225	0	225	19.12248	90	0	109.12	28.68372	28	0	56.68
Towcester Town Council	9799	0	225	50	275	600.58071	90	30	720.58	900.871065	28	16	944.87
Upton PC	6219	0	225	50	275	381.16251	90	30	501.16	571.743765	28	16	615.74
Walgrave PC	733	0	225	0	225	44.92557	90	0	134.93	67.388355	28	0	95.39

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Wappenham PC	241	0	225	0	225	14.77089	90	0	104.77	22.156335	28	0	50.16		
Watford PC	240	0	225	0	225	14.7096	90	0	104.71	22.0644	28	0	50.06		
Weedon Bec PC	2231	0	225	0	225	136.73799	90	0	226.74	205.106985	28	0	233.11		
Welford PC	925	0	225	0	225	56.69325	90	0	146.69	85.039875	28	0	113.04		
Welton PC	485	0	225	0	225	29.72565	90	0	119.73	44.588475	28	0	72.59		
West Haddon PC	1467	0	225	0	225	89.91243	90	0	179.91	134.868645	28	0	162.87		
West Hunsbury PC	3375	0	225	0	225	206.85375	90	0	296.85	310.280625	28	0	338.28		
Weston and Weedon Lois PC	280	0	225	0	225	17.1612	90	0	107.16	25.7418	28	0	53.74		
Whilton PC	237	0	225	50	275	14.52573	90	30	134.53	21.788595	28	16	65.79		
Whittlebury PC	445	0	225	0	225	27.27405	90	0	117.27	40.911075	28	0	68.91		
Wicken PC	258	0	225	0	225	15.81282	90	0	105.81	23.71923	28	0	51.72		
Woodford-cum-Membris PC	3017	0	225	0	225	184.91193	90	0	274.91	277.367895	28	0	305.37		
Wootton PC	6798	0	225	0	225	416.64942	90	0	506.65	624.97413	28	0	652.97		
Yardley Gobion PC	985	0	225	0	225	60.37065	90	0	150.37	90.555975	28	0	118.56		
Yardley Hastings PC	607	0	225	0	225	37.20303	90	0	127.20	55.804545	28	0	83.80		
Yelvertoft PC	640	0	225	0	225	39.2256	90	0	129.23	58.8384	28	0	86.84		
				<b>Total Option A</b>	<b>32175</b>					<b>Total Option 2</b>	<b>32049.76</b>			<b>Total Option 3</b>	<b>32491.64</b>