

Etton Village Flagpole Consultation Results

1. Responses

Individual responses

- Total responses received: **63**
- Invalid responses: **7** (see below)
- Valid responses: **56**
- Responses in favour: **28 (50%)**
- Responses against: **28 (50%)**
- Including invalid responses: in favour 34 (54%), not in favour 29 (46%)

Household responses

Where more than one resident of a household responded, all shared the same view in support or against, with no exceptions.

- Total households that responded: **33**
- Valid responses: **30**
- Responses in favour: **15 (50%)**
- Responses against: **15 (50%)**
- Including invalid responses: in favour 17 (51.5%), not in favour 16 (48.5%)

Invalid responses

The consultation requested one response per adult resident of the parish.

- 2 responses came from those living outside of the parish.
- 2 forms had been altered – previously submitted forms were resubmitted with the original names, signatures and house number replaced with a different names, signatures and house number. The signatures appear to be the same on both of the altered forms.
- 2 forms were submitted with incomplete information – no surnames and residency cannot be verified.
- 1 response was received via email as a letter of objection; no form was completed.
- One form contained one name and one signature with a note requesting it count for two votes – this was disregarded and counted for one response.

Total invalid consultation responses: **7**

- Responses in favour: **6**
- Responses against: **1**

Results including invalid

2. Flags:

Most responses are from those in favour, some are from those against and only in the event a flagpole is installed.

Total valid responses:

- Union Jack: **32 (51%)**
- Cross of St George: **21 (33%)**

- Cambs County Flag: **16 (25%)**

Total individual responses for 'other': **10 (16%)**

Other flags suggested:

- British National: **1**
- Peterborough United: **1**
- Peterborough City: **1**
- Lest We Forget: **1**
- Royal Anglian: **2**
- Mauritian: **1**
- Australian: **2**
- Other Irish: **1**
- Any flag for celebratory purposes (not for political purposes): **1**
- Common Wealth: **1**
- St Davids Day: **1**
- French: **1**
- Pride: **1**
- All appropriate flags: **1**
- Themed flags e.g. Australian Day: **1**

Answers not included above:

- Yes: **1**
- Multiple miscellaneous (not all appropriate for publication): **1**
- Etc: **1**

Total valid responses in support of 'special flags': **28**

3. Precept

Total valid responses in support of partial or full funding from precept: **21 (33%)**

4. Financial considerations

Pledge of funding from resident(s):

- Not secured
- Unsecured funding cannot be assumed or relied upon. Pledges can be rescinded at any time (e.g. if flag policy does not align with the residents' own views, or the costs and EPC's choice of contactor/supplier for maintenance/replacement flags are not agreed with, or residents move, change their mind (40+ weeks for Commons consent decision may mean residents lose interest or motivation), etc).
- High risk of the Council being liable for maintenance and repairs.
- Unsecured funding for a council owned asset means the next precept demand should increase to cover the forecast repair/maintenance costs.
- Not increasing the precept and relying on pledges is financially risky, poor governance and may be picked up at audit in which case the Council may be criticised.

- These funds would be earmarked and replaced via the precept as necessary.

Pre-installation costs that have not been pledged:

- Pre planning and/or planning application
 - Ground survey
 - Professional plans for Commons Consent and Planning applications
 - Professional consultants
 - Commons Consent public notices
 - Clerk's time. If Councillors were to complete planning and Commons Consent applications, including writing the heritage statement, etc the project would still require the Clerk's time for e.g:
 - Checking and submitting applications
 - Additional admin such as emails, agendas, meeting papers
 - Advising Council and any research involved
 - Arranging the public notices
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5. Council power

The Council's statutory power for spend on anything to do with installation and ongoing costs regarding a flagpole is s.137 LGA 1972:

- This is capped at £11.60 per elector for 2026/27
 - Total the Council could legally spend in 2026/27 is £1,206.40.
 - Conditions exist for using s.137 (power of last resort), including:
 - Spending must directly benefit the area (or part of) and/or all of some of the parishioners.
 - The benefit must be commensurate with spending incurred – spending on a project that is divisive/controversial could be objected to.
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6. Permission considerations

Commons Consent:

- Assuming it is required, which looks to be the case – appears to be the biggest hurdle to obtaining permission:
- The results of the consultation would be disclosed in the application
- All 'commoners' would have the opportunity to respond to the application
- One of the criteria is the 'Interests of the neighbourhood' test. The results of the consultation do not indicate that this criteria would be met.
- There are also other tests and the heritage statement would have aspects of the Etton Conservation Area Appraisal Report and Management Plan such as the 'positive views'.

Planning application:

- As with Commons Consent, all residents have the opportunity to respond.
- PCC Planning Services would consult those directly affected.
- Two objections/not in favour have been raised/noted.

Councillors' time:

- For applications, etc
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7. Post installation:**Clerk's time:**

- Risk assessment
- Flag policy
- Arranging maintenance
- Time handling potential complaints and requests for certain flag

Councillors time:

- for changing of the flags.
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9. Vandalism / unauthorised use risk:

- Increased due to split in support and strong opinions on both sides, including that it is politically motivated
 - Repairs would fall to the Council.
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10. Advice

The Council should consider all of the above in particular/and:

- Council decisions must be in the public interest.
- No clear consensus; 50/50 split is 'neutral'.
- Existing division in the community
- Concerns raised and weight to be given
- Proceeding with non-essential expenditure (whether or not partly funded) carries risk of further division and challenge of appropriate use of funds.
- The s137 commensurate benefit should be considered alongside division of the community.
- Differing opinions regarding the purpose of the flagpole and the flying of flags may cause additional division. A flag policy would need to align with the Council's statutory duty of neutrality and its responsibility to make decisions about its assets – this may cause further tension, and the offers of funding being withdrawn.
- The Council should arrive at its decision as if it were considering using public funds.