



12 January 2026

To: Chairs and Clerks of North Oxfordshire Parishes

Subject: Request for grant support to fund resident communications and independent reporting in 2026

Dear Parish Chairs and Clerks,

North Oxfordshire Resident Action (NORA) exists to make local voices heard on planning and development in North Oxfordshire. We bring factual analysis, plain-English updates, and practical guidance to residents so that communities are well informed and can respond constructively when consultation or action is needed.

NORA's role has become increasingly critical. The current [five major development applications](#) (link to Somerton Parish Council's site) in North Oxfordshire will generate over 35 million vehicle trips a year and introduce 60,000 additional residents to the area. These large-scale schemes will have long-term impacts on our communities, services, environment and transport networks, and they need scrutiny and effective local engagement.

In 2026, we would like to better harness the collective voice and capacity of parish councils by expanding communications and strengthening access to independent, evidence-based reporting. Therefore, for 2026, we would like to ask local Parishes to consider providing a grant to support the work of NORA.

Why funding is needed

NORA is operated by volunteers as a non-registered charity and until now has been predominately electronically based. We recognise that to ensure maximum reach, we need to widen the forms of communication and this means we need to consider community-wide mailings delivered by Royal Mail across North Oxfordshire. This would enable NORA to reach its stated objectives of:

- informing residents about major proposals and consultations;
- signposting evidence and parish positions; and
- providing, where appropriate, a call to action (e.g., how to submit comments, attend briefings, or engage with authorities).

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What NORA proposes to deliver in 2026

Two community-wide mailings (Spring and Autumn 2026)

- Reaching around 20,000 households per mailing.
- Format: A4 leaflet (A3, folded – to give 4 pages of content)
- Distribution: Royal Mail Door to Door, covering agreed postcode sectors.
- Content: Non-partisan information, maps and timelines, parish contacts, links/QR codes to source documents and evidence; any call to action will align with parish guidance.
- Approximate costs are £10,000 per mailing

Ring-fenced funding for independent expert reports

- We propose to ring-fence part of the grant to commission independent consultants (e.g., planning, transport, ecology, heritage, flood risk, noise) to prepare rapid, evidence-based reports for parishes when material proposals arise.
- Having a modest, pre-approved consultancy fund allows immediate engagement without returning to each parish for ad-hoc top-ups, ensuring timely submissions within statutory deadlines.
- Finalised communications will be shared openly with all participating parishes and published on NORA's channels.
- Estimates for expert reports vary depending on the scope of work – we anticipate them varying between £1,000 and £50,000

Essential NORA running costs

Grants will also support essential NORA operating expenses which are budgeted at £3,000 for 2026, including website hosting, printing proofs and compliance costs. This will ensure continuity and timely delivery of communications and independent reports, maintaining transparency and effectiveness in our work.

On a case-by-case basis where urgent responses are required, especially when planning deadlines are tight (we are all very used to the 6 week consultation period), NORA will work with relevant parishes to produce flyers that can be delivered by volunteers at the individual parish level – such material will also be cascaded by NORA's social media and electronic communication channels.

Funding will also be used to develop social media content, in particular video material, that can be used as 'call to action' across a wide demographic range. This has been successful for NORA through-out 2025 to raise awareness and drive action.



Funding request and council budgeting

We recognise parish councils will fund grants either by precept (FY 2026/27) or from reserves / savings. To keep planning straightforward, we invite each parish to consider a grant of £3,000 in 2026 to support NORA's increased work in the coming year.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the grant amount, timing, and any parish-specific messaging preferences. . If your council is open to supporting this programme, please reply to the email this letter was sent from, with details of your grant application process. We will of course provide any further supporting information you require and will provide contributing parishes with a mid and end of year summary of expenditure and activities.

Thank you for your continued partnership in keeping residents informed and involved.

Finally, to keep up to date with NORA's work, you can find details at our website and social media channels.

Yours sincerely,

NORA (North Oxfordshire Resident Action)