



Easingwold Town Council

A Vision for Easingwold
2024 - 2030



Easingwold Town Council's (ETC) philosophy for its vision was set in 2015 and continues to be: *"We want Easingwold to be a prosperous community, with a clear and distinctive character, that delivers a high quality of life for all its people. We want to see the positive development of Easingwold as a thriving modern town, a great place in which to grow up, live, grow old, access services, and visit."*

The 2021 Census showed Easingwold's 10-year growth as being 15% in inhabitants and 18% in households, growth that continues today. Growth is an opportunity to adapt, conserving the best and improving the rest. ETC supports measured, proportionate, timely and sustainable development; its policies and programmes are aimed at having a positive effect on the locality. These must maintain and improve the quality of the natural and built-up environments; whilst enabling a positive social and commercial community in which our residents can thrive.

ETC's vision is based on two aspects: the town's physical and social infrastructures:

- Regarding *Physical Easingwold*, ETC focuses on influencing and managing through its policies and activities the appearance, the structure, and the nature of parish right from its borders until its focal point in the town marketplace. This should reflect our town's status as a respected, Georgian market town and local service centre. This physical infrastructure provides the foundation for the parish to meet its people's employment, lifestyle, and social needs.
- Regarding *Social Easingwold*, ETC focuses on influencing and partially managing through its policies and activities the social and lifestyle aspects of the parish, such that it is considered a great place in which to grow up, live, grow old, access services, and visit.

ETC has limited direct powers and responsibilities. It maintains and improves the amenities it is responsible for; whilst working with multiple partners for the rest. Most local powers and responsibilities lie with North Yorkshire Council (NYC); overlaid by the directly-elected Mayor for York and North Yorkshire. For ETC to be successful, it needs to collaborate with these regional authorities; working with them to realise the best possible outcomes for Easingwold.

1. Physical Easingwold

To remain vibrant the parish must be expected to grow, welcoming new residents and businesses. ETC will seek to ensure the town's facilities and infrastructure evolve to meet both the town's needs and those of the approximately 17,000 people for whom it acts as a service centre.

- **Town Planning/Local Plan/Neighbourhood Plan:** ETC expects to participate with North Yorkshire Council in creating its new local plan; but will consider pursuing a more locally focused Neighbourhood Plan if it becomes appropriate. Developments should be consistent with or enhance the town's existing aesthetic. They should meet the need for:
 - Social and affordable housing; and Seniors' housing (including residential care).
 - Facilities for health, welfare, education; and transport infrastructure.

- Commercial premises including those for industrial, office, retail, and hospitality.
- Sustainability provisions: the mandatory installation of off-street parking, charging points, heat pumps and high-grade insulation.
- Accessibility by cyclists, pedestrians, the less-able, and the disabled.
- **Town Maintenance and Improvement:** ETC will work to create, evolve, and maintain excellent public spaces, open spaces, and recreational areas (Millfields Park, Memorial Park, Chase Garth Park etc.) always taking biodiversity into account.
- **Roads & Footpaths:** Throughout the town the condition of the roads, footpaths and byways is a matter of concern. ETC will seek to influence North Yorkshire Council in enhancing the maintenance of the roads, footpaths, and their drainage.
- **Car Parking:** ETC will continue to offer free parking; whilst working to provide the optimum balance of spaces for its diverse users.
- **Town Centre/Conservation Area:** ETC wishes to retain the current Easingwold Conservation Area. However, it should be operated flexibly and openly; allowing for enhancement and improvement where needed. All town centre properties should be continuously maintained to a high standard; ETC will ask NYC for corrective measures where standards slip. ETC will positively promote a good level of visual amenity throughout the town centre from Long Street to Spring Street and beyond.
- **Primary Commercial Area:** ETC will encourage a positive, full use of the town's central spaces; supporting the town centre's continuation as a strong retailing, hostelry, commercial and tourism centre. ETC will seek to influence NYC planning decisions to ensure a healthy balance between commercial and residential properties.
- **Town Facilities Development:** Easingwold has many public buildings, facilities and services that are vital to the wellbeing of the town and its population (e.g. for Health and Education.) ETC wishes to see them grow with the town and develop with its population's needs. In proposed developments ETC wishes to see any healthcare, commercial, and residential facilities for the aged etc. delivered before any housing.
- **Communal Assets:** There are multiple building assets that contribute strongly to Easingwold's life (the Galtres Centre, the Community Library, NHS St. Monica's Hospital, COZIE, the Tourist Information Centre, Sports Clubs etc.) They are important social facilities for Easingwold and, whilst not operated by ETC, we will provide help and support towards their continued success.
- **Services:** ETC promotes having excellent facilities and services in the town. Some are private (Undertakers, Accountants, Dentists, Solicitors, Building Societies, Retailers and Hostelrys etc.); some are public (Public toilets, Markets, Health and Social Care, Schools, Churches etc.); and others are collective (Football & Cricket Clubs, Galtres Centre, COZIE etc.) ETC wishes to facilitate and enable the Easingwold townspeople themselves to create, maintain and operate a whole range of facilities, clubs and activities that enhance the quality and variety of life within the town.
- **Enhanced Physical Assets:** Many residents would like to see further shared assets introduced to the town (e.g. nature reserves; swimming pool; basketball/squash courts etc.) ETC will consider these and any other proposals that may arise according to their likely benefits to the town, its nearby villages, and people versus their value for money and the resources available to create and operate them.

2. Social Easingwold

Despite its growth, ETC wishes Easingwold to retain its current community spirit and neighbourliness. Easingwold needs a good range of opportunities for employment, services, socialising, and entertainment; those aspects supporting residents, nearby villagers, and visitors enhancing and enabling their lives. ETC wants Easingwold to be a parish that is the envy of its neighbours to live in; a town where people can thrive. We would also like to see it evolve ever more strongly to support healthy lifestyles by enabling socialising, walking, cycling, and exercise for all.

- **Local Services & Resources:** ETC will promote the use of local resources, markets, enterprises, and artisans by the townspeople and tourists so that, as much as is possible, Easingwold can fulfil the needs of our people and visitors locally. Public transport and buses are not ETC's responsibility, however, we will advocate with our partners for a good service availability to and from Easingwold 7 days a week.

- **Social Organisations & Groups:** ETC recognises the value of the town's many sports clubs; youth groups; social support and networking groups; religious and secular groups; educational and training groups; environmental, rural, and agricultural groups etc in keeping essential infrastructure in good order, making socialising easier, and enhancing lifestyles. ETC will support these groups and organisations in positive ways according to their needs.
- **Social/Ageing Support:** ETC welcomes the presence of the NHS St Monica's Hospital in the town as a link between hospitalisation and home care. It also supports (via trustee/board representation) Easingwold & District Community Care Association (EDCCA), Easingwold United Charities, the Galtres Centre, the Alms Houses, the Community Library etc. For the more vulnerable amongst us, ETC supports EDCCA with its food bank, meals-on-wheels, disability support, and dementia programmes. Equally, ETC welcome the support from the Citizens' Advice Bureau and their locality-based advice.
- **Families & Young People:** The balance and future of the town will depend on families and young people. ETC will place an emphasis on involving and engaging families within the town. Especially, ETC will look to create or support resources and opportunities for young people so that they can thrive as they grow in the town.
- **Commercial, Retail & Hospitality:** A strong, profitable, and vibrant commercial sector is important to the town and its employment prospects. In this regard ETC will keep a close relationship with NYC-led initiatives, the Easingwold Business Forum and other business groupings. In a difficult trading environment, Easingwold needs to compete and be as much an attraction as a commercial centre. To help arrest any retailing decline, ETC supports the retention and enforcement of a primary commercial area to stop properties drifting to becoming residential over time. The town is now known for its 'café culture', this ETC will continue to facilitate by provision of outdoor trading licences, town centre WiFi, events, attractive planting etc.
- **Visitors & Tourism:** ETC will support Easingwold as an attractive place to visit, and an excellent service centre for its surrounding villages. ETC will encourage public transport, cycling, walking, connectivity and accessibility for townspeople and visitors alike. ETC will continue to sponsor the Easingwold Tourist Information Centre; and to facilitate other visitor attractions as much as it is practical to do so.
- **Events Programme:** ETC wishes to see a full programme of interesting and exciting events throughout the year and across the town; such that it is always attractive to visit and stay within Easingwold. ETC will directly manage and operate a limited number of events in any calendar year; but it will actively support other organisations to add to the richness of the programme on offer. ETC will continuously work on maintaining and improving its markets programme.
- **Volunteering:** Easingwold needs an active and engaged community. It is unrealistic to expect that all facilities, organisations, and events will be provided by ETC or other authorities. This means ETC will sponsor the active volunteering and participation by all our townspeople in all aspects of town life. ETC will help facilitate and coordinate volunteer engagement in the town, as this builds considerable resilience into the town; and enables all the talents within the town to be available for all.
- **Anti-social Behaviour:** An important aspect of Easingwold is that it should be a safe and respectful place to live, work and visit. Whilst crime levels are generally low, any criminal or anti-social behaviour is too much, and ETC will always work with the Police and other partners to eliminate bad behaviour and mitigate its effects.
- **Enhanced Social Assets:** ETC is aware that many residents would like to see further shared social resources being introduced to the town and often receives proposals for such arrangements. ETC will consider them all according to their likely benefits to the town, its villages, and people versus value for money and the resources available.