

**Minutes of the Meeting of Freethorpe Parish Council held
on Monday 26th September 2022 at 7.00pm at Freethorpe Village Hall**
(postponed from 19th Sept. due to the funeral of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth on that day)

Present: Nick Spencer (NS, Chair), David Lake (DL, Vice-Chair), Paul Bacon (PB), Michael Blake (MB), Janet Church (JC), Grant Nurden (GN, also District Councillor), Andrew Moll (AM, Parish Clerk)
Also present: John Fleetwood (JF, Tree Warden), Andrea Rowlands (AR, Tree Warden), and 3 members of the public

1. Apologies

Lana Hempsall (LH, County Councillor)

2. Public Forum

a) In honour of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the Parish Council expressed, on behalf of the parish, its deep sadness at her passing and its sincere thankfulness for her long life of leadership and faithful service.

b) County Councillor Report

LH provided a written report by email on service updates, including covid-19, cost of living payments, energy bills for business, delay in the Thickthorn junction decision, Adult Social Services Privacy Notice change, broadband in public buildings, and bus service improvements. She has also asked for a quotation for an Electronic Vehicle charging point in Freethorpe.

c) District Councillor Report

GN advised that food waste caddies had been delivered ready for the collection service to start. PB commented that bigger liners would be an improvement. GN also advised on the purchase of the Horizon building for Broadland and South Norfolk.

d) Tree Wardens Report

JF reported on completion of the work on the oaks and poplars at the Playing Field and will cut back the ivy in due course. AR hoped that work with the Junior Tree Wardens can re-commence soon. JF advised that the Platinum Jubilee Oak at the Village Hall has recovered. Thanks were given to those who watered it in the drought. National progress on tree planting has only achieved 42.4% of its target.

e) Public Items

Resident concerns about Wickhampton Pond were raised and discussed. It was pointed out that the pond has dried up. It is believed that the lining has been damaged some years ago. The pond has regularly been filled from the tap and tidied up by the neighbouring resident. The pond is overgrown and it was felt that the Parish Council hadn't done anything to maintain it. Item 8c below refers.

3. Declarations of Interest for items on the agenda

As a substitute member of Broadland District Council's Planning Committee, GN is unable to discuss planning applications under agenda item 9. There were no other declarations.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18th July 2022

The minutes were **agreed** as an accurate record and were duly signed by NS as Chair.

5. Matters arising from the previous meeting

- a) (5c) Development conditions to be proposed for Town & Parish Forum (AM) – done, and accepted onto the agenda, although the meeting was postponed and not yet re-arranged.
- b) (10a) Confirm approval of new speed measures, and raise DL's question about reinforcing the speed limit at entry to the village as well (AM) – email sent to Highways.
- c) (10c) Order new bench for Wickhampton play area. (AM) – done, item 10b refers.
- d) (10d) Contact landowner re. allotments. (AM) – done, item 10d refers.

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- e) (10g) Accept quotations for extra maintenance and one-off strimming (AM) – done, and strimming has been carried out.
- f) (10j) Meet Electronic Vehicle Charging point supplier. (AM/JC) – done, quotation now with AM and JC for review, item 10g refers.
- g) (11a) Question durability of pothole fillings. (AM) – email sent to Highways.
- h) Other matters arising - none

6. Clerk's Report

a) Review of File Retention Policy

AM advised that a new section had been added to specify the filing locations. Parish Council noted that all minutes from 1952 are now online. NS advised that new NALC guidance was available on email addresses. The Parish Council agreed that AM should retain minute books until after CiLCA training before lodging them with Norfolk Records Office. The revised File Retention Policy was approved.

7. Finance

a) Monthly Financial Update

AM advised the summary **forecast** financial position for 2022/23 as follows:

Income	£23,272.20
Operational Expenditure	-£17,464.16
Earmarked Reserves Expenditure	-£9,411.81
VAT expenditure to be reclaimed	-£1,500.00
Contingency Reserves	-£9,227.38

Current Bank balance, including deposit account £23,045.05

DL was thanked for disposing of the unwanted goalposts for £350.

- b) Payments - it was **agreed** to make the following payments, NS explaining that three cheques had been signed during the summer between meetings because of the obligation to pay these invoices within terms:

Ref	Payee	Description	Amount (£)
1	Andrew Moll	Salary for July & August 2022	338.46
2	Andrew Moll	Administration Expenses – postage + no-dog and no-mow signs	27.58
3	HMRC	PAYE	84.60
		<i>The following three cheques are for back-dated approval, as there was no meeting in August, the September meeting was postponed, and they needed to be paid to meet invoice terms.</i>	
4	PKF Littlejohn LLP	Invoice SB20220172 VAT 40.00 Date 27/07/2022 External audit	240.00
5	Norse Eastern Ltd	Invoice 1039212 VAT 26.35 Date 31/07/2022	158.12
6	Arborcare (U.K.) Ltd.	Invoice 10162 Date 10/09/2022 (7 day terms)	6150.00
7	No Butts Bin Co.Ltd.	Invoice 3522508 VAT 40.50 Date 20/09/2022	243.00

- c) Completion of Audit 2021-22 - the completion letter from the external auditors was circulated in the agenda, and completion notices have been published as prescribed.
- d) CiLCA training – the cost and time proposal for AM's CiLCA training was agreed. There will be a cost of £660 which will result in an overspend on the training budget of £510. It

was recognised that AM's priority time will be taken with the training work until completed. The Learning Agreement duly signed by NS.

- e) Confirmation of donations 2022/23 – DL proposed and it was agreed that the donations had been considered when setting the budget and that the donations should only differ from the budgeted figures if an exceptional circumstance has arisen. The Village Hall accounts were reviewed and it was agreed that the donation is appropriate, although JC advised of a number of issues and exceptional costs currently being dealt with. AM/PB advised that the Freethorpe Methodist Church cemetery grass cutting had cost £590 in 2022 and it was agreed that the donation should reduce to match this. This released funding to make a donation to Norfolk Citizen's Advice Bureau following their presentation at the Annual Parish Meeting in which their work to support people in the parish was highlighted. DL and PB proposed £70, which was agreed.

Recipient	Reason	Budget 2020-21	Budget 2021-22	Actuals 2021-22	Budget 2022-23	Agreed donation
Village Hall	Annual Donation, includes use of the Village Hall for meetings	3600	3600	3600	3600	3600
Budget set		3600	3600	3600	3600	3600
All Saints Church	Cemetery grass cutting	685	685	685	685	685
St Andrews Church	Cemetery grass cutting	685	685	685	685	685
Freethorpe Methodist Church	Cemetery grass cutting	685	685	650	685	590
Budget set		2055	2055	2020	2055	1960
First Responders	Section 137 donation	190	190	190	190	190
Norfolk Accident Response Service	Section 137 donation	190	190	190	190	190
East Anglia Air Ambulance	Section 137 donation	140	140	140	140	140
Tree Warden Network	Section 137 donation	250	250	250	250	250
Royal British Legion	Section 137, including provision of wreaths	45	45	45	45	45
Acle Foodbank	Section 137 donation	0	0	0	0	0
Norfolk Citizen's Advice Bureau	Section 137 donation	0	0	35	0	70
Budget set		815	815	850	815	885

8. Correspondence

- a) Resident concerns raised about the 'cost of living crisis' – what can the parish and village do to help people? GN advised that the first point of contact for support should be the Broadland District Council Help Hub 01603 430431. He cited an example in the village of confusion

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caused when people use other routes. It was agreed that the Parish Council should promote this wherever possible, including seeking ways of letting people with and without internet know. GN advised that the Broadland News is a regular postal delivery to all houses.

- b) Request to consider including Wickhampton in parish title – GN advised that other Parish Councils refer to themselves with multiple village names and that Broadland District Council would advise on this aspect. It was agreed that research is done on the legalities and practicalities with options brought back to Parish Council for decision. **ACTION AM**
- c) Approach regarding the future of Wickhampton Pond – a paper was considered proposing actions to establish further information about the registration, restoration and maintenance of the pond. While it is unregistered, it is assumed that the ownership falls to Freethorpe Parish Council, with neither Broadland nor Norfolk County Council regarding themselves as the public owners. The pond was originally used for animals to drink in the early 20th century and probably before. Parish Council Minutes from 1985 mention it, when the ownership of the pond was discussed and the Chairman (Mr.Alexander) advised that it was owned by the Parish Council. It occasionally surfaces in subsequent minutes with concerns (e.g. about weedkiller used near it) and intentions to register the pond. It is currently included on the Parish Council asset register for insurance purposes. Nplaw have been approached about providing legal support for the registration process, initially suggesting their £500 annual legal support service to Town and Parish Councils. The following comments were made:
- NS confirmed his understanding that ownership rests with the Parish Council
 - The work of the current neighbouring residents in clearing and putting water in the pond over the last 33 years was noted
 - PB thought that a risk assessment specifically for the pond was needed and that it might be necessary to fence it off for safety
 - GN and NS agreed that registration is a pre-requisite to action
 - JF warned that pond maintenance can be problematic, even with voluntary workers there is an obligation to train and provide safety measures; he also offered to send contact details for the Norfolk Ponds Project, which may be able to advise on management
 - DL noted that over many years the Woodgate family were involved in clearing the pond

It was agreed that legal guidance on registration be pursued with nplaw, and expert advice on the restoration and maintenance of the pond be sought from the Norfolk Ponds Project.

ACTION AM

- d) The Norfolk ALC share certificate and meeting of 11th October were noted.

9. Planning

a) New Applications

No new applications. Open application 20220838 was discussed following resident concerns with the Highways response. The email sent to Broadland reiterating the Parish Council's position was noted. Open applications 20220923 & 20220619 relating to 75 The Green were also discussed. Parish Council remains deeply concerned about the attempt to remove affordable homes from the development. The emails sent to Broadland reiterating the Parish Council's position were noted.

b) Decisions

The following decisions were noted:

20221162 7 Walpole Way extension – approval

20221184 The Chestnuts, sycamores – approval

20220815 Wickhampton Barn cart lodge – approval

20081694 Manor Farm Barns - approval

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- c) Enforcements – it was noted that the one enforcement case has now been closed.

10. Update on Ongoing Matters and Projects

a) Speed Management

The latest figures, for July/August 2022, were reported. The Green, facing Reedham, showed 85th percentile speeds of 32.3mph and a maximum of 55mph, which were improvements on the previous figures for this location (32.8 and 80). Volumes were up from 29,000. Of 37,989 vehicles, 9,105 broke the speed limit. The new SAM machine was near 111 on the Common facing Great Yarmouth. 85th percentile speed was 32.9mph. However out of 17,853 vehicles, 5,081 exceeded the speed limit. PLEASE DRIVE SAFELY. NS expressed concern that the machine at the current location on the Common is flashing up incorrect speeds, possibly affected by a nearby flag? **ACTION AM**

b) Play Area Inspections

AM presented an analysis of recent inspections, highlighting four low to medium risks and options for decision.

- Graffiti on two items at Freethorpe – it was agreed that it would be best to remove and NS will provide some cleaner to try **ACTION NS**
- Removal of broken bench and fixing of replacement at Wickhampton (which has been delivered) – DL offered to look at the anchoring to establish if someone needs to be brought in to do this **ACTION DL**
- Tree inspection at Wickhampton – JF kindly offered to schedule an inspection of the trees for November. **ACTION JF**
- Surfacing at Freethorpe – it was agreed that rubberised surfacing is an unattractive (and possibly unachievable) option due to expense and environmental considerations. JF suggested 25-30mm wood chip on top of the grass, which he could provide. NS asked that the various options in the report and JF's suggestion be shared with the external inspector for advice as we seek to reduce the risk from Low-Medium to Low. **ACTION AM**

c) Freethorpe Village Sign

Awaiting work to clean and re-paint.

d) Allotments

It was noted that the site on Mill Road has been proposed to the landowner, and we await confirmation from him before consulting residents as to their interest and support.

e) Parish Nature Plan

It was noted that 21 surveys have been returned and analysed and a discussion paper is in draft for the October meeting.

f) Tree Surgery at Freethorpe Playing Field

Parish Council approved a report on the tree surgery which has been carried out at Freethorpe Playing Field.

g) Electronic Vehicle Charging Point

AM advised that a quotation has been provided to AM and JC which is yet to be reviewed. **ACTION AM/JC**

h) Dog fouling

It was agreed that at the moment we do not need to approach Broadland to ramp up monitoring for dog fouling. However JC advised that one person is persistently taking a dog on the Playing Field despite the signage and being asked not to do so by various members of the Village Hall Committee. A similar problem is happening at Wickhampton Play Area. It was agreed that a letter from Parish Council be drafted to reiterate the condition of use of the Playing Field and Play Area. **ACTION AM**

11. Other Matters

- a) Untidy area on the Common – PB raised a concern about this area. AR advised that numerous attempts have been made to get the owner to tidy it up. It was agreed that a letter should be sent from the Parish Council to Clarion Housing requesting some tidying.
ACTION AM
- b) Tree at Southwood – AR asked to check the action agreed regarding this tree, which is in Cantley parish.
ACTION AM
- c) Trees on Low Road – DL advised that the leylandii on Low Road have been cut back from the road. The overhanging branches had previously caused problems to the school bus company, which had necessitated some Parish Council involvement. It was felt that there should be no problem now.

12. Reports from Parish Councillors and items for next agenda

None. It was noted that AR is an apology for the next meeting.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 17th October 2022 at 7:00pm at Freethorpe Village Hall.

The schedule for 2022-23 meetings was agreed.

ACTION AM

14. Exclusion of the Press and Public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to consider the following item of business:

JC advised on the Village Hall insurance claim relating to fireworks injuries.

The meeting closed at 8:55 pm.

Signed after approval by the Parish Council as being a true and accurate record by the Chair of the meeting or authorised deputy	Chair Nick Spencer	Date
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