

Minutes of the Meeting of Freethorpe Parish Council, serving Freethorpe & Wickhampton, held Monday 17th March 2025 at 7pm at Freethorpe Village Hall

Present: Nick Spencer (NS, Chairman), David Lake (DL, Vice-chairman), Paul Bacon (PB), Michael Blake (MB), Paul Crisp (PC), Andrew Moll (AM, Parish Clerk), Grant Nurden (GN, also District Councillor).

Also present: 1 member of the public.

1. Apologies

John Fleetwood (JF, Tree Warden), Lana Hemsall (LH, County Councillor), , Andrea Rowlands (AR), Emma Covington (Labour candidate for the County Council).

2. Public Forum

- a) Feedback from Cluster Meeting – MB found out more about neighbourhood planning, including the extra CIL money that can be achieved, although this is also linked to a ‘build limit’ which needs to be understood. ACTION AM
There was a potential interest from neighbouring parishes. GN advised that Halvergate would be interested. At the cluster meeting MB also aired the concern about developments being allowed without providing sufficient affordable homes. Brundall had held a strategy day for Councillors but MB felt the neighbourhood plan covered.
- b) Neighbourhood Plan – it was agreed that we should look at next steps and other parishes can join in if they decide to.
- c) County Councillor Report – none. GN shared a general County Council update. PB was concerned that residents are not properly represented with the County Councillor not attending parish meetings, a situation which PC observed may well continue for 14 more months. But it was understood that there is no process for addressing this.
- d) District Councillor Report - GN explained that local authorities in Norfolk are currently finalising submissions for local government reorganisation. Broadland’s proposal is for three unitary authorities. NS and others questioned the value of splitting the county into three and triplicating management structures. GN advised that the Boundary Commission’s review of ward boundaries is on hold as a result of the reorganisation. GN proposed, and it was unanimously agreed, that a declaration is made that we stand with the people of Ukraine at this time.
- e) Tree Wardens’ Report - JF is generally unavailable for a couple of months but can be contacted if there are issues needing his help. NS commented on the nice display of bulbs now appearing in front of the Village Hall as a result of the good work by AR, her helpers and the school.
- f) Police – priorities of speeding and anti-social behaviour were noted.
- g) Public items – None.

3. Declarations of Interest for items on the agenda

As a substitute member of Broadland’s Planning Committee GN cannot discuss Broadland planning applications in agenda item 9. There were no other declarations.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 17th February 2025

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

5. Matters arising from the previous meeting

- a) (2f) Share information about the road race and where to look for updates (AM) – done, shared with Emma Covington, who raised the issue on behalf of a resident.
- b) (6e) Advise Village Hall that Parish Council is not in a position to pick up recurring costs such as extra grass-cutting costs (AM) – done.
- c) Other matters arising – none.

Chair’s initials

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6. Clerk's Report

- a) VE Day Community Grants were noted.
- b) A letter from the County Officer, Norfolk Association of Local Councils, and the membership renewal were noted.
- c) The new dog bin has been put up by David Grint, fortnightly emptying starts soon.
- d) The new bleed kit has been installed in the defibrillator cabinet, with thanks to Emma Dix of the Joe Dix Foundation and Helen Utting. It is now available in an emergency to those qualified to use it. PB suggested a training course for people to use it as at Upton. GN felt that it should be publicised, for example with the school. **ACTION AM**
- e) It was noted that Highways have cleaned the directional road signs.
- f) The Town and Parish Council Forum was noted.
- g) The Big Broadland Litter Pick March-April-May was noted.

7. Finance

- a) Monthly Financial Update – was reviewed and approved. Summary YTD as follows:

Income	£60,375.73	Bank balance	£32,239.63
Expenditure	£47,975.81	Forecast end year balance	£31,845.14

AM advised that the income for the year was higher than budgeted due to grants, and expenditure due to VAT paid on the grant work, to be recovered in annual VAT claim in August. Reserves target is £10,000. Forecast end year balance of £31,845 is due to CIL money received. When this is spent next year, reserves will revert to the normal level.

- b) Payments - it was **agreed** to make the following payments:

(1) Mr A & Mrs MC Moll **£113.57** – backdated salary adjustment for pay award and arrears and expenses for postage Sep 24-Mar 25 as per breakdown provided

(SO1) Calica Computer Solutions **£30.00** - Speed machine management

(SO2) Mr A & Mrs MC Moll **£207.33** – basic clerk salary.

(DD) HMRC **£0.00** – PAYE – GN noted that the PAYE taken by HMRC relating to Jan-Mar will actually be taken by direct debit in the new financial year, creating a one-off underspend on PAYE in this financial year.

- c) Receipts – none.
- d) Quarterly Finance Review – MB reported that he had carried out his quarterly review and found no issues, so was able to approve the finances.
- e) The Statement of Internal Controls was reviewed, unanimously **approved** and duly signed by NS.
- f) The Parish Partnership Scheme for village gateways was unanimously **approved**.
- g) The Grounds Maintenance services are provided under a rolling annual contract. A charges increase of 8.8% has been notified for 2025. NS considered that the service has been responsive and flexible, and the cost pressures are recognised. The increase means that the budget for grounds maintenance will be overspent in 2025-26 by £110 which will have to be covered from the underspends on other budget heads. With grass growing quicker, the fortnightly cutting service does not meet all the requirements of the football club. If the football club is in a position to do so, the Parish Council is open to respecifying requirements and going to tender for the contract in a future year. The tremendous efforts of Jason Cooper and others in keeping football alive in Freethorpe were recognised. The possibility of the club mowing between the fortnightly cuts, which was the original basis of the service, may yet solve the problem. The renewed contract for this year was unanimously **approved**.

8. Correspondence

- a) New Park and Ride services were noted.

Chair's initials

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b) The new Nutrient Mitigation Fund (Norfolk) was noted.

9. Planning

- a) New applications – 2025/0403 4 Walpole Way, erection of shed – it was unanimously agreed to support the application.
- b) Decisions – none.
- c) Enforcements – one open case noted.
- d) Affordability / viability check for Green View Way – PB advised that the three affordable homes are occupied. NS advised that Land Registry has not yet been updated.

10. Update on Ongoing Matters and Projects

- a) Speed Management- figures are for February 2025. 85th percentile speeds at School Road increased from 24.7mph to 26.4, which is partly due to more traffic between 8pm and 10pm, possibly because of local overnight road closures. Of 4431 vehicles, 134 broke the speed limit, which is largely from the evening traffic. On the Common at the Southwood entry, 85th percentile speeds had reduced from 32.8mph to 31.6mph on reduced volumes of 13,279, of which 2,733 vehicles broke the speed limit. There is great concern among local residents about the risk to children from speeding vehicles at this end of the Common. Analysis of the speeds by time suggests this is a general trend of vehicles moving a bit too quickly, 30-35 when they should be 25-30.
- b) Play Area & Asset Inspections – the noticeboard on the Common is beyond repair with water infiltration. It was agreed that a new board at the Village Hall would be seen by more people. PC suggested by the road with the Social Club board, PB suggested the Village Hall wall, which was the general preference. Village Hall Committee to be consulted. **ACTION AM**
- c) Wickhampton Pond – Norfolk Wildlife Trust have agreed to come and take another look at the current state of the pond.
- d) Rampant Horse – PC advised that the pub remains up for sale at an unlikely price. The Asset of Community Interest accreditation remains in place until 2027.
- e) The Pump – Beighton Builders to be contacted about the repair work needed.
- f) Flower troughs at Village Hall and Flying Field Memorial – carry forward.
- g) Solar Panels for the Village Hall – GN advised that Reedham Village Hall are looking into solar panels. It was agreed that Reedham Clerk be approached about the possibility of a joint bid for grants.

11. Other Matters

PC asked whether the EVCPs were being used.

ACTION AM

12. Reports from Parish Councillors and items for next agenda

None.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 28th April 2025 7PM, Freethorpe Village Hall. PB is unavailable.

Exclusion of the Press and Public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to consider the following item of business: None

The meeting closed at 8:15 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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