Minutes of the Meeting of Freethorpe Parish Council, serving Freethorpe & Wickhampton, held Monday 19th May 2025 at 7:05pm 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: 3 members of the public, 2 of whom left after item 6.

1. Apologies

John Fleetwood (JF, Tree Warden), Lana Hempsall (LH, County Councillor).

2. Annual Parish Council Meeting Items

a) Acceptance of Office - forms were signed by each member, witnessed by the clerk.
b) Election of Chairman – NS was proposed by GN, seconded DL and unanimously elected.
c) Election of Vice-Chairman – DL was proposed by NS, seconded PC and unanimously elected.
d) General Powers of Competence - continue, having been adopted in 2023.
e) Review and approval of standing orders policies and procedures – Standing Orders and Financial Regulations had been rebuilt from new model regulations. They were unanimously approved.
f) Appointment of representatives – DL to Village Hall Committee, with PC to act as backup; GN as Armed Forces Champion; and MB as Norfolk ALC representative were unanimously agreed.

3. Public Forum

a) County Councillor Report – included in Annual Parish Meeting reports.
b) District Councillor Report - GN advised that he has a new Members' Grant of £1,000 to support voluntary groups in his ward. The AGM will elect a new chair and vice-chair this week. All meetings are live streamed and can also be watched afterwards.
c) Tree Wardens' Report - included in Annual Parish Meeting reports.
d) Dog fouling – Public Spaces Protection consultation – it was unanimously agreed that dog fouling remains a significant issue and that the PSPO as it stands is appropriate and proportionate in our parish.
e) Local Government Review – online session on 20th May was noted.
f) Public items – Two members of the public introduced themselves as landowner and developer with land in the parish which could be considered for sites in a Neighbourhood Plan. NS asked them to write to the clerk with their details.

4. 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. As a school governor, MB cannot discuss item 8i. There were no other declarations.

5. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 17th March 2025

The minutes were **agreed** as an accurate record and were duly signed by NS. The cancellation record for 28th April 2025 was also signed by NS.

6. Matters arising from the previous meeting

a) Publicise new bleed kit (AM) – this has been posted on the website and shared with the school.

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b) (10b) Purchase new noticeboards at Village Hall (AM) – purchased, and they were kindly mounted by David Grint. Parish Council notices will now appear there and the old noticeboard on the Common will be taken down.
c) (11) Check usage of EVCPs – carry forward. **ACTION AM**
d) Other matters arising – none.

7. Finance

a) Monthly Financial Update – was reviewed and **approved** and is the Accounting Statement for 2024-25.

Income	£60,375.73	Bank balance	£31,888.73
Expenditure	£48,326.71	End year balance	£31,888.73

Reserves target is £10,000. End year balance is higher than normal 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) Office Boffins **£693.25** INV SI2450041 Noticeboards.
(2) Sonya Blythe **£125.00** INV 04/04/25 Internal audit.
(3) Business Services at CAS Ltd. **£592.98** Insurance renewal quotation
(4) Norfolk County Council **£2600.00** INV10110293 Parish Partnership Gateways
(5) Norse Eastern Ltd. **£1750.52** INV1082692 Grounds maintenance (1)
(6) Norfolk Association of Local Councils **£256.06** INV2356 Annual subscription
(SO1) Calica Computer Solutions **£30.00** - Speed machine management
(SO2) Mr A & Mrs MC Moll **£207.33** - Clerk Salary.
(DD) HMRC **£162.00** – PAYE.

c) Receipts – noted:
(1) Broadland District Council £8965.00 Precept (1).

d) The Internal Auditor's Report was received. There were no issues needing action.
e) To review and approve Annual Governance Statement – this was unanimously **agreed** and signed by NS.
f) To review and approve Annual Accounting Statement – this was unanimously **agreed** and signed by NS.
g) To review and approve CIL Statement 2024-25 – Income from CIL was £20,372.26 (Garage site). CIL was used to pay for the war horse bench, bleed kit, and £3,556.93 towards the Village Hall Kitchen refurbishment. Balance is £16,347.33. The Statement was unanimously **approved** and duly signed by NS**.**
h) To note the Annual Duty of Care Waste Transfer Notice – noted.
i) To note the application for the Parish Partnership Scheme – noted.
j) To review and approve Risk Assessment Schedule – unanimously **approved.**
k) To review and approve the Community Emergency Plan – unanimously **approved.**
l) To approve insurance renewal - Premium has increased to £592.98 (by 20%) due to expiry of the previous 3-year long term undertaking. Exceeds budget of £518.05. The broker checks annually for the best cover and rates available. The renewal commits the Parish Council to a new 3-year Long Term Undertaking, expiring in 2028. This was unanimously **approved.**

8. Correspondence

a) Information from Age UK was noted.
b) To consider Village Hall concerns – (1) Rubbish around recycling bins / cardboard in paper bank – new signs have been placed on paper bank (2) Fly tipping – should councils complain en masse? Agreed to raise at next cluster meeting (3) Incident of

misuse of EVCP parking spaces stopping a user – better "no parking" signage to be explored.

c) Local Nature Recovery consultation closing on 11th June was noted.

d) Bird scarers at 5am affecting Chapelfield – appear to have been placed at furthest extreme of the field beyond the Playing Field and carried by the south-east wind at the time. Resident is correct to take up with Broadland District Council if still an issue.

e) Nutrient neutrality information was noted.

f) The Norfolk Hub for event advertising was noted.

g) A resident request for more footpaths and access to the Playing Field with dogs was considered. Further information to be explored. **ACTION AM**

It was agreed that it remains inappropriate to allow dogs on the Playing Field for health and safety reasons previously stated:

> The condition of use of both Freethorpe Playing Field and Wickhampton Play Area is that no dogs are allowed. The signs clearly state this.
>
> The reasons are as follows:
>
> 1. The health risks to children of toxocariasis and other illnesses. Even if you pick up and bin your dog faeces, the toxocara parasite can contaminate the ground. If children come into contact with this, it can lead to fever, abdominal pain or even permanent vision loss. Dogs may also carry E. coli or hepatitis in their faeces, or increase risks such as contact with avian flu.
> 2. The health risks and upset to children of dog bites.
> 3. Some children may have fears or phobias about dogs, and have their play prevented or spoilt.

h) To note the Humpty Dumpty 10k race on Sunday 8th June as per website.

i) To comment on consultation on amalgamation of Freethorpe and Cantley schools – this was discussed at length. NS spoke for all in being saddened to see the loss of a village school in Cantley and the impact this has on the wider community. But he also felt that the academy and the local education authority have assessed the situation and applied their professional judgment to the viability of the options. It was understood that the numbers for Cantley are too small to be practical and viable, and that that there is sufficient capacity for children to be accommodated at other schools including Freethorpe. AR, PB,PC and DL commented on the pros and cons for the children. Disadvantages are more travel, larger classes and less one-to-one attention. Advantages are year group-based classes, and opportunities from larger school activities. It was agreed to respond along these lines, with a comment that it was assumed that there would be no redundancies and that class sizes and support capacity for the children was in place at Freethorpe.

9. Planning

a) <u>New applications</u> – 2025/1215 7 The Green – two houses. It was unanimously agreed to object to this application due to insufficient space to remain in keeping.

b) Decisions – none.

c) Enforcements – one open case noted.

d) <u>Affordability / viability check for Green View Way –</u> PB advised that the three affordable homes are occupied. NS advised that Land Registry has not yet been updated.

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10. Update on Ongoing Matters and Projects

a) Speed Management- Figures are for March and April 2025. 85th percentile speeds on the Common facing Southwood decreased from 29.9mph to 29.7. Of 14,850 vehicles, 1,836 broke the speed limit. At Chapelfield the figure increased from 31.0 to 31.8mph from 18,408 vehicles. Near the shop facing Acle 85th percentile speeds had risen from 28.0mph to 29.2mph from 26,809 vehicles. Near the shop facing Reedham the figure was also up from 28.7 to 29.5 from 33,032 vehicles. In total over 6,000 vehicles broke the speed limit near the shop in 2 months. The vast majority of vehicles, over 50,000, were within the speed limit.

b) Play Area & Asset Inspections – we are awaiting confirmation from the current supplier about the future of the play area inspection service. **ACTION AM**

c) Wickhampton Pond – Norfolk Wildlife Trust have visited and commented on the approach to the pond. Awaiting advice on how material could be safely transported and disposed of off site and the costs. When this is available, a sub-committee will be called to agree the plans for the autumn once nesting season has passed.

d) Rampant Horse – PC advised that the pub remains up for sale at an unlikely price.

e) Village Hall mowing update – AM advised that the Village Hall Committee has taken on the mowing of the front of the Village Hall, the play equipment, and the surrounds of the bowls green.

f) Solar Panels for the Village Hall – carry forward, noting that Reedham are also exploring this.

11. Other Matters

DL advised that the recycling centres will close on Wednesdays from June. PB felt that the reinstatement of a bin for general waste at the Village Hall near the recycling banks might help reduce this being dumped in the other containers.

12. Reports from Parish Councillors and items for next agenda

None.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 16th June 2025 7PM, Freethorpe Village Hall.

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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