

Minutes of the Meeting of Freethorpe Parish Council, serving Freethorpe & Wickhampton, held Monday 21st July 2025 at 7:00pm at Freethorpe Village Hall

Present: Nick Spencer (NS, Chairman), Paul Bacon (PB), Michael Blake (MB), Paul Crisp (PC), Andrew Moll (AM, Parish Clerk), Grant Nurden (GN, also District Councillor), Andrea Rowlands (AR).

Also present: John Fleetwood (JF, Tree Warden), 1 member of the public.

1. Apologies

David Lake (DL, Vice-chairman), Lana Hemsall (LH, County Councillor).

2. Public Forum

- a) County Councillor Report – none provided, but GN circulated a general report.
- b) District Councillor Report - GN was disappointed that the 'At Heart' seemed to have been dropped from the Community Awards 2025. He advised of management changes in planning enforcement at Broadland. It is being decided whether he will continue in his role as Vice-chair of the Audit Committee.
- c) Tree Wardens' Report - JF reported that he has corrected the ties and guards on the Jubilee Oak and Janet Church Memorial tree at the Village Hall. He is busy looking after the newly planted orchards and is seeking new Tree Wardens.
- d) Annual Parish Meeting Format – MB presented a paper proposing a more community-based approach to the Annual Parish Meeting, separating it from the Parish Council meeting and pro-actively engaging with the community to make it attractive for people to come and hear what's going on and have their say. The idea was fully supported, and MB was asked to come back with costed proposal by October. **ACTION MB**
- e) Next Cluster Meeting – is Tuesday 16th September.
- f) Next Town and Parish Council Forum – is 2nd September.
- g) Adult Care & Support Service – it was agreed that Village Hall activities and the Pop-in at the Methodist Church be submitted for the county register of voluntary services.
- h) Consultation on Broadland's Policy Statement regarding the Licensing Act 2003 – the proposed revised Policy Statement was unanimously supported. **ACTION AM**
- i) To discuss vacancy arising from the resignation of Councillor Nurden – it was unanimously agreed to the advertisement of the casual vacancy. **ACTION AM**
- j) Public items – None.

3. Declarations of Interest for items on the agenda

None.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 16th June 2025

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

5. Matters arising from the previous meeting

- a) (2c) Advise Village Hall Chair of concern about the two memorial trees (AM) – done
- b) (2d) Consider Annual Parish Meeting format (MB) – done, item 2d refers.
- c) (5a) Check usage of EVCPs – carry forward. **ACTION AM**
- d) (5b) Check the options for TRODs (AM) – done, item 6a refers.
- e) Other matters arising – none.

6. Clerk's Report

- a) To consider Parish Partnership Bid 2025-26. A resident suggestion about the 30mph signs on Reedham Road and a paper on footpath provision from the brickyard to the Village Hall were discussed and generally supported whilst noting the practical problems with the high verges and multiple landowners. It was agreed that these be

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discussed with the Area Highways Engineer when he visits Freethorpe on 1st September. Parish Councillors are invited to attend if they wish.

- b) It was noted that funding support for Neighbourhood Planning has been withdrawn, making it impractical for us at the moment.
- c) The latest information was Norfolk ALC was noted.
- d) The following policies were reviewed and unanimously **approved**: new IT policy and revised File Retention Policy. A new statement is being added to the next AGAR on managing IT securely. AM advised that he had attended a seminar on IT security, which had given assurance that the approach to web site, email and IT Policy is satisfactory. He also has a follow-up 1:1 with CloudyIT's cyber security expert to follow up on points of detail to which Parish Councillors were invited. **ACTION AM**
- e) The Website Accessibility Statement was reviewed and unanimously **approved**. The excellent support from Norfolk ALC on the new website was noted. While the website has been fully tested as compliant with WCAG 2.2, there are PDFs that are not well suited for accessibility, some of which are standard formats such as the accounts, and some are scanned images of old minutes which it is agreed would be a mountainous task to make more accessible.
- f) Potholes on School Road have been reported, awaiting scheduling.

7. Finance

- a) Monthly Financial Update – was reviewed and **approved**.

Income	£13,315.17	Bank balance	£38,265.10
Expenditure	£ 6,938.80	Forecast end year balance	£15,639.80

There is a CIL balance of £13,169.62 available for community infrastructure projects.

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

- (1) Norse Eastern Ltd. £672.00 – INV 1085054 Play Area inspections 2024-25
- (2) Norfolk Association of Local Councils. £95.50 – INV 2553 Web service 2024-25
- (3) Countrystyle Recycling Ltd. £36.00 – INV 542173 Emptying banks 30/06/25
- (4) Broadland Tree Warden Network £100.00 – re-issue cancelled cheque 790
- (5) Freethorpe Sports and Social Club £150.00 – re-issue cancelled cheque 796
- (DD) HMRC £162.00 PAYE 3 months
- (SO1) Calica Computer Solutions £30.00 - Speed machine management
- (SO2) Mr A & Mrs MC Moll £207.33 - Clerk Salary.

- c) Receipts – noted:

- (1) Broadland District Council **£62.46** textile recycling credits 2024-25.

- d) Bus shelter grants – it was agreed that there are no requirements.

- e) Norfolk Community Fund grant information was noted.

- f) The CIL and S106 funds available were noted:

CIL has been received with £13,169.62 available for community infrastructure projects which enhance community facilities following the garage development **Section 106** has not yet been received by Broadland but a figure of £46,965.79 is expected, with specific amounts legally earmarked for sports facilities, play areas and allotments which the Parish Council can claim. It was unanimously **agreed** that the Village Hall Committee should propose what the sports facility grant be used for.

8. Correspondence

- a) The decision to close Cantley School was noted. It is understood that there are places available at Freethorpe but parents will have a choice of local schools.
- b) The Broadland Community Awards 2025 were noted.
- c) The resident request for an application to designate Church Road, Wickhampton, as a Roadside Nature Reserve was unanimously supported. **ACTION AM**

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9. Planning

- a) New applications – none.
- b) Decisions – 60 Lower Green – annexe change of use 2025/1390 - approval with conditions was noted.
- c) Enforcements – one open case was noted.
- d) Affordability / viability check for Green View Way – carry forward.

10. Update on Ongoing Matters and Projects

- a) Speed Management- Figures are for June 2025. 85th percentile speeds on Reedham Road near the Village Hall facing Reedham came down to their lowest ever recorded figure, from 38.0 to 35.6mph. 60% of 26,729 vehicles kept within the speed limit. On the Green near the Manor House, the figure increased from 30.8mph to 32.1. Nearly 80% of 27,483 vehicles kept within the speed limit.
- b) Play Area & Asset Inspections – no significant issues were raised.
- c) Wickhampton Pond – Norfolk Wildlife Trust have suggested an alternative for removing the crassula. The feasibility of disposal is still being investigated. JF expressed concern that delay in the decision may result in losing another year.
- d) Rampant Horse – further information is being sought on the advertised terms of lease.
- e) Solar Panels for the Village Hall – two further proposals and quotes are being sought. It was agreed that two figures be requested: what we can get for £15,000; and what the optimal solution would be, likely to require additional grants. Parish councillors were invited to join a discussion with one of the suppliers on 28th July 9am.
- f) Gateways – it was agreed that the Lower Green signs should be along the lines of 'Welcome to Freethorpe, please drive carefully'. The Village Hall is within the village and 30mph, so should be something like 'slow down – children/pedestrians crossing'.
- g) Village Hall – representation for next meeting (8th September) to be confirmed.

11. Other Matters

It was agreed that the old noticeboard could be patched up and re-used at the chapel. Encouraging correspondence from the Football Club was noted, with three youth teams for next season. The Club is grateful for Parish Council support in pitch setting. This will cause an overspend of around £260 on the Grounds Maintenance budget which can be compensated for by an underspend on the Play Area maintenance budget.

12. Reports from Parish Councillors and items for next agenda

None.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 15th September 2025 7PM, Freethorpe Village Hall.

14. 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 8:35 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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