

Minutes of the Meeting of Freethorpe Parish Council, serving Freethorpe & Wickhampton, held Monday 15th September 2025 at 7:00pm at Freethorpe Village Hall

Present: Nick Spencer (NS, Chairman), Paul Bacon (PB), Michael Blake (MB), Andrew Moll (AM, Parish Clerk), Grant Nurden (GN, also District Councillor),
Also present: John Fleetwood (JF, Tree Warden), 1 member of the public.

1. Apologies

Paul Crisp (PC), David Lake (DL, Vice-chairman), Lana Hemsall (LH, County Councillor), Andrea Rowlands (AR).

2. Public Forum

- a) County Councillor Report – none provided, but GN circulated a general report.
- b) District Councillor Report - GN asked whether there had been any more complaints about motor vehicles at the Plantation. None have been received. He reported on the progress of presentation of options for Local Government Review. He continues as vice-chair of the Audit Committee. He has submitted a Community Grant Scheme application for Reedham Village Hall's new doors.
- c) Tree Wardens' Report - JF reported that the number of tree wardens in the Network has reduced. He was pleased about the Roadside Nature Reserve. He was concerned that the Norfolk Wildlife Trust proposals for Wickhampton Pond might be inconsistent with DEFRA rules. NS asked that JF assures the proposals when detail is provided. JF felt that no action was necessary about planning application 2025/2800 (FILE NOTE: JF visited next day and as a result clarified his advice and raised an objection).
- d) Annual Parish Meeting Format – MB advised that he would come back with a costed proposal in October. **ACTION MB**
- e) Next Cluster Meeting – Tuesday 16th September, assumed cancelled.
- f) Town and Parish Council Forum – notes were shared, item 6b refers.
- g) Norfolk Police – the initiatives to tackle scams were noted (OP Radium) along with the planned visit of the Police to talk to people at Pop-in at the Methodist Church.
- h) Mindful Parish – Freethorpe is now officially a Mindful Parish' thanks to four Wellbeing Champions from the village trained in mental health awareness.
- i) Broadland Futures Initiative Newsletter – was noted.
- j) Public items – None.

3. Declarations of Interest for items on the agenda

None.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 21st July 2025

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

5. Matters arising from the previous meeting

- a) (2d) Annual Parish Meeting – 2d refers.
- b) (2h) Support Policy Statement on Licensing Act 2003 (AM) – done.
- c) (2i) Advertise casual Parish Councillor vacancy (AM) – done, 6a refers.
- d) (5c) Check usage of EVCP (AM) – carried forward.
- e) (6d) Follow up with cyber security expert (CloudyIT) to ensure that current practices and processes are satisfactory (AM) – done, no issues.
- f) (8c) Application for Roadside Nature Reserve (AM) – the application was made and was successful. Church Road, Wickhampton has been designated an RNR and signs are in place.
- g) Other matters arising – none.

6. Clerk's Report

- a) Parish Councillor vacancy – the vacancy had been advertised by Broadland District Council and no request for elections was forthcoming. Therefore Parish Councillors agreed to consider co-option and will bring ideas to a future meeting.
- b) It was noted that a new Greater Norwich Local Plan is being initiated, for a number of reasons including the inability of the current plan to meet the increased housing development demands.
- c) It was noted that potholes in School Road have been repaired. Highways have looked at the brambles on the verge of Chapelfield but are leaving them to be dealt with by a final verge cut of the year. The 30mph signs on Palmers Lane are to be replaced. PB reported our request at the meeting with the Area Highways Engineer that the road surface at Lower Green and the drainage at the top of the Common be looked at.

7. Finance

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

Income	£13,377.63	Bank balance	£36,887.40
Expenditure	£ 8,378.96	Forecast end year balance	£15,519.09

Four expenditure heads are forecast to overspend – Audit, due to higher fees for external audit; Grounds, due to extra work on football pitches; Insurance, due to additional cover; Audit writeback, due to reissuing two cancelled cheques from the previous year. 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) Norfolk Association of Local Councils £114.20 – INV2734 Payroll service 24-25
- (2) PKF Littlejohn LLP £378.00 – INV SB20251235 External audit
- (SO1) Calica Computer Solutions £30.00 - Speed machine management
- (SO2) Mr A & Mrs MC Moll £207.33 - Clerk Salary.

- c) Receipts – none.

- d) The completion of the external audit was noted. A paper had been provided to the auditor explaining a correction made to the asset figure in the previous year. This was accepted. The Notice of Conclusion of Audit has been published.
- e) It was noted that the bank will charge £4.99 a month for our banking service from 1st October. It was agreed that no steps be taken for now in changing bank.
- f) It was noted that Norfolk ALC payroll service have applied the NJC Pay Award and backdating to the salary calculation for the Clerk. When the monthly payments stabilise, the monthly standing order can be adjusted and back pay can be paid by cheque, probably best done in March 2026.

8. Correspondence

- a) Bus timetable changes were noted.
- b) The Guides' report from a successful NORJAM was noted.
- c) It was noted that Brundall Scouts have requested a donation, to assess in October.
- d) A compliment from the football club to Norse for the grounds service was noted.

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 for July and August 2025 were reviewed. There was more traffic through the village, with over 30,000 vehicles along the Green, 18,800 on

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Chapelfield and 17,500 on the Common. 85th percentile speeds were 33.4mph at Lower Green, 31.7 near the Manor, 31.3 at Chapelfield and 29.9 at the end of the Common. Overall speeding was up on previous readings. Lower Green was the worst, where 1 in 3 vehicles broke the speed limit. The Common was the best, where speeders were only 1 in 9 vehicles.

- b) Play Area & Asset Inspections – no significant issues were raised in the latest external operational inspection. It was approved that quotation is sought from the supplier to carry out some maintenance at Freethorpe to fix some advisory items in the report.
- c) Wickhampton Pond – the neighbouring farmer has kindly agreed in principle to allow crassula to be buried at the field edge. Further guidance is now being sought from Norfolk Wildlife Trust. The Parish Council must ensure no breach of regulations and NS asked JF to provide assurance on whatever is planned.
- d) Rampant Horse – no update.
- e) Solar Panels for the Village Hall – a report outlining requirements, options and estimated costs was considered. Three suppliers have submitted proposals. It was **agreed** to apply for National Lottery funding of £10,000 to be matched from CIL reserves. It was noted that warranty of cabling should be included and that funds should be allowed for regular maintenance, namely, cleaning the panels.
- f) Pump repairs – it was **agreed** to initiate a project to carry out repairs to the Pump. Advice has been sought from Broadland regarding Listed Building Consent.
- g) Gateways – all information has been provided to Highways and installation is expected within the next few weeks
- h) Village Hall – representation for next meeting (13th October) to be confirmed.

11. Other Matters

PB pointed out the continuing misuse of the paper bank, which is full. Whites have advised that they will take the paper bank away as part of discontinuing the service. This was requested several months ago and DL has kindly been chasing it.

12. Reports from Parish Councillors and items for next agenda

None.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 20th October 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 8:19 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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