

Minutes of the Meeting of Freethorpe Parish Council, serving Freethorpe & Wickhampton, held Monday 17th November 2025 at 7:00pm at Freethorpe Village Hall

Present: Nick Spencer (NS, Chairman), David Lake (DL, Vice-chairman), Paul Bacon (PB), Andrew Moll (AM, Parish Clerk), Andrea Rowlands (AR).

Also present: John Fleetwood (JF, Tree Warden), Grant Nurden (GN, District Councillor), 1 member of the public.

1. Apologies

Michael Blake (MB), Paul Crisp (PC), Lana Hempsall (LH, County Councillor)

2. Public Forum

- a) County Councillor Report – published updates shared with the papers by AM and GN. GN understood that Halvergate had received the County Councillor's Member Grant for two successive years. Were we missing an opportunity? AM advised that Freethorpe received £10,000 from this grant 2 years ago for flashing school signs, but would keep in touch with the Highways Area Engineer about options for Freethorpe.
- b) District Councillor Report - GN explained Broadland's submission for Norfolk local government reorganisation, which proposes 3 unitary authorities. He applied for a Community Grant Award for Reedham, which has been awarded in part. He highlighted the opportunity of grant funding from Broadland's Future for Nature Fund. He advised that Broadland has adopted a Homeless Strategy. He was expecting a cluster meeting to be held at Beighton Village Hall on 3rd December.
- c) Tree Wardens' Report - JF was puzzled by a U-turn on tree work at 103 Wheelwright's Close. He has agreed plans with Freethorpe School to plant green beech by the railings, to provide materials for refurbishment of outdoor classroom, to work with the gardening club on measuring trees and planting hedges. He is not restarting Junior Tree Wardens though. The Tree Council's National Schools Programme Manager is visiting the school.
- d) Annual Parish Meeting Format – carry forward.
- e) Town and Parish Council Forum – notes were shared, and date of the next meeting.
- f) GNLP Consultation on SPD2 – it was agreed that a firmer position on affordable housing should be requested.
- g) Village bus and timetables (AR) – the latest timetable was circulated. There is a concern that the service is too patchy for people to use. People are probably not aware of the service, and a way of sharing the timetable with non-internet residents would be helpful. It was agreed that this would be a good topic for the next cluster meeting.
- h) Public items – None.

3. Declarations of Interest for items on the agenda

None.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 20th October 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 – in MB's absence a budget figure of £150 was agreed.
- b) (6g) First Responders – accept responsibility for defibrillator (AM) – done.
- c) (7g) Public land – follow up (AM) – done.
- d) (7g) TCV volunteer work – follow up (AM) – done, they would charge £340 a day to co-ordinate and deliver voluntary conservation work, including insurance and training. JF observed that Tree Wardens also offer this service for free.

- e) (8a) Zebra crossing – check likelihood, and discuss with road safety team (AM) – in progress.
- f) Other matters arising – none.

6. Clerk's Report

- a) PSPO (Dog Control) signs – was noted.
- b) Permitted development rights open letter – was noted.
- c) Football pitch maintenance required – was noted.
- d) Age-friendly community – it was noted that Broadland are interested in feedback on ideas for this.
- e) Rough Sleeper Count – a nil return for 12/11/25 was confirmed.
- f) Act of Remembrance 2025 – PB reported back on a well-attended ceremony.
- g) Voluntary Norfolk Survey – was noted.
- h) Village Hall update (DL) – DL reported that the Village Hall Committee had agreed to forego its normal Parish Council donation while the solar panel bid progresses. He reported that the Social Club is doing well at the moment. The Committee had agreed to request S106 monies for pétanque lighting and youth football goals. Village Hall Committee is also hopeful of the solar panels and is in favour of the battery storage option. DL reported that the paper bank has been removed. PB questioned why the lights were left on all hours. DL advised that a timer is being installed. He also asked if AM could provide some support and information to the Village Hall regarding the insurance renewal.

ACTION AM

7. Finance

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

Income	£22343.13	Bank balance	£44,420.59
Expenditure	£ 9,811.27	Forecast end year balance	£17,220.93
		CIL balance	£13,169.62.

- b) Village Hall donation – it was agreed that this will be discussed once the outcome of the solar panel grant application is known.
- c) Section 106 – a grant application by the football club for £1,000 towards youth football goals was approved. The funds will be reclaimed from Section 106 (sports).
- d) Section 106 – a decision paper on the pétanque floodlights was also approved, again to use funds from Section 106 (sports). On the basis of the three quotes received, it was agreed to place the order.

ACTION AM

- e) Donation application – Headway Suffolk – it was agreed that there was insufficient assurance that the services were accessible in the parish.
- f) An order for play equipment maintenance and repairs was approved.

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

- (1) Norse Eastern Ltd. £1750.52 – INV1090691 Grounds maintenance (2)
- (2) NGF Play Ltd. – £477.90 Subject to decision, Quotation Q-25486 30% deposit, item 7f refers.
- (3) Freethorpe Parochial Church Council £745.00 cemetery upkeep, as agreed
- (4) Freethorpe Methodist Church £745.00 cemetery upkeep, as agreed
- (5) Wickhampton Parochial Church Council £745.00 cemetery upkeep, as agreed
- (6) Broadland Tree Warden Network £100.00 donation, as agreed
- (7) East Anglian Air Ambulance £250.00 donation, as agreed
- (8) The Royal British Legion – Poppy Appeal £60.00 donation, as agreed
- (9) Freethorpe Football Club £1,000, subject to decision, goalposts item 7c refers.
- (10) Headway Suffolk £TBC, subject to decision, donation, item 7e refers
- (SO1) Calica Computer Solutions £30.00 - Speed machine management
- (SO2) Mr A & Mrs MC Moll £207.33 - Clerk Salary.

- h) Receipts – none.

Chair's initials

- i) Quarterly Finance checks are with MB.
 - j) Budget 2026-27. A decision paper was considered. The budget results in a maximum of £1.51 p.a. or 2.95% increase (band D figures) in the Freethorpe element of Council Tax. As the tax base figures had not been received, and may increase the income, the clerk was asked to increase two expenditure budget heads if possible: (1) Speed Management Services, to allow capacity for maintenance and repairs and (2) the Play Areas & Equipment budget head, which had reduced by £500. The budget was **agreed** within these parameters, and a minimum precept of £18,452 was agreed, again adjustable within these parameters if a tax base increase is notified. It was **agreed** that the precept demand be submitted when the tax base figures are available in order to meet the Broadland deadline. The final figures will be re-presented to the January meeting.
- ACTION AM**

8. Correspondence

- a) Walpole Almshouses – a letter had been received notifying the Parish Council of the resignation of Cheryl Nicholls as Trustee and Secretary. It was noted that Cheryl had been nominated by the Parish Council. It was agreed to discuss further at the next meeting when MB is available.

9. Planning

- a) New applications – BA/2025/0300/LBC Thatched Farm, Wickhampton change of windows – no objections.
- b) Decisions – noted the approval of 2025/1365 103 Wheelwrights Close TPO work, although some puzzlement about how the application was initially rejected then an alternative very quickly accepted.
- c) Enforcements – three open cases were noted.
- d) Affordability / viability check for Green View Way – carry forward.

10. Update on Ongoing Matters and Projects

- a) Speed Management- Figures are for November 2025. Chapelfield saw 10,214 vehicles, with an 85th percentile speed of 31.1mph down from 31.8mph. At the Green opposite the Shop, there were 25,316 vehicles, with an 85th percentile speed of 29.7mph slightly up from 29.5mph.
- b) Play Area & Asset Inspections – The quotation from the supplier to carry out a package of minor maintenance works was approved.
- c) Wickhampton Pond – awaiting guidance from Norfolk Wildlife Trust.
- d) Rampant Horse – no update.
- e) Solar Panels for the Village Hall – a grant application has been made to the National Lottery Fund. We have applied for funding of £10,000 to be matched from CIL reserves.
- f) Pump repairs – awaiting guidance from Broadland regarding Listed Building Consent.
- g) Gateways – installation is expected within the next few weeks

11. Other Matters

PB pointed out a water leak on Old Chapel Road. He was also concerned about the brambles on Chapelfield.

12. Reports from Parish Councillors and items for next agenda

PB anticipated that cemetery management at the chapel may become problematic in the future. Could we plan for the Parish Council take it on? DL felt that the approach would have to come from the chapel. NS was unsure whether the Parish Council could or should be responsible and further research was needed. JF noted the difficulty of maintaining these aspects of community life with hard-pressed volunteers.

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PB also asked whether any further action had been taken by Highways on the drainage at the end of the Common. **ACTION AM**

13. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 19th January 2026 7PM, Freethorpe Village Hall.

2026 meeting dates were agreed: 19th Jan; 16th Feb; 16th March; 20th April; 18th May; 15th June; 20th July; 21st Sept; 19th Oct; 16th Nov. Book hall. **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: None

The meeting closed at 8:17 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