

Minutes of the Meeting of Freethorpe Parish Council, serving Freethorpe & Wickhampton, held Monday 19th January 2026 at 7:00pm 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).

Also present: John Fleetwood (JF, Tree Warden), Grant Nurden (GN, District Councillor), no members of the public.

1. Apologies

Lana Hemsall (LH, County Councillor), Andrea Rowlands (AR)

2. Public Forum

- a) County Councillor Report – general update shared by GN was provided with the papers. In response to the news of government funding for the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, AM has written to LH requesting support for a footpath on Reedham Road.
- b) District Councillor Report - GN advised that Broadland's budget meeting is in February. Reedham has received a grant from the Fund for Nature. GN has received representations from Reedham about the proposed new development. He was concerned that cluster meetings have dried up, and asked for AM's support to arrange.
- c) Tree Wardens' Report - JF was disappointed to report the dissolution of the Broadland Tree Warden Network, with the unspent budget being returned to the District Council. Meanwhile JF has resumed work with the school, providing gardening equipment, compost and work on the outdoor classroom. The Friday afternoon Gardening Club will be helping him plant a new hedge. JF is pleased to continue supporting the Parish Council, and to this end it was agreed that a new Tree & Conservation Advisor role be created with a policy document to support it. **ACTION AM**
- d) Annual Parish Meeting Format – further thought to be given as opportunity arises.
- e) Armed Forces Covenant – it was agreed that the Parish Council respond to the consultation for the 2031 Census by requesting that the Armed Forces question be retained in the census. **ACTION AM**
- f) Norfolk Association of Local Councils – national and local updates were shared.
- g) Public items – None.

3. Declarations of Interest for items on the agenda

None.

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

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

5. Matters arising from the previous meeting

- a) (6h) Village Hall insurance support (AM) -done.
- b) (7d) Place order for pétanque floodlight work to reclaim from S106 (AM) – done
- c) (7j) Budget and precept – final figures to Jan meeting (AM) – done, item 7f refers.
- d) (12) Drainage at entry to the Common – follow up (AM) – done, the update has been shared with PB. The drain has been checked and where we thought there was a pipe there is instead a French drain style stone backfilled area. Photos of the flooding problem have been requested to inform further work.
- e) (13) Book Village Hall for 2026 meetings (AM) – done, item 7b(1) refers.
- f) (8a) Zebra crossing – check likelihood and discuss with road safety team (AM) – in progress.
- g) Other matters arising – none.

6. Clerk's Report

- a) A house name change at 49 The Green was noted.
- b) Broadland's revised policy on sex establishment and sexual entertainment venues was discussed. It was agreed to support the policy. **ACTION AM**
- c) Village Hall update (DL) – DL reported that Village Hall insurance has been renewed. Village Hall Committee had agreed to forego its normal Parish Council donation while the solar panel bid progresses. PB asked about the emptying of the clothes bank. AM has requested it. There is a number on the bank for people to call when it is full. DL advised that the market for rags has crashed and many textile services are stopping. PB observed the gravel parking underused. NS asked whether CIL money can be used to improve the gravel parking. **ACTION AM**

7. Finance

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

Income	£34,794.76	Bank balance	£50,514.16
Expenditure	£16,169.33	Forecast end year balance	£28,116.69
		CIL balance	£13,169.62
- b) A donation application from the 1st Freethorpe Rainbows and Brownies for £300 were considered and approved. Parish Council was delighted of the increase in young people belonging and joining their meetings at the Village Hall.
- c) Payments - it was **agreed** to make the following payments:
 - (1) Freethorpe Sports and Social Club £150.00, hall hire.
 - (2) 1st Freethorpe Brownies **£200.00**, item 7b refers
 - (3) 1st Freethorpe Rainbows **£100.00**, item 7b refers.
 - (DD) Bank charges **£9.98** (Two months)
 - (SO1) Calica Computer Solutions **£30.00** - Speed machine management
 - (SO2) Mr A & Mrs MC Moll **£207.33** - Clerk Salary.
- d) Receipts – were noted as follows:
 - Freethorpe First Responders £1235.00 Closure of account
 - Broadland District Council £1000.00 Section 106 (Football goalposts)PB moved and it was agreed that the £1235 from First Responders be retained as Earmarked Reserve to cover maintenance of the defibrillator.
- e) Quarterly Finance checks (MB) – it was agreed that AM will send a sign-off sheet with the papers for MB to use to report back to the next meeting.
- f) Budget 2026-27. As a result of an increase in the tax base, the budget has been revised within the parameters set at the previous meeting, resulting in an increase to Council Tax of £1 per annum, 8p a month, or 1.92% (band D figures). The precept demanded was £18,752. The revised budget and precept demand were **approved** by the Parish Council.
- g) Village Hall donation – is to be discussed once the outcome of the Solar Panel project is known.
- h) Section 106 Sports Fund – around £3,500 of S106 funds for Palmers Lane development expire in August 2026. It was agreed to pursue investment in football pitch improvements if this is acceptable to Broadland.

8. Correspondence

- a) Royal British Legion. (i) Poppy Appeal results for 2025 were noted. (ii) PB volunteered to represent the Parish Council on 28th Feb for the Acle Branch Standard Dedication.
- b) Road surface at Lower Green – resident concerns about the surface were supported. Highways propose a pothole fix within 6 weeks, and scheduled resurfacing in 2026.

- c) Walpole Almshouses – MB advised that when the trustees find a new trustee/secretary they will ask Parish Council to ratify as the departing trustee/secretary is one of the two Parish Council nominations.

9. Planning

- a) New applications – none.
b) Decisions – none.
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- In December 2025, Lower Green saw 28,216 vehicles, with an 85th percentile speed of 32.4mph down from 33.4mph. At the Common near 111, there were 14,965 vehicles, with an 85th percentile speed of 29.4mph down from 29.7mph. 81% of all vehicles kept within the speed limit. Since the speed machines were introduced in 2017, measured speeds have gone down in general by between 1-4 mph.
- b) Play Area & Asset Inspections – The agreed package of minor maintenance works will be scheduled by the supplier, but requires warmer dry weather for the rubber mulch repair. It was noted that our current inspector retires in June and a new inspector will need to be found.
- c) Wickhampton Pond – awaiting guidance from Norfolk Wildlife Trust.
- d) Rampant Horse – PC reported that the pub is now open, serving pump beer, soft drinks and good food. He stressed the need to retain the Asset of Community Value status.
- e) Solar Panels for the Village Hall the draft Invitation to Quote and Evaluation Model for the solar panels was approved with the following comments: (i) NS asked that the suppliers confirm compliance with planning; (ii) NS asked for staging of payments to be specified under 'payment profile'. With those amendments, it was agreed to proceed.
- f) Pump repairs – awaiting guidance from Broadland regarding Listed Building Consent.
- g) Gateways – were installed in December. A small tweak has been requested to swap the text between the gateways. Otherwise positive feedback has been received.
- h) Petanque floodlights – the work has been ordered to be reclaimed from Section 106.
- i) Highways projects for Freethorpe – priorities for projects were agreed if funding were to become available, as follows: (1) two further gateways, at Southwood entrance and the Brickyard (2) a zebra crossing survey (3) a footpath survey for Reedham Road (4) drainage survey for the Southwood entrance.
- j) MUGA – there was some interest in the information from Carleton Rode's success story with their MUGA. It was agreed to continue supporting the Village Hall Committee in exploring the options and business case.

11. Other Matters

PB pointed out potholes on Lower Green and Old Chapel Road. He also queried whether the grit bins were replenished.

ACTION AM

12. Reports from Parish Councillors and items for next agenda

None

13. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 16th February 2026 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 8:27 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