

Minutes of the Meeting of Freethorpe Parish Council, serving Freethorpe & Wickhampton, held Monday 16th February 2026 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), Andrea Rowlands (AR).

Also present: John Fleetwood (JF, Tree Warden), and 4 members of the public.

1. Apologies

Lana Hempsall (LH, County Councillor), David Lake (DL, Vice-chairman), Grant Nurden (GN, District Councillor)

2. Public Forum

- a) County Councillor Report – a Members' Highways Grant of £7,000 has been allocated to Freethorpe. This will be used in the 2026-27 schedule on priorities identified at the last meeting, namely (1) two more gateways at the Brickyard and the Common; and, depending on remaining funds, surveys for either (2) a zebra crossing (3) a footpath between the brickyard and the village, or (4) the drain at the top of the Common.
- b) District Councillor Report - GN had advised AM that Broadland's budget meeting is expected to set a zero-increase budget this week. NS pointed out that local elections are now back on for May.
- c) Update on tree work - JF advised that the Broadland Tree Warden Network has been dissolved. JF has worked with the school to plant a new beech hedge. He has also provided a child-friendly wheelbarrow.
- d) Norfolk Association of Local Councils – national and local updates were shared.
- e) Public items – None.

3. Declarations of Interest for items on the agenda

None.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 19th January 2026

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

5. Matters arising from the previous meeting

- a) (2c) Tree & Conservation Advisor Policy (AM) – done, item 6a refers.
- b) (2e) 2031 census - ask for Armed Forces question (AM) – done.
- c) (6b) Support Broadland's sex establishment/ entertainment venues policy (AM) – done.
- d) (6c) Can CIL be used to improve the car park? (AM) – item 6d refers.
- e) (11) Potholes to report, check on grit bins (AM) – reporting in progress, grit bin on Youngs Crescent has been filled.
- f) Other matters arising – none.

6. Clerk's Report

- a) A new Tree and Conservation Adviser Policy was reviewed and agreed. AM to contact insurers with regard to cover and premium impact. **ACTION AM**
- b) A new Defibrillator Policy was reviewed and agreed. The Parish Council is very grateful to Helen Utting for taking the Guardian role and for all that she does regarding this.
- c) A volunteer is sought to take on the role of Defibrillator Support Guardian. NS suggested former first responders or a Village Hall Committee member. **ACTION AM**
- d) Village Hall update – MB asked whether the school are now using the gravel car park more since he approached them. PB thought that usage had improved. Village Hall Committee have asked whether Section 106 could fund tarmac replacement. Broadland have been approached. **ACTION AM**
- e) The review of the Risk Policy was carried forward.
- f) An offer had been received from TCV volunteers to carry out a free day's work and provide plants. It was agreed to propose Wickhampton Play Area. **ACTION AM**
- g) The next Cluster Meeting is at Cantley Village Hall on 28th April.

7. Finance

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

Income	£34,794.76	Bank balance	£49,659.63
Expenditure	£17,023.86	Forecast end year balance	£45,187.50
		CIL balance	£13,169.62

AM advised that the bank balance includes £25,000 earmarked for solar panels.

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

- (1) Broadland Hoarding Solutions **£3,948.00**, Inv BHS 445, Petanque floodlights
- (2) Norfolk Association of Local Councils **£67.20**, Inv 2762, website fee.
- (3) Countrystyle Recycling Ltd. **£47.99**, Inv 574989, bottle bank emptying Oct 25
- (DD) HMRC **£167.20** – Quarterly PAYE
- (SO1) Calica Computer Solutions **£30.00** - Speed machine management
- (SO2) Mr A & Mrs MC Moll **£207.33** - Clerk Salary.

- c) Receipts – none.

- d) Appointment of Internal Auditor. It was unanimously agreed to appoint Sonya Blythe as Internal Auditor.

8. Correspondence

- a) Walpole Almshouses – no-one has come forward to volunteer as a trustee/secretary at the moment. MB and Tony Tibbenham advised that the position needs to be filled before September at the latest.
- b) Ownership of track beside Wickhampton Church – in response to a resident request, Highways have been approached to advise on ownership and responsibilities.

9. Planning

- a) New applications – 2026/0008 47 Chapelfield had been reviewed by email. There were no objections, which has been fed back to Broadland.
- b) Decisions – none.
- c) Enforcements – three open cases were noted.
- d) Affordability / viability check for Green View Way – carry forward.
- e) Call for sites for the GNLP revision – it was noted that this activity is now going on.

10. Update on Ongoing Matters and Projects

- a) Speed Management- figures are for January 2026. School Road saw 4,611 vehicles, with an 85th percentile speed of 26.1mph down from 26.8mph. At the Common, Southwood entry, there were 12,232 vehicles, with an 85th percentile speed of 29.9mph up from 29.8mph. Since the speed machines were introduced in 2017, measured speeds have gone down in general by between 1 and 5 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. AM advised that his monthly inspection had highlighted a missing nut on the overhead carousel at Freethorpe. While the handle seems secure even without the nut, it has been taped off awaiting repair by the supplier. It was noted that our current inspector retires in June and a new inspector will need to be found. JF kindly advised that he has carried out the tree inspection at Wickhampton Play Area. No issues requiring action, but he is returning shortly when the trees are out for one more check.
- c) Wickhampton Pond – awaiting guidance from Norfolk Wildlife Trust. JF advised that he is no longer able to offer to do the work as the Tree Warden Network has closed.
- d) Rampant Horse – PC reported that the pub is now open and appears to be doing well.
- e) Solar Panels for the Village Hall – AM reported that the Invitation to Quote had been amended to take account of last month's review comments, namely: (i) Permitted development – following advice from Broadland, AM completed a Prior Approval application form which indicated that Prior Approval is not required. The eligibility

Chair's initials

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details from the form have been added to the Invitation to Quote to ensure suppliers propose solutions that will qualify as permitted development. (ii) Staging of payments is now specified under 'payment profile'. It was agreed to send out the Invitation to Quote to the four agreed locally based suppliers.

- f) Pump repairs – awaiting guidance from Broadland regarding Listed Building Consent. Broadland have advised that CIL money should not be used for maintenance.
- g) Petanque floodlights – the work has been completed, funds to be reclaimed from Section 106.
- h) MUGA – a meeting has been set up with Broadland in early March for help in exploring the options and business case.
- i) Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan – the response from Norfolk County Council to our interest in the AC01 Acle to Reedham route was noted. Ideas and support from parish councillors and residents will be appreciated in making the case.

11. Other Matters

- a) The shop – the recent closure of the shop was discussed, along with the informally announced use of the Village Hall for weekend breakfasts. A village shop is clearly an important asset for the village, but there is nothing the Parish Council should get involved in until the situation is clearer. The use of the Village Hall for breakfasts was discussed. Various bases clearly need covering, of which the Village Hall Committee should be aware.

ACTION AM

- b) Burglaries – PB advised that the chapel shed had been broken into and items stolen. There have been other incidents recently of suspicious behaviour, and a burglary.

12. Reports from Parish Councillors and items for next agenda

None

13. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 23rd March 2026 7PM, Freethorpe Village Hall. Note the change of date.

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 8:20 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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