

Minutes of the Meeting of Freethorpe Parish Council, serving Freethorpe & Wickhampton, held Monday 23rd March 2026 at 7:00pm at Freethorpe Village Hall

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

Also present: John Fleetwood (JF, Tree Warden), Grant Nurden (GN, District Councillor) and 4 members of the public.

1. Apologies

Michael Blake (MB), Lana Hempsall (LH, County Councillor)

2. Public Forum

- a) County Councillor Report – none provided, standard update shared.
- b) District Councillor Report - GN advised a zero-increase budget for the Broadland element. He noted that the special expenses budget has a small decrease. He confirmed that the County Council elections are going ahead in May. He was pleased that organisations in the parish had benefited from Keep It Going Grants and encouraged others to apply. He has received much feedback about proposals for large developments at Reedham and Cantley, and welcomed any comments from Parish Councillors about the potential impact on our parish. To be discussed at the cluster meeting.
- c) Tree & Conservation Advisor Update - JF advised that the Tree Warden Network has been closed and remaining funds and assets returned to Broadland District Council and the Tree Council respectively. Work has been going well with Freethorpe School, including the hedge planting. Tree inspection at Wickhampton to be done soon.
- d) Norfolk Police – crime map was shared for information.
- e) Norfolk Association of Local Councils – no update this month.
- f) Public items – None.

3. Declarations of Interest for items on the agenda

None.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 16th February 2026

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

5. Matters arising from the previous meeting

- a) (6a) Tree & Conservation Advisor – check with insurers (AM) – done.
- b) (6c) Defibrillator Support Guardian – seek volunteer (AM) – one possible candidate was proposed, to be followed up by AM. Otherwise it was agreed that the role be added to the Clerk's Job Description. **ACTION AM**
- c) (6d) Ask Broadland whether S106 could fund Tarmac in car park? (AM) – done, it can't.
- d) (6f) Propose Wickhampton Play Area project for volunteers (AM) – done, item 6d refers.
- e) (11a) Village Hall breakfasts – check with Village Hall Committee (AM) – done
- f) Other matters arising - none.

6. Clerk's Report

- a) Big Broadland Litter Pick – information was shared.
- b) Village Hall update (DL) – DL asked about the remaining S106 funding from Palmers Lane, which has now been approved for the football pitch improvements. AM hopes to be able to wrap the remaining £500 in this work if possible.
- c) The revised Risk Policy was reviewed and approved.

- d) The specification for the TCV volunteering day at Wickhampton on 20th April was approved.
- e) The next Cluster Meeting is at Cantley Village Hall on 28th April at 7:15.

7. Finance

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

Income	£34,794.76	Bank balance	£45,354.12
Expenditure	£21,329.37	Forecast end year balance	£45,324.87
		CIL balance	£13,169.62

AM advised that as we approach year end, income exceeded budget due to additional grants obtained. The expenditure budget is in balance. £3,800 Village Hall donation has been withheld and earmarked into next year until the solar panels work has been done. The bank balance is higher than normal in readiness for a cash outlay of up to £30,000 for the solar panels. It will then revert to usual levels.

- b) Clerk end of year pay and expenses adjustment – a detailed breakdown was reviewed and approved which ensures that the clerk paid salary equals the P60 provided by Norfolk ALC Payroll service. This is necessary because the clerk's monthly pay is set as a standing order which is slightly less than calculated pay.
- c) Payments - it was **agreed** to make the following payments:
 - (1) Beckhithe Farms Ltd. £200.00, Inv 1327, Annual rent Wickhampton Play Area
 - (2) Broadland District Council £148.20, Inv 2701005758, Village Hall dog bin p.a.
 - (3) Helen Utting £150.95, proforma 11192, reimbursement for defib pads
 - (4) Mr A & Mrs MC Moll £226.29, salary & expenses adjustment, 7b refers
 - (DD) Santander **£9.98** – Bank charges Jan & Feb
 - (SO1) Calica Computer Solutions **£30.00** - Speed machine management
 - (SO2) Mr A & Mrs MC Moll **£207.33** - Clerk Salary.
- d) Receipts – were noted:
 - (1) Broadland District Council **£3,290.00** S106 Petanque lights
 - (2) Norfolk County Council **£253.29** Recycling Credits 2025
- e) The Statement of Internal Controls was reviewed and approved.
- f) The sign-off of the Quarterly Finance Checks by MB was approved.
- g) Village Hall donation – remains deferred until solar panel process complete.
- h) To consider Tree & Conservation funding support for school gardening items (AR) - AR has had discussions with the school about extending gardening activities, with a specified need for new tools for the children. It was agreed that this activity is a really positive community contribution. AM pointed out that the tools couldn't be gifted to the school but could be provided on a free loan. GN considered that funding might be a possibility for the Ward Member's Grant. Quantify and consider applying, initially to GN, and failing that, to Parish Council. **ACTION AR**
- i) To consider switching bank (AM) – a decision paper was received. A change of bank would provide electronic payments with electronic two-signature approval, and specialist banking for Parish Councils. The cost of the service is £84. This equates to current costs for banking and posting cheques. It was agreed that an application is made to Unity Trust Bank, with Parish Council to consider and decide before actually switching when the detail is available about the transition. **ACTION AM**
- j) To consider request from Bowls Club for maintenance support – not required.
- k) To note and approve the annual grounds maintenance increase – was noted and approved.

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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 – Highways are currently researching.

9. Planning

- a) New applications – 2026/0436 Conditions rear of 37 Chapelfield – for information.
- b) Decisions – 2026/0008 47 Chapelfield approved with conditions.
- c) Enforcements – three open cases were noted.

10. Update on Ongoing Matters and Projects

- a) Speed Management- Figures are for February 2026. The Common near 111 saw 13,594 vehicles, with an 85th percentile speed of 30.0 up from 29.4mph. On the Green near Palmers Lane, there were 19,588 vehicles, with an unchanged 85th percentile speed of 29.3mph. Overall, 89% of vehicles travelled within the 30mph speed limit.
- 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, and offering a shop service, and appears to be doing well. It was agreed to remove this agenda item.
- e) Solar Panels for the Village Hall – four locally based suppliers have provided proposals and quotations to meet the Parish Council and Village Hall's specification. Item 14 refers to evaluation and selection.
- 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, and funds have been reclaimed from Section 106.
- h) Football pitch improvement project – Section 106 funding has been approved by Broadland. Parish Council confirmed that the order could be placed with Norse.
- i) MUGA – a helpful options meeting was held between AM and Broadland. Next step is to engage with contractors to provide options, costs and usage profiles, subject to Parish Council and Village Hall agreement.
- j) 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. Carry forward.
- k) EVCP – publicity plan – carry forward.

11. Other Matters

- a) It was noted that surface repair work had been carried out at Lower Green.

12. Reports from Parish Councillors and items for next agenda

None

13. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 20th April 2026 7PM, Freethorpe Village Hall.

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14. **Exclusion of the Press and Public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to consider the following item of business:** Evaluation and selection of supplier for Village Hall Solar Project. Parish Councillors were joined by the Chair and Treasurer of the Village Hall Committee to make up the Evaluation Panel. Four good proposals were considered. It was agreed that further information was needed to make the decision, so specific clarification questions would be sent to two of the suppliers and a further Evaluation Panel meeting be arranged to conclude the process.

The meeting closed at 8:50 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