

ASHWELLTHORPE AND FUNDENHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held Tuesday 18th February 2025 7:30pm
at Thorpe Hall, Ashwellthorpe

Present: S Allen (Chairman)
S Tyree (ST)
C Eastwood (CE)
J Ives (JI)
C Wood (CW)
R Morris (RM)
Mrs T Higlett (Clerk)
District Cllr B McClenning
Three members of the public

1)Apologies.

Apologies from R Burridge. Council duly noted.

2) Declarations of interest for items on the Agenda and Dispensations for Councillors with a Pecuniary Interest.

None

3) Public Open Forum

a) Input from public.

Residents had come to voice their concerns around the possibility of a small business that is being run out of a property located on Norwich Road and the parking of vehicles on verges and on Wymondham Road. The property in question has in the past been subject to a planning application which was refused due to concerns by NCC Highways. Members of the council have passed on their concerns to District Councillors who have advised they have spoken to the relevant department of South Norfolk Council. Cllr McClenning advised he had been informed that an officer of SN had spoken with the resident and they stated the premises was being used primarily as residential. It was noted that six vehicles are permitted on a residential site. They would however monitor the situation. Cllr McClenning stated he was not happy with the weak response he had received and felt a site visit had not taken place. Further communication has taken place between Cllr McClenning and SN. A visit will be arranged and officers will require permission to go on site. Member of the public advised the vehicles parked on Wymondham Road are untaxed. Members also stated their concerns if a business is being run from the site how is trade waste being disposed of. Cllr McClenning asked members to convey their dissatisfaction with the response received from SN enforcement too himself and relevant department within SN.

b) Report from District Councillor

Appendix 1.

Cllr McClenning spoke briefly about devolution and the moving over to a unitary council. Norfolk and Suffolk Councils have expressed an interest and if successful would see them combine. It will enable them to collaborate and take collective decisions across council boundaries. Would see a mayor elected in May 2026.

4) To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21st January 2025.

These were approved and duly signed

5) Matters arising from the Minutes

To hear an update and to consider any necessary action with regard to the following:

a) Village pond maintenance

Clerk had arranged for a local conservationist to take a look at the pond and surrounding area to advise on the plant life which has become well established. Suggested the cutting back of vegetation later in the year. Autumn is the least damaging time for making changes, and there maybe organisations that would carry this out on voluntary basis or even grant funding.

b) Dog waste bin emptying

Council currently invoiced for a twice weekly emptying service. SN charge £135.00 per bin. Council can move over to once a week at £91.00 per bin. Council will monitor that once a week is appropriate. One particular bin sited near the village hall may warrant a twice a week emptying in which case council could purchase a second bin to compensate.

Members voted to move over to once a week emptying which will commence from the 1st of April 2025.

Proposed J Ives seconded by C Eastwood – all in favour.

Chair advised the bin by the bridleway on Wymondham Road, has now been moved to the opposite side of the road near the white railings on Old Hall Close.

c) Tree maintenance around village pond

Two quotes for tree surgery have been obtained for the removal of the tree canopy on trees in close proximity to the pond. Quotes ranged from £1780 to £8,000. Clerk advised she has contacted GMS Trees who are based in Hethersett to carry out a free quotation. They have worked for parish councils and local schools. It is hoped Clerk will have quotation available prior to next council meeting for discussion. Chair advised there is one other tree by the entrance gate which could also need attention.

d) VE Day

ST advised he had attended a meeting of the Trustees of Thorpe Hall as the parish council representative. They made him welcome and discussed the working on joint ventures with the parish council. They were supportive of a VE Day event. He conveyed what the parish council envisage for the day. This was followed up in an email to the Chair of the Trustees. Thorpe Hall is available on the 10th May but just waiting on confirmation in writing that all Trustees are in favour. JI proposed asking the district councillors for a small grant of £300 towards the planned activities. A quote of £200 for music has been obtained and food has also been offered.

6) Planning

a) 2024/3816 Location: Land East of High Road Ashwellthorpe Proposal: Series of 13 ponds designed to intercept surface water flows and designed to be part of work to create off-site biodiversity units.

Council had no objection. However, members would be interested to see a detailed map along with the final design of the ponds and how the preservation of the fauna and flora in the area will be addressed. Consideration should also be given to the residents in the immediate area and construction traffic kept to a minimum.

Proposed by J Ives seconded by C Eastwood – all in favour.

b) Planning applications responded to between meetings.

2025/0167 Location: The Oaks The Street Fundenhall. Proposal: Replacement dwelling and detached garage Application Type: Full Planning Permission.

Members had stated no objection to the replacement of what was a derelict building. All In favour.

7) General parish issues

No comments

8) Finance

- a) To note councils current financial standing.

Bank statement 31/01/2025 - £9693.24

- b) To approve payments.

I. Clerks February salary - £348.55

II. HMRC – £72.00

III. Omache Gardens - £357.50

IV. T Higlett – Wix domain renewal £15.24

V. PC Online – £216.00

These were approved unanimously.

- c) To note direct debit payments.

I. N Power £77.98 streetlighting electricity.

II. Information Commissioners Office - £47.00

- d) Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2024/25

Clerk had made contact with R Goreham with regards to carrying out the audit at the end of the financial year. For a council with a turnover of less than £25,000 it would cost council £17.00 per hour and envisage 3 to 4 hours. Clerk advised she would be prepared to deliver documentation to save on travel expenses.

Council unanimously agreed to appoint R Goreham as Internal Auditor.

9) Correspondence

- a) Norfolk PTS Spring Seminar – Chairman advised he would be interested in attending.

- b) Email from resident passing on thanks for relocating dog waste bin on bridleway.

- c) Telephone call - purchasing book on the History of Ashwellthorpe – Council stated they were not interested.

- d) Norfolk PTS- Central Government consultation on strengthening the standards and conduct framework – Council duly noted

- e) Clerks' resignation – Clerk advised that she had worked in excess of 5 hours per week. When she took on the role, she advised that due to other work commitments she was not prepared to work in excess of 5 hours as previous incumbent. Members asked if there was anything they could take control of to alleviate the problem. District Cllr stated it would be a shame to see the clerk leave and was aware of the work she does for other parishes. Clerk advised she had work she wanted to review for the council and would reconsider.

10) Consultations

- a) Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council Consultation on Custom and Self-Build Housing

11) Date and time of next meeting – 18th March 2025

JI asked for the following items to be included on March Agenda;

Clerk: Tina Higlett
February 2025 Minutes

Chair.....
Ashwellthorpe & Fundenhall Parish Council

Review of Land Tenancy
Fundraising for VE Day Event

Meeting closed at 20:42

Appendix 1.
District Councillor report

Grants

Member Ward Grants for 2024/25 have been used on local projects. New grants for small projects (up to £1,000 usually) will be available from April.

Devolution & Local Government Reorganisation

The County Council has been accepted into the Devolution Priority Programme, with the result that the May 2025 County elections have been deferred for one year (at least). The elections for the new position of Mayor is planned for May 2026. South Norfolk is working with other Norfolk councils to produce plans to transition to new unitary authorities combining the powers of District and County Councils. Elections for the “shadow” unitary authorities could be in May 2027. Proposals must be submitted by September 26th this year, and a plan is required by 21 March. The key question is likely to be whether Norfolk should transmission to one or more unitary authorities.

Mental Health Awareness in the Community – Mulbarton 21st January

Your District Councillors attended the free training course delivered by NHS Talking Therapies at Mulbarton Village Hall on Tuesday 21st January. The excellent course included an overview of common mental health conditions, how to manage stress, how to start a conversation and where to signpost people for help. The Council aims to run one course per month; the next is at Bramerton on Thursday 21st March – further details can be found at <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/communities/mindful-towns-villages/how-to-get-involved>.

Local Development Scheme – Housing Targets

It is expected that a review of the local development scheme (the Greater Norwich Local Plan and other documents) will start later this year. This is a result of the new national planning framework which increases the number of new houses required across Greater Norwich by 28%, from 1,929 per year to 2,590. The Government is planning to accelerate the development of 12 new towns. A recent report in the Guardian suggested that one of these could be at the edge of Norwich.

South Norfolk Council Tax Proposals

Council will vote for a £5 annual increase in the council’s share of Council Tax for a Band D property in 2025/26 on 19th February, an increase of almost 3%. Norfolk County Council recently approved an increase of £79.47 for its element of Council Tax.

Ketteringham Recycling Depot

Following on from the launch of South Norfolk’s Recycling Action Plan your District Councillors recently visited Ketteringham Recycling Depot. During the visit we asked the team heading the proposed development and extension of the site to supply us and the nearby parishes with updates. Additional land will need to be acquired to extend the facilities but most of the existing land will be redeveloped. Once complete this will improve facilities and safety for the workforce and cater for extra traffic created by the proposed new services with the introduction of food waste collection to be introduced in 2026.

Planning Consultation – Self-Build and Custom Build SPD

This consultation on a proposed Supplementary Planning Document on Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing is now open and runs until 21st March. <https://southnorfolkandbroadland.oc2.uk/document/23>

Council Tax Assistance Scheme

The Council is expected to agree to the renaming of the scheme to Council Tax Reduction Scheme and change the terms of the scheme to better target those in most financial need. This only applies to those of working age; the equivalent scheme for pensioners is mandated by the Government.

‘Norwich to Tilbury’ Update

National Grid has recently announced a “targeted consultation” involving minor changes to the proposed scheme. Locally, the proposal is to move the construction laydown area from the North of the current substation to the Southwest of it – nearer to Swardeston and Mulbarton. The consultation closes on March 3rd. Details can be found at: <https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/norwich-to-tilbury/public-consultation-and-programme>

The application for a Development Consent Order is expected later this year.

PylonsEastAnglia are continuing to campaign against the pylon proposals. For further information visit <https://pylonseastanglia.co.uk/actions>