

ASHWELLTHORPE AND FUNDENHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held 7:30pm 10th December 2024
Thorpe Hall, Ashwellthorpe

Present: S Allen (Chairman)
R Morris
S Tyree
R Burridge
C Wood
C Eastwood
Mrs T Higlett (Clerk)

Two members of the public

1)Apologies.

Apologies from J Ives council noted. I Spratt and B McClenning (District Councillors) and County Cllr C Rowett had also sent their apologies

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.

Two representatives from Wood Farm development were in attendance to see if council had a response regarding the ownership of the parcel of land which been left to become overgrown. Chair advised that Cllr Bob McClenning had advised the land is held by the developer and suggested a management committee from the estate should speak directly to them. Cllr Tyree also advised he had spoken to a representative of Spire solicitors who worked on the conveyancing. They too advised the land had nothing to do with the parish council.

b) Reports from County and District Councillors
Appendix 1 and 2.

4) To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19th November 2024

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) Ownership of land on Old Hall Close – Chair advised he has not heard anything from the owners of Ashwellthorpe Hall. It was proposed that residents speak directly to Ashwellthorpe Hall. Owners are aware that the parish council has contacted them on behalf of the residents and voiced their concerns. Council will pass on their proposal to the representative of Old Hall Close residents.
- b) Ownership of land on the Wood Farm Development – Spire solicitors have stated this parcel of land has nothing to do with the parish council

- c) Planning application for signage on playing field – Chair advised he had not got round to producing the relevant documentation for the application. Members asked was there a need for it to be installed as information signage on the use of play equipment and the disposing of dog waste is currently affixed to Thorpe Hall. Cllr Tyree proposed cancelling the application. Members were in favour and requested the clerk contact South Norfolk advising them of their decision and requesting the reimbursement of the planning fee.
- d) Relocation of dog waste bin opposite Old Hall Close – Chair advised the bin will be installed in front of the 30mph signage. This will mean the bin is accessible more from the footpath and users will not feel vulnerable to passing traffic

6) Planning

- a) 2024/3481. Proposal: Erection of four dwellings (use class C3) and associated works including access, parking, landscaping and associated infrastructure

Location: Land North Of The Street Ashwellthorpe. Application Type: Full Planning Permission.

Members concerned that this is yet another access onto The Street. Council is very concerned around safety issues currently in the village particularly with the constant stream of vehicles some of which are not abiding by the speed limit set within the village. There is a speed awareness machine near the proposed development. Public transport is almost non-existent, so any new residents will need to have access to a motor vehicle. The properties would be 20 metres from protected woodland, which Norfolk Wildlife feels should be 30 metres. There are currently sufficient developments in the village. It was also noted that the application sits outside the development area. Access for emergency vehicles did not seem to be sufficient.

Concerns that this would also change the character of the village and allocation of new homes is sufficient for the size of the village.

- b) Correspondence from South Norfolk. Appeal against Enforcement Notice made to the Secretary of State against South Norfolk regarding appeal against 'Without Planning Permission'. Members noted and stated they had no comment to make.

7) Administrative issues

- a) To receive the External Audit
Clerk advised that the external auditors report stated a risk assessment document on the website is dated June 2023 and was not formally approved during full council minutes. The council should ensure that all actions taken by council are correctly minuted.
- b) Notice of Conclusion of audit. Clerk will complete documentation and publish on noticeboards and website in the new year.

8) Finance

- a) To note councils current financial standing.
Community account - £12,596.03
- b) To approve payments.
 - I. PKF Littlejohn – External audit £252.00
 - II. T Higlett – Salary December 2024
 - III. HMRC Clerks taxation – £100.60
 - IV. T Higlett – postage stamps £13.20
 - V. T T Jones Electrical – Street light maintenance - £52.48
 - VI. S Tyree – reimbursement of land registry fee - £6.00
 - VII. Omache Gardens - £357.50
 - VIII. A Arber - £81.39

These were approved unanimously.

- c) To note direct debit payments.
N Power £69.72 streetlighting electricity.
- d) Update on bank signatories.
Clerk advised that Barclays business team are waiting for approval from the mandate team that changes have been approved. All documentation was in order.
- e) Budget 2025/26.
Council agreed unanimously to accept the draft budget for 2025/2026. Council proposed from reserves to earmarking a sum for future highways improvements in the village. Cllr Tyree had produced a report on various traffic calming measures and likely costs which could be considered for the village.
- f) Precept 2025/26
Council agreed to set the precept at £13.299.00

9) Highways

- a) To discuss issues with speed awareness machines and downloading of information.
Batteries have been replaced. There are issues with downloading information as council do not have the necessary equipment to carry out the task. Council will look to see what other speed deterrents can be installed on The Street.
- b) Ashwellthorpe Road. As previously discussed, council are concerned with excessive speeding and it is recommended that council will look to reserve funding over the next five years, when measures to address the issues could be implemented. Concerns also with New Road and poor visibility, narrow in places and when wet particularly dangerous.

10) Village Matters

- a) Footpaths
No report.
- b) Defibrillator
Checks to be carried out and reported on Circuit website.

11) Thorpe Hall – playing field.

- a) Play Equipment training
Chair advised he had attended the training and found it be very informative. Council suggested including on the parish website that should any problems with play equipment be found by users that they report to the clerk.

12) New Issues

Nothing to report.

13) Correspondence.

- a) PKF Littlejohn – conclusion of external audit for 2023/24
- b) SN Weekly Planning applications and decisions.

14) General Parish Issues (for information only)

JI had requested council consider holding meetings bi-monthly, with additional meetings should the need arise.

15) Date and time of next meeting – 21st January 2025

Meeting closed at 21:20

County Councillor report

Councillor report 9th December 2024, from Catherine Rowett 09/12/2024

Work in Progress

I've been pleased to see progress on some highways projects, especially the arrival of the village gates in Forncett, and finding extra road safety money to fund flashing school signs for Burston. I've seen and checked new plans for moving one of the lorry signs in Tabernacle Lane and adding two more at the other ends of the roads where lorries enter from the South. I've seen and checked plans for the new signage and road paint for Furze Green. It turns out that what was supposed to be a natural spring in Spring Lane in Forncett was actually a leaky water pipe, which has now been repaired. But there is still other water on the road, from what is probably a natural spring! New projects I'm now working on include a desperate need for speed limits and other safety measures on Upgate Street and Rode Lane in Carleton Rode. We are also awaiting major work on Upgate Street to deal with the collapsed sides of the road, and similar work is now needed on Hunts Green (both aggravated by the traffic bypassing the closure of Bunwell Street). I'm looking to schedule a site visit to these sites and also to Bressingham and Fersfield to negotiate the exact locations for the new speed limit provisions that need to be submitted for new traffic regulation orders. I'm also working on footpath issues in Winfarthing and Great Moulton. The crossing equipment that used to be on the Turnpike in Bunwell, before it was damaged in an accident, has now been replaced and there seems to be no need for further improvements to the crossing, so I am investigating other solutions to make the road safer near the School and the hall.

New buses

The Simonds bus number 82 (formerly 2) operates six days a week and runs roughly every hour and right into the late evening, providing a really superb service for residents in Dickleburgh and Tivetshall to go North to Norwich (an evening out in Norwich for £2 each way!) or to head to Diss for the railway station or the town centre. The last bus back from Norwich is at 10.15 pm (or 5 minutes earlier on Saturdays). During the middle of the day on weekdays these buses also continue to and from Norwich railway station. Please use these new buses as much as possible.

Disappointingly the timetables for the 84 service to Pulham (formerly 584) and the Bressingham circular bus haven't improved.

Energy infrastructure and energy saving:

I'm keeping pressure on to get sensible (rooftops first) provision for clean energy and energy storage with good benefits for local communities, while pushing the government to commit to mandating rooftop solar on new build housing (alongside other zero carbon, low running cost provisions like insulation and solar gain). We won't make sufficient progress on these things unless incentives to export power to the grid are restored to make rooftop solar pay for itself. We also need adequate grid connections and substations for Norfolk communities and businesses, and if there are to be local solar projects, they should be community or public owned so that the profits come directly to the people hosting them, along with access to the energy from local substations or batteries. We keeping our eyes on the Norfolk energy plan which needs to make a case for more community or council owned schemes rather than foreign companies that will siphon the money out of Norfolk. We're currently seeing masses of speculative applications for solar farms in South Norfolk, far more than is appropriate for this area. There are potential benefits for farmers and local residents from some

moderate developments: having a patch of solar panels can make a farm profitable so that the farmer can practise better and more sustainable kinds of agriculture. They provide a reliable income alongside smaller scale and more varied cultivation that's more resilient to seasonal disruption, they provide wildlife corridors and help with regeneration of the land, allowing depleted soils to recover and get their organic matter, worms and substructure of fungi and micro-organisms back. They're not smelly, noisy, nor polluting to our rivers. They can be combined with rewilding, wildflowers, traditional hedges, sustainable agriculture, bee keeping, footpaths, regenerative farming. They will keep land from being developed for housing estates or industrial estates. As climate change disasters increasingly destroy harvests and remove soil, this additional source of income for our Norfolk farmers, alongside agriculture, is very helpful to tide them over if the crops are lost. Energy security is also immensely important, but there is good reason to prefer solar farms that are combined with food production (e.g. grazing) and I'm looking into how reliable are the mechanisms for holding applicants to account for providing this for the entire life of the project. Again, community owned and publicly owned schemes would surely have a better chance of delivering what the local community expects. I have submitted a response raising the local community's concerns to Norfolk County Council's input to the current consultation on East Pye Solar and in my own submission to the consultation.

Health

Please get your annual flu and covid vaccinations if you're eligible. For more information on how to book your vaccination, visit www.nhs.uk/wintervaccinations

Info from Norfolk County Council

Norwich Western Link road The Council has got itself into a self-made mess over this road, having ignored the scientific advice brought by campaigners since it was first put up for consideration, and refused to listen to opposition groups on Norfolk County Council. So the cabinet has spend huge £££ up front, in expectation of government funding to complete the road, which is now impossible since the planned route passes through protected habitats. The Leader is calling on the government to do something, but there's no legal way out of their impasse.

Devolution: There's a good deal of speculation about likely changes to local government structures, with rumours that the government is looking to form a Norfolk/Suffolk unified authority with the same kind of status as metro-mayors in other regions. We await further details, but need to watch out that this does not reduce our local democratic rights with respect to planning etc.

Info from Central Government

Antisocial road racing etc

The government is introducing new powers for police as part of the forthcoming Crime and Policing Bill. This includes stronger powers to seize vehicles involved in anti-social behaviour, to deal with unlicensed e-bikes and e-scooters, e-scooters on pavements, street racing and cruising.

Railway passenger services transfer into public hands!

The Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Bill brings passenger services into public ownership as a first step towards wider rail reform. Greater Anglia's services will transfer to public ownership in autumn 2025. The transition to a publicly owned railway is intended to improve reliability and support the government's priority of boosting economic growth by encouraging more people to use the railway.

Contact me

Catherine.rowett.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk. See also my Facebook page [here](#).

Catherine Rowett

9th December 2024

District Councillor report - **Bob McClenning, Ian Spratt & Jim Webber**

Grants

Clerk: Tina Higlett
December 2024 Minutes

Chair.....
Ashwellthorpe & Fundenhall Parish Council

At present Member Ward Grants for 2024/25 have been fully reserved. Requests for future support with small projects (up to £1,000 usually) to benefit the local community can be made to your District Councillors. Grants for 2025/2026 will be available from April 25.

NCC Recycling Centres

Visits to local recycling centres now need to be booked online at:

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/62632/Norfolk-Recycling-Centre-bookings>

Residents unable to use the internet can call **0344 800 8020** to book. Initial reports suggest the system is working well, although we have heard of some queuing to enter the Norwich South Recycling Centre.

County Council Budget consultation 25/26.

The next big subject will be the budget and how the Conservative administration will deal with keeping services at the level our residents deserve, without cutting any. There is a proposal to increase council tax with final decisions about the level of increase to be made on 18th February 2025. To find out more about the consultation and express your views follow the link here: [Budget consultation 2025-26 - Norfolk County Council - Citizen Space](#). The consultation closes on 16th December 2024

South Norfolk Budget Consultation

The district council has fewer budget pressures than the County. South Norfolk is also conducting a short budget consultation which can be found on the [council's website](#).

South Norfolk Planning – Suspension of Pre-Application Advice

The planning team is still experiencing a very high workload resulting from the number and complexity of planning applications and enquiries being submitted. It has therefore reluctantly suspended its Pre-Application Advice service until January 2025. Residents should still be able to have a short phone conversation with a planning officer for informal advice.

South Norfolk and Broadland Community Link Network

This network is designed to bring together people who serve as community leaders and volunteers with voluntary groups and organisations. The objective is to encourage communication, collaboration, and support within the voluntary, community, and social enterprise sector. Membership is open to anyone who is part of a group and to residents interested in learning more about opportunities in the voluntary sector.

To find out more please email: communities@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk or call 01603 430431.

South Norfolk and Broadland Business Awards

Nominations are open for the different categories of awards available. Nominations close on 13th December 2024.

Further information from: [SNC Business Award Link](#)

‘Norwich to Tilbury’ Update

National Grid has announced that it is now undertaking a number of surveys along the proposed route of the pylons, to help refine and complete its application for planning permission (known as a Development Consent Order or DCO) to the Planning Inspectorate in Summer 2025.

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