

ASHWELLTHORPE AND FUNDENHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held Tuesday 18th March 2025
at Thorpe Hall, Ashwellthorpe

Present: S Allen (Chairman)
S Tyree (ST)
C Eastwood (CE)
J Ives (JI)
C Wood (CW)
R Morris (RM)
R Burrridge (RB)
Mrs T Higlett (Clerk)

Two members of the public

1)Apologies.

Full council in attendance

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 hear if there was an update from South Norfolk Enforcement Team regarding property on Norwich Road and a possible vehicle breaking business. Chair advised that a contravention notice had been issued to the owner and they have 21 days to respond. Planning Officer has requested further information on the activities on the site. They will review whether a material change of use has occurred and make a judgement on the scope on operation

Member of Public advised unlicensed vehicles are still being parked on the roadside and Norfolk Police have been contacted. Requested people should contact Norfolk Police about their concerns as it all helps with the problem. Public left the meeting.

b) Report from District Councillor

Appendix 1.

c) County Councillor

Cllr Rowett had forwarded a report prior to the meeting. Appendix 2.

Briefly spoke about her involvement to challenge the threat to woods in the Bunwell Hill area. These have arisen from the changes proposed by National Grid from the proposals they put in place in 2024. They appear to be unaware of the woodland area. NCC are erecting additional bus stops in some villages. Cllr Rowett advised there are changes to the Norwich Park and Ride sites from the 30th March, with a new operator taking on Harford and Postwick sites. RB asked if it was possible for a park and ride set up within the village similar to the one set up in neighbouring village which has a designated parking area for people to leave their vehicle whilst going into Norwich. Council had no further questions for Cllr Rowett so she asked to be excused from the meeting.

- 4) To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18th February 2025.
These were approved and duly signed

5) Matters arising from the Minutes

a) VE Day

JI advised members that refreshments will be overseen by the Trustees of Thorpe Hall. A buffet will be available and this is being put together by volunteers. The parish council will apply for temporary entertainment notice. ST will contact the Chairman of Thorpe Hall to see whose name should be on the licence as they will be overseeing the bar.

b) Tree maintenance around pond

Clerk advised Cllr Spratt would be contacting South Norfolk to see if they could give the parish council guidance on how they should proceed with the removal/pollarding of the trees. Council have now received three quotations from tree maintenance contractors. Quotes ranging from £1780 + Vat to £8000 to cut trees down to 4 – 5 metres in height. This will be just above the bird boxes. Clerk had not received a quotation from GMS Trees although they had thought around £5000. Council is in favour of the quotation of £1780 + Vat which will include the removal of all arisings. This was supplied by Broadland Tree Services who came recommended, which included the conservationist who viewed the pond and surrounding area. Chair advised there is another tree on the site which needs to be removed and would ask for this to be dealt with at the same time. Council agreed to wait on correspondence from Cllr Spratt before appointment. It was agreed to give Cllr Spratt a month to get back to council. Clerk advised she had also approached Cllr Spratt for a grant towards the cost, as council have not planned for tree maintenance within the 2024-25 budget.

CW offered to put together editorial for inclusion on parish website advising residents on council's current work for the village, to include VE day.

6) Planning

a) Planning applications

2024/3835 Location: 69 The Street Ashwellthorpe Proposal: Variation of condition 2 of 2024/2085 - amendments to the design of garage and link it to the house Application Type: Removal/Variation of Condition (S73 / S19) comments by 20th March 2025

JI stated this is now the second amendment to the design of the garage which the parish council have made comments on. Members noted the new design includes the reposition of the plant room to behind the garage giving more space for the utility room and office. Overall, the revised design has increased the style of the property. Council stated they look forward to completion of the property and when the frontage will be landscaped to fit in with other residential properties on The Street. JI had concerns as to whether the property will be used as a three-storey house.

Council voted. No objection - five with two abstentions.

b) To receive a report on plans accepted/refused by South Norfolk Council.

2024/3610 Location: The Grange Barns Whipps Lane Fundenhall: Proposal: Details of conditions 15, 16 and 17 of 2021/1343. (15) Landscaping and boundary treatment, (16) Lighting proposal, (17) Ecological enhancement measures. Decision: Approval of details - Approved (Delegated) Date of decision: 20 February 2025

2025/0632 The Grange Barns Whipps Lane Fundenhall

Proposal: Details of condition 3 of 2022/1461- Details of windows and doors

Decision: Approval of details - Approved (Delegated) Date of decision 7 March 2025

7) Finance

- a) To note councils current financial standing.
Bank statement - £8270.02
- b) To approve payments.
 - I. Clerks March salary - £298.55
 - II. HMRC – £72.20
 - III. Omache Gardens - £357.50
 - IV. T Higlett – Wix Premium Plan - £108.00
 - V. TT Jones – Streetlight maintenance - £52.48
 - VI. S Allen – Maintenance - £7.02
 - VII. J Ives – Plants and sundries – £28.98
 - VIII. Norfolk PTS seminar - £56.00These were approved unanimously.
- c) To note direct debit payments.
 - I. N Power £67.50 streetlighting electricity.
- d) Land tenancy, Silfield Road, Ashwellthorpe.
Clerk advised she had approached Gaze & Sons who acted for council in 2020 as tenancy should have been reviewed in 2023. If council wish to cease the agreement with current tenant, then they will need to Issue a notice to quit and this would be a 12 months' notice commencing October 2024. Council could leave as a rolling tenancy, leaving at current rent value, which is good considering current agricultural issues.
Council agreed unanimously to continue with current tenant and ask Gaze & Sons to act on their behalf.

8) Highways.

Council acknowledge correspondence regarding Bridleway Hudsmans Lane and the damage caused by agricultural equipment. Clerk advised contractors had now flatten the pathways as best as possible, but this has removed almost all the grassy areas. The surface is very soft and with the grass removed the ground may not withstand heavy use and rain. Council to monitor.

9) Removal of redundant building materials on Wood Farm development

Chair spoke of his concern of redundant building materials which have been left on land opposite Wood Farm. JI advised she would speak to Developer to see if this could be tidied up.

10) Administrative Issues

- a) To approve the Asset register and policy
Clerk advised the asset register was a working document and would need to carry out further review of the play equipment which should be documented individually. Council unanimously agreed the Asset register Policy.
- b) Planning Policy
ST stated that he didn't see the need to set up a planning advisory committee and asked member's view. Council agreed and asked for this to be removed from policy.

11) Correspondence

- a) Invite to South Norfolk Town and Parish Summit Devolution - 2nd April
RM advised she would like to attend. Clerk to advise SN that RM and the clerk will be in attendance.
- b) T T Jones – change of address – council duly noted.
- c) Email from SNC Leader - Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation – duly noted

- d) Dogs on farmland – correspondence from 2 landowners – Members suggested erecting signage advising dog owners of their obligations. Signage could be purchased or produce our own signage and laminate. Clerk advised she has put a notice on the website reminding dog owners of the importance of keeping dogs on leads.
- e) Planning portal – changes to planning application costs – duly noted.
- f) South Norfolk – Nutrient Neutrality Fund – duly noted.
- g) South Norfolk Litter Pick 2025 – JI advised she would be interested in organising a litter pick around the villages and asked clerk to forward information onto her.
- h) South Norfolk – VE Day Community Grant- Grant paperwork submitted and council will receive £300.

Chair advised he had received correspondence from Old Buckenham High School regarding the use of the playing field for an overnight camp. To be forwarded to Thorpe Hall to respond too.

12) Consultations

- a) Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council Consultation on Custom and Self-Build Housing – duly noted
- b) CPRE Norfolk – Opposition to the proposal for a new town - duly noted
- c) Devolution consultation – closing date 15th April 2025 – duly noted.

13) Date of next meeting – 15th April 2025

Meeting closed at 21:20

Appendix 1.

District Councillor report

Member Ward Grants

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

Community Action Fund Grants

Another round of CAF grants is expected to open in April. Applications for grants of up to £20,000 are made by District Councillors on behalf of local organisations. Please contact us if you would like more information. Grants are expected to be heavily oversubscribed once again.

Bleed Kits

Last year SNC agreed to encourage more Bleed Control Kits in public spaces across the district – possibly in or alongside defibrillator units. Your Councillors will be pleased to support applications for funding.

Government Consultation on Norfolk & Suffolk Devolution

Norfolk and Suffolk have been accepted onto the priority programme for devolution. This will mean that elections for a mayor to lead the Mayoral County Combined Authority could be as early as next May. Elections for Norfolk County Council have been suspended for at least one year.

The Government has published a consultation paper on its proposals for devolution in Norfolk and Suffolk. The consultation is open until 13 April 2025. All residents are encouraged to respond.

Link to consultation paper: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/norfolk-and-suffolk-devolution/norfolk-and-suffolk-devolution-consultation#establishing-a-mayoral-combined-authority-across-norfolk-county-council-and-suffolk-county-council>

Consultation form: <https://consult.communities.gov.uk/lggc/norfolk-and-suffolk-devolution-consultation/>

Local Government Reorganisation

The County, District and City Councils are developing their plans for the reorganisation of local government in the area with the current two-tier approach replaced by a number of unitary authorities. Final proposals need to be submitted in September 2025, with initial plans in late March. Early signs are that it may be difficult to reach agreement across all the councils affected.

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.

Town & Parish Summit – 2nd April 2025

Parish Councils are invited to a special morning meeting at Broadland Business Park on 2nd April to discuss proposals for devolution and local government reform. RSVP closes on Wednesday 19th March.

New Nature Conservation Fund

In April, a pilot scheme for a Nature Conservation Fund will be launched. Five grants of up to £10,000 will be available to Parish Councils and Community Groups. Projects must deliver benefits in one of three areas by April 2026: public accessibility to greenspace, biodiversity benefit, and carbon sequestration.

More Funding for Play Parks

In the 2025/26 South Norfolk budget, £134,000 of additional funding is available to support play park repair and improvement. It is expected that funds will be spent on SNC managed facilities.

‘Norwich to Tilbury’ Update

The National Grid 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>

The Government has announced a proposed compensation scheme for those living within 500m of new or upgraded pylon routes. It is not clear at present of this would apply retrospectively, for example to those affected by the recent Great Grid upgrade. Relatively few houses locally are this close to the proposed Norwich Tilbury route.

Appendix 2.

County Councillors Report

Progress report

The usual situation with some improvements happening here and there as new speed limits and signage get progressed. I’m hard at work on trying to get safety improvements and a speed limit on Upgate Street in Carleton Rode, as well as the problem of how to repair that road which has been surfaced on areas wider than the foundations of the road, and with below surface cables laid alongside that make building a wider foundation impossible.

Clerk: Tina Higlett
March 2025 Minutes

Chair.....
Ashwellthorpe & Fundenhall Parish Council

I've been involved with visits and urgent work to challenge the threat to woods in the Bunwell Hill area that arise from the changes proposed by National Grid from the proposals they put out in 2024. In response to my submission, I've been invited to a meeting with National Grid about it. I'm working with Dickleburgh and Rushall on questions about their buses to Pulham. More improvements to bus stops and other bus related facilities are to be funded by the Bus service improvement plan funding and proposals are to be approved by a delegated decision by the cabinet member. I've asked for the Infrastructure and Development committee to get to look at these proposals before they are decided.

Devolution and local government reorganisation

A consultation has been launched by the government regarding the idea of having an elected mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk (which is called "Devolution"), so please do add your thoughts to that. You can find it here: [Norfolk and Suffolk devolution - GOV.UK](#).

Note, this consultation is not about the change to local councils and combining district and county councils in a number of councils for Norfolk. That is called "Local Government Reorganisation". The County Council has drawn up a proposal for what it would like to recommend to the government for the Local Government Reorganisation for Norfolk. They are favouring one single unitary council for the whole of Norfolk (abolishing all district and borough councils). Parish and town councils would remain. The majority of district and borough councils favour having more and smaller unitary councils, and Norwich City Council is keen to keep a local council for Norwich, but with an expanded area that would absorb parts of what is currently South Norfolk and Broadland. Cabinet on Monday 17th March is expected to approve their submission (which considers three options for how to carve up the county into one, two or three blocks). They think that having it as all one would save money. In my experience reorganisation never saves money.

Budget

On 18th February, the Council passed the administration's budget plan for 2025-6. Costs have been rising faster than inflation, and the latest settlement from government includes a small uplift to cover National Insurance, but does not meet the increasing demand on services so a range of services face cuts. Council tax will rise by the maximum that is allowed, which is just short of 5%.

Info from County Council

New enhanced Norwich Park & Ride services from 30th March

Park and Ride services were retendered last year, with the objective of running the services from all five sites with no subsidy from the council. From Sunday 30 March, First Bus will operate services from Airport, Thickthorn and Sprowston, while Simonds will run Harford and Postwick.

On the first day there will be free travel from all sites.

The new service includes: Earlier journeys in the morning, later journeys in the evening, increased frequency at most sites, Sunday services at all sites.

Airport, Thickthorn and Sprowston services will have zero emission buses, and fares will be subsidised from the Bus Service Improvement Plan funding (a government grant).

Full details of the services including timetables and ticket prices are available [here](#).

Norfolk Rural Business Awards – nominations open

Farmers, food and drink producers, tourism attractions and others that champion our county are eligible for the Norfolk Rural Business Awards. The closing date for applications is Monday 21 April. The final shortlist will be announced in May and the winners will be announced at the Royal Norfolk Show in June. Further details are available [here](#).

Bird flu: good news

No new cases have been reported but mandatory housing continues.

Info from Central Government

Government consultation on plans for North Sea clean energy

The Government is consulting on “plans to put the North Sea at the heart of Britain's clean energy future and to drive economic growth.” You get what that means, right?

The Government says it is committed to “working with industry, communities, trade unions and wider organisations to develop a plan that will ensure a phased transition for the North Sea – creating tens of thousands more jobs in offshore renewables”. My view is that the main concern has to be the destruction caused by siting too much energy production in the same place, instead of distributing it across the country close to the areas where the energy is actually needed.

The consultation also includes delivering the Government’s “commitment not to issue new licences to explore new oil and gas fields in the UK”. (Yes, this is good, but...)

The consultation on Building the North Sea’s Energy Future is open until 30 April 2025. Please have your say.

Planning and Infrastructure Bill

The Planning and Infrastructure Bill was introduced to Parliament on 11 March 2025.

The Bill is intended to speed up and streamline planning processes to accelerate delivery of infrastructure and housing and to get what they call “clean energy infrastructure” built ASAP.

It proposes that people living within 500m of new pylons across Great Britain will get money off their electricity bills up to £2,500 over 10 years. Additional guidance will set out how developers should ensure communities hosting transmission infrastructure can benefit, by funding projects like sports clubs, educational programmes, or leisure facilities. The new community funds guidance means communities could get £200,000 worth of funding per km of overhead electricity cable in their area, and £530,000 per substation.

We are unimpressed with the attempt at bribery, or the government’s attitude to nature and local communities. We see an attempt to take away rights that are there to protect the voiceless.

Factsheets and a Guide to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill that are available here.