

ASHWELLTHORPE AND FUNDENHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held Tuesday 15th April 2025
at Thorpe Hall, Ashwellthorpe

Present: S Allen (Chairman)
C Eastwood (CE)
J Ives (JI)
C Wood (CW)
R Morris (RM)
R Burridge (RB)
Mrs T Higlett (Clerk)
District Cllr B McClenning and County Cllr C Rowett
Four members of the public

1)Apologies.

S Tyree – Council accepted 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.

Local farmer had come to speak about their concerns around dogs being allowed to run free on farm land. Dogs have been seen to attack deer and worrying other wildlife, such as water and red deer. One deer had to be put out of its misery due to being severely attacked by a dog. Dog owners have been approached and asked to take charge of their pets but they don't take any notice, which is very concerning. People are not sticking to designated pathways. There are good footpaths and they are well used by some walkers. Signage could be erected by landowners but this will probably get ignored. It was asked of the parish council if they would consider erecting appropriate signage on designated trails. Councillor Rowett advised she would speak to NCC Footpath Warden to see if they could assist perhaps supply notices, which could be erected on the Rights of Ways and field margins. Chair proposed designing a poster which must comply with the legal authority on controlling dogs in public and on leads. Suggested perhaps log incidents and report to police. Discussion followed around social media and how the parish council shares information. Clerk has already placed editorial on the parish council's website.

b) Report from District Councillor

Appendix 1.

Cllr McClenning spoke of concerns around devolution and less democracy. Parish Council could find they have more power.

c) Report from County Councillor

Appendix 2.

4) To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18th March 2025.

These were approved and duly signed.

5) Matters arising from the Minutes

a) VE Day

Clerk advised she had corresponded with Thorpe Hall lettings administrator regarding the application for the Temporary Events Notice. Personal information is required about the

applicant and clerk felt it would be better for them to apply and council reimburse them for the cost which has been covered by the grant. JI advised everything was coming together for the street party but asked for assistance with donations of food for the buffet. VE Day banner now in place at Muskett Road/The Street. Chair advised that although Cllr Tyree was not in attendance, he had requested that when council takes part or organises events that they include reference to the parish council on any advertising. Some residents may be unclear what the parish council does and opportunities to raise councils profile should not be missed. Council felt on this occasion banner contained more than enough information, but will consider for the future. JI stated that on this occasion the event is being funded by South Norfolk and would not be appropriate to reference the parish council.

b) Tree maintenance around pond

As no further quotations have come forwarded it was proposed that Broadland Tree Services should carry out the work.

Proposed by S Allen – seconded by C Eastwood – all in favour.

Clerk to follow up on a grant from District Councillors towards final costs.

c) Removal of building materials on land opposite Wood Farm development

JI had spoken with the owner and they had advised the materials would remain on the land for the foreseeable future. There is also no hazardous material kept on site.

d) Councillor attendance to South Norfolk Town and Parish Forum.

RB advised that she found the forum very interesting and that District are up against a deadline. It is the intention of South Norfolk to contact communities to gauge feed-back of the electorate.

e) South Norfolk Litter Pick

JI advised that this year's Litterpick had been carried out on the 14th April. Six ladies took part clearing rubbish from ditches and verges. Any bottles found were placed in the recycling bins. The £20 which council will receive for taking part would go to the horticultural club. It was proposed that additional litter bins which come with liners should be erected on parish land. These are currently in storage at Thorpe Hall.

JI advised that the Kynvett Green playground owned by South Norfolk Council is to receive a refurbish.

6) Planning

a) Planning applications

2025/0544. Location: Former Post Office Stores, 94 The Street Ashwellthorpe.

Proposal: Increase dropped kerb at front of the property to facilitate parking and improve access. Council spoke of their concerns with the future parking issue for residents who currently use the layby to park their vehicles. Once the business is open there will then be an issue with staff (3 dentists) and patients vehicles parked in the area, not just in the layby. How will this also affect pedestrians. Council felt that further clarification as to why the applicant wishes to drop the kerb, what purpose will it serve and the long term use of the layby should have been communicated in the application. Council unanimously agreed to object to application.

2025/0833. Location: The Bungalow Church Lane Fundenhall

Proposal: Demolition of existing chicken sheds and garage and erection of a single storey building. Council had no objection.

2025/0737 Location: Wellington House, The Street Fundenhall. Proposal:

Erection of outbuilding to store caravan, tractor and associated agricultural/garden implements. Council could see no reason to object. The building will be situated to the rear of Wellington House and the design/build sympathises with the area. The outbuilding will be well screened by native hedging and set back from the highway as with similar buildings on the curtilage.

2025/0955 Location: 1 Greenwood Close Ashwellthorpe. Proposal: Two storey side extension, catslide roofs over existing flat roof dormers, new stove flue, cladding to walls, and new duo-pitched roof over garage. Council had no objection.

- b) To receive a report on plans accepted/refused by South Norfolk Council.
Nothing to report.

7) Finance

- a) To note councils current financial standing.
Bank statement - £7521.79
- b) To approve payments.
 - I. Clerks salary April - £298.75
 - II. HMRC – £72.00
 - III. Omache Gardens - £357.50
 - IV. Thorpe Hall - £155.97These were approved unanimously.
- c) To note direct debit payments.
 - I. N Power £67.50 streetlighting electricity.

8) Administrative Issues

- a) Policies
 - I. Biodiversity policy and Councils Action Plan – Clerk to draw up a policy and present at a future meeting.
 - II. Revised policy – ‘How council deals with planning applications’ - This was agreed unanimously.
- b) Subscriptions
 - I. Norfolk Parish Training and Support – Council approved renewing subscription at £132.99
- c) General
 - I. Parish Council schedule meeting dates for 2025/26 were approved. Clerk to arrange the hire of the community area at St Nicholas Church Fundenhall for the months of June and July 2025.

9) Village – Maintenance and Highways.

- a) Dogs roaming free on farm land – this was discussed within the public forum.

Jl advised she had tidied up the paintwork on the benches around the village.

10) Correspondence

- a) South Norfolk Community Awards 2025
- b) South Norfolk Nature Conservation Fund – Expressions of Interest
- c) CPRE Norfolk response to the creation of a new town in South Norfolk.
- d) NCC Highways – Old Hall Close. Clerk advised that the drains had been cleared after reporting on NCC Highways Portal.

11) Date of next meeting – 20th May 2025

Meeting closed at 21:05

Appendix 1.
District Councillor report

Member Ward Grants

Member Ward Grants for 2025/26 are now available. Requests for support with small projects (typically up to £1,000 per project) to benefit the local community can be made to your District Councillors. Unfortunately, the total amount available remains at £1,000 per Councillor.

Community Action Fund Grants

Another round of CAF grants has opened with total funding of £150,000 this year. Applications should be made via a District Councillor for amounts between £1,000 and £15,000. The closing date for applications will be mid-June. Applications are likely to be oversubscribed. Successful projects are likely to have matched funding in place, be able to complete within 12 months of the grant and be able to demonstrate considerable community benefit and support. Interested organisations are encouraged to contact a Councillor at the earliest opportunity.

New Nature Conservation Fund

The fund has been launched to make up to 5 awards for projects that best meet the following criteria:

- Carbon sequestration: Projects that actively contribute to tackling carbon emissions.
- Biodiversity benefit: Initiatives that enhance local ecosystems and support a diverse range of plant and animal life.
- Public accessibility to greenspace: Creating and improving green spaces that are accessible and enjoyable for the entire community.

Priority will be given to proposals that deliver one or more of the following projects:

- A Miyawaki mini forest
- Pond creation and restoration
- A circular walk

Interested bodies should make an initial expression of interest to the Council as soon as possible. Applications close on 31 July.

<https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/climate-change-environment/trees-biodiversity/nature-conservation-fund>

Devolution & Local Government Reform

At the South Norfolk full council meeting held on 18th March, members overwhelmingly voted in favour of undertaking further work to develop a two unitary model for Norfolk. One serving Norwich and East Norfolk, including Great Yarmouth and the other encompassing West Norfolk. It was agreed that this proposal meets government population requirements, avoids disrupting boundary changes and allows rapid, cost-effective implementation and minimum disruption to existing communities. This plan has now been submitted in line with the March 21st deadline. Final proposals need to be submitted in September 2025. Feedback is expected from the Government in April or early May.

South Norfolk and Broadland Town & Parish Summit 2nd April 25.

Discussing Devolution and LGR it was recognised that this is an extremely complex process endeavouring to shape local government for the next 50 years. It has been hurried but South Norfolk Council and the LGR cross party working group are working toward a beneficial conclusion. Councils, including South Norfolk, intend to engage with communities to get feed-back to fully support the democratic process during this period and beyond.

Local Development Scheme – Housing Targets

Clerk: Tina Higlett
March 2025 Minutes

Chair.....
Ashwellthorpe & Fundenhall Parish Council

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 focus is likely to be on developing one or more new settlements as the previous iteration of the Local Plan indicated limited capacity for growth in existing settlements. Sites previously considered include Hethel, Silfield and Honingham Thorpe in Broadland.

‘Norwich to Tilbury’ Update

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

Appendix 2 County Councillors report

Progress report

The ups are generally matched by the downs. The petition about safety on Upgate Street in Carleton Rode received the usual “we only care about making cars go fast” response from the head officer in highways. I’ve sent back a very angry response. I am also very angry about the appalling meeting I had with National Grid where I supposed they would want to listen to my concerns about their change of route in Bunwell, but no. I am extremely angry about the recent applications for additional energy infrastructure in Great Moulton parish and Dickleburgh parish. In neither case did they think to consult the County Councillor or even let me know that there is anything on the cards, so I’ve only picked up info via others. The companies promoting them are lazy and ill-informed. They’ve never been to see the place. The ones in Dickleburgh seem not to know which county it’s in (hence their inability to find the county councillor?); the ones in Great Moulton didn’t know which power line they were scheduled to connect to, nor where their grid connection was, nor how the land sloped, nor what homes or businesses were nearby. The rudeness and carelessness of these applications and their ignorance of local conditions and of the nature of Norfolk roads beggars belief. There appears to be no intervention from the government to preclude duplication or multiple applications for mutually incompatible projects. It’s incoherent as an energy strategy. We need a strategy first, and then a call for applications in the appropriate places. Instead of that we have a chaotic gold rush that is creating local hostility against even the more suitable energy schemes. No one could have chosen a worse way to deliver an energy revolution.

I’ve been working with Dickleburgh and Rushall on questions about their buses to Pulham. I’ve now seen the report on the delegated decision for what the latest round of spending for buses will include and it looks all pretty sensible, but lacks detail. I’ve asked for the Infrastructure and Development committee to get to look in detail at these schemes.

I’m working on some questions about the location and accessibility of footpaths in Winfarthing, for which we shall be holding a meeting with landowners affected, in late April.

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 only about the Mayoral authority.

Separate from that but not unconnected is the proposed change to local councils to eliminate the current two tier system. A number of options have been presented to the government with different councils favouring different solutions (for one, two or three unitary authorities in Norfolk). Other options that are not apparently on the table that might have made more sense include putting Lowestoft in with Great Yarmouth, putting Beccles and Bungay into the same council as Norfolk, along with the relevant bits of the Norfolk and Waveney Health Board area, or dividing Norfolk north south, or coastal and inland, instead of East West. But these, it seems, are not up for debate. I believe a letter has gone out to Parish Councils and that there will be some consultation at some point.

Info from County Council

New enhanced Norwich Park & Ride services from 30th March

From Sunday 30 March, the new services at Park and Ride sites will include: Earlier morning and later evening services, increased frequency at most sites, Sunday services at all sites. Full details of the services including timetables and ticket prices are available.

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.

Bird flu

A new case has been reported in the Wymondham area after a bit of a respite.

Info from Central Government

Government consultation on plans for North Sea clean energy

The Government's 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 is supposed to accelerate delivery of infrastructure and housing and to get what they call "clean energy infrastructure" built ASAP. You can find factsheets on this topic here.

Govt proposes that people living within 500m of new pylons will get money off their electricity bills up to £2,500 over 10 years. New community funds guidance recommends that communities could get £200,000 for community projects per km of overhead electricity cable, and £530,000 per substation. I'm unimpressed with this bribery approach, and with the government's cavalier attitude to nature and local communities. I see an attempt to take away rights that are there to protect the voiceless. I've been working with the MP for Waveney Valley to get the voiceless a voice in Westminster. I am also meeting Ben Goldsborough MP about this later this month.

Transformation Fund for reform of public services.

In her spring statement the Chancellor announced a £3.25 billion Transformation Fund for reforming public services, investing in digital technology and AI, and transforming frontline delivery "to release savings for taxpayers over the long-term".

The money is to

- reform children's social care through an additional £25 million for fostering.
- £8 million for new technology to manage offenders in the community.
- £42 million funding for testing and deploying AI applications to reduce bureaucracy.
- £150 million for government employee exit schemes to support a leaner Civil Service,