

BUNWELL PARISH COUNCIL
www.bunwellpc.info

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MINUTES of Bunwell Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 3rd September 2025 at the Village Hall, Bunwell.

Cllrs Present at the Meeting: Cllr M Booty (Chair), Cllr M Crouch, Cllr S Spooner and Cllr D Ward

Also Present: Parish Clerk, County Cllr Catherine Rowett, District Cllr Suzanne Wateridge and 5 members of the public.

MINUTES	ACTION
<p>1. To receive apologies – Cllr Watson sent his apologies.</p>	
<p>2. To record declarations of interest from Council members in any item to be discussed – there were no declarations of interest.</p>	
<p>3. Nature Recovery Project – South Norfolk Cllr, Trevor Graham, was welcomed and talked about the Nature Recovery Project he has been involved with at Harleston Town Council. He said that this Project has been recognised by South Norfolk Council who have endorsed the concept across the entire District. He said it is important that local councils support and encourage their communities to deliver their own Nature Recovery and that it is the small actions taken at home that collectively build into something larger as the collective size of gardens in England is greater than the size of the nature reserves. Ideas include providing food and water for birds, building bug houses, planting pollinating plants or letting a section of garden grow wild. Small actions taken by ordinary people, added together can make a difference. Nature recovery is all about how we restore habitats, protect wildlife and combat climate change. It's about building resilient landscapes for the future through natural restoration. More information can be found on: www.naturerecoveryinharleston.org.uk. The councillors agreed to discuss the matter at the next meeting to see if there are possibilities for Nature Recovery in Bunwell.</p>	
<p>4. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 2nd July 2025 – the minutes of the meetings held on 2nd July 2025, pages 584-599, having previously been circulated to all members, were agreed and signed by the Chair.</p>	
<p>5. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting</p> <p>5.1. Update on Village Emergency Plan – This matter is progressing and checks will be made on the information already held.</p> <p>5.2. Installation of waste bin on roundabout at Greenways – There are problems with finding a suitable site for a litter bin. Further advice will be sought.</p>	Cllr Crouch
<p>6. To receive the District and County Councillors' Reports – County Cllr Catherine Rowett's full report is attached to these minutes. In brief, she spoke about energy parks and infrastructure, funding opportunities, a Recycling Centre survey, and the importance of ensuring children receive all necessary vaccinations. District Cllr Suzanne Wateridge's full report is also attached to these minutes. She spoke about the Environment Agency's plans to 'rewiggle' The Tas, meaning less flooding</p>	

downstream and more benefits for biodiversity. She also mentioned the Local Planning Update, which does not affect the Village Clusters, and a change in planning rules for self-build houses. The next Full Council Meeting is on the 24th September to discuss LGR and Devolution. She also gave updates on the various local renewable energy projects.

7. Resident's Questions – there were no questions from the residents present.

8. To receive and discuss correspondence – all correspondence had been forwarded to Councillors and matters of importance had been dealt with.

9. Highway & Footpath Matters –

9.1. The flashing sign across The Turnpike now appears to be working properly.

9.2. There are no matters of concern relating to footpaths in the village. Cllr Crouch said that he is trying to obtain an up-to-date map showing all the footpaths in Bunwell.

Cllr
Crouch

10. Playground/Village Hall –

10.1. Most of the adult play equipment has been removed and the area will be cleared soon. The councillors agreed to the quote supplied by Jason Goddard to carry out this work.

10.2. Action Play & Leisure will be asked to quote for the items on the RoSPA report which need attention, and this will be discussed and agreed at the next meeting.

10.3. Upgrade to the existing outside toilet at the Village Hall – the work on this project is almost complete and the toilet should be ready in a couple of weeks for use by sports groups who have contracted to use the Playing Field.

10.4. Discussion took place to ascertain whether it would be a good idea to have a dog bin sited somewhere on the playground/field area. The Clerk will contact the grasscutting contractor to ask if dog mess is a problem in the area before a decision is made at the next meeting.

Clerk

11. Local Energy Infrastructure Projects – Cllr Mike Booty and Cllr Michael Crouch have both attended recent meetings concerned with these Projects and a detailed report by Cllr Crouch is attached to these minutes. In brief: the proposal for Tasway Energy Park is at an early stage and a campaign against the project is not needed yet; the East Pye Solar Project EIA Scoping response should provide a good template for any response to the Tasway project; local parish councils should try to co-ordinate any response to project a united front; councils should encourage engagement with local MP's by inviting them to speak at meetings on the subject of ongoing energy projects. Cllr Booty has been in contact with our local MP, Adrian Ramsey, to invite him to attend a Parish Council meeting in the near future. Cllr Crouch attended a meeting at Ashwellthorpe where South Norfolk MP, Ben Goldsborough, spoke about the East Pye Project, the Tasway Project and the National Grid Pylons Project. He confirmed that the National Grid have submitted a Development Consent Application but this process is likely to take 18 months before a decision is reached. National Grid have said that they will make a detailed traffic management plan for the project before any work commences.

12. Potential Future Projects – possible future projects include changing facilities for sports teams at the Village Hall and improving the access from the centre of the village to the Village Hall area. Other possible projects will be discussed at future meetings.

13. Planning Applications – to discuss and vote on any new planning applications – no new applications had been received since the last meeting.

14. Finance

14.1. Payments for July and August had been circulated and councillors agreed to these transactions.

14.2. The cashbook balance was noted.

15. To receive matters of importance from Councillors – Cllr Sarah Spooner said that regrettably she will no longer be able to remain on the Parish Council due to increased work commitments. She will try to attend meetings where possible until a replacement is found. She was thanked for her hard work and commitment to the residents of Bunwell, particularly with regard to overseeing the Parish’s footpaths. This means that the Parish Council now has 5 vacancies and it is important to encourage residents to take an active part in the decision-making concerning their village by joining the Parish Council. Details of what this entails can be found on the PC website under the heading of Vacancies: www.bunwellpc.info

16. To receive items for the next Agenda for Consideration – To follow up items raised above.

17. Date of next meeting – the next meeting is on Wednesday 1st October 2025 at 7.30pm.

18. Meeting Closed 9.10pm

UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT	
BALANCE AS AT 02.07.25	£24,732.41

RECEIPTS AS AT 03.09.25			
DATE	RECEIVED FROM	DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL AMOUNT
25.07.25	South Norfolk Council	S Wateridge Grant	500.00
15.08.25	HMRC	VAT Refund	1,063.31
BALANCE C/FWD			£26,295.72

PAYMENTS FOR APPROVAL IN JULY: UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT					
BALANCE AS AT 02.07.25				£24,732.41	
PAY TYPE	PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL AMOUNT	VAT	PAYE
BACS	G’s Gardening Services	June Grasscutting	350.00		
BACS	G’s Gardening Services	July Grasscutting	350.00		
BACS	Bunwell Village Hall	Hall Hire, June	30.00		
BACS	Community Heartbeat	Defib Batteries	42.00		
BACS	Norfolk PTS	M Booty Autumn Seminar	67.20	11.20	
BACS	Spire Solicitors	ID1 Verification for Playing Field Lease (Pd by M Booty)	180.00	30.00	
BACS	M Ridgwell	Jul Salary & Exps	318.75		
BACS	HMRC	PAYE to month 04	71.20		71.20
	Unity Trust	Service Charge	6.00		
Total			1,415.15	41.20	71.20

PAYMENTS FOR APPROVAL IN AUGUST: UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT					
BACS	G’s Gardening Services	Aug Grasscutting	350.00		
BACS	Bunwell Village Hall	Hall Hire, July	30.00		
BACS	South Norfolk C	Dog Bin Annual Charge	676.80	112.80	
BACS	R Hoolahan	Upgrade to VH outside toilet	825.00		

BACS	J Goddard	Maintenance of SAM2, 5 mths	250.00		
BACS	M Ridgwell	Aug Salary & Exps	297.60		
BACS	HMRC	PAYE to month 05	71.20		71.20
	Unity Trust	Service Charge	6.00		
		Total	2,506.60	112.80	71.20

CASHBOOK BALANCE: 03.09.25

Details		CR	DR	
Cash Book Balance Brought Forward (Unity Trust Bank Current Account)	A	£24,732.41		
Receipts this month (see listed above)	B		1,163.31	
Payments Jul & Aug month (listed above)	C			3,921.75
				22,373.97
			Unity Balance	£22,373.97

Information on Energy Projects produced by Cllr Michael Crouch

National Grid

To answer a Parishioner's questions at the July 2025 meeting:

National Grid (NG) state they will develop a detailed traffic management plan in conjunction with local councils. The plan will show routes that contractors and construction traffic should follow and will be published on their project website. The over-arching aim being *"to minimise disruption to local communities."*

NG submitted their application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) on 29th August. They should hear from the Planning Inspectorate by 26th September as to whether the application has been accepted for examination. If the application is accepted, anyone wishing to take part in the examination can register as an interested party. At September's meeting the PC resolved to register as an interested party should the DCO be accepted for examination.

Examination will take six months. After this time, the Planning Inspectorate has up to three months to make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy Security & Net Zero. Once the Secretary of State has received a recommendation from the Planning Inspectorate, they will decide on whether to approve the DCO. If the DCO is accepted for examination, NG expect the subsequent processes to take about 18 months. They would therefore conclude circa March 2027.

Tasway

Since the July meeting, Mike Booty met with representatives of Great Moulton and Aslacton Parish Councils. It was agreed not to actively campaign against Tasway at present as there is little detail concerning the scheme in the public domain.

Michael Crouch attended the meeting held by Ben Goldsborough MP (South Norfolk) at Ashwellthorpe on 23rd July. Tasway were invited to the meeting but did not attend. At the meeting Myles Jeeves of Forncett spoke about his campaign 'Stop Tasway Solar', which Michael Crouch will keep abreast of.

Mr Goldsborough's approach to the East Pye solar farm proposals is *"Mitigation, not cancellation"*, which can basically be summarised as reducing the project's area and removing the facets with the greatest potential for harm. Mr Goldsborough stated that an Infrastructure Bill which the Labour Party intends to introduce this parliamentary term will, because of timing, apply to Tasway but not to East Pye. A member of the audience stated that they had, along with other residents, received a letter from Tasway stating that the 'go live' date

for the project will be in 2030. Another audience member stated that landowners had signed call option agreements for earmarked Tasway land.

The National Farmers Union (NFU) does not routinely oppose solar farms but has done so where tenant farmers manage the land. They are actively opposing High Grove solar farm (which is broadly earmarked to run just east of RAF Marham, around the north of Swaffham to just west of Dereham) for this reason.

NSIPs in general

If a DCO is passed by a Secretary of State, it isn't the end of the road. The decision to grant (and presumably not grant) a DCO can be challenged at the High Court.

In late July, CPRE Oxfordshire and 'Safer Waters' successfully applied to the High Court for judicial review of a DCO granted by the Secretary of State for the Environment to Thames Water to build a reservoir. The DCO was upheld by the High Court.

Presumably High Court decisions can be further challenged at The Supreme Court.

Councillor report 28th August 2025, from Catherine Rowett

28/08/2025

Progress report

August has given me a welcome break to catch up with family and have a week's holiday, as well as getting some academic research completed and some more started. I now have a brief patch of trying to make progress with Council stuff, before I go to the USA for a week in the middle of September for an academic research meeting that I am speaking at, at Berkeley in California.

Current work in the parishes includes working with the residents of Shimpling to try to deal with an issue with their footpath (part of the Boudicca Way for part of it) that is legally supposed to be open to motor vehicles, despite many attempts to restrict it to non-motorised usage.

I am pleased to hear that the diversion for Gissing Footpath 6 is now up and running, and the footpath officer will be visiting next week to check that it is all compliant so that she can sign off the legal paperwork, which will finally regularise the situation there.

Also on my radar are some problems with traffic caused by the diversions and closures associated with the Long Stratton Bypass, but that seems to have resolved now that local people know what to do.

The big issue, which is energy parks and infrastructure, continues to bubble just under the surface. I got a number of challenges and responses submitted to the various planning consultations earlier in late July and early August.

The next Full Council meeting has been delayed due to the Council not having received the required information from the government about the promised funds in the devolution deal (which had been supposed to be sent before the August recess). The September Council is scheduled to discuss devolution and local government reorganisation. The meeting will now be on 25th September. As a result of this change of date I will be able to attend and vote at the meeting, since I will be back (God willing) from the USA.

New community fund

A reminder that I have two local member funds, one for capital costs for highways/footpaths/nature spaces and ecological initiatives and one for costs (including running costs) for community activities and creative initiatives that make your place a happy place where people meet and are supported. For the former, please go through your parish council for highways issues. The grant won't stretch to fully funding legal changes (speed limits etc) but I may be able to contribute if you have part of the funds from private sources or parish funds. For funding for ecology or woodlands etc, and for the community fund, the group organising the activity can contact me directly. The community fund is for grants between £200 and £2,500 to support projects that promote things like social inclusion, volunteering, and community

engagement. Church groups qualify if they serve the community. Larger grants require matched funding, but there is support for this via a crowdfunding scheme. Please ask me for a leaflet, or you can find details and how to apply on the county council website [here](#). Anyone with an eligible project should contact me on Catherine.rowett.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk.

Info from County Council

Recycling Centre survey

There is a survey for users to give their views on the County's Recycling Centres. The link is here:

[Shaping Norfolk's Recycling Centres: Customer satisfaction survey 2025](#)

National Information

Childhood vaccinations

The UK Health Security Agency has issued an urgent warning ahead of the start of the new school year, about the low vaccination rates among children starting school this year, and the risks of serious dangers to immunity and health. Please encourage parents to get their children vaccinated with all the boosters that they need to have before school. Low uptake rates lead to resurgence of diseases that can kill or disable children and adults for life.

Contact me

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

Catherine Rowett

Bunwell District Councillor Report September 2025

Rewigging the Tas

It's really nice to have a story that isn't all doom and gloom so I'm starting with this one! I don't have more detail than you can uncover online at this stage but for those who may not have read about it, the Environment Agency is planning to 'rewiggle' the River Tas, meaning less flooding downstream and more benefit for biodiversity. Whereas straightened rivers mean faster flow, meandering rivers have more storage capacity, which is better able to cope with torrential rain, as it takes longer for the water to move downstream. Rewigging also boosts wildlife and creates more biodiverse ecosystems, as it means species are not forced to cling to the bottom or swim rapidly to survive.

This is a good link telling you more about it <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25392342.river-tas-forncett-st-peter-set-rewigged/>

I'm aware that the Norfolk Rivers Trust has already met with some residents and landowners in this area to discuss natural flood management around the Tas so hopefully this approach will complement that. The Yare and the Waveney are currently undergoing similar projects.

Local Planning Update

At the Town and Parish Summit this week, Ben Burgess updated us on what is happening as a result of the government's goal to build 1.5 million houses over this Parliament. The Greater Norwich Local Plan, which came into effect last year, will already need to be updated in light of this (it is normally only reviewed every 5 years) and the aim is to get an amended one in place by Spring 2029.

Ben recognises that this is an ambitious target (the last one took 7 years!) but it is essential to get this done as soon as possible, otherwise the government's new set of national development policies (due to be launched this autumn) will supersede any local plans.

So how does that affect us? Well, they will be revisiting development sites that didn't make it last time, checking up on plans that are stalled or not delivering, and approaching landowners and developers to see what's available for building on.

He confirmed the Village Clusters would not be affected and Neighbourhood Plans should be kept up to date as much as possible. The Planning Team will be talking to Parish Councils and members in the coming weeks with more details.

SPD on Custom and Self Builds

SNC has now adopted the Custom and Self-Build Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which was consulted on earlier this year. Full details can be found here <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/asset-library/custom-and-self-build-spd-august-2025.pdf> but headline news is that as I understand it, the rules have been relaxed on the location of isolated homes in the countryside (ie GNLP Policy 7.5) so that residents are now able to build their own house outside a defined settlement boundary ie it is more permissive than previously. Do give the planning department a call to find out more if you are planning a self-build and perhaps have previously been refused, or you have a new plan you'd like to discuss.

LGR and Devolution Update

South Norfolk Council are continuing to work on their LGR plans and continuing to favour a two unitary model. We will meet at Full Council on September 24th to vote on our final submission and then South Norfolk's response, along with the other District Councils and the County Council, will go to Jim McMahon, the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution. The hope is there may be a consultation this side of Christmas, but more likely we will hear back from the government on which approach they favour (ie one, two or three unitaries) by spring 2026. You may have read in the press that the government has not carried out their own cost analysis on the benefits of LGR, which is disappointing to say the least.

Renewable Energy Projects Update

East Pye: I'm sure you all submitted your responses, as we councillors did, to the second statutory public consultation by East Pye in August. Next step: they review all the responses alongside their own assessments and they will submit a DCO (Development Consent Order) to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) later this year. They will also include a Consultation Report summarising the feedback received and how they have acted (or not) on it.

Tasway Energy Park: I imagine some residents attended Ben Goldsborough's meeting to form an Action Group against this new scheme, details of which have yet to be fully revealed. Things we do know: it will be an NSIP; we know it will comprise of solar panels and a BESS; they would hope to start work in 2030 and it will take a couple of years; and not all the land currently earmarked on their map will be used. They are saying they will start consultations in autumn/winter this year. I have asked the NSIP Manager at SNC, Claire Curtis, if she has heard anything further and will keep you updated

FIELD BESS (2025/1689): I am waiting to hear when Richard Smith, the Planning Officer working on this, will make his decision. I'll keep you updated. I'm sure Catherine will give more details in her report but we had a very productive meeting back in July, on site at Carr Lane, with the head of NSIPS at County, Highways and Alison Thomas, County Councillor in Long Stratton/Wacton, along with Great Moulton and Wacton parish councils. They confirmed the complete unsuitability of the site and quite how much work FIELD would have to do to make the application viable in terms of highway adaptation. Let's hope this puts them off

Cllr Suzanne Wateridge

Member for Bunwell Ward, South Norfolk Council

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