

BUNWELL PARISH COUNCIL

www.bunwell-pc.gov.uk

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MINUTES of Bunwell Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 7th October 2026 at the Village Hall, Bunwell.

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

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

ACTION

- 1. To receive apologies** – Cllr R Watson and Cllr J Worth sent their apologies.
- 2. To record declarations of interest from Council members in any item to be discussed** – Cllr Booty declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 9.3.
- 3. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 2nd September 2026** – the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd September 2026, pages 676-686, having previously been circulated to all members, were agreed and signed by the Chair.
- 4. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting:**
 - 4.1. Update on Village Emergency Plan – Cllr Crouch and Cllr Palmer are in the process of compiling a Community Resilience Plan and will report to the PC at the next meeting. Cllrs Crouch and Palmer
 - 4.2. Repair and repainting of telephone boxes – Cllr Crouch reported that he is in the process of arranging the purchase of new glass for the broken panes and will organise the repairs and repainting as necessary. Cllr Crouch
- 5. Resident's Questions –**
 - 5.1. County Councillor's Report – Cllr Margaret Thomas said that Highways continue to be a key issue for local residents, and the upcoming budget is being discussed by CC. Other topics included the stressful effect on close residents of the multiple large-scale energy developments in the area, Anglian Water's compensation process, the adult social care transformation process, digital services and planning applications.
 - 5.2. District Councillor's Report – Cllr Wateridge was delighted to report that her application for Community Action Funding had resulted in a grant of £7,700 being given to Bunwell Village Hall to help pay for new fire and front doors, CCTV and upgrades to the kitchen. She also spoke about the recent East Pye hearing at Dunston Hall, changes to the Village Clusters Plan consultation (a link is in her full report) and the withdrawal by government of the Unitary Council plans meaning that there will be District Council elections next May as planned. Cllr Wateridge's full report is attached to these minutes.
 - 5.3. There were no questions raised by members of the public.
- 6. To receive and discuss correspondence** – any correspondence of importance had been passed to councillors for consideration or are included in agenda items.
- 7. Highways and Footpath Matters –**
 - 7.1. The Footpath Warden, Katherine Womack, reported that she had not had a response from NCC Highways concerning replacing missing footpath signs. She had reported a fallen tree to Highways and said that a new entrance to a badger

sett had appeared in the hedge next to the path on the Banyards Hall side of the little wood. She asked residents to ensure that the badgers were not disturbed by dogs or walkers as this is an offence. Her full report is attached to these minutes.

- 7.2. Proposed diversion of FP3 – no update has been received from NCC as yet.

8. Playground/Playing Field

- 8.1. Cllr Crouch had submitted a report on the state of the play equipment and said that he will arrange for the repair of the handrail on the slide. Other minor matters will be dealt with in the near future.
- 8.2. Cllr Worth had arranged the purchase of two new picnic benches, and these had been fitted by Mr Goddard.
- 8.3. An application had been submitted to the National Lottery Fund to supply a grant towards a new climbing and target wall for the play area. The result of the application will not be received until nearer the end of the year
- 8.4. The organisers of New Buckenham under-7s Football Team had written to the Parish Council saying how pleased they were with the facilities at Bunwell Playing Field and the welcome they had received from the Parish Council and the Village Hall. They would therefore like to propose setting up a Bunwell AFC from next season, initially for an U9 and U10 team, which would eventually lead to an adult team for Bunwell. Councillors were unanimously in favour of this proposal and will liaise with the team organisers concerning storage of equipment. Toilet facilities are already accessible from the rear of the Village Hall. The football team organisers will also sign an agreement which allows them to site a storage container on the field for their equipment.

Cllr Crouch

9. Projects –

- 9.1. Nature Recovery Project on the Playing Field. Cllr Booty reported that unfortunately he had not had time to progress this project but would put forward plans later in the year.
- 9.2. Changing Facilities for visiting teams. The Village Hall Committee are considering reinstating the existing changing rooms at the rear of the Hall which are now used as a storage area and will liaise with the PC as to whether further storage could be provided outside the back of the Hall.
- 9.3. Village Hall Grant request. (Cllr Booty left the meeting). The Chairman of the Village Hall Committee reported that they had received confirmation from the District Councillor that Community Action Funding had been granted for half of the expected cost of upgrades to the Village Hall. The estimated total is £15,400 and the VHC requested that the Parish Council match fund the CAF grant of £7,700. All councillors were in agreement that a grant of £7,700 be given to the Village Hall. (Cllr Booty returned to the meeting.)
- 9.4. Norwich to Tilbury Community Fund Project. Cllr Watson had prepared an in-depth report concerning how best to ensure that residents can benefit from the Community Fund National Grid are offering. Unfortunately, Cllr Watson was unable to attend the meeting but Councillors were appreciative of his time and effort and agreed that his suggestions be followed up.

Cllr Watson

10. Planning Applications –

- 10.1. A planning application had been received for a single storey side extension at 88 Bunwell Street: <https://info.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=TLVJ2JOQJQ300> Councillors had no objections to this proposal.
- 10.2. Details of the Greater Norwich Local Plan Scoping Consultation had been received, and as Chairman of the Bunwell Building Development Group, Mr Gledhill had kindly replied on behalf of the Parish Council. The very long document was concerned with general matters driving housing in Norfolk and was not specific to Bunwell.

Clerk

- 11.** To consider and agree Policies requiring annual review. These updated policies had already been forwarded to councillors for their consideration, and they were all were in agreement with the updates. The following policies will be published on the website in the near future: Standing Orders, Code of Conduct, Freedom of Information Publication Scheme, Financial Regulations, Internal Control, Risk Management Policy and Reserves Policy. Cllr Crouch had kindly checked the current Asset Register and updated this. Clerk
- 12. Finance**
- 12.1. Payments for September had been circulated and councillors agreed to these transactions.
- 12.2. Councillors also received and noted the Half-Yearly Position Statement.
- 13. To receive matters of importance from Councillors** – Cllr Ward raised the issue of leaking water in Bunwell Street and that despite Anglian Water being informed nothing had been done. The PC will write to Anglian Water. Clerk
- 14. To receive items for the next Agenda for Consideration** – To follow up items raised above. Cllr Palmer asked that the Norwich to Tilbury Pylon project be discussed at the next meeting.
- 15. Date of next meeting** – the next meeting will be held on Wednesday 4th November 2026 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Meeting Closed 8.15pm

UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT			
BALANCE AS AT 02.09.26			£25,171.95
UNITY TRUST DEPOSIT ACCOUNT			
BALANCE AS AT 06.05.26			£120,641.38
RECEIPTS AS AT 02.09.26			
DATE	RECEIVED FROM	DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL AMOUNT
30.09.26	South Norfolk Council	Precept	£7,750.00
Current A/c Balance C/Fwd			£25,171.95
Deposit A/c Balance C/Fwd			£120,641.38

PAYMENTS FOR APPROVAL THIS MONTH: UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT					
BALANCE AS 02.09.26			£25,171.95		
PAY TYPE	PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL AMOUNT	VAT	PAYE
BACS	M Ridgwell	Sep Salary & Exps	400.85		
BACS	HMRC	PAYE to month 6	90.40		90.40
BACS	Norfolk PTS	Training, JW	72.00	12.00	
BACS	Broadland Tree Services	Grasscutting, July	672.00	112.00	
BACS	Broadland Tree Services	Grasscutting, August	672.00	112.00	
BACS	M Crouch	Cleaning Playground	40.68	6.94	
BACS	M Crouch	Paper Cutter	18.68	3.11	
BACS	Huws-Gray	Picnic Benches (Pd by JW)	436.42	72.74	
BACS	Mr & Mrs Wilson	Coffee Morning donation	60.00		
	Unity Trust	Service Charge	7.00		
		Total	2,470.03	318.79	90.40
BALANCE C/FWD			£22,701.92		

CASHBOOK BALANCES: 07.10.26

Details		CR	DR	
Cash Book Balances Brought Forward		25,171.95		
Unity Trust Bank Current Account	A1			
Unity Trust Deposit Account	A2	120,641.38		
Receipts this month (listed above)	B	7,750.00		
Payments this month (listed above)	C	2,470.03		
Cash Book Balances Carried Forward (=A1+A2+B-C)				151,093.30
Unity Current Account Balance				30,451.92
Unity Deposit Account Balance				120,641.38
Total Bank Balances				£151,093.30

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT – OCTOBER 2026

Margaret Thomas - County Councillor for West Depwade

Highways continue to be a key issue for local residents. Norfolk County Council is trialling a new repair system called Roadmender, which treats cracks and road defects before they develop into potholes. The aim is to provide quicker, more durable repairs, minimise disruption and make better use of taxpayers' money.

The County Council has also published its initial **budget proposals for 2027/28**. Rising demand for adult social care and children's services continues to place pressure on finances, and the Council is consulting on a range of proposals aimed at protecting frontline services while closing a projected funding gap.

Key proposals include:

- Earlier intervention and neighbourhood support to reduce demand for adult social care
- More support for children to remain within or return to family networks, alongside expanded family help services
- Higher income from infrastructure fees and charges

Adult social care remains an important priority. The national **Big Conversation on Care** is seeking views from residents to help shape future care provision. This complements Norfolk's ongoing work to support people to live independently and remain connected to their local communities for longer.

[\[caseycommission.co.uk\]](https://caseycommission.co.uk/), [The Big Conversation on Care](#) | [The Casey Commission](#)

Public health initiatives are also expanding across the county. New self-service health check stations have been introduced, allowing residents to access free health assessments, including blood pressure, heart rate and lifestyle indicators, together with personalised advice and signposting to support services.

Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service recorded its busiest month ever in August, attending 1,295 incidents following an exceptionally hot and dry summer. The increase was largely driven by fires across the county, including incidents in Kenninghall and other rural locations.

Young people across Norfolk have benefited from a range of summer activities organised by the County Council's youth support team. Nearly 1,700 young people took part in programmes designed to build confidence, improve wellbeing and provide positive opportunities, particularly for those at risk of isolation or exploitation.

There are also several **funding opportunities** available for community organisations. Grants are currently being offered to support community facilities, local projects and renewable energy initiatives. Parish councils and local groups may wish to explore whether these opportunities could benefit their communities.

Finally, the County Council has adopted its new "**Standing Up for Norfolk**" priorities, focusing on supporting vulnerable residents, improving roads and transport, strengthening communities, encouraging economic growth and ensuring value for money. These priorities will help shape the Council's work over the coming years.

Local Issues and Community Representation

Alongside these county-wide developments, I have continued to represent residents and communities across West Depwade on a range of local issues, including major planning applications, road safety, rural infrastructure and adult social care transformation.

- I recently attended the Planning Inspectorate examination hearings for the proposed East Pye Solar Farm and spoke on behalf of local residents. I raised concerns about the difficulties many people have faced engaging with the process and the confusion and stress this has caused. During the issue-specific hearings, I highlighted the lack of assessment of the cumulative impact that multiple large-scale energy developments could have on residents' mental health and wellbeing, as well as their potential impact on local services. I am pleased that the Planning Inspectorate agreed that this issue should be scoped back into the examination. I will continue to make representations throughout the process, liaise with the Block East Pye Solar campaign group and remain firmly opposed to this application.
- I also recently raised concerns at the County Council's Planning and Infrastructure Select Committee regarding Anglian Water's compensation process for affected farmers. I highlighted the complexity of the arrangements and the additional stress and uncertainty this can create, particularly for tenant farmers, and called for a simpler and more transparent approach.
- As Deputy Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, I continue to play an active role in helping to drive the transformation programme currently taking place across Norfolk. This work is focused on improving outcomes for residents, supporting greater independence, delivering services closer to communities where possible, and ensuring best value for money across the adult social care sector.
- I continue to liaise with highways officers on speed reduction measures and wider road safety concerns across the division.
- I am also working with digital services to support improvements in both digital connectivity and digital skills across Norfolk, helping to ensure rural communities are not left behind.
- In addition, I continue to make representations on behalf of residents regarding planning applications where there are significant local concerns, ensuring community views are fully considered throughout the planning process.

Please contact me if you wish me to raise any concerns or issues on your behalf.

Margaret Thomas

County Councillor for West Depwade

Email: margaret.thomas.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk

District Councillor Report October 2026

Funding Success!

I was delighted that two of my three applications for grant funding from South Norfolk Council were successful. Bunwell Village Hall will now have £7,700 to put towards new fire doors, front doors, CCTV and kitchen facilities, while Aslacton Parish Council will receive £1,200 to help them replace

their churchyard toilet facilities. My third application, for Rachel Duffield's Community Arts Clubs CIC, wasn't successful this time but we have been informed there will be a second round of funding in February 2027 so we will try again then and please let me know if there are any other projects in the pipeline you would like my help with.

East Pye Update

The hearings at Dunston Hall were very well attended last month and Adrian Ramsay spoke on behalf of his residents regarding the more problematic aspects of the scheme in his constituency areas of Great Moulton and Tivetshall. All recordings, and initial questions posed by the Planning Inspectorate, can be found here <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN0110014>

I filed my second submission as an 'interested party' in time for the deadline of 6th October and am happy to email this to anyone who would like to read it. The only way you can feedback on the project is if you register as an interested party and it is not too late to do so if you have good reason – email eastpyesolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

The examination stage will take up to six months and may include further in-person hearings.

Village Clusters Consultation

The Planning Inspectorate has proposed a series of changes to the Village Clusters Plan and these are now out for public consultation until 26th October. Consultation documents will be available online through the Council's Local Plan consultation website (<https://southnorfolkandbroadland.oc2.uk/>). The changes for the four Bunwell parishes are very minimal but do go online to have a look and submit your comments, and of course there are always copies of the consultation available at local libraries.

Planning Reminder

Just a reminder that as of the end of October, I will not be able to call planning applications into committee unless there is a very good reason to do so. I have one outstanding call-in, which is the FIELD BESS in Great Moulton, but I believe this will be honoured as it is such a large project. Of course, parish councils will still be able to comment on applications, as will I.

Food Waste Reminder

You should be receiving your food waste caddies very soon – most of us are in the second phase which was put back to the 9th November. Even if you don't want to make use of this service, South Norfolk Council has advised to keep hold of your caddies (there are other uses for them!) rather than refusing them or sending them back.

South Norfolk In Bloom Reminder

This worthwhile scheme is still running up until 15th November so have a think about whether you would still like to take advantage of £1 for every resident in your parish towards communal planting schemes, vegetable growing or biodiversity projects:

<https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/communityfunding/south-norfolk-in-bloom-fund>

And finally...

The news came in last month after I had written my September report so it feels rather old now but in case you weren't aware, the Unitary Council plans have now been withdrawn by the government in Norfolk and we are back to holding District Council elections again in May 2027, as was always the plan. We do not know if the Unitaries will be reintroduced but for now, this is what we are all planning for.

Cllr Suzanne Wateridge

Member for Bunwell Ward, South Norfolk Council

m: 07943 180556 suzanne.wateridge@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk

Footpath Warden Report 07/10/26 – September goings-on

I thought I would have an update from the council about the Banyard's Hall signs by now, but alas, nothing yet. I am contemplating a gathering of pitchfork-wielding locals to find and retrieve the “missing” signs. Quicker than waiting for the council to do something. See me afterwards if you have a pitchfork and a few hours spare one evening. Drinks and flaming torches will be provided.

I can say that I have installed some new DIY signs after the “mysterious” disappearance of the last batch. I've already had to replace one, but luckily cardboard is free and I've got plenty of it.



Still no news about Mystery Footpath 4, which I'm sure you're all terribly disappointed to hear.

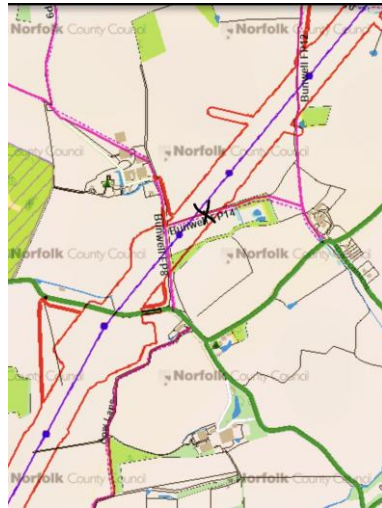
I bumped into Sasha and Dan of North Lodge at the weekend, there's been no progress on the diversion of the Bunwell stretch of Carleton Rode FP3. Hopefully something will happen soon so they can get to work before the weather really turns.

I am slowly working my way through the list of landowners with paths across their land. I spent an informative afternoon with Mr Dent of Persehall Manor Farm, was given a tour of his footpaths, and discussed the issues currently affecting them. Eastons are next on the list. I will keep you posted.

I received a report of a fallen tree on footpath 14, it turns out there are also several smaller trees next to it that are in precarious positions. All have now been reported to the council.



On the way down to inspect the fallen tree I noticed the local badgers have been enlarging an old outlier sett in the hedge next to the path, on the Banyards Hall side of the little wood. It happens to be smack in the middle of the pylon route. I would ask anyone who walks that path to please keep an eye on the sett and report any human disturbances to me and if necessary, the local constabulary. Interfering with an active sett is a criminal offence.



I would also like to take this opportunity, as we are in harrowing, beet harvesting and winter sowing season, to remind local landowners with crossfield paths of their legal obligations, which are as follows:

field-edge and cross-field public rights of way

You must not cultivate (eg plough) footpaths or bridleways that follow a field edge. The minimum width you need to keep undisturbed is:

- 1.5 metres for a field edge footpath
- 3 metres for a field edge bridleway

You should avoid cultivating a cross-field footpath or bridleway. If you have to cultivate make sure the footpath or bridleway:

- remains apparent on the ground to at least the minimum width of 1 metre for a footpath or 2 metres for a bridleway, and is not obstructed by crops
- is restored to at least the minimum width so that it's reasonably convenient to use within:
 - 14 days of first being cultivated for that crop
 - 24 hours of any subsequent cultivation, unless a longer period has been agreed in advance in writing by the highway authority

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-rights-of-way-landowner-responsibilities#field-edge-and-cross-field-public-rights-of-way>

This applies to all footpaths in the parish, even where the farmer has given the public permission to walk around the edge of a field a path crosses.

Katherine Womack

Pedantic Pedestrian