

BUNWELL PARISH COUNCIL
MILL HOUSE, LENWADE MILL, NORWICH, NR9 5QA
www.bunwellpc.info

Chairman: J Chapman,
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MINUTES of Bunwell Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 5th February 2025 at the Village Hall, Bunwell.

Cllrs Present at the Meeting: Cllr M Booty, Cllr J Chapman, Cllr M Crouch, and Cllr D Ward

Also Present: Parish Clerk, County Cllr Catherine Rowett and 7 members of the public.

MINUTES	ACTION
1. To receive apologies – apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Spooner and Watson, also from District Cllr Wateridge.	
2. To record declarations of interest from Council members in any item to be discussed – there were no declarations of interest.	
3. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 8th January 2025 – the minutes of the meeting held on 8 th January 2025, pages 558-563, 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 Chapman and Crouch will bring more information to the next meeting.	Cllrs Chapman & Crouch
5. To receive the District and County Councillors' Reports	
5.1. County Councillor, Catherine Rowett, had sent a full report which is attached to these minutes. She mentioned the proposals for local government devolution and Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils have applied to central government to fast-track restructure which included cancelling this year's May elections. The Minister's decision to proceed has just been received. She also mentioned the County Council's vote, which will take place shortly, to agree the budget for the coming year. Highways have received a £56 million grant for highway maintenance, but she urged residents to report any potholes or problems on the NCC website. The danger of recharging lithium batteries has been addressed by Trading Standards as part of a regional campaign, and everyone should be aware that many batteries sold online do not meet safety standards and have caused fires when batteries have been charged indoors. Information from central Government included a regional lockdown for poultry to prevent bird flu in our region and notice of an exercise which will take place later this year to test the national response to any possible future major pandemic outbreak.	
5.2. District Councillor, Suzanne Wateridge, sent her report which is attached to these minutes. She also mentioned devolution, as well as the Help Hub van which will be parked at the Carleton Rode Hall/Social Club at 10am to 4pm every Thursday until the 13 th March. Residents are encouraged to take advantage of this service for help and advice.	

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- 6. Resident's Questions** – A resident raised the issue of the National Grid's Plans for installing pylons from Norwich to Tilbury. A recent newsletter said that they have identified some potential local changes to the location of 3 pylons in our area and will hold targeted consultations before confirming any decisions on these. More information is available on the National Grid's website below and residents are encouraged to send in their comments by the deadline of 3rd March. They are also holding webinars for residents who wish to comment or find out more on the 11th Feb at 6pm and on 12th Feb at noon. Access can be found by clicking on the link on the website - <https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/norwich-to-tilbury/public-consultation-and-programme> The matter of farm tractors speeding through the village was raised.
- 7. To receive and discuss correspondence** – emails received had been forwarded to Cllrs and dealt with as required.
- 8. Working Groups** – to receive updates from:
- 8.1. Planning Development Group – there are no updates to report at the moment
- 9. Highway & Footpath Matters** –
- 9.1. Update on NCC Highways Department drainage system work – NCC Highways had been contacted concerning the poor surface left following the recent work and we are awaiting their comments.
- 9.2. Safety issues crossing the Turnpike outside the Village Hall – County Cllr Rowett will contact Highways to ask that a 40mph roundel be painted on the road to encourage motorists to obey the speed limit and she will ask whether it is possible to reduce the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph during school times.
- 9.3. Safety issues at the junction of Bunwell Street and Church Lane – Following the recent accident at this junction between a cyclist and a vehicle, councillors discussed the possibility of any improvements that could be made but are awaiting the outcome of any report from the Police before proceeding further.
- 9.4. There are no matters of concern at the moment relating to footpaths in the village.
- 10. Playground/Village Hall** –
- 10.1. It was suggested that a clean-up operation be organised for the Spring when residents could be invited to help. A suitable time will be arranged when the weather improves. Efforts continue to try to remove the adult gym equipment sited on the playing field. A decision will be made by the April meeting on its disposal.
- 11. Planning Applications – to discuss and vote on any new planning applications** – no applications have been received or decisions made since the last meeting.
- 12. Finance**
- 12.1. Payments for January had been circulated and councillors agreed to these transactions. The Cashbook balance was noted.
- 12.2. The Clerk raised the matter of updating the Parish Council's Asset Register and help was offered by two councillors to check the information held.
- 13. To receive matters of importance from Councillors** – no new concerns were raised.

**Cllrs
Crouch &
Ward**

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

15. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 5th March 2025 at 7.30pm

16. Meeting Closed 8.45pm

UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT	
BALANCE AS AT 08.01.25	£23,389.34

RECEIPTS AS AT 08.01.25			
DATE	RECEIVED FROM	DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL AMOUNT
BALANCE C/FWD			£23,389.34

PAYMENTS FOR APPROVAL IN OCTOBER: UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT					
BALANCE AS AT 08.01.25				£23,389.34	
PAY TYPE	PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL AMOUNT	VAT	PAYE
BACS	Bunwell Village Hall	Hall Hire Jan	30.00		
BACS	M Ridgwell	Jan Salary & Exps	318.75		71.20
BACS	HMRC	PAYE to month 9	231.59		
	Unity Trust	Service Charge	6.00		
		Total	586.34		71.20
RECEIPTS					
BALANCE C/FWD				£22,803.00	

CASHBOOK BALANCE: 05.02.25

Details	CR	DR	
Cash Book Balance Brought Forward (Unity Trust Bank Current Account) A	£23,389.34		
Receipts this month (see listed above) B			
		Payments this month (listed above) C	586.34
		Cash Book Balance Carried Forward (=A+B-C)	22,803.00
		Unity Balance	£22,803.00

Councillor report 3rd February 2025, from Catherine Rowett

03/02/2025

Progress report

Since the start of January we've been engulfed by the emergency Council meeting and debates about devolution (see below). I need to get fixed up with some visit dates with Highways and push for progress on things that aren't going well yet. I'm following up issues with the new signage in Furze Green as well as existing issues in Forncett. I'm looking forward to seeing the plans for the new speed limits in Bressingham.

I've had some answers from the buses team about some of the mysterious new bus stops. I've put in the January suggestions for things to improve our buses and I am planning to make a suggestion on that for our proposed amendments to the Cabinet's budget plans on the 18th February.

I've signed a letter to the government about protecting chalk streams, and I've been involved in campaigns in support of the climate and nature (CAN) bill which is vital to protecting our countryside and wildlife and also legally enshrining our commitments to climate action agreed internationally for the sake of the whole world. We need it to protect us from this government which seems intent on vandalism across our country in the name of the nonsense they call growth.

There's further bad news now in that the government is trying to prevent environmentalists from challenging destructive infrastructure plans by way of judicial review.

Devolution

Just before Christmas, the government put out a plan for local government reorganisation and restructuring that has sent the entirety of Suffolk and Norfolk into a spin, along with many other parts of the UK. Proposals include elected mayors for large areas (in our case Norfolk and Suffolk together) and unitary authorities that combine the functions of District and County councils, and eliminate the layer of representation that is currently district councillors. Since these are the people closest to the actual places you live, and elected to serve small groups of villages rather than large areas, this seems like centralising power in large authorities, rather than devolution.

Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils decided to apply for the option of a fast-track restructure, which could include cancelling this year's May elections. Only the Green group voted against going for this hasty restructure programme and silencing the democratic voice. We also presented an amendment in favour of fairer voting systems for the new strategic authorities and mayors, which is essential if we are to get representatives who command the respect of a majority of the people. That was voted down, despite a number of speakers agreeing that it would help to restore confidence in our democratic procedures.

At the time of writing we are awaiting (every day) the minister's decision as to which councils are to proceed on the priority programme for reorganisation.

Budget

The Council will meet on 18th February to vote on Cabinet's the proposals for how to deliver a balanced budget for next year within impossible constraints, where revenue doesn't match the demand for what we have to deliver, and the level of council tax rise permitted doesn't match inflation or the increased costs for social care workers that result from the rise in the minimum wage and national insurance.

Road repairs

Norfolk has been allocated £56 million for highways maintenance. Please report potholes and decaying road conditions in Norfolk to the county council by completing their online

form: www.norfolk.gov.uk/potholes. However, a new report shows that the Department for Transport is totally out of touch with the decay to rural roads. See the report [here](#).

Lithium batteries

More than 1,800 potentially dangerous batteries and chargers were removed from sale thanks to a regional campaign by Trading Standards services from local authorities, led by NCC. They bought and tested 22 items, primarily from online marketplaces. All failed to provide the correct information as required by law, with 13 also failing on safety grounds, including risk of electric shock, fire and explosion. If you believe you've bought a sub-standard product, you can report it by contacting the Citizen's Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133.

Info from Central Government

Bird Flu (avian influenza)

We're in a regional lockdown for poultry to prevent bird flu. People with small or large flocks of chickens that normally roam free need to keep them indoors. Guidance on how to prevent your chickens or ducks from getting it, and stop it spreading, is available [here](#).

UK Pandemic exercise planned

Local authorities will take part in the UK's [largest ever pandemic exercise](#) later this year. The

'national response exercise' is designed to test the country's ability to respond to a future major pandemic outbreak. It will involve local resilience forums working alongside all central government departments, devolved administrations, and – the government hopes – the 'most

significant involvement ever' at a local level. It may be that parishes would like to have some input, and you might also want to think about having your own parish emergency plan for action (maybe for other emergencies as well as epidemics).

Environment Agency secures commitments from water sector

The Environment Agency (EA), working closely with Natural England, [says it has secured the largest ever commitment from water companies to clean up the environment and invest in new infrastructure since privatisation](#).

The Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP) is a large regulatory framework that outlines environmental obligations for water companies. The WINEP programme sets out over 24,000 actions water companies must take over the next five years to meet their legal requirements for the environment.

The EA says that this series of targeted interventions represents a £22.1bn investment in the environment and will lead to improvements in water infrastructure to secure future supply, habitats and biodiversity and drinking water quality. I see no evidence that we have any regulatory body that can actually do its job because the cuts to the environment agency mean it has no capacity, and we no longer get the hefty fines from the EU for failing on water quality. It's no accident that we had clean rivers and clean beaches while we were in the EU and since then have become a cess pit of filth.

Contact me

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

Catherine Rowett

3rd February 2025

Bunwell District Councillor Report February 2025

Update on Norwich to Tilbury from National Grid

Catherine and I were briefed along with other councillors this week on some small changes to the pylons route, following National Grid's consultations last year. One of these is around Bunwell Hill and I believe Margaret has the details but they can also be found on the website [Norwich to Tilbury | Public consultation and programme | National Grid ET](#). The area is called Norfolk 3. These are local, targeted consultations and the deadline for feedback is March 3rd. They are holding webinars for parish councils and any residents who wish to comment or find out more on 11th February at 6pm and 12th February at noon. You can sign up by clicking the links on the website.

Community Engagement Van – New Location!

The Help Hub van, which I mentioned in December, was a little delayed and had to move locations but is now to be found every Thursday from 10am to 4pm in Carleton Rode, at the Jubilee

Hall/Social Club. Hopefully it will get more footfall there as it's a really excellent service. Spread the word! It will be there until 13th March.

Mindful Towns & Villages Update

In January I completed the NHS Talking Therapies Wellbeing Champion Training, as part of the Mindful Towns & Villages Project run by the Council. It was really worthwhile, made me think more deeply about how to listen and help people who might need it, for whatever reason. The facilitators would be very happy to visit any Parish Council or community who might be interested in becoming Wellbeing Champions themselves in their community. It only takes two champions in a small village to give it 'Mindful' status. Local villages who have gained this accreditation include Tibenham, Winfarthing, Shelfanger and Gissing.

At a time when many people are struggling with their mental health and wellbeing, it means your community have someone to turn to, with a basic level of mental health training, who can listen and signpost if needed. Again, all the information can be found on the Council's website [What does becoming a Wellbeing Champion involve? | Broadland and South Norfolk](#)

Flood & Drought Summit at NCC

I virtually attended Norfolk County Council's inaugural flooding and drought summit recently. There were many local stakeholders present, as well as organisations such as Anglian Water and the Environment Agency. There was talk of working on mapping regularly flooded areas digitally, so that local communities, who are best situated to do so, can report on the flooding in their area. There was talk about creating a local toolkit for parishes to deal with flooding emergencies. There was a lot of talk and hopefully there will be a lot of preventative action, as everyone agreed we need to adapt urgently to the extreme weather conditions that the climate crisis is creating. The fact that Bunwell PC is working on its own emergency plan already is to be applauded!

Cllr Suzanne Wateridge Member for Bunwell Ward, South Norfolk Council

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