

BUNWELL PARISH COUNCIL

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REPORT OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7th MAY 2025

Cllrs Present: Cllr J Chapman (Chair), Cllr M Booty, Cllr M Crouch, Cllr S Spooner and Cllr R Watson. Cllr Ward did not attend. The Parish Clerk, District Councillor Suzanne Wateridge, County Councillor Catherine Rowett and 11 members of the public attended.

Chairman's Report – Chairman, Cllr John Chapman, was unfortunately delayed due to traffic, but in the interim his report for the year was read. His report mentioned that since the election last year, the Parish Council only formally had three remaining councillors, but two previous councillors were welcomed back via co-option. Two more volunteers have since joined but Cllr Bob Smith has stepped down after over 10 years' service. He was warmly thanked for his service as a Councillor and Chairman.

He said that key issues for the Council and the Parish this year have been broadly similar to those of last year – namely the threat of the Norwich to Tilbury Pylon Scheme. Despite the outstanding research and responses prepared by several volunteers, and the feedback submitted to the consultations by the Council and many villagers, National Grid have not factored in any of the points raised in any meaningful manner. The PC will continue to strive to influence Government decisions by asking them to consider the more sensible approach of an integrated off-shore grid or HVDC.

Norfolk County Council have finally completed the much-needed drainage improvements along Bunwell Street. Despite the disruption from the significantly longer than expected road closure, hopefully there will be no further flooding issues, but unfortunately the road surface is far from ideal and the PC are pressing Highways Department to repair and improve this before the winter.

In the play area near the Village Hall the outdoor gym equipment was beyond economic repair and has been removed. However, this means that funds will now be available to focus on the main play area equipment. We also now have a new grass-cutting contractor and so far, feedback has been very positive. The New Buckenham Under-7s football team will be using the playing field for the summer season and it would be good to encourage further use in the future.

Lastly, the Parish Council has been working on a new Parish Emergency Plan which, hopefully, will never be needed, but it is sensible to plan for such an occasion.

Cllr Chapman said that due to changes in personal circumstances, he will be stepping down from the Parish Council following this evening's meeting. This means that at present there are 5 councillors with four vacancies on the Parish Council and if any resident feels they would be able to help, then Co-option Forms are available on the PC website or they can contact the Clerk or a Councillor if they want more information.

The Chairman of the Village Hall reported that the last year had been reasonably successful with changes to the hiring pattern meaning that less organisations are using the Hall regularly but there have been more private bookings for functions both from local residents and from further afield.

St Michael's and All Saints' Parish Church. Unfortunately, Rev John Madinda was unable to attend but a summary of his report was read out and is attached to these minutes.

Finedale Foods Limited. Director and Owner, Edward Miles was unable to attend but had sent a report giving details of the food products produced in Bunwell, that they have a workforce of 30 people and that there are plans to provide more storage at the rear of the site. He said that the company supports local businesses and village events and they purchase local eggs and chickens.

Annual Report from County Councillor Catherine Rowett. Her full report is attached to these minutes, but subjects covered included her work with the parishes, her election as Leader of the Green Party on the County Council and that she sits on the Infrastructure and Development Committee. She spoke about Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation and said that we are awaiting Government's next moves in response to outline proposals for how Norfolk might be split between the new unitary councils. There are details of how residents can take part in a survey to give their views on her full report. She also spoke about Energy Schemes and Pylons.

Annual Report from District Councillor Suzanne Wateridge. Her full report is attached to these minutes but she spoke about Community Grants which have helped her parishes in the past year and that she is keen to ensure that these parishes benefit in the future from any grants that are available. She also spoke about the Norwich to Tilbury Pylon Scheme and the East Pye and Field BESS projects which will impact Great Moulton. Together with Cllr Rowett she had met with local residents on site in Bunwell Low Common to discuss National Grid's recent proposal to change the pylon route slightly through Bunwell. Other subjects mentioned include building contacts with South Norfolk Police, considering Planning Applications and looking at speeding up Planning Enforcement issues.

Report from PC Planning Development Group. The Chairman of this Group, Phil Gledhill, had sent in a full report which is attached to these minutes. This gives details of the Greater Norwich Local plan which identified the homes, jobs and infrastructure that needs to be planned across South Norfolk. The Plan required 40,541 homes in total with a 22% buffer to ensure delivery, and sites for 49,482 homes have been identified. In Bunwell there are 2 approved sites for development, one opposite Lilac Farm and the other opposite the bungalows of Greenways for approximately 35 houses across the two sites. The South Norfolk Village Cluster Housing Allocations Plan is scheduled for submission to the Secretary of State in July/August 2025 and finally adopted by South Norfolk Council in April/May 2026, so development of the sites cannot begin until then.

Report from the PC National Grid Pylon Scheme Group. A full and comprehensive report from this Group is attached to these minutes and further details of Bunwell's PC objections to this proposal and photographs of the areas affected are on the Parish Council website. The PC Pylon Group, together with local residents and our County and District Councillors, are working diligently on behalf of all residents, not just those closest to the line of Pylons, to ensure that the Government and National Grid properly assess this Scheme and the harm it will cause along its length, if it is allowed to go ahead.

The Chairman raised the question of how best to use the Community Infrastructure Levy income from building developments to enhance the facilities in the village and suggestions included providing changing facilities at the rear of the Village Hall for users of the Playing Field, and possible community facilities shared between local villages for the elderly. He encouraged residents to take part in the decision-making in the village by considering becoming a Parish Councillor.

He thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and said that the Parish Council will continue to do their best to ensure Bunwell residents' interests are looked after to the best of the Council's ability in the future and invited them to stay for the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

Bunwell Parish Council – Chair’s Report – May 2025

Following the election year last year, the Parish Council only formally had three remaining councillors – Councillor Smith, Councillor Spooner, and myself. We were pleased to welcome back two of the previous councillors via co-option this time last year (Councillor Ward and Councillor Watson), and two more have since joined our ranks (Councillor Booty and Councillor Crouch). Councillor Smith stepped down earlier this year, and I would like to thank him for his work as a councillor and previous Chair over a number of years. Key issues for the Council and the Parish this year have been broadly similar to those of yesteryear – dominated once again by the recurring threat of the Norwich to Tilbury Pylon Scheme and updates to the proposals. Unfortunately, despite the outstanding research and responses prepared by several volunteers, and the feedback submitted to the consultations by the Council and many of our villagers, it seems National Grid are yet to factor in any of the points raised in any kind of meaningful manner. We will of course continue trying, and we can only hope that in the end a more sensible approach of an integrated off-shore grid or HVDC undergrounding will be adopted for the project. Following the efforts of the Surface Water Drainage Group, Norfolk County Council have finally completed the much-needed drainage works along Bunwell Street. Despite the disruption from the significantly longer than expected road closure, this will hopefully be enough to prevent the flooding issues in the north part of the village from recurring. Now we just need the road to be resurfaced to a reasonable standard... In the play area near the village hall, the outdoor gym equipment near the Wood Lane footpath entrance was sadly beyond economic repair and has now had to be removed. However, this should free up funds to better focus on the primary play area equipment. Following issues last summer, we have also switched to a new grass cutting provider, and so far feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Lastly, the Parish Council has been working on a new Parish Emergency Plan. As always with these things we hope it’s never needed, but it’s always best to be prepared. And finally on a personal note, due to changes in personal circumstances, I will be stepping down from the Parish Council following this evening’s meeting. That will leave a total of four vacancies on the council, which we are as always keen to fill if anyone is interested! Please do get involved in helping decide how to support and drive the village forward and the right direction for doing so. No experience is necessary; I certainly didn’t have any when I started! Feel free to speak to any of us if you have any questions about what the role entails, and to the clerk if you would like a co-option application form or any other information.

John Chapman, Chairman, Bunwell Parish Council

ST MICHAELS AND ALL ANGELS CHURCH, BUNWELL, 2025

This Year in the benefice

	Item	Activities	Comments	Conclusion
1	Introduction	Firstly, I would want to thank all in the team ministry such as Margaret Smith, Rev Paul Schwier and Elisabeth Spry, and all the retired clergy, Bishop David Gillett, Canon Martin Smith, Canon Bob Baker members of the PCC’s and all those who have	This has been another eventful, challenging but also an encouraging year	I hope and pray that as we enter into the new year we can be encouraged by our strengths, work on our weaknesses and use the

		<p>supported the events in the Team last year leading into this year. I would also like to give special thanks to our new Rural Dean Revd Michael Windridge and our bishops, especially Ian, Bishop of Thetford, for all their support.</p> <p>This annual report covers activities since we last had our APCM's. The report includes Sunday and mid-week services and other special services, concerts and other areas of ministry</p> <p>such as the schools.</p>		<p>opportunities which come up and be able to address the challenges which we have encountered in the past year.</p>
2	Developments	<p>In 2018 I had reported that, "in the past year, the planned step towards forming a Team Ministry which brings together the 5 churches of the Pilgrim Benefice and the 3 churches of the Long Stratton Team was completed and we are now a team known as the Long Stratton and Pilgrim Benefice Team Ministry.</p> <p>Today following a few years of reorganisation and consultation, I am reporting that we are now back to being "The Pilgrim Benefice consisting of 6 Parishes of the Old Pilgrim Benefice, plus an addition of Wacton from the old Long Stratton Benefice". This has been a frustrating period, and we are still waiting for the Pastoral Scheme to be completed.</p>	<p>This current situation came about following the Diocese initiated reorganization of the Benefices and deaneries. It was partly due to a shortage of ordained clergy and partly due to decline of congregations and Parish Share collections</p>	<p>As part of the process, our neighbouring deanery [the Humbleyard} was dissolved and last year the Long Stratton and Pilgrim Benefice was suspended, which meant we could not make any significant steps until we knew what shape our benefice would take.</p>
3	Sunday services	<p>However, we are grateful that in the past year, following the reorganization, the pattern for our Sunday services was reviewed and we have made no changes. It was agreed at the Church Warden's meeting on the 3rd June 2024. that the services will be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every first and third Sunday of the month the service will be held at All Saints Church Carleton Rode, St Michaels and All Angels Great Moulton and All Saints Wacton. • Every second and fourth Sunday of the month the service will be held at St 	<p>Aslacton decided to have one service a month during the winter months.</p> <p>Further, the churchwardens suggested that we will need flexibility when circumstances change. Eg, Carleton Rode moved its Plough Sunday Service to the Jubilee Hall as an outreach service.</p>	<p>The rota continues to be work in progress</p>

		<p>Michaels Great Moulton, and St Michaels and All Angels Bunwell.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tibenham will have only one Sunday a month on the third Sunday of the month <p>A United service will be held on every 5th Sunday of the month. This was to rotate amongst the different churches.</p>	<p>Aslacton chose to cancel an Easter Eve service to have a Maundy Thursday Service etc</p>	
4	Midweek Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Bunwell there are morning prayers every Thursday morning at 9:30am. However, the Holy Communion service which used to take place every 2nd Thursday of the month has long stopped following the Pandemic. In Carleton Rode we have mid-day prayers every Friday at 12:00 noon. The midweek prayers in Wacton have also stopped. 	<p>These services are very important in keeping the churches open and in having an act of worship held on a day of the week other than Sunday each week.</p>	<p>These services need to be encouraged, and a welcome given for more people who can make it to attend</p>
5	Alternative/ special services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Church and Carleton Rode Baptist chapel. Last year this was used as the Stations of the Cross service and witness walk Service of the stations of the cross Easter services Harvest services Remembrance services Service of lessons and carol Christingle service Christmas services 	<p>These services have always attracted more people, and they continue to be a very important part of the mission of the church. They open good opportunities to encourage attendance.</p>	<p>We need to continue to make the most use of these services and encourage a continued pattern and make them consistent and reliable</p>
6	Bible Study	<p>The bible study groups stopped long ago, but there have been attempts to resume them</p>	<p>More discussion and planning are needed.</p>	<p>People need encouragement to attend and where possible to start a lecture series.</p>
7	School Ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I continue to do collective worship at Carleton Rode school on a weekly basis. On Shrove Tuesday we had a very successful pancake race organised by the church and Friends of Carlton Rode School. There was an encouraging turn out and it was suggested that it becomes an annual event There has also been an Easter egg hunt between Carleton Rode and Bunwell churches, the Baptist Church together with the schools and the Friends of Carleton Rode School. 	<p>These are good opportunities for children to explore Bible stories, and there has been very strong and encouraging support from the church, staff and governing body at Carleton Rode school.</p> <p>This continues to be a good development and it is always wonderful to see families and friends fill the churches on such</p>	<p>There is a very encouraging atmosphere, and this has improved good relationships between the school and the church in Carleton Rode.</p> <p>Unfortunately, due to the small size of the church in Aslacton, families and friends</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have been very encouraged to see Bunwell school, Aslacton school and Carleton Rode Schools, the 3 schools in our benefice, maintaining the tradition of coming into church for holding special services such as Christmas Carols, Easter, Harvest, Remembrance services or celebration assemblies such as leavers' assembly and nativity plays. 	occasions to support our schools.	have not been able to attend.
8	Weddings Funerals Baptisms Confirmations	As per register		
9	Other events	The various churches have organised other events, such as the Benefice Garden Party at Carleton Rode rectory in the summer, a wedding Festival and Fete in Carleton Rode, a D-Day celebration and Christmas Festival in Bunwell, the Benefice Lunch, Christmas Dinner in Carleton Rode, a quiz in Wacton, sponsored Bible reading and Christmas Carol Concert in Aslacton, Christmas suppers, Harvest suppers, Music Festivals, Porch sales etc where there was also fund raising.	In these events many of those who come are non-church attendees, so again these are lovely opportunities to meet people from the wider communities	These are also very encouraging moments for witness and fund raising
10	The Church Fabric and churchyard	Our PCC's have been kept very busy in planning events and making decisions and have been involved in activities which have helped to maintain our church buildings. Considering the age of our churches ranging from 11 th Century, the oldest church, to the more recent church built in the 15 th century, our church have been very well looked after. This work is ongoing, and thanks to all members of our communities who have turned up to support. I particularly would like to give special thanks to our local councils who have continued to support the upkeep of our churchyards. Without this support, our churchyards would be impossible to maintain.	There have been various groups and individuals who have supported our PCC's with ideas, and initiatives in running community events, which have raised funds for the fabric and for the churchyard too	Many humble thanks
11	Parish Newsletter	The parish newsletter continues to go out monthly with thanks to our	The newsletter has continued to be	The magazine continues to help

		editor, Mr Alan Harris, and a new Treasurer, Mrs Lorraine Bensley.	maintained, and we are grateful to the magazine committee	link our communities and church.
12	Looking Ahead	As we begin to settle into the new normal, there are matters to think about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many of our congregations are struggling. How do we reach out? • We need to see how we can maintain our fabric and churchyards • We need to consider how we can be energy-efficient and environmentally friendly. 		There is definitely no quick answer, we will need time to think and act.

The Revd John Madinda [April 2025]

Report from Edward Miles, Owner & Director of Finedale Foods Limited

Finedale Foods is a frozen foods manufacturer, producing savoury pastry products, canapes for hospitality and snack products for airlines and convenience stores.

We own and produce under a number of brands, such as Frank Dale, George Adams and Delisante. We have recently launched a website <https://www.finedalefoods.co.uk/> this explains everything we do.

The business currently operates a small team of around 30 people, working on a single shift 5 days a week.

We have run out of storage space and are currently using temporary storage but wish to invest in the site and extend the building, towards the back, to accommodate more storage. The business had approved planning in 2016 and we will resubmit a planning application later this year.

We support local businesses, we purchase eggs and chicken locally and our staff support the local shop. We also support local events.

County Councillor annual report, April 2025, from Catherine Rowett

06/05/2025

Introduction

I've been your County Councillor since July 2023 so this is my second annual report.

Parishes

I've continued to work with officers at County Hall to solve issues around the parishes. Thanks to our bids to the Road Safety Community Fund in 2023-4 I was awarded two road safety schemes though we're still waiting for them to actually materialise. I've asked (too late probably) for another speed limit in Carleton Rode, with no luck so far. I've funded several improvements out of my highways allowance. I'm working with the buses team on improvements to take advantage of the bus service improvement grants and, as usual, dealing with various new and ongoing problems with footpaths, drainage/ditches and hedges.

County Council

Part way through the year, I was elected as Leader of the Green Group at County, so I now collaborate with other opposition leaders on holding the Conservative administration to account and challenging their priorities. I sit on the Infrastructure and Development Committee and take a special interest in the environment,

green spaces, food and energy security and rural transport. I have been serving on the board for the Long Stratton Bypass.

Devolution and Reorganisation

The government is proposing to reorganise local government, and also devolve powers from central government to a new mayoral authority to cover Norfolk and Suffolk. We are awaiting Government's next moves in response to outline proposals for how Norfolk might be split between the new unitary councils. Because of this, government cancelled the County Council elections so you've been deprived of your opportunity to vote me out this May!

Please do send in your views via a survey that the County Council has put out to gather information on what would serve residents best in the future organisation of council services. The link to the survey can be found here:

<https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/public-engagement/lgrfeedback/>

Energy schemes and pylons

Parishes and residents across the division are affected by a rash of proposals for renewable energy schemes and infrastructure projects. Some are clearly the wrong thing in the wrong place. I'm keen to support good green energy projects that could contribute to local and national energy needs, but this needs to be done alongside nature recovery and energy saving schemes. I have been actively working with the two local MPs to ensure that we don't become a county ravaged for destructive profit to be extracted for speculators with no respect for trees, wildlife, landscapes and human residents.

Contact me on

Catherine.rowett.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk for Council-related business.

Catherine Rowett, April, 2025

Bunwell District Councillor Annual Report May 2024/May 2025

I was elected as District Councillor for Bunwell, standing for the Green Party, in May 2024, winning by just 10 votes! Combining previous careers as a journalist, copy writer, concierge manager and company director, I had never worked in local politics before but have always had a passion to help people, whether that's friends and family, or my community. And a keen interest in politics!

A year on, I've discovered that being a Councillor combines skills learnt from all of those professions and motivations, and I'm really enjoying it. As all four parish councils are holding their Annual Parish Meetings this month, I thought I would summarise what I've achieved since I've had the privilege of representing you on South Norfolk Council.

1. **Community Grants.** I submitted two applications for the Community Action Fund in 2024. These were for a fuseboard upgrade in Bunwell Village Hall and a substantial toilet renovation at the Carleton Rode Social Club. Both were eligible but due to the popularity of the scheme, not every proposal could be funded and in the end, just the former was successful. This year, I am in ongoing talks with Carleton Rode Social Club about an application to redesign and renovate their car park, to make it safer and avoid parking on the road (a suggestion I brought to the table after complaints from local residents); and Aslacton and Great Moulton Youth FC, to replace the rabbit-proof fencing around their football ground.

I also have an annual allowance of £1,000 to spend on projects of my choice in the ward. This has so far funded a new wildlife camera and equipment in Fir Covert Wood, a community woodland in Carleton Rode; help towards creating a new library at Bunwell Primary School; and new play equipment for Caterpillars Playgroup in Great Moulton.

I have also facilitated lots of introductions and conversations between the excellent Communities Team at the Council and residents who are keen to explore other funding and grant avenues. For

example, Caterpillars are now benefitting from a Keep it Going grant; and after meeting an inspiring woman in Bunwell who wants to create a therapy garden as a calming and inspiring environment for teenagers, we are hopefully progressing that through various platforms.

- 2. Renewable Energy Infrastructure Projects.** One of the most contentious issues in the Bunwell area, I have had many discussions on the Norwich to Tilbury Pylons and more recently, East Pye and Field BESS projects, both of which will impact Great Moulton. As I have said many times, I agree with the government that we must invest in renewable energy at scale and at pace, but the infrastructure has to be in the right place and communities who are disproportionately impacted must be compensated. Alongside Catherine, I met with Grae and Samantha Piercy to discuss National Grid's recent proposal to change the pylon route in Bunwell and it seems that National Grid have been listening.

I have also worked with residents and officers on ensuring that FIELD have to carry out an EIA (Ecological Impact Assessment) on their 400MW BESS application in Great Moulton (they were trying to get away with not doing one). I am always happy to support residents where I feel there is a strong case.

I have also ensured that companies such as Station Road Solar keep their promises and commitment to community benefits schemes by ensuring that they get in touch with parish councils to draw up a heads of terms agreement.

Catherine and I also managed to reserve a chunk of Adrian Ramsay's time recently and he was able to attend a Great Moulton Parish Council meeting, where residents were able to quiz him about his thoughts on renewable energy. With nearly 200 parish councils in his constituency, we felt very lucky that Great Moulton was one of the few he's visited in person.

- 3. Building contact with South Norfolk Police.** Soon after I started, I realized that none of the Parish Councils had been receiving any kind of regular communication from the police. I made contact with Inspector Chris Tomkins based in Wymondham, and parishes are now kept up-to-date with police activity in the area. This relationship proved very useful recently when I liaised with Inspector Tomkins after a shocking indecent exposure incident in Bunwell, and I was able to send the Parish Council a report from Inspector Tomkins on how they dealt with, and are dealing with, the crime.
- 4. Speeding up Enforcement Issues.** I inherited several enforcement issues which I have looked into with the relevant officers at the council. These must remain confidential but I am hopeful that at least one of these will be progressed very soon – watch this space!
- 5. Supporting (or not!) Planning Applications.** I have met with or spoken to residents who are concerned about neighbour's planning applications and addressed these concerns with the relevant planning officer where relevant. Planning is one of the most complex issues I deal with but I have found it interesting to learn about the process.
- 6. Developing Land for Nature.** After a piece of land owned by South Norfolk Council became available last year, I started looking into the possibility of transferring this to the community, either as a communal play area for Great Moulton and Aslacton, or a nature recovery/community woodland project. Talks on this are still ongoing.

And in brief...

- I set up an interview for a promotional video shot by South Norfolk Council, to encourage residents to become Parish Councillors. Happy to report that Mo Negm in Great Moulton made the final cut!
- As the only Green Party Councillor on South Norfolk Council, I feel it's important to attend every Full Council Meeting and although Widdicombe Rules dictate that I cannot be on any committees, I have

made my voice heard and seconded a motion on Supporting the Climate and Nature Bill, as well as being the only Councillor to vote against 2 unitaries for South Norfolk (I believe there should be 3). I am not afraid to stand my ground!

- I have facilitated the four parish councils joining together for responses on issues such as Norwich to Tilbury – strength in numbers!
- I have been visible in the community, attending every parish council each month as much as possible

Cllr Suzanne Wateridge

Member for Bunwell Ward, South Norfolk Council

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

Bunwell Parish Council 2025 AGM – Housing Update

On the 25th March 2024 South Norfolk Council adopted the Greater Norwich Local Plan, known as the GNLP. This followed approval by inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State. When a council plan is adopted, it means the plan has been officially approved and legally enforced. The GNLP identifies the homes, jobs and infrastructure that needs to be planned across South Norfolk, Broadland and Norwich between now and 2038. The Plan requires 40,541 homes in total but with a 22% buffer, to ensure delivery, sites for 49,492 homes have been identified.

The GNLP includes confirmation of the housing growth required in the **South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan (VCHAP)** which covers smaller rural settlements. This includes Bunwell and under 'Local Plans' requires sites (48 identified) for a minimum of 1200 homes. The VCHAP is now being prepared and is scheduled for submission to the Secretary of State July/August 2025, for review September 2025 - March 2026 and finally adopted by South Norfolk Council during April/May 2026. Only then can development of the sites commence.

In Bunwell there are 2 approved sites for development, both north of Bunwell Steet, one opposite Lilac Farm (ref VCBUN2) and the other opposite the bungalows of Greenways (VCBUN1). South Norfolk Council Planning estimate around 35 houses across the two sites (SNC site assessments). This appears realistic assuming a suitable mix of housing. Sewer capacity and capability shall require thorough scrutiny at the planning development stage.

A point of importance - the GNLP Housing Development Plans, which include Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans, require periodic review. The review process is typically conducted every five years, as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). **This review ensures the plans remain relevant and aligned with current needs and circumstances.**

Given the Government has plans to build 1.5 million houses during its term in office, it's very likely that house building targets will increase across the board. There has also been mention in the media of the Government looking to create new towns and 100 new town locations have been suggested, including South Norfolk
(Ref BBC News/articles/cx2pdxn2pjdo).

The South Norfolk planners continue to receive routine planning applications. However, the Site Specific Allocations and Policies Document has been superseded by adoption of the Greater Norwich Local Plan in March 2024.

REPORT ON NATIONAL GRID'S PROPOSALS - NORWICH TO TILBURY PYLONS

General Background on Norwich to Tilbury

National Grid needs to expand the electricity grid to meet the country's future energy requirements. In East Anglia, this is primarily to transport green energy produced by wind farms off the east coast. The energy is mainly to be used by London and the South-East.

Plans for a new line of 520 pylons over 183km from Norwich to Tilbury were announced in 2022. This will start at the Norwich Main Substation and initially follow the route of the B1113.

The pylons are to be in the region of 50m high, and therefore visible for up to 10 miles. Native trees in the UK usually reach heights of up to 20-30m, so they will dominate the rural landscape.

.6 of these pylons are to be located in Bunwell Parish. The pylon line is to enter the parish from Fornsett End, running behind Cordwell, through the upper end of Low Common and on to the lower end of Bunwell Hill, before crossing the Tas Valley River and going on to Tibenham. In addition to the significant negative effects upon residents and businesses in these hamlets, the pylons will be highly visible from the B1113 and the village hall and playing fields.

The pylon route currently proposed, the '2024 preferred draft alignment', can be viewed on National Grid's website, Norwich to Tilbury.

National Grid held consultations about their proposals in 2022 and 2023 (non statutory consultations), 2024 (statutory consultation) and 2025 (targeted consultation). Bunwell Parish Council have submitted objections to the proposals in each of these.

2024 Statutory Consultation

Bunwell PC objected to the proposals on the grounds that they cause substantial harms:

- Proximity to Homes and Businesses
- Heritage
- Archaeology
- Environment, Habitat and Species
- Landscape
- Traffic
- Public Rights of Way
- Agricultural Land
- Recreation
- Mental Health

This report, submitted in March 2024, can be accessed on Bunwell PC website under 'Working Party Report'.

South Norfolk Council and Norfolk Council have also formally objected to the proposals.

National Grid has not yet published feedback or outcomes from this consultation.

2025 Targeted Consultation

In February/March 2025 National Grid held a small number of local 'targeted' consultations, seeking feedback on minor variations to their plans. Their proposal 'Norfolk 3' is to move two pylons either side of the River Tas at Bunwell Hill/Tibenham by roughly 60m to the west and to make slight adjustments to the positioning of associated pylons to the north and south.

This area is where the footpath between Bunwell Hill (Brick Kiln Lane) and Low Common runs. The path is sometimes referred to as Cow Lane. It is beloved by dog walkers and ramblers from Bunwell and beyond. It's an ancient pathway, surrounded by rare remnants of the medieval small system of agriculture and with exceptional landscape qualities. Much of the land here has formal ecological protections in place - Priority Habitats and a County Wildlife Site. The land here is only accessible by a small track and is therefore virtually untouched and is a haven for wildlife. Both the 2024 and 2025 routings through here involve the destruction of significant numbers of mature and veteran trees, inflicting huge and lasting damage on this historically and ecologically valuable location.

Photos of much of the area affected by the 2025 targeted consultation can be found on Bunwell PC website, entitled 'Woodland Photos'.

Misrepresentations and errors in documentation and process for this targeted consultation were found and reported to National Grid. These include the claim that an area of woodland has been 'cleared', when it evidently has not, as a significant number of large trees remain.

Bunwell PC stated in their 2024 submission and reiterated in their 2025 submission that the issue of this area's clear unsuitability for development cannot be solved by moving the pylons left or right and that an alternative solution must be found.

Bunwell PC's objection to the 2025 proposal can be found on their website under 'National Grid March 2025'

Recent Developments

Cllr Catherine Rowett and Cllr Suzanne Wateridge visited Bunwell Hill and the area of special interest described above.

Subsequently, there were site visits from Hugh Coggles, South Norfolk Ecologist and Biodiversity and Tree Manager and Catherine Dew, South Norfolk Ecologist and Biodiversity Officer.

As a result, South Norfolk Council have put a blanket TPO (Tree Preservation Order) on all the trees (woodlands and hedgerows) at the bottom of Brick Kiln Lane, deeming the area ecologically important. TPO 2025 No. SN0737. This will not prevent National Grid's plans - but they will be required to seek consent for any work to each tree in the TPO.

Cllr Catherine Rowett has met with Simon Pepper, Senior Project Manager for National Grid, to discuss the issues and raise concerns. It appeared in this meeting that National Grid favours the 2025 routing (through the 'previously cleared woodland' and not through the adjacent pasture) but Simon Pepper said that nothing has been decided yet..

Local landowner and woodland conservationist Grae Piercy continues to challenge National Grid to try and minimise the ecological impact of the project, should it go ahead.

Other

It has been proposed by the government that households within 500m of a new or upgraded pylon line will receive discounts of £250 per annum off their electricity bill for 10 years. No actual compensation is available, except for land which is to host a pylon or is in the development consent area.

The reduction in house value for those within the vicinity of a pylon is said to be up to 30%. A property close to the pylon run in Low Common has had no viewings - reportedly because of pylon proximity.

National Grid Timeframe

National Grid state that they will be submitting a DCO (Development Consent Order) for the project in Q3 2025.

The decision is expected to take place in 2026.

Construction is anticipated to begin in 2027, with an estimated three year construction period. The project is expected to be fully operational by 2031.

There is no indication from either National Grid or the government that anything other than the proposed pylon line is under consideration.

G.P. 07/05/2025

Signed

Date