

**BUNWELL PARISH COUNCIL**  
**www.bunwell-pc.gov.uk**

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**MINUTES** of **Bunwell Parish Council Meeting** held on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2026 at the Village Hall, Bunwell.

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

**Also Present:** Parish Clerk, County Cllr Margaret Thomas, District Councillor, Suzanne Wateridge and 2 members of the public.

MINUTES	ACTION
<b>1. To receive apologies</b> – Cllr R Watson sent his apologies.	
<b>2. To record declarations of interest from Council members in any item to be discussed</b> – there were no declarations of interest.	
<b>3. To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2026</b> – the minutes of the meeting held on 6 <sup>th</sup> May 2026, pages 656-658, having previously been circulated to all members, were agreed and signed by the Chair. Cllr Crouch said that in the reports received for the Annual Parish Meeting, one of the reports mentioned the Tasway Energy Project, and he wished to confirm that this project is not now going ahead.	
<b>4. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting:</b>	
4.1. Update on Village Emergency Plan – Cllr Crouch had been in touch with the Emergency Planning Officer from Norfolk CC and he will arrange a meeting between himself and Cllr Palmer to compile a Community Resilience Plan. This would include a list of residents who might be able to help in an emergency, such as flooding, fire, major accident or incident, etc. and also vulnerable residents who might be in need of extra help.	Cllr Crouch and Cllr Palmer
4.2. Repair and repainting of telephone boxes and Bunwell Hill Noticeboard – Cllr Crouch reported that the broken and unsafe noticeboard had been removed and he will contact Jason Goddard to ask for his help in erecting a replacement. Cllr Ward agreed to measure the glass in the telephone boxes so new glass can be obtained.	Cllr Crouch Cllr Ward
4.3. Financial support for Village Coffee Shop – Councillors were in agreement that the sum of £500 be granted to this project and this will be actioned once a completed Grant Application form has been received.	
4.4. Plans to spend S.Norfolk grant on rewilding areas – this was discussed at item 9.1 below.	
<b>5. Resident's Questions</b> – members of the public to raise matters of concern. No questions were raised which had not been dealt with elsewhere in the meeting.	
5.1. County Councillor's Report – the newly elected County Councillor, Margaret Thomas, gave a brief summary of her background in Norfolk. She also reported on the first full meeting of council when Julian Kirk was elected as Reform	

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UK Chair and his theme will be 'supporting Norfolk's voluntary sector and neighbourhoods'. David Bick was elected as leader of the council and his focus will be on 'providing value for money'. She also mentioned that she would be happy to attend local events and talk to residents and hear their views. Cllr Thomas's full report is attached to these minutes.

5.2. District Councillor's Report – Cllr Wateridge's full report is attached to these minutes, but she mentioned the recent County Council Elections and an update of the Local Government Reorganisation and confirmation of how many councillors will be allocated to each of the new unitary divisions. She spoke about the new food collection service which is expected to start in July and the new digital assistant on the SNC website which is very efficient in answering users' questions and pointing them in the right direction for answers. She reminded the PC that the deadline for applying for Community Grants is the 16th August for projects ranging from £1k to £40k. Grants are also available for renewable energy funding for solar panels, heat pumps and EV charging points. Any applications need to be discussed at the next meeting in July.

5.3. Questions from members of the public arising from the above reports – no questions were raised.

- 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** – The Footpath Warden, Katherine Womack, reported that she has now walked all the nearly 9 miles of Bunwell footpath network and noted broken or missing signs, and overgrown paths, and is continuing to report each item separately on the Highways website – a time-consuming exercise which councillors appreciated. She reported that most of the paths had been trimmed by NCC.
- 8. Playground/Playing Field** – Cllr Worth said that she had investigated prices and availability of picnic benches and will get in touch with Jason Goddard regarding fitting standard size benches to the existing bases. She will report back at the next meeting. A date will be agreed soon to spring-clean both the Village Hall and the play equipment and residents will be invited to help. The Clerk had forwarded to councillors a report of the six quotations she had received for taking over the contract of cutting the Playing Field grass and strimming around the play equipment. Councillors all agreed that Broadland Tree Services from New Buckenham be awarded the contract for the remainder of the season. Cllr Worth
- 9. Future Projects** –
- 9.1. Nature Recovery Project on the Playing Field. Cllr Booty had met with the landowner, Mark Easton, to discuss the siting of this project on the Playing Field and he was in agreement with siting such a project behind the Village Hall. This site is well away from the neighbouring field, and rainwater could be collected from the Village Hall to help look after newly-planted trees and hedges and provide shallow ponds or wetland areas. Cllr Booty had also met with a representative from Norfolk Wildlife Trust who will provide advice and plans for this site.
- 9.2. Norwich to Tilbury Community Fund Project. Cllr Watson had prepared an in-depth report and timetable of liaising with other local councils affected by the proposed National Grid Pylon proposal and how best to ensure that residents can benefit from the Community Fund National Grid are offering. Councillors were Cllr Watson

appreciative of Cllr Watson’s time and effort and agreed that his suggestions be followed up.

**10. Potential Future Projects -**

10.1. Providing changing facilities for sports teams at the Village Hall. Cllr Booty confirmed that he is obtaining costings for a standard size changing building which could be added to in future if required. He will also obtain costings of connecting services. Cllr Booty

10.2. Providing a BMX/Pump track on the playing field. Cllr Crouch explained the results of the survey which has been available for residents, to give the views of children in the village on what equipment they would like to see on the playground. The most popular request is for climbing facilities, followed by a Pump track or ramps, a new slide, a net swing and a trampoline. Councillors agreed that this feedback is useful and will help inform future plans to ensure any funding spent would meet the needs of the children in the village.

10.3. Improving Access from the centre of the village to the Village Hall and playground/playing field area. Discussion took place as to how best to improve access by either providing a cycle way from Greenways, across Barhams Lane to the school, or upgrading Church Lane to improve the footway and the road which is heavily used by HGVs. The matter will be discussed further in the future.

**11. Planning Applications** – to discuss and vote on any new planning applications. No applications or decisions had been received.

**12. Finance**

12.1. Payments for May had been circulated and councillors agreed to these transactions.

12.2. The cashbook balance was noted.

**13. To receive matters of importance from Councillors** – Cllr Ward asked if more could be done to clean up Bunwell Street, particularly from the shop to Greenways, where large amounts of rubbish are being dumped. A plea will be put on Facebook asking residents to take pride in keeping their village clean and, if necessary, a litter-pick could be organised. It was also suggested that the School could be asked to highlight the importance of taking rubbish home for disposal in one of their newsletters to parents.

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

**15. Date of next meeting** – the next meeting will be held on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2026 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Meeting Closed 9.05pm

<b>UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT</b>			
<b>BALANCE AS AT 06.05.26</b>			<b>£28,797.03</b>
<b>UNITY TRUST DEPOSIT ACCOUNT</b>			
<b>BALANCE AS AT 06.05.26</b>			<b>£120,057.70</b>
<b>RECEIPTS AS AT 03.06.26</b>			
<b>DATE</b>	<b>RECEIVED FROM</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>ACTUAL AMOUNT</b>
22.05.26	S Norfolk	Norfolk in Bloom Grant	<b>1,000.00</b>

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MINUTES			ACTION		
Current A/c Balance C/Fwd			£29,797.03		
Deposit A/c Balance C/Fwd			£120,057.70		
<b>PAYMENTS FOR APPROVAL THIS MONTH: UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT</b>					
<b>BALANCE AS AT 06.05.26</b>			<b>£29,797.03</b>		
PAY TYPE	PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL AMOUNT	VAT	PAYE
BACS	M Ridgwell	May Salary & Exps	332.45		
BACS	HMRC	PAYE to month 2	73.40		73.40
BACS	Bunwell Village Hall	Hall Hire, April 26	36.00		
	Unity Trust	Service Charge	7.00		
		<b>Total</b>	<b>448.85</b>		<b>73.40</b>
<b>BALANCE C/FWD</b>			<b>£ 29,348.18</b>		

**CASHBOOK BALANCE: 03.06.26**

Details	CR	DR	
Cash Book Balances Brought Forward			
Unity Trust Bank Current Account	<b>A1</b>	<b>29,797.03</b>	
Unity Trust Deposit Account	<b>A2</b>	<b>120,057.70</b>	
Receipts this month (see listed above)	<b>B</b>		
Payments this month (listed above)	<b>C</b>		
		<b>448.85</b>	
	Cash Book Balances Carried Forward (=A1+A2+B-C)		<b>149,405.88</b>
	<b>Unity Current Account Balance</b>		<b>29,348.18</b>
	<b>Unity Deposit Account Balance</b>		<b>120,057.70</b>
	<b>Total Bank Balances</b>		<b>£149,405.88</b>

**County Councillor Report, June 2026**

Email: [margaret.thomas.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:margaret.thomas.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk)

Tel: 01603 223834

Firstly, I would like to introduce myself as your newly elected County Councillor for West Depwade. I look forward to meeting as many residents of Bunwell as possible in the coming months and working with the parish and district councillors.

I first came to Norfolk and Suffolk in 1990 and have many family members and friends in the area. I studied at UEA and then worked for Norfolk and Waveney NHS Trust as a Psychiatric Nurse. I relocated and worked as a Community Psychiatric Nurse and Care Co-ordinator in rural Powys for 11 years while I took on a caring role for my elderly mother. My last post was as a Senior Mental Health Practitioner within Primary Care with a specialism in Family Therapy and maternal mental health. I relocated back to Norfolk in 2017.

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Following the elections on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2026 I feel privileged and honoured to have been elected as your Reform UK County Councillor.

I have attended an intensive period of training and induction at County Hall designed to prepare all new councillors for their role. This was well attended by all Reform UK councillors.

The first full meeting of council took place on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

Julian Kirk was elected as Reform UK Chair of the council. His theme will be 'supporting Norfolk's voluntary sector and supporting neighbourhoods'.

David Bick was elected as leader of the council. He stated the focus of this new administration will be on providing 'value for money'.

Cabinet and Chairs of committees were also elected but committee members and Chairs of outside committees have not yet been announced.

A motion was passed not to renew the contracts of the 3 political advisors to councillors. These roles are party political and have been deemed as unnecessary by the new administration. This represents a saving of £163,000 pr annum. Although this is a tiny amount in comparison to the overall budget, it demonstrates our commitment to providing savings wherever possible.

A motion was also passed to undertake a full cost benefit analysis review for all spending on Net Zero projects. The next full council meeting is to be held on 21<sup>st</sup> July.

I have requested the plan for highways improvements for 2026-27 for West Depwade. The works scheduled for the Bunwell area are:

Ref number S14B on B1113 The Turnpike at Carleton Rode – surface dressing;

Ref number S195B on B1113 at Tacolneston - surface dressing.

I am meeting with the officers responsible for South Norfolk Highways on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June.

I have been involved with BEPS as a private individual and will now work closely with them as a county councillor in doing all I can to oppose all aspects of this scheme along with my colleague Karl Catchpole and other councillors. I am currently writing to National Grid to make them aware of the depth of distress they are causing to local residents.

I would like to get to know as many residents as possible and would be happy to attend village events in addition to parish council meetings, such as coffee mornings etc if residents would like to hear more about my role or if I can assist them in any way with any issues or access to schemes at the County Council.

*Margaret Thomas (Maggie)*

**District Councillor Report June 2026**

**Norfolk County Council Election Results**

After a gruelling campaign, we were desperately sad in the South Norfolk Green Party to lose our West Depwade County Council seat. As many of you know, Catherine Rowett had always planned to step down this year, having already served an extra year after the elections were postponed by the government.

Our candidate Christina Kenna worked really hard but in the end Reform won the seat and I congratulate the new County Councillor Maggie Thomas on her appointment. I will work constructively with her and hope that she will continue Catherine’s excellent work over the past three years in the 19 villages of this lovely county division.

Excitingly, the Green Party did, however, win our first ever seat in Diss and Roydon with our candidate Will Porteous, who joins the 12-strong Green Group at the County Council. Reform now form a minority administration, with the Lib Dems the official opposition with 13 members. Judging from the first Full Council meeting at the end of May, we might all have to fasten our seatbelts for a bumpy ride.

**LGR (Local Government Reorganisation) Update**

As you know, the new Unitary Council elections are set to be held next May 2027. West Depwade will sit right on the western edge of the East Norfolk Unitary (see below).



This is a link to a more detailed map on the government’s website:  
[https://data.parliament.uk/resources/constituencystatistics/landing\\_page\\_content/unitaries/Norfolk.png](https://data.parliament.uk/resources/constituencystatistics/landing_page_content/unitaries/Norfolk.png)

We are waiting to have the new division boundaries confirmed but it is thought that West Depwade will remain pretty much the same geography as it is now, though possibly slightly smaller.

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We are also waiting for confirmation of how many councillors will be allocated to each of the new unitary divisions. Currently there is one County Councillor and five District Councillors: myself, James Easter, Kim Carsok, and Clayton Hudson and Delme Thompson who just share Tivetshall in West Depwade. At the time of the last census in 2021, there were 9,139 residents in the division, so if, say, the Secretary of State decides to go with the national average ratio of councillor to residents, that would mean a figure of roughly 4,500 residents per Unitary Councillor. Boundaries and number of councillors should be finalised in autumn.

### **Food Waste Collections**

A few residents have been asking me about when the food waste collections will start. After launching for businesses in South Norfolk last April, this was meant to start being phased in for residential properties this April, but has been somewhat delayed due to a problem with new vehicle deliveries. I will be able to update you further next month but Phase 1 (28,000 properties) is expected to go live towards the end of July, with food caddies delivered in advance. Municipal buildings require more thought so they will be the last to launch by the end of this year, but some have been included in the Phase One roll-out to test and learn the best ways to coordinate this.

### **New Digital Assistant on SNC Website**

As Councillors, we were introduced to the council's new Digital Assistant last month, which helps residents ask questions and find answers to any service the council offers (or point you in the direction of the County Council or other resources where appropriate). It can answer even quite complex questions and guide users to the right service, providing responses 24/7. This aims to free up staff time so they can focus on more complex cases where residents may need additional support.

More information here <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/digital-assistant>

Do note that you do not need to give your name or contact details to use the service, unless you want to – this is not a data harvesting exercise! I have used it several times as a test and have actually found it really useful, saving lots of time trawling around the SNC website trying to find the information I might need. Look for the logo in the right-hand corner of the screen on every page of the council's website:



### **Quick Reminder**

Reminder of the Community Action Fund and the Community Facilities Grant: the closing date for both is the 16<sup>th</sup> August, for projects ranging from £1k to £40k. Remember as part of this, you can apply for renewable energy funding for solar panels, heat pumps and EV charge points. Please call or email me if you have any questions. This could be the last year we are able to access such substantial grants so please do spread the word among all your residents.

**Cllr Suzanne Wateridge**

**Member for Bunwell Ward, South Norfolk Council**

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