

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

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**MINUTES** of **Bunwell Parish Meeting** held on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 at the Village Hall, Bunwell.

**Cllrs Present at the Meeting:** Cllr J Chapman, Cllr M Booty, Cllr M Crouch, Cllr S Spooner and Cllr R Watson.

**Also Present:** Parish Clerk, District Councillor Wateridge and 6 members of the public.

MINUTES	ACTION
<p><b>1. To receive apologies</b> – apologies were received from County Cllr Rowett. Cllr Ward was unable to attend.</p> <p><b>2. To record declarations of interest from Council members in any item to be discussed</b> – there were no declarations of interest.</p> <p><b>3. To appoint a Vice-Chairman</b> – the Chairman asked for volunteers for this post from the Councillors and Cllr Mike Booty offered to take on the role. Cllr Chapman proposed and Cllr Watson seconded that this appoint be approved. All Councillors agreed to the appointment.</p> <p><b>4. To agree the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024</b> - The minutes of this meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024, pages 538-544, having previously been circulated to all members, were agreed and signed by the Chair.</p> <p><b>5. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting</b></p> <p>5.1. Update on signposting on Low Common. A query had been raised by a resident as to whether the residents of Low Common should be required to pay a part of the cost of these new signs as it should be the responsibility of the Highways Dept. It was pointed out that a resident had originally approached the Parish Council stating that some of the residents of Low Common were concerned that the replacement signs which Highways would provide would be modern and not in keeping with the area and asked if the PC would provide a financial contribution if the work was carried out by a group of residents to a more sympathetic design. The PC agreed and offered to contribute to the original estimate of approximately £300. At the completion of the work, the total bill came to £965 and the Parish Council agreed to pay 50% of this. Following discussion, Councillors agreed that the sum offered by the PC was fair, based on the original proposal.</p> <p>5.2. Update on Village Emergency Plan – Cllrs Chapman and Crouch will bring more information to the next meeting.</p> <p>5.3. Update on Anglian Water Outages – Cllr Crouch reported that he had written to Anglian Water voicing the concern of residents that information on the recent outages had not been given to residents prior to the problems. Anglian Water stated that they are not legally obliged to contact customers, or supply bottled</p>	<p><b>Cllrs Chapman &amp; Crouch</b></p> <p><b>Cllr Crouch</b></p>

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water, until at least 12 hours after an outage. Cllr Crouch will continue to monitor the situation.

## **6. To receive the District and County Councillors' Reports**

- 6.1. County Councillor, Catherine Rowett, had sent a full report which is attached to these minutes. She said that she is aware that residents are having to endure a lot of delay with the drainage work on Bunwell Street but had visited the site and discussed things with the workmen. They explained that they have had to make some adjustments due to finding unmapped old pipework, with the unfortunate result that the pipes in some sections are now broken down into multiple narrower ones instead of one large one. She hoped that this new scheme would provide some relief in preventing future flooding. She is also meeting with NCC Energy Plan leaders to discuss future plans for onshoring power from new windfarms.
- 6.2. District Councillor, Suzanne Wateridge, reported that she will be attending a meeting next week concerning the proposed new sites for solar farms in the area south of Gt Moulton. Details are in her full report. The new MP Adrian Ramsay is holding an MP Surgery on the 25<sup>th</sup> October in Bunwell from 12.45 to 14.00. An appointment can be made online to [Adrian@waveneyvalley.greenparty.org.uk](mailto:Adrian@waveneyvalley.greenparty.org.uk), or on 07534 933356. Her full report is attached to these minutes.

## **7. Resident's Questions** – There were no questions.

## **8. To receive and discuss correspondence** – emails received had been forwarded to Cllrs and dealt with as required.

## **9. Working Groups** – to receive updates from:

- 9.1. Planning Development Group – there are no updates to report at the moment

## **10. Highway & Footpath Matters** –

- 10.1. Update on NCC Highways Department drainage system work – Due to delays to this work, caused by old AW uncharted pipes being found, work is now progressing but an extension of another 12 weeks has been sought. The work should be finished by early December. A costing had been obtained from Westcotec to replace the damaged Children Crossing sign from the school across The Turnpike to the carpark outside the Village Hall. This quote for thermal pedestrian crossing signs amounted to over £28,000. It was agreed to wait until a report is received from County Cllr Rowett with details from her feasibility study on this crossing.
- 10.2. The Footpath Warden confirmed that all the necessary evidence had been collected to enable the footpath from Greenways to Barhams Lane to be added to the Definitive Map.

## **11. Playground/Playing Field** –

- 11.1. Discussion took place concerning the condition of the adult gym equipment on the Playing Field and taking into consideration the cost of repairing and maintaining this equipment, and how little it was used, it was agreed by all councillors that the equipment should be removed, and the possible expenditure put to better use on the main play area. It was suggested that a clean-up operation be organised for the Spring and residents be invited to help.
- 11.2. The Clerk confirmed that a contract for 2025 had been received from G's Garden Services, based on the specification currently in use, for a total of £2,450 from April to October inclusive. All Councillors agreed that the Contract be accepted.

## **12. Planning Applications – to discuss and vote on any new planning applications** – No applications had been received since the last meeting.

**13. Finance**

- 13.1. Payments for the month had been circulated and councillors agreed to these transactions.
- 13.2. The Cashbook balance was noted.
- 13.3. The Bank Statement and Reconciliation were agreed and signed.

**14. To receive matters of importance from Councillors –**

- 14.1. An email had been received from South Norfolk Council concerning the Winter Pressures Grant, offering help to residents in need. Cllr Crouch agreed to pass this information on to the Charity Group in the village.

**Cllr  
Crouch**

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

**16. Date of next meeting –** Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7.30pm

**17. Meeting Closed 8.35pm**

<b>UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT</b>	
<b>BALANCE AS AT 04.09.24</b>	<b>£19,050.29</b>

<b>RECEIPTS AS AT 04.09.24</b>			
DATE	RECEIVED FROM	DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL AMOUNT
18.09.24	South Norfolk Council	Precept	<b>7,750.00</b>
<b>BALANCE C/FWD</b>			<b>£26,800.29</b>

<b>PAYMENTS FOR APPROVAL THIS MONTH: UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT</b>					
<b>BALANCE AS AT 04.09.24</b>				<b>£19,050.29</b>	
PAY TYPE	PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL AMOUNT	VAT	PAYE
BACS	Norfolk PTS	Autumn Seminar M Booty	56.00		
BACS	South Norfolk Council	Additional Dog Bin Annual Charge	70.90	10.15	
BACS	M Ridgwell	Sep Salary & Exps	308.75		68.60
BACS	M Smallwood	Low Common Signposts	485.00		
<b>Total</b>			<b>920.65</b>	<b>10.15</b>	<b>68.60</b>
<b>RECEIPTS</b>	South Norfolk	Precept	<b>7,750.00</b>		
<b>BALANCE C/FWD</b>			<b>£25,879.64</b>		

**CASHBOOK BALANCE: 02.10.24**

Details	CR	DR	
Cash Book Balance Brought Forward (Unity Trust Bank Current Account) <b>A</b>	<b>£19,050.29</b>		
Receipts this month (see listed above) <b>B</b>			
Payments this month (listed above) <b>C</b>			<b>920.65</b>
Cash Book Balance Carried Forward (=A+B-C)			<b>25,879.64</b>
<b>Unity Balance</b>			<b>£25,879.64</b>

Work in Progress

I am currently chasing various Highways problems: the village gates which have never arrived for Fornsett, the misplaced lorry signs for Tabernacle Lane, the request for a vehicle-activated sign in Burston, speeding and road condition problems on Ugate Street. I met up with Adam Mayo in early September to look at some of the places that are particularly problematic. I'm making slow progress trying to get the long-awaited signs for the hamlet of Furze Green, to be jointly funded by myself and Councillor Wilby of East Depwade.

I'm checking in with the officer who is in charge of the Norfolk County Council energy plan, to see what we can do about the future plans for onshoring power from new windfarms off the Norfolk coast. I've set up an appointment for myself and Jamie Osborn from the Green Group to have an informal chat to learn more (and feed into) how we can deliver the grid upgrades needed in a future-proof way without destroying everything in the process, and to ensure that demand-reduction is on the agenda and not just increasing supply. There are currently a lot of proposals for solar panels on patches of farmland in and around our area. I am following these with interest, because there are a number of real benefits for farmers and for residents in having these installations in preference to development of the land for housing or intensive farming: they can make a farm profitable while practising sustainable agriculture, give a reliable income alongside smaller scale and more varied cultivation, provide wildlife corridors and help with regeneration of the land. They are also not smelly, noisy, nor polluting to our rivers. I would therefore encourage a positive response to these solar farms, especially if they are combined with rewilding, wild flowers, traditional hedges, sustainable agriculture, regenerative farming.

Planning permission has been awarded for an expansion of the substation at Dunston, and other substations and battery facilities are being proposed along with the solar farms, along the route of the pylons and in other parts of Norfolk. Some of this is fine, but we need to keep alert. I submitted my pylons response back in August, but I see that the latest report from the Norwich to Tilbury team indicates that they are carrying on as if no one had said anything and expect to make nothing more than the smallest route adjustments in the event of finding archaeology or other obstacles.

County Council:

The big news in September was the fact that the Government has turned down the proposed devolution deal that the Council had drafted under the Conservative government. This will now not happen in time for the May County Council elections, but the government has indicated that it is interested in starting negotiations towards a devolution arrangement on its preferred terms.

Almost the whole of the County Council meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> September was devoted to discussion of this matter, with somewhat similar motions on the topic submitted by the Conservative, Labour and Lib Dem groups. The outcome was the passing of a wholly vacuous motion from the Conservative group. We also discussed a motion from the Green group on the ways in which the council is supporting fossil fuels and arms sales to dodgy regimes by virtue of the investment decisions of Barclays Bank, and a motion calling on the government not to scrap the winter fuel payments.

Infrastructure & Development committee met on 11<sup>th</sup> September with a 500 page dossier of really impactful papers. The climate action plan in particular affects everything from economic development to transport, energy, housing, digital connections and farming. We also examined the Council's economic strategy, the local transport plan, performance of highways contracts and the county tree policy. [Info from Norfolk police and crime commissioner, Sarah Taylor](#)

The new Norfolk police and crime commissioner has been holding surgeries to consult about Norfolk's policing and crime priorities over the period from 2025 to 2029.

She is proposing ten core priorities: Focus on Prevention, Restoring Trust and Confidence in Policing across Norfolk, Improving Road Safety, Tackling Extremism and Community Tensions, Making Norfolk Streets Safer, Effective Criminal

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Justice System, Support for Victims, Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls, Improving Rural Response, Tackling organised Crime and Criminal Exploitation.

You can share your views by taking the short online survey at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/NorfolkPCP2025/> Closing date Friday 1 November 2024.

## Info from Norfolk County Council

### House fires caused by e-bike and e-scooter batteries charging at night

It's important to buy lithium-ion batteries only from reputable and safe retailers, to ensure they meet UK safety standards and aren't a fire risk.

Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service and Norfolk County Council's Trading Standards team are investigating a house fire in Bowthorpe which is believed to have been started by a battery purchased from an online retailer, which was charging indoors. This is just one of an epidemic of such house fires across the UK with devastating consequences, deaths, serious burns and massive losses of property and housing.

**[Find out more about how to stay safe with lithium batteries. Read more about the Lithium-ion battery safety bill.](#)**

### Railways consultation

The Norfolk Rail Prospectus aims to establish vision for rail in Norfolk. It sets out what we need to deliver a good service for passengers, support Norfolk's tourism industry, and work for people and employers in Norfolk. The last Prospectus was adopted in 2013. Rail travel has now returned to a post-covid normal and we have more certainty about the future direction of rail, given the Williams Rail Review, and commitments in the government's manifesto.

The consultation covers priorities for Norfolk's stations and lines, and for large cross-country infrastructure projects such as improvements at the Ely junction and East-West Rail. To respond to the consultation, go to:

<https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/environment-transport-and-development/norfolk-rail-prospectus-consultation-2024/>

### Subsidised trees: two Norfolk schemes

The One Million Trees for Norfolk subsidised tree scheme is now open for individuals, parish councils, community groups, businesses, schools, and landowners to apply for tree packs (and tree protection) at a reduced price. This year, a limited number of single Norfolk Oak trees, grown at Gressenhall Community tree nursery, are available as well as the usual tree packs. Apply [here](#).

The Busseys Community Grant offers funding for tree-planting projects. Community groups can apply for up to £2,500 to plant trees that will benefit their local area. Open to any organisation in Norfolk with suitable land and requisite permissions for planting. More info [here](#).

### Contact me on

[Catherine.rowett.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:Catherine.rowett.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk) for Council-related business. See also my Facebook page [here](#).

*Catherine Rowett*

*2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024*

**A New NSIP (Nationally Strategic Infrastructure Project) in South Norfolk**

Some of you may have received a flyer through your postbox recently about the East Pye Solar Park, or read about it in the local press. The company is considering land consisting of multiple sites across South Norfolk, mainly clustered to the east of Long Stratton but also the area south of Great Moulton. The Great Moulton location has also been identified as a potential site for the substation and battery storage. The entire area to be covered is approximately 2,718 acres in total, which I believe makes it the largest solar project in the UK to date. I think we all agree that we need solar panels to transition to net zero; however, surely the government should be prioritising solar panels on roofs before they think about covering vast swathes of rural land. The company is presenting to all South Norfolk councillors on 9<sup>th</sup> October so I will be able to find out more then but do refer to the website if you wish to know more at this stage. The first public consultation period runs from October (exact date yet to be announced) for six weeks [East Pye Solar](#)

While we're on the subject of NSIPs, the council recently launched a new area on their website dedicated to these projects [Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects | Broadland and South Norfolk \(southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk\)](#) although at the time of writing, East Pye had not yet been added.

**Ideas for Community Ward Funding**

Every South Norfolk District Councillor is given an allowance of £1,000 a year to spend on community projects at their own discretion (the guidelines and application process is more informal than the CAF). I am currently exploring ideas to submit and to this end, I am liaising with Matt Mullins, Chair of Aslacton & Great Moulton Youth Football Club, and the Trustees of Fir Covert Wood in Carleton Rode. Please let me know if you hear of any other community projects looking for small amounts of funding in Bunwell and please encourage them to approach me.

**Ideas for Community Spaces**

I have met with Helen Baczkowska from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust to discuss the possibility of identifying council-owned land for nature recovery and community spaces for everyone to enjoy. More on this to follow but again, if you know of any particular areas in the ward that might be relevant, please let me know.

**Cllr Suzanne Wateridge**

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

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