

BUNWELL PARISH COUNCIL

www.bunwellpc.info

Chairman: M Booty,
Tel: 07712 048925
e-mail: bunwellpcc@gmail.com

Clerk: Mrs Margaret Ridgwell,
Tel: 01603 871636
e-mail: bunwell-pc@live.com

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

Cllrs Present at the Meeting: Cllr M Booty (Chair), Cllr M Crouch, Cllr P Palmer, Cllr R Watson and Cllr J Worth

Also Present: Parish Clerk, District Cllr Suzanne Wateridge and 6 members of the public.

	MINUTES	ACTION
1.	To receive apologies – Cllr Ward did not attend the meeting.	
2.	To record declarations of interest from Council members in any item to be discussed – there were no declarations of interest.	
3.	To consider Co-option Applications – Phillip Palmer, whose Co-option Application had been accepted at the last meeting, signed his Declaration of Acceptance form and joined the Council. There are two vacancies on the Council.	
4.	To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 3rd December 2025 – the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd December 2025, pages 620-626, having previously been circulated to all members, were agreed and signed by the Chair.	
5.	Matters Arising from Previous Meeting: 5.1. Update on Village Emergency Plan – Cllr Palmer offered to help Cllr Crouch continue with updating this matter. 5.2. Installation of waste bin on roundabout at Greenways – This matter has been delayed for the time being. 5.3. Possible Nature Recovery Projects in Bunwell – An area of approximately 25m x 5m on the Playing Field had been suggested as a suitable site and more information will be sought on how to set up the area and maintain it for the future. The local Primary School have been contacted and it is hoped that they will be happy to help with the Project. Cllr Crouch has set up a website and discussion took place as how best to promote this in the community. It was suggested that other groups who use the Village Hall, such as The Brownies, be asked if they would like to be involved. It is possible that other suitable sites could be found in the centre of the village and this will be investigated. 5.4. Update on Assertion 10 – the Clerk explained that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, which includes the end-of-year accounts, has to be sent to the Government-appointed Auditor each year. An extra paragraph this year, which the Councillors have to acknowledge their compliance with, will include: Email management, including gov.uk email addresses and website domain name; website accessibility standards, FOI and transparency duties, data protection responsibilities	Cllrs Crouch & Palmer

and IT Policy requirements. Gov.uk email addresses have been ordered and all other requirements will be in place before the AGAR is submitted in June 2026.

6. To receive the District and County Councillors' Reports – County Cllr Catherine Rowett's full report is attached to these minutes, and she reports on the Mayor and Unitary elections, energy projects, Community funding and updates from the County Council and the Health Board. Other information on the National Planning Framework Consultation and the Erasmus+ Scheme are also mentioned. Cllr Suzanne Wateridge spoke about local Energy Projects and said that the Tasway Scheme has been delayed indefinitely. The East Pye Scheme will be applying for approval from the Planning Inspectorate. The South Norfolk Council are seeking a replacement for the Surface Water Drainage Officer and if there are any flooding issues in the meantime, Cllr Wateridge will endeavour to help. Her full report is also attached to these minutes.

7. Resident's Questions – A resident raised the matter of the poor state of many of the road signs in the village and fly-tipping in laybys in the area. Both matters can be reported by individuals on the Norfolk County Highways website and have already been done so.

8. To receive and discuss correspondence – A letter had been received from Spire Solicitors who are dealing with the administration of the estate of the late Peter Haylock. In his will, Mr Haylock has generously left a sum of £120,000 to the Trustees of Bunwell Parish Council to be used on capital projects with lasting impact and for the benefit of the village of Bunwell. This very generous bequest will be lodged in a separate bank account and plans and ideas will be carefully considered before any spending takes place. All correspondence had been forwarded to Councillors and matters of importance had been dealt with or are included in other headings. Clerk

9. Highway & Footpath Matters – No response has been received from NCC Highways concerning the poor surface of Bunwell Street and whether this will be improved in the near future. There are no footpath matters to report.

10. Playground/Village Hall
The Chairman asked that thanks be passed on to the members of the Village Hall Committee who made the Hall look so festive with the lovely Christmas decorations.

10.1. Play Area – It had been agreed that a new picnic table was needed soon, and prices would be sought for something suitable.

10.2. Update on dog bin – A new dog bin has been purchased and will be installed outside the Play Area on the corner of Wood Lane.

10.3. Use of Playing Field by football teams – Tivesthall Men's Football Team had been in touch asking if they could make arrangements with the Parish Council to use the Playing Field for their adult and junior teams to play there during the football season. A representative from Tivesthall explained that they would be happy to use their own equipment and arrange for storage on site. They would arrange for the pitch marked out and would ensure the surface is cared for and, if necessary, reseeded during the off season. New Buckenham Junior Team had been contacted and the teams would be in contact to avoid any duplication of bookings. Local residents would be welcomed to undertake trials to be included in these football teams. A pricing structure would be confirmed and an Annual Agreement issued and signed by all parties. Cllr Booty

MINUTES**ACTION**

11. Local Energy Infrastructure Projects – As mentioned by District Cllr Wateridge, the Tasway Energy Project has been shelved indefinitely.

12. Potential Future Projects – possible future projects include:

12.1. Providing changing facilities for sports teams at the Village Hall - The PC and the Village Hall Committee are in discussion on how best to provide both changing facilities and necessary storage for the Village Hall. Costings will be sought on the best options. Cllr Booty

12.2. Providing a BMX cycle track on the playing field – Cllr Crouch has published a Survey on social media asking parents and youngsters in the village what facilities they would like to see on the Playing Field. The matter will be considered further when the results of the survey are available.

12.3. Improving the access from the centre of the village to the Village Hall area – this matter will be considered at a later date.

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

14. Finance –

14.1. Payments for December had been circulated and councillors agreed to these transactions and the cashbook balance was noted.

15. To receive matters of importance from Councillors – A Councillor asked whether the installation of an EV charging point with solar panels had been considered by the Village Hall. This had been investigated and it was not deemed to be necessary or financially viable.

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

17. Date of next meeting – the next meeting is on Wednesday 4th February 2026 at 7.30pm.

18. Meeting Closed 8.50pm

UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT			
BALANCE AS AT 03.12.25			£25,524.40
RECEIPTS AS AT 03.12.25			
DATE	RECEIVED FROM	DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL AMOUNT
BALANCE C/FWD			£25,524.40

CASHBOOK BALANCE: 07.01.26

Details	CR	DR	
Cash Book Balance Brought Forward Unity Trust Bank Current Account	A	£25,407.64	
Receipts this month (see listed above)		B	
Payments this month (listed above)		C	2,116.76
Cash Book Balance Carried Forward (=A+B-C)			23,407.64
		Unity Balance	£23,407.64

Councillor report 4th January 2026, from Catherine Rowett

04/01/2026

Progress report

Mayors and unitary councils

The latest bombshell on this saga was the announcement just before Christmas that the government was inviting councils to explain if they had “capacity issues” that would make it wise to postpone May elections for councillors. Effectively this put the decision on whether to cancel elections into the hands of the administration that stands to gain from clinging to power and not inviting the electorate to decide whether they are doing a good job. The very idea is clearly unacceptable and when the leader of the council consulted me (as leader of an opposition group) I recommended that she should point out to the government how utterly inappropriate it was even to invite a sitting councillor to request such an extension. I made clear in no uncertain terms that the elections should not have been cancelled last year, when councillors could have been elected for a three year term. The idea of delaying them to next year, only to elect new councillors to an authority that was merely winding itself down for a year is even more bizarre than electing them this year for a two-year term. I haven’t seen what letter the leader sent, but it seems likely that she invited the officers to make the case that capacity is an issue for us in Norfolk. As far as I know we haven’t yet heard whether the ministers will decide to cancel the elections. At the very least we can expect a lot of by-elections as councillors resign rather than take on another year (or rather probably two years) beyond their mandate.

Now older news is the announcement of a two year delay to the election of a Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk: an absurd change of schedule when election campaigns were already under way for elections expected this year and recruitment was under way for the CEO and other staff needed to set up the new authority. The priority programme that the government was so keen to get up and running has turned out to be chaos.

Reorganising the local councils is supposed to be going ahead to the old timetable with handover to the new councils in 2028. The consultation on how to divide Norfolk up into one, two or three unitary councils closes on 11th January. Find the consultation here: [Proposals for local government reorganisation in Norfolk and Suffolk - GOV.UK](#).

Pylons and panels

Some decisions have been made regarding grid connections for the energy schemes and residents in the Fornett and Ashwellthorpe area are breathing a sigh of relief that the Tasway Energy Park has been parked for now, due to not achieving a slot in the first round of connections. New revisions have come in relating to the planning application for the (monstrous and inappropriately located) battery storage installation in Great Moulton (Field BESS) with an awkward short consultation interval over Christmas. So far I am not seeing any useful mitigations.

Community Fund

I'm pleased to report that awards from my fund have now been made to Burston for an insect hotel and to Gissing for gardening tools for the church yard gardening group. Several projects are still open for receiving donations: find your village project here: [Crowdfund Norfolk | Crowdfunder.co.uk](#) Currently open for donations are: biodiversity projects in Tivetshall, and catering equipment for community meals at Gt Moulton and Aslacton, but there are some applications that I've promised to support that don't seem to be in the scheme yet. Please do get those applications in or I will have to assign the money to other things.

You can see the schemes that are being supported across Norfolk here: [Crowdfund Norfolk | Crowdfunder.co.uk](#) It's a heartwarming site and reminds us that communities work together to do

good things when they are filled with love and friendliness, not the hate and division that are currently being promoted across the world.

I urgently need to know if we can find the parish contribution funds (20% of the cost) for the bus shelter improvements in Carleton Rode. I'm concerned about the deadline for this and don't want to miss out on the funds.

Updates from County Council and the Health Board

Norfolk Trails Public Survey

The council is seeking feedback to ensure that the future of Norfolk's Trails aligns with the values and preferences of residents. A public survey is being conducted to gather community input, which will inform the long-term planning and improvement of the trails, with the aim of enhancing accessibility for all. Please encourage residents to do the questionnaire (there's also a prize draw!) Find it at <https://research.audiencesurveys.org/Interview/1b4334d0-3a8e-4445-8397-dd99353abf9b>.

Adult Services CQC inspection report

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) delivered their verdict on Norfolk's Adult Social Services Provision on 12th December, awarding an overall rating of "Requires Improvement".

This was based on a review of the local authority from 31 January to 3 July this year, including an onsite visit, speaking to staff, meeting service users and consulting with partners and care providers. The report highlights safeguarding, waiting times for Care Act assessments and inequity in outcomes as key areas for improvement. The overall score was 56%, which is 6% away from a Good rating. The authority has said that improvements are already in progress.

Which roads will be gritted on cold nights?

People can check which roads are on the council's gritting routes for this season using the map at www.norfolk.gov.uk/gritting. Use this to plan your safest route if you need to go somewhere.

National Information

National planning policy framework consultation

The Government has launched a major consultation on a revamped National Planning Policy Framework. It's part of their policy of plonking infrastructure and housing all over the countryside and removing protections from nature and human communities. Data centres are eating up our energy and our countryside: they are not the solution to our problems as the government seems to think! Have your say. The consultation (open till 10th March) is here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-proposed-reforms-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>

UK gets onto the Erasmus+ scheme in 2027

The Government has finalised an agreement to let us into the Erasmus+ programme in 2027. It offers opportunities for participants of all ages: students can spend a year abroad without extra fees and there are also opportunities for teaching exchanges, apprentices and adult learners.

Contact me

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

Catherine Rowett

4th January 2025

Bunwell District Councillor Report January 2026

Happy New Year everyone! I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas.

As you might expect, things have been very quiet at the council over the festive period but I have a few things to update you on.

Tasway and East Pye

I'm sure you have all heard by now but Tasway has been delayed indefinitely, for at least the next few years, after being given what's called a Gate 1 connection by NESO (NESO is the National Energy System Operator owned by the government). As I talked about last month, NESO has just completed their grid connection reform, prioritising renewable energy projects that are the farthest down the line. Those projects have been given a Gate 2 connection which means they will go ahead (subject to the planning inspectorate). Gate 1 connections will be able to reapply for Gate 2 status as and when further grid capacity is made available.

East Pye has confirmed they have been given a Gate 2 connection so that scheme will be going ahead subject to the planning inspectorate approval.

FIELD BESS

Great Moulton residents were dismayed to receive details of FIELD's latest revisions to their 400MW Battery Storage Scheme just before Christmas. With over 40 documents to read, the parish council and myself have asked the planning officer, Richard Smith, at South Norfolk Council to grant an

extension for this latest consultation, so we will be discussing this at the February Parish Council meeting in Great Moulton on 12th February.

Flooding Issues

South Norfolk Council are currently seeking a replacement for the excellent Katie Spillman, who was the Surface Water Drainage Officer. In the meantime, please let me know if there are any flooding issues you need my help with. For example, I recently met with Aslacton Parish Councillors to look at the long-term flooding on the Pottergate Street junction in Great Moulton. As this is South Norfolk Council-owned land, we alerted them and they are now taking this on and organising ditch clearance to enable surface water to flow off the road into the Tas, as it should.

Budget Consultation

Have your say on how your council tax is spent! South Norfolk Council are encouraging you to feedback on their budget consultation – the link is here, the deadline is January 16th:

<https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/council/governance/consultations/south-norfolk-council-budget-consultation-202526>

Funding for Neighbourhood Plans

As far as I know there are no neighbourhood plans in any of the Bunwell parishes but if you were interested in putting one together (and it would have to be quick!), South Norfolk Council has introduced a Neighbourhood Planning Transitional Fund to bolster the funding they currently provide (the government withdrew their funding for neighbourhood plans last summer). So on top of the £6,000 communities can apply for, additional funding of up to £10,000 can also be applied for, on a first come first served basis. Obviously it requires time commitment from a dedicated team of volunteers but neighbourhood plans do carry significant weight in planning decisions and enable you as a community to have more influence in shaping your area. Details here

<https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning/future-development/local-plans/neighbourhood-plans/broadland-neighbourhood-planning-grant>

Cllr Suzanne Wateridge

Member for Bunwell Ward, South Norfolk Council

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