

**BUNWELL PARISH COUNCIL**  
**www.bunwellpc.info**

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**MINUTES** of the **Parish Council Meeting** held on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 at the Village Hall, Bunwell.

**Cllrs Present at the Meeting:** Cllr J Chapman (Chair), Cllr R Smith, Cllr D Ward and Cllr R Watson

**Also Present:** County Cllr Catherine Rowett, the Parish Clerk and 15 members of the public.

**MINUTES**

**ACTION**

- 1. To receive apologies for absence** – Cllr Sarah Spooner sent her apologies.
- 2. To record declaration of interest from Council members in any item to be discussed** – there were no declarations of interest.
- 3. To agree the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023** -  
The minutes of the previous meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023, pages 477-480, having previously been circulated to all members, were signed by the Chair.
- 4. To discuss matters arising from the previous Parish Minutes** –
  - 4.1 Update on Anglian Water Sewerage System – The Parish Council received a letter from the CEO of Anglian Water in response to our questions concerning the inadequacies of the Bunwell Sewerage System. He said that the ongoing issues in the system occur during heavy rainfall because surface water is infiltrating the vacuum system which is designed to cope with foul water only. AW tankers are deployed during heavy rainfall to help alleviate the problem. He stated that Anglian Water do not have the power to make customers remove their connections to the foul system and drain to soakaways or a ditch system instead, and that previous surveys of the village were unable to establish where highway drainage and field run-off goes. The Parish Council will reply to AW asking that they investigate where the surface water leaks are and issue a report. In the meantime, they must fit non-return valves to those properties at risk of flooding with raw sewerage either indoors or in their gardens which is totally unacceptable.

Clerk
  - Several residents also raised the question of flooding in their gardens and houses following heavy rain, and pointed out that in today's climate, this is now the norm and not unprecedented. It was suggested that the Parish Council form a working party to try to resolve the problem with Highways, local landowners and residents by helping to maintain the water courses in good condition to try to stop flooding during periods of heavy rainfall.
  - 4.2 Update on renewed lease for the Playing Field – this is still in the hands of the landowners and their solicitor.

**5. To receive the County Councillor and District Councillors' Reports** – County Cllr Rowett had sent her written report prior to the meeting and this is attached at the end of these minutes. Topics covered included Highways and Road Safety, the Long Stratton Bypass, Buses and Active Travel, a report of the September Full Council meeting, report from the Scrutiny Committee, and the County Council Budget.

**6. Resident's Questions** – The question of flooding during recent heavy rain was raised by several residents and, as stated above, a Parish Council Working Party is to be set up to try to mitigate the problem.

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

**8. Highway and Footpath Matters –**

8.1 Update on entrance of footpath from George Close to Church Lane – The Turnpike Bunwell Residents' Association reported that they had received permission from the landowner to remove some dead elm trees and cut back part of the hedge so the sight lines from the path onto Church Lane can be improved. Highways Department have been asked to install road signs warning of a concealed entrance.

8.2 Update on suggestion for 30mph speed limit along The Turnpike – The Highways Dept had sent a link to the NCC Speed Management Strategy and it would seem that Bunwell now meets two of the main criteria required to reduce the speed limit. Highways and County Cllr Rowett have now listed the proposal for consideration under the Road Safety Community Fund Scheme so we await further developments. In the meantime, the PC are waiting to hear from Highways regarding further safety measures, such as additional signage, which could attract funding from NCC under the Parish Partnership Scheme.

8.3 The Parish Council are keen to pursue the possibility of setting up a Community Speedwatch Group and volunteers are asked to contact Cllr Chapman, or the Parish Clerk, if they can spare the time to commit to this worthwhile undertaking. A minimum of 6 people are needed and they will be required to commit to at least one hour each week. All training is given by the Police and they provide equipment and agree sites where speed checks are to take place. Carleton Rode Parish Council have said that they are interested in joining with Bunwell PC in providing volunteers for the scheme. The local police were also contacted to ask if they have any up-to-date figures for speeding vehicles in the village, particularly along The Turnpike. No information has been received yet.

8.4 Repair and refurbishment of fingerposts on Low Common – these repairs will be carried out soon, weather permitting, as the new timber posts now have been delivered.

Cllrs Smith and Chapman had met to discuss the exit of FP8 at the bottom of the playing field where there are concerns that children could leave the field and go straight onto the roadway. Suggestions that a fence and/or gate could be erected will be discussed with the landowner.

Cllr Smith

**9. Playground/Village Hall –**

9.1 Action Play and Leisure have installed new toddler swings and repaired other equipment to comply with the RoSPA report. Apart from some painting and cleaning work, the play equipment is now all in good condition. A grant has been applied for from the Lottery Fund to install a new Rotating Cone Climber, costing

approximately £10,000 to enhance the play equipment in this very popular play area.

9.2 The Village Hall Committee and Parish Council have agreed that the materials for a new fence at the front of the Village Hall be paid for by the Parish Council, and the cost of installation will be paid for by the Village Hall and a grant from Saffron Housing. The quote for the fencing was higher than originally expected but all councillors agreed that this additional cost be covered by the Parish Council, using some of the CIL money received from property developments in the village during the past year.

**10. Bunwell Planning Development Group** – There have been no further developments concerning the Village Cluster Housing Plan.

**11. Planning Applications – to discuss and vote on any new planning applications** – Applications Nos. 2023/3107 and 2023/3269 were considered by the councillors and there were no objections.

**12. Finance**

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

12.2 Cashbook balance – this had been circulated to all Councillors and was noted.

**13. To consider possible celebrations for the D-Day 80-year Anniversary** – The anniversary takes place on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024 and councils are invited to celebrate the occasion with the lighting of beacons. Cllr Chapman will invite neighbouring councils to join Bunwell in the celebration. Mr Gledhill said that there will be a special service in Church on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June with music and readings. The matter will be considered at the January meeting.

**14. To confirm dates of Parish Council meetings in 2024** – These will continue on the first Wednesday of each month except that there will be no meeting in August.

**15. To receive matters of importance from Councillors** – No matters were raised which had not already been discussed.

**16. To receive items for the next Agenda for Consideration** – To follow up items raised above. To consider and agree the Parish Council Budget for 2024/25 and the Precept request to South Norfolk Council.

**17. Date of next meeting** – Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 7.30pm.

**Meeting Closed 9.20pm**

<b>BARCLAYS COMMUNITY ACCOUNT</b>	
<b>BALANCE AS AT 04.10.23</b>	<b>£0.10</b>

<b>RECEIPTS THIS MONTH – UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT</b>			
<b>BALANCE AS AT 04.10.23</b>			<b>20,371.98</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>RECEIVED FROM</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>ACTUAL AMOUNT</b>
18.10.23	South Norfolk Council	CIL Payment	<b>933.36</b>
<b>BALANCE C/FWD</b>			<b>22,748.87</b>

<b>PAYMENTS FOR APPROVAL THIS MONTH: UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT</b>					
<b>BALANCE AS AT 04.10.23</b>					<b>20,371.98</b>
<b>PAY TYPE</b>	<b>PAYEE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>ACTUAL AMOUNT</b>	<b>VAT</b>	<b>PAYE</b>
BACS	CGM	Playing Field Grasscutting Sep	323.34	53.89	
BACS	Village Hall	Hall rental Sep	30.00		
BACS	Action Play & Leisure	Swing replacement and repairs	2,740.80	456.80	
BACS	Wix.com (Pd by M Ridgwell)	Domain name renewal, Oct 2023-25	28.74	4.79	
BACS	M Ridgwell	Oct salary & exps	292.75		64.60
BACS	HMRC	PAYE Months 4 - 7	323.20		323.20
BACS	Community Heartbeat	Defib Pads	303.54	50.59	
BACS	Jason Goddard	SAM2 maintenance and move	50.00		
BACS	Jacksons Fencing	Village Hall fencing material	2,180.64	363.44	
<b>Total</b>			<b>6,273.01</b>	<b>929.51</b>	<b>387.80</b>
			14,402.17		
<b>Receipts</b>	South Norfolk Council	CIL Payment	<b>933.36</b>		
<b>BALANCE C/FWD</b>			<b>£15,032.33</b>		

**CASHBOOK BALANCE: 01.11.23**

<b>Details</b>		<b>CR</b>	<b>DR</b>	
Cash Book Balance Brought Forward (Barclays Saver A/c & Unity Bank)	<b>A</b>	<b>20,372.08</b>		
Receipts this month (see listed above)	<b>B</b>		<b>933.36</b>	
		Payments this month (listed above)	<b>C</b>	<b>6,273.01</b>
		Cash Book Balance Carried Forward (=A+B-C)		<b>15,032.43</b>
		<b>Barclays Savings A/c balance</b>		<b>0.10</b>
		<b>Unity Balance</b>		<b>15,032.33</b>
		<b>TOTAL CASH IN BANK:</b>		<b>15,032.43</b>

## Councillor report, end of October 2023, from Catherine Rowett

### Highways and road safety:

I have been busy working with Parishes and with the highways officer on schemes for improving things relating to roads and road safety. Some of these will be funded through the Parish Partnership scheme, from which you can get up to £25,000 contributed by NCC providing the Parish Council finds the funding to contribute half the costs. This scheme is for works that don't involve changes to any legal traffic order. Most urgent however has been work on the applications that I shall be making to the Road Safety Community Fund which is currently open to applications from this part of Norfolk. This one does allow us to apply to change Traffic Regulation Orders if our proposal meets the relevant criteria. I now have a spreadsheet of all the schemes that have been suggested, and I'm working with the Highways officer to see which ones are suitable for the RSCF scheme and how to make a convincing and effective case for them. I now have a spreadsheet of suitable schemes, and will be getting the most plausible ones submitted early in November.

### Long Stratton Bypass:

The Long Stratton Bypass has now got planning permission from South Norfolk District Council. It includes huge numbers of new homes (I've heard it described as a housing estate rather than a bypass) and a new primary school. I requested a proper briefing on the scheme with the chief officer in charge of the scheme, in the hope of understanding the details of how it will affect access into and out of Long Stratton, and also how it will affect cyclists, businesses in Long Stratton who rely on passing trade, and bus routes. I'm having an on site visit to see where it is supposed to connect with the old road, and what route it will take across unspoiled land, next week. I would be interested to hear the views of West Depwade residents and parish councils.

### Buses and active travel

I'm continuing to push for choices for everyone, so that life without a car remains an option for everyone, young and old, and ideally a really convenient option since active modes of travel have been shown to massively improve community life and a sense of belonging and knowing your neighbours. Having been taken aback in September to find a council web page that implied that the Flexibus still existed in South Norfolk, I now find that this was not true, and that it has indeed been withdrawn, and so has the Border Hoppa service. This leaves many residents with no solution for the trips they used to do, since even where there is a bus to/from the village, it often goes at times that are not really compatible with appointments or even a half day shopping trip. It seems to coincide with a general sense that the cabinet member for highways and transport is promoting car travel to the exclusion of all other modes of transport. The Council does run a car scheme with volunteer drivers, <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/public-transport/travel-norfolk-car-scheme> but the eligibility criteria make it look as if almost no one would qualify for help.

The County Council has launched a new website that enables you to check for any journey you need to make whether there is a suitable way to get there by bus, train, bicycle, walking, or some combination of these things, and compares the time, cost and carbon footprint of each mode of travel, including car travel, so that you can see if there is a better/quicker/cheaper or less damaging way to get to the place you need to go. It's interesting, though rather depressing when I ask it for public transport routes to the villages in my County division! Fun to play with and could be very interesting for children at the school to investigate the carbon footprint of their journeys and to work out how to manage them without emitting so much planet-killing stuff. Find it here: [Journey Planner - Travel Norfolk](#).

### September's Full Council meeting

Full Council met on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> September. I spoke on a number of important motions, including one on coastal erosion, one on the nutrient neutrality regulations that (thankfully) the House of Lords voted to keep in place when the government suddenly proposed to scrap them, and one on ensuring that the County is not investing its money in fossil fuel assets that will lose value as we move to a carbon-free future. We also asked a number of searching questions to the Leader and Cabinet. I asked the Transport Cabinet member (Graham Plant) about the lack of rural bus services, and got a pretty unsatisfactory answer from which it appeared that only his wife ever travels by bus in his family. We also pressed the administration to ensure that they continue with insulation programmes to end the problem of cold homes, despite the government's latest betrayal of its net zero commitments. I got featured in the EDP when it ridiculed the answer given by the Council Leader in response to my quoting Feargal Sharkey on the importance of protecting our rivers from pollution.

### Scrutiny Committee

On Tuesday 31st October the Scrutiny Committee meets. Both the Green Group and the Labour Group have submitted papers calling in the unilateral decision by the Highways Cabinet Member to undo the pedestrianisation of

Exchange Street in Norwich City Centre, and make it a through route for motor traffic during shopping hours as well as during the evening and early morning. The decision appears to go against the Council's own commitments to ensure that 50% of journeys in Norfolk's towns and cities are walking, cycling or wheeling, and conflicts with the City's net zero strategy.

## County Council budget

The administration has prepared a report says that NCC faces a "significant challenge" to develop a budget for 2024/2025 given yet more expected cuts in what we get from government. A shortfall of £46 million is predicted. A 4.99% increase on council tax is proposed. There will be public consultation during the Autumn. Further details and a link to the report available [here](#). My colleague Jamie Osborn attended the scrutiny meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> October to raise challenges and concerns about the medium term financial strategy on behalf of the Green Group.

## Contact me

You can contact me on [Catherine.rowett.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:Catherine.rowett.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk) for Council-related business, and I look forward to helping with a range of issues that people have already brought to my attention. I'm always delighted to attend award ceremonies, events, centenaries, lectures, exhibitions, conferences, debates, litter picking parties, campaign events and protests, so don't hesitate to add me to your mailing lists! I also have a facebook page which includes updates on what I am working on, posts about events and opportunities relevant to residents, and a place where you can comment and leave your views on things I want to ask you about. The link is [here](#).

## Other County Council news

A few items to mention from the County Council more generally:

### Preventing floods

Small, simple steps that ensure water can drain away from your home can cut down the likelihood of flooding: e.g. keeping drains, ditches, and watercourses clear. Many ditches and watercourses will benefit from clearing branches, and cutting back new undergrowth. Early autumn is a good moment for property owners to put in a little work to keep their properties safe. Outside the home, if you spot any blocked or broken drains on Norfolk's highways you can report it via [www.norfolk.gov.uk/flooding](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/flooding), allowing Norfolk's Highways Team to clear them and keep our roads open. More information [here](#).

### Recruiting foster parents

The Council (in collaboration with other councils) has launched a new film to encourage people to consider becoming foster parents, to help ensure that all children in care get the best possible chances in life. Information about becoming a foster carer in Norfolk and a link to the film can be found [here](#).

### Household Support Fund winter support

Norfolk County Council is receiving £13.4m from central government, to which it is adding £400,000 of its own for support measures to meet the needs of vulnerable households over the winter. "All of Norfolk's libraries will be offering free winter support items until the end of March 2024 (while stocks last)," they say. As far as I can see this means sanitary products and essential toiletries (which maybe one might need in the summer too, but I guess the Council preferred to suggest that there was something new on offer that's to help you with winter costs. Or maybe they're redirecting winter support money to fund the hygiene products?). Find out more about how to get various kinds of help from the Household Support fund [here](#).

*Catherine Rowett*

*30<sup>th</sup> October 2023*

