

BUNWELL PARISH COUNCIL

www.bunwellpc.info

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MINUTES of **Bunwell Parish Meeting** held on Wednesday 3rd December 2025 at the Village Hall, Bunwell.

Cllrs Present at the Meeting: Cllr M Booty (Chair), Cllr D Ward and Cllr R Watson

Also Present: Parish Clerk, County Councillor Catherine Rowett, District Cllr Suzanne Wateridge and 2 members of the public.

MINUTES	ACTION
<p>1. To receive apologies – apologies were received from Cllr Spooner and Cllr Crouch.</p> <p>2. To record declarations of interest from Council members in any item to be discussed – there were no declarations of interest.</p> <p>3. To consider Co-option Applications – Co-option Applications had been received from two residents. Julie Worth, who has lived on Bunwell Street for 18 months, said that she would like to contribute positively to the village. Her application was unanimously accepted and she was welcomed onto the Council. Phillip Palmer, who lives on Hall Road, has been a resident of Bunwell for 27 years and is happy to help increase the number of councillors able to help with the work of the Parish Council. Unfortunately, Phillip was unable to be at this meeting but his application was accepted and he will be welcomed onto the Council at the next meeting in January. Cllr Sarah Spooner will now officially leave the Council and her contribution to the work of the Council was greatly appreciated.</p> <p>4. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 1st October 2025 – the minutes of the meeting held on 1st October 2025, pages 607-613, having previously been circulated to all members, were agreed and signed by the Chair. The planned PC meeting of the 5th November had had to be cancelled due to lack of councillors being able to attend and a brief report of payments approved and reports from the County and District Councillors were noted.</p> <p>5. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting</p> <p>5.1. Update on Village Emergency Plan – This matter is progressing and will be completed shortly.</p> <p>5.2. Installation of waste bin on roundabout at Greenways – There are problems with finding a suitable site for a litter bin and a decision will be delayed for the moment.</p> <p>5.3. Possible Nature Recovery Projects in Bunwell – councillors discussed the siting of an area for a Nature Recovery Project on the Playing Field where the adult gym equipment used to be. The area is approximately 25m x 5m 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 Booty will contact the Headteacher and also investigate the fencing of the area.</p>	<p>Cllr Booty</p>

- 6. To receive the District and County Councillors' Reports** – County Cllr Catherine Rowett's full report is attached to these minutes. In brief, she mentioned that she has sent in her comments on the proposed Tasway Solar Panel Project. She said that during the run up to Christmas, Diss are offering extra free parking time. She spoke about various local funds that are available to Parish Councils. In Tivetshall the PC, together with the Woodland Trust, are measuring large trees in the area to ensure that Tree Preservation Orders are issued on any important trees in the parish. She suggested that it would be advisable to do the same in Bunwell so any such trees could be protected before possible Energy Projects are proposed. Her report also has a link to the Warm Homes Scheme to ensure that any owner/occupiers in Bunwell who are eligible are helped to take advantage of this scheme. Cllr Suzanne Wateridge's full report is also attached to these minutes. She said that she had sent in her own comments to the consultations concerning the Tasway Project, the East Pye Project and the suggested Local Government Reorganisation.
- 7. Resident's Questions** – A resident raised the matter of the exceptionally bright lights which had been installed outside the village shop and asked if others had complained that they were excessively bright and unnecessary. The difficulty of driving to Bunwell from the A11 through Spooner Row was raised as this necessitated negotiating the chicane on the approach to the village which is badly lit and hard to see in the dark, particularly when there is approaching traffic. Cllr Rowett suggested that the Clerk write to Spooner Row PC asking if they are able to help by contacting their Highways Officer. Clerk
- 8. To receive and discuss correspondence** – all correspondence had been forwarded to Councillors and matters of importance had been dealt with or are included in other headings.
- 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**
- 10.1. Play Area - Action Play & Leisure have repaired the zipwire and other non-essential repairs and replacements will be dealt with in the near future.
 - 10.2. Upgrade to the existing outside toilet at the Village Hall – following the recent upgrade, the Village Hall Committee requested that the extra cleaning time could be invoiced to the Parish Council. This was agreed.
 - 10.3. The councillors confirmed that they were happy to use the current grasscutting contractor for 2026.
- 11. Local Energy Infrastructure Projects** – The Development Consent Order (DCO) for the National Grid Norwich to Tilbury Pylon Project has now been passed to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. Bunwell PC have registered as an interested party and their comments objecting to this Project are available to see via a link on the Parish Council website. Cllr Crouch attended the Tasway Project public consultations and his report is also available via a link on the Parish Council website.
- 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 will meet to discuss where any changing facilities would best be sited. Cllr Booty

MINUTES	ACTION
12.2. Providing a BMX cycle track on the playing field – concerns were raised on the possible need for such a facility, the health & safety issues, necessary maintenance and future costs. 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 - discussion took place on whether the existing path from Bunwell Street, down Church Lane and to the Village Hall, School and Church is adequate or safe for pedestrians and cyclists. An alternative route would be from Greenways to Barhams Lane and then down the old Wash Lane to the rear of the school. Cllr Booty will contact the landowner to ask for their views.	Cllr Booty
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 November had been circulated and councillors agreed to these transactions.	
14.2. The cashbook balance was noted.	
14.3. Councillors had received the draft budget for 2026/27 and agreed to the figures presented. The Precept for next year will remain unchanged.	
15. To receive matters of importance from Councillors – The new Government directives to Parish Councils to agree to Assertion 10 as part of the AGAR (Annual Governance and Accountability Return) recommends certain conditions concerning digital and data obligations. Part of this Assertion recommends that all Parish Councils and their councillors have gov.uk email addresses. It was agreed to contact Parish Online, who are associates of Norfolk Parish Training Support, and ask them to provide this service.	
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 7 th January 2026 at 7.30pm. It was agreed that the PC would meet on the first Wednesday of every month in 2026, except August.	
18. Meeting Closed 8.40pm	

UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT				
BALANCE AS AT 05.11.25			£26,675.95	
RECEIPTS AS AT 05.11.25				
DATE	RECEIVED FROM	DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL AMOUNT	
BALANCE C/FWD			£26,675.95	

MINUTES				ACTION	
PAYMENTS FOR APPROVAL THIS MONTH: <i>UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT</i>					
BALANCE AS AT 05.11.25				£26,675.95	
PAY TYPE	PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL AMOUNT	VAT	PAYE
BACS	M Ridgwell	Nov Salary & Exps	306.60		
BACS	HMRC	PAYE to month 07	73.40		73.40
	Unity Trust	Service Charge	6.00		
		Total	386.00		73.40
RECEIPTS					
BALANCE C/FWD			£26,289.95		

CASHBOOK BALANCE: 03.12.25

Details		CR	DR	
Cash Book Balance Brought Forward				
Unity Trust Bank Current Account	A	£26,675.95		
Receipts this month (see listed above)	B			
		Payments this month (listed above)	C	386.00
		Cash Book Balance Carried Forward (=A+B-C)		26,289.95
		Unity Balance		£26,289.95

Councillor report 28th November 2025, from Catherine Rowett

28/11/2025

Progress report

Pylons and panels

The deluge of energy projects all over South Norfolk continues, and once again we are in a round of so-called “consultations” in which the firms trying to cash in on Britain’s super-excessive energy prices will try to insist that they have our interests at heart.

Norwich to Tilbury have submitted their Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Planning Inspectorate. The deadline for registering as an interested party was 27th November, and I submitted comments myself and also recommended some input for Norfolk County Council’s submission, including complaints about the failure to respond to the statutory consultations and some detailed stuff about the damage to the nature reserves and woodland in the Bunwell Hill area resulting from rowing back on the improvements made in 2024, and reverting to the more damaging plans despite evidence from the ecologists, and things about the gliding club and aircraft safety at Tibenham. I hope that the County Council will remember to include these things this time, but I have also mentioned them myself.

On the Tasway Energy Park I have submitted comments to go in with the County Council submission, mainly about cumulative impact and the lack of any strategic land use framework in this government’s crazy energy and planning policy. I have also put in a contribution to the

County Council’s response to the consultation on the changes to the East Pye proposals, especially objecting to the location of the NG substation right by Great Moulton and the increase in the size of it, and the potential damage to the roads and byways. Their objections are manifold. I am visiting Station Road in Tivetshall with the officers and local parish council reps, to consider the bends where the company think they need to straighten the road because of their oversized vehicles.

Mayors and unitary councils

The consultation is now open for residents to put their views in to the government regarding the rival proposals for how to divide Norfolk up into one, two or three unitary councils. Find the consultation here: [Proposals for local government reorganisation in Norfolk and Suffolk - GOV.UK](#).

I have attended a briefing on the complex issue of how to manage the transition of powers from County Council to mayoral authority, and from existing councils to the new unitary councils. It's a costly nightmare, though the costs are the least of the problems! It must be very problematic for the council staff, who won't know whether they have a job in the new set up they are designing, or where that job might be.

Highways and paths

I've had no response so far to my concerns about the failures with respect to the promised resurfacing on the B1077 (Shelfanger to Winfarthing) (which had a surface dressing treatment instead of a full resurfacing, due to some confusion). I need to have another go at chasing that. I'm supporting several parishes with parish partnership applications for road safety schemes but have now run out of this year's local member fund money.

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 I don't yet see the applications I'm supporting for printing costs for the parish newsletter in Aslacton and a shelter for the children's play area at the community nursery in Gissing.

I'm pleased to say that the proposal for bus shelter improvements in Carleton Rode will be funded from the Bus Service Improvement Plan funds, providing we can find the parish contribution funds (20% of the cost) from somewhere else. I'm concerned about the deadline for this, however.

Updates from County Council

Norfolk County Council Budget Consultation

The Conservative administration is asking residents for their views about their 2026-27 budget proposals which include raising money by way of council tax and suggesting a raft of ways of trying to reduce costs, to help close the budget gap. You can read a brief fact sheet here: <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/consultation/budget-proposals-2026-27/>.

Find out more and have your say at www.norfolk.gov.uk/budget. Closes 15 December 2025.

Avian flu

All of Great Britain is now in an avian influenza prevention zone (AIPZ). This means all bird-keepers in Great Britain (including pet birds and small backyard flocks) are required by law to take biosecurity precautions. See links [here](#). To report breaches of bird flu rules, email trading.standards@norfolk.gov.uk.

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.

Tap on tap off on First buses

Norfolk County Council and First Bus have worked together to bring Tap On Tap Off (TOTO) payment technology to Norfolk's bus users. The new way to pay went live on all First Bus vehicles throughout the region from 23 November. On a bus with this system you need to remember to tap your card when you exit the bus, to get the right fare charged.

Budget

A number of provisions in the budget will have implications for local services and funding.

The government has also launched a major overhaul of council funding formulas intended to end 'postcode lottery' inequalities in local services. Backed by a £5 billion funding boost over three years, the reforms update decades-old data and consolidate dozens of grants into (what it claims to be) a simpler system, ensuring more money goes to councils in deprived areas with higher needs. There is some concern that the higher costs of basic services for rural areas will not be fully recognised by a system that (rightly) tries to rectify deprivation in some urban areas.

Contact me

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

Catherine Rowett

28th November 2025

Bunwell District Councillor Report December 2025

Renewable Energy Projects Update

Tasway, East Pye and Norwich to Tilbury have all received my responses on their various non-statutory and targeted consultations, as I'm sure they have from all of you. Mercifully, there seems to be a brief lull at the moment in terms of projects within South Norfolk and it's just been announced that the government has cleared the renewables list of so-called 'zombie projects'. This means we should only see 'shovel-ready' applications submitted from now on. While not always welcome, at least we know there won't be any time-wasters, just companies with fully developed proposals.

TPOs on Trees

I live in Tivetshall and have recently joined a biodiversity group there. One of our first tasks is measuring veteran and ancient trees to see if they merit a TPO. This is something anyone can organise through the Woodland Trust and I thought it would be helpful to share the details with you. This link tells you all you need to know. It's vital to record natural features in our local landscape so that they can be protected and the council will not always have an up-to-date record <https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/how-to-record/recording-guide/>

Ward Allowance Projects Success

So far this year from my £1k ward allowance budget I have successfully funded the refurbishing of an external toilet at Bunwell Village Hall and the purchase of two electric buffet food warmers at Aslacton and Great Moulton Coronation Hall, where they are catering for more and more people with community events and private bookings. I still have around £200 left before the next allowance begins in spring, so please let me know if there are any small community projects I could help you with.

LGR Consultation

Following the shock announcement that the Mayoral elections will be postponed until May 2028, we are as sure as we can be that the delayed County Council elections will still be going ahead in May 2026. Remember that these County Councillors will only be in their roles for two years, as they will be replaced by Unitary

Councillors in May 2028. Do respond to the government's statutory consultation which closes on 11th January 2026 to have your say on the unitary proposals <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-reorganisation-in-norfolk-and-suffolk>

Free Christmas Parking in Diss

On Saturdays in December, if you're Christmas shopping in Diss you will receive an extra free hour on top of the normal one, and free parking for as long as you need after 4pm from Monday to Friday. Just display your free ticket as normal.

In other news...

There are rumours of another round of Nature Conservation grants from South Norfolk Council early next year, and possibly more CAF (Community Action Fund) funding too. I'll keep you posted but start thinking about those projects you might want to fund!

Cllr Suzanne Wateridge

Member for Bunwell Ward, South Norfolk Council

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