



WALPOLE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at the Parish Hall on the 7th of May 2026 from 7pm.

Present:

Councillors – members of the public – William Brooks, Christopher MacCormick, Jan Luck, Adrian Eveleigh, Andy Bliss, Richard Blunt, Irene Hunter, Richard Green.

Chairman: Charles Boston

3 members of the public.

1. Welcome from the Chairman.
2. Apologies received – Cllrs Campion and Kirk.
3. Minutes approved from the Annual Parish Council meeting on the 1st of May 2025, proposed by W Brooks, seconded Richard Green and all in favour who were present at that meeting.

REPORTS FROM:

4. **Chairman's Annual Report:**

What's New

The playground equipment has continued to be updated, especially the ground as we continue to change the ground protection.

We have moved to the newly built Parish Hall for this year and in the future, where possible, we will continue to use both this and the community centre long into the future.

Sadly, we have said goodbye to Cllr Heather Smith and Cllr Claire James, as other commitments take over for them in their lives. We wish them the very best and a huge thank you for everything you have done for the Parish.

We welcome Cllr Christopher MacCormick to the team. He has already proven to be a valuable member and we look forward to what he brings to the parish.

Projects

The N.D.P. is finally active and the parish give much thanks to both Mr Paul Cotton for getting it off the ground and getting the necessary data in place in order to start writing it, and Mr Paul Blandford for taking it on and getting it over the finishing line.

To put it into perspective, there are other parishes that started before us and have yet to have it implemented.

We have started to look and gather whatever is needed to get a TROD in place around the double S bend on Walnut Road, to improve pedestrian Safety.

Responsibilities

The cost of Dog bin emptying has risen dramatically with very little warning and is a cost we had no say in.

Grass cutting has now been taken over by a private company. They do more for us, for less money.

Over the next year, 'the team' Cllr Bliss and Cllr Eveleigh, aka Andy and Ady, are continuing to find ways to help save and improve many of our dating footpath signs, as well as ensuring the paths themselves remain in appropriate condition.

We do still have Allotment space available to rent.

Not responsible (But pass on reports)

The continued degradation of the roads in and around the parish still need to be reported to highways, there is a link on the parish website.

Future Challenges

Money in general Despite increasing our precept, the actual cost on each home in the parish is counted in pence, not pounds. But every little helps and we endeavour to continue to spend wisely for the long-term, giving value for money.

A big thank you must go to Mr James Whitaker for his continued work dealing with the continued surprises the substation throws at us.

We as a parish council have been criticised for what's happening and challenging the substation and its massive expansion. It would be wise to ask us directly to seek the facts as the issue is here to stay and the reality is, it goes way beyond our influence.

We do continue to make ourselves heard and will continue to get the very best out of a raw deal for the parish.

In many ways, the results from today's election will determine what then next 12 months holds for us as a Parish. I am sure there will be plenty of hidden challenges ahead. To that note, I would like to thank every councillor for all their hard work and commitment to the parish over the last 12 months, and I look forward to seeing how we overcome whatever lies ahead.

Finally, I wish to thank our Parish Clerk, Caroline, whose continued support, knowledge and dedication keep the Parish Council running.

5. Borough Councillor's Report: Cllr Richard Blunt

It has been a difficult year for the Borough Council with the uncertainty of the Local Government Reorganisation and the Borough Council only have 2 more years to exist as it is now. A proposed Town Council for King's Lynn is under discussion, along with structure changes.

The planning process changes are due to take place as per the Government requirements, meaning that the planning committee will be reduced in numbers, calling in of applications will cease and officers making more decisions.

The planning committee could only meet quarterly.

Changes to the Local Plan include a national framework but the Neighbourhood Plans remain as a reference document. 1000 new homes are now required by the government per year.

Concerns regarding the growth for the Walpole distribution of electricity to substation 2 with a planning application due soon. All we can control is the build, access and traffic.

The Folgate Lane planning issues are in appeal and will continue to be watched carefully.

6. Due to illness, we do not have a County Councillor Report

7. St Peter Church Report given by William Brooks:

We continue with Holy Communion and Morning Prayer on alternate Sundays with approximately 30 people attending.

We have had 2 new consumer units fitted, some re-wiring, sockets and isolators as well.

We now have 10 LED floodlights fitted in the Chancel and have changed more lights to LED – now 99% LED.

We have had the tower cleaned of pigeon droppings and, in progress at the moment, are the repairs to the organ for water damage. All of this work has been completed from grant and donation funding to approximately £40,000.

We have held 2 successive craft fairs and the Carol service was well attended.

Looking ahead, we will be losing Barbara to retirement in January 2027.

St Andrew Church Report given by Andy Bliss:

After 20 years the floor is nearly completed but taking ages to dry meaning that the church is presently closed. The Easter event was successful and the Christmas Tree festival will be held again.

8. Community Centre Report given by Christopher MacCormick:

The centre is in a much better state with a good future ahead. The shop is returning and the Garden Room will be repurposed. The addition of the clothes recycling and package lockers have been well used. The Summer Fair is coming up but unfortunately the White House Cup football tournament has been cancelled. Continued improvements will be taking place.

9. Parish Hall report given by William Brook:

We have been open nearly one year and, whilst losing a couple of clubs due to the closure, we have gained 3 additional clubs with all being well supported as are the clubs who returned.

We are working on the acoustics but having a problem finding someone local to help. Companies further afield keep asking "well what do you want , how many" and quoting £6000+. Funds that we do not have.

10. Parishioners Open Forum

Qair have submitted planning application 26/00722. This is asking the planning department as to whether or not an environmental impact assessment is required prior to their submission of the actual planning application for BESS.

Because of the size of the application it most certainly is required but they may get lucky and if no-one objects they could get away without doing one (it costs tens of thousands of pounds). It covers all sorts of environmental, social, and economic effects of the proposed project such as developments and major infrastructure. It requires in this case Qair to identify, assess, and mitigate the effects of the application.

I wish to speak to the parish council about the need for their full disclosure. (Qair). I have details of their proposed new road, questions about "swept paths" weights, size of units (168) and flooding prospects to mention a few.

I will obviously be raising my concerns to the planning officer about this application and hope that the parish council will ask for the same and request an environmental impact assessment.

Oh yes Mr Burgess has stated that the earliest connection date they have been given is 2034. Apparently they will not build until a year before they have a definitive date from the grid. But at the moment 2034.

It was agreed that our roads simply cannot take this traffic and agreed that the Parish Council will write to Qair requesting an impact statement and stress tests to the bridges.

The meeting closed at 19.50

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DRAFT

Signed

Date