

WALPOLE PARISH COUNCIL

MEETING

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at the Community Centre on the 6th of February 2025 from 7.00pm.

Present:

Councillors – Charles Boston (CB), Heather Smith (HS), Adrian Eveleigh (AE), William Brooks (WB), Jan Luck (JL), Andy Bliss (AB), Richard Green (RG), Richard Blunt, Borough Councillor, (RB), Clare James (CJ), Charlene Campion (CC) and Irene Hunter (IH)
County & Borough Councillor Julian Kirk (JK)
9 members of the public

A minutes silence took place in respect of Mr. Richard Boden, former Chairman and Parish Councillor

1. Welcome from the Chairman.

Public Participation:

a. A member of the Crier delivery team thanked the council for the Christmas gift.

b. Voltwise request to use allotment land – item 7.9b on agenda.

The dyke at the side of their boundary with the allotment in 7.9b needs clearing as silted up and the water is overflowing into their pond and then onto the road.

Thought to be 50/50 responsibility but clerk to check and advise. ACTION: clerk

2. Apologies received - none.

3. All Councillors were reminded of their duty to abide by the Code of Conduct.

4. Declarations of interest – Cllr Brooks re 6.2 Solar Farm Fund

5. Minutes approved from the Parish Council meeting on the 5th of December 24 proposed by AE, seconded WB and all in favour who were present at that meeting.

6. Matters arising:

6.1 NDP – Clerk followed up on the updated Consultation Statement following regulation 14. Approval proposed RB, seconded CC and all in favour. To send to Borough for Regulation 15. ACTION: clerk

6.2 Solar Farm Fund update – 1 completed to application from the Walpole St. Peter Parish Hall for tables. £500 grant proposed CC, seconded CJ and all in favour. Note. WB abstained from the vote. Application forms requested by Skaters Roller Hockey Club and Walpole Good Companions.

7. To receive reports:

7.1 Highways – A number of complaints include Townsends corner, dyke collapsing and clerk asked for photos and exact locations. The more reports made, the quicker it seems that engineers attend the locations. Use

www.norfolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roads/report-a-problem

7.2 County and Borough Councillor's Reports:

Cllr Blunt – The Borough budget has gone through the cabinet, and it is a balanced budget with income satisfying expenditure. Full council meeting on the 27.2.25 to approve.

Devolution fast track has been approved by the Government with Norfolk and Suffolk having an elected mayor from May 2026. No further details and concerns regarding loss of democracy with the May 25 County Councillor elections being postponed. Currently we have 84 councillors for Norfolk and 55 for West Norfolk. We could only have 1 in the future! Unitary authorities to commence from 2027 soonest. West Norfolk could combine with Breckland and North Norfolk.

Cllr Kirk – The devolution is a takeover by the Government, and he is very angry at the loss of the May 25 elections. Norwich could have its own unitary authority. He fears it could get nasty, and the HQ could be in Ipswich which could impact on Norfolk and especially the Walpoles on the edge of the border. Parish Councils could have more work/responsibilities. Not sure if he will have a members fund next year.

RG asked for an update on the hospital rebuild and advised delayed 2-3 years, looking at 2033 now.

7.3 Clerk Report: precept sent to Borough, attended online updates on AGAR and year end requirements. SSE electricity invoicing has taken up a lot of time as they appear unable to get the correct Parish Council name on their invoices. EE mobile phone contract has ended, and clerk advised if this number was cancelled, we could be saving £190 per year. Most residents/councillors use 07368 861696 anyway. Proposed CJ, seconded HS and all in favour.

7.4 Village Crier and Website reports:

Crier – AE reported that now close to breaking even with 5 potential new advertisers. The Editor will adhere to deadlines due to issues caused by late reports. Next deadline is the 10th of March.

Clerk advised 372 views in January of the website.

7.5 To receive updated regarding footpaths and circular walks – 2 signs at Weatherholme are damaged and AB rescued one for repairs. 2 new posts are required and this was proposed by JL, seconded IH and all in favour.

7.6 Community Fund Projects Working Group – AB has cleared some dead wood on Swingfield.

7.7 Play area –The zip wire has been repaired, and clerk negotiated a discount. The gate still needs repairs to the post. The 3 areas for the siting of the adult equipment by the Community Centre were discussed as a recent site meeting and it was agreed to go ahead with option C at the rear of the Community Centre. Thanks, given to the Community Centre representatives for their support. Clerk to advise Online Playgrounds to start. ACTION: clerk New signage is required for the playground and adult area with a local telephone number – CJ agreed the use of her mobile number. ACTION: clerk Note. CJ left meeting at 8.25

7.8 SAM reports – AE reported as follows:

6.1.25.to 6.2.25 Swingfield 30mph 85th % = 32.8 mph, maximum speed = 50mph with total vehicles 20,955. Average speed = 28.0mph

6.1.25 to 6.2.25 Frenchs Road Incoming 40mph
85% = 43.6mph, maximum speed = **80**mph, total vehicles 8,221. Average speed = 35.6mph

Next Locations Hughenden House and Walnut Road

7.9 Communications/Correspondence:

- a. Tender for grass cutting – AB and the clerk had 4 interested parties with 3 putting in prices. Details given out and quote from The Mowing Man proposed by JL, seconded RG with all in favour. This will now include 3 cuts a year on Stickfast, Dunces and Follens footpaths.
- b. Resident (present) had sent an email to the clerk regarding allotment land next to their home being used by Voltwise on French’s Road. This is at the initial interest stage, and nothing has been received by the parish council since the original interest raised last July. Apparently soil testing has taken place but the parish council not advised. The Government are now pushing through all the applications for solar/battery projects.

2 letters have been received this evening from Ardent/ National Grid for 2 allotment areas on Folgate Lane. RB advised that the National Grid are now looking at 1 application with pylons and 1 underground. There is little we can do.

- c. Conrad Energy Community Funding is now available with information in the Crier.
- d. Lithium-ion battery safety campaign looking for our support – proposed AE, seconded WB and all in favour.
- e. Precept payments – now to be paid 50% in April, 50% in September and the clerk had made a complaint regarding the effect to our budget.
- f. Email received regarding a cycle path to Wisbech along an allotment. Agreed to invite the writers to attend the April PC meeting. ACTION: clerk

8. Planning – to consider Planning Applications, Decisions, Appeals and Enforcements. Any applications received after the date of this agenda and before the meeting date be considered.

8.1 Applications: None

8.2 Decisions: None

8.3 Enforcements/Appeals: (for information):

24/00189/UNTIDY| Untidy Land| Keldan Chalk Road Walpole St Peter Wisbech Norfolk PE14 7PH – pending consideration

24/00368/BOC|BOC - Breach of Planning Condition| Bustards Farm Bustards Lane Walpole St Andrew Wisbech – Pending Consideration

Clay Cottage – raised by RB and he will follow up on this.

9. Finance

9.1 To approve payments/receipts, bank reconciliation and statements for December and January, proposed AE, seconded HS and all in favour.

9.2 To approve payments (to date) for February – proposed AB, seconded CC and all in favour.

9.3 To approve J. Raby as our internal auditor for 24/25 audit – proposed AB, seconded HS and all in favour.

10. Public participation: None

11. Items for next agenda – please advise clerk by 27th February.

12. Next meeting will be on the 6TH of March 2025 from 7pm at the Community Centre.

Meeting closed at 8.51 and Chairman thanked everyone for attending

PAYMENTS FOR FEBRUARY 2025 (to date)

Clerk Expenses January	£ 26.00
Community Centre	£ 34.32
Clerk Salary	£ 681.53
HMRC	£ 170.40
SSE	£ 95.66
EE	£ 19.42
Online Playgrounds zip wire	£ 76.80
BCKLWN dog bins	£ 1345.34

Solar Farm Fund:

Walpole St. Peter Parish Hall grant	£ 500.00
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Signed

Date