

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in Carbrooke Village Hall on 14 April 2026

Present: Cllrs N Defew (Chair), J Borrett, L Brazell, W Leport, D Page, L Poole, G Redfern. In attendance: N Hartley (Parish Clerk) Cllr H Crane (Breckland Council), Cllr C Bowes (Norfolk County Council) thirteen members of the public.

1 Community Engagement Award

Cllr Defew presented the Council's Community Award to Laura Fox and David Cook. The award to Laura was in recognition of all her hard work in setting up and running Stay and Play at the Community Hub. The award to David was in recognition of all his hard work voluntarily litter picking at Blenheim Grange.

2 Parish Affairs

None.

3 Parish Council Chairman's Report

Cllr Defew delivered the following report.

It gives me great pleasure to present the Chairman's Report for Carbrooke Parish Council for the year 2025/26. Over the past twelve months, the council has continued to work diligently to serve the needs of our community and maintain the village's unique character. Our efforts have been focused on improving local amenities, fostering community spirit, and ensuring the responsible management of resources.

During this period, we successfully completed several projects, including the installation of EV charging points at both our village halls and the enhancement of children's play areas. These improvements have been well received by residents and have contributed to making Carbrooke a safer and more pleasant place for families. The council also supported various community events, which brought neighbours together and celebrated our local heritage.

We have continued to address environmental concerns by promoting recycling initiatives and maintaining public green spaces. Our partnership with local volunteers has been invaluable in keeping the village tidy and welcoming. The council has also prioritised road safety, working closely with authorities to address concerns about speeding and traffic management.

Financially, the council remains in a stable position, thanks to prudent budgeting and careful oversight. We have ensured that public funds are used effectively to benefit all residents, and we remain committed to transparency in all our operations. Regular consultations and open meetings have encouraged greater participation from the community, allowing residents to share their views and shape local decisions.

Looking ahead to the coming year, the council will continue to work on further improvements to our local plan. Key priorities include the development of new recreational facilities, ongoing support for youth programmes, and continued engagement with local businesses to promote economic growth. We invite all residents to become involved and share their ideas for Carbrooke's future.

In closing, I would like to thank my fellow councillors, our clerk, and all the volunteers who have given their time and energy to support Carbrooke Parish Council. Your dedication is greatly appreciated, and together, we will ensure our village remains vibrant and welcoming for all.

4 Report of the Community Hub Committee

Helen Crane delivered the following report.

As Chair of The Community Hub, I am delighted to bring this report to the Annual meeting of the Parish Council.

The Carbrooke Community Hub continues to thrive as a space for the Community. During the past year the Hub has supported a wide variety of groups, activities, and initiatives, benefiting residents of all ages.

Regular User Groups and Activities

The Hub is used by a diverse range of groups, including:

- **Crafty Coffee** – A welcoming social group where participants meet to create, enjoy refreshments, and build friendships, helping to reduce isolation within the community.
- **Ear to Hear** – A friendly and inclusive group for people with hearing difficulties, open to both hearing and non-hearing individuals.
- **Meditation with Amanda** – Sessions promoting wellbeing and relaxation, followed by refreshments.
- **Brecks Jam Club** – A music group led by Tony Owen, encouraging musical participation and collaboration.
- **IDT Independent Dance Training** – Providing structured dance training sessions.
- **Bridge Club** – Meeting weekly every Thursday.
- **Stay and Play** – Offering a safe and stimulating environment for young children. Health Visitors attend on the third Friday of each month to provide weighing services and advice.
- **Warm Baby Initiative** – Volunteers provide knitted garments for children, available free of charge or for a small donation.
- **FitSteps with Aimee** – Dance fitness classes for both beginners and more experienced participants, featuring styles such as Salsa, Cha Cha Cha, and Jive.
- **NHS Services** – Use the Hub for baby and toddler development checks.
- **Foundation of Life Church** – Supporting young people through weekly groups for ages 6–10 and 11+.
- **Beavers and Cubs** – Regularly use the Hub for activities and learning.
- **Zumba Dance** – Weekly sessions held every Friday.
- **The Creation Station** – Craft sessions for children and parents.

Community Events and Initiatives

The Hub has hosted and supported a number of successful events and initiatives, including:

- A well-attended **Remembrance Service** with refreshments.
- A **Breast Cancer charity Coffee Morning**, raising £1,246.00
- A **Children's Christmas Party**, featuring a visit from Santa and gifts for the children.

In addition, volunteers have contributed to community improvement projects, including:

- Planting trees and bulbs at the Hub, orchard, and memorial areas. Including weekly watering during the growing season.
- Maintaining and enhancing the 2 memorial sites through cleaning, weeding, and the installation of poppy bunting during remembrance.
- Supporting fundraising efforts for a large iPad for the local care home to improve accessibility for residents.

The Hub continues to work in partnership with a number of organisations, including:

- Carbrooke Village Hall
- Friends of Carbrooke and Watton
- Helping Families in Watton
- Local Care Home
- Cranswick (who support events with food donations)
- Tesco (providing raffle prizes)
- Twinning Group

Additionally, Abbots Countrywide regularly hires the Hub, and the facility is frequently booked for private parties at affordable rates.

During the year, an electric vehicle charging point has been successfully installed at the Hub, organised by the Parish Council.

From the Parish Council precept allocation of £18,000 for the 2025–2026 budget, the Hub has only required £4,500, demonstrating careful financial management and efficiency.

The continued success of the Carbrooke Community Hub would not be possible without the dedication and commitment of its committee members. Their willingness to volunteer, support events, and step up when needed is greatly appreciated by myself and the wider community.

5 Carbrooke Academy Report

Hannah Wheeler, the school's Head, delivered the following report.

Spring term – have been fully staffed. Completed a shuffle around of support staff in January, ensuring pupils have the right support, at the right time. No significant staff absence. KS2 classes are almost full (average class size 28.75) EYFS/KS1 classes have some space, but this leaves possible mobility spaces or transition from Infant to Junior for Sept '26. (average class size 25)

Nursery rooms are almost full, with limited days and spaces currently just in the 2 year room. Booking has already started for September 2026, with 6 children already on the list for September 2027!

Reception intake for September 2026 sees us with 28 first choices. This could mean we receive some second choices, or have space for people new to the area, or those who haven't applied yet.

Pupil attendance has been good, with our figures in line with National and our attendance baseline improvement expectation (ABIE) is 95.5%. See attendance data shared through attendance document.

Attainment data targets are monitored regularly (at least weekly for Year 6) and we see that children are working below their predicted grades. Additional support has been in place since January to help this, but we are aware that this is our last 'Covid' cohort, which significantly affected their attainment – something that has been flagged over the last 3 years. This is also our final cohort with almost one third pupil premium children, many of whom have significant SEND/other barriers to learning.

We continue to give as much support as possible, but also recognise that we need to offer early additional interventions to the children below year 6.

Enrichment week in January was a busy, but positive week. We continue to extend and enhance the curriculum through visits, visitors and experiences for the children. This has included the Planetarium visit where the children are all transported into space, a Multiskills tournament for children with SEND, several classes have been out to Gressenhall and one class to the Sainsburys Centre for Visual Arts.

Christian Distinctiveness As we are likely to be on the 2026/27 SIAMs inspection list, we are ensuring our provision is solid, with evidence to show inspectors. This term, the school teaching staff are enrolled on a study for 'The Bible', run by the Diocese of Norwich. This is a series of twilight events online, with a book for each teacher and leader to use to reflect on their own knowledge and understanding of the Bible. This is in lieu of our 5th INSET day which would have been in July 2026. We would also like Page 2 of 3 Christian Distinctiveness to return to giving our incoming Reception and outgoing Year 6's a bible – something that we were not permitted to do 3 years ago due to costs. We are building up our links with other church charity groups, including Fountain of Life and RAISE, as well as the local vicar Reverend Dave. RAISE have already lead a collective worship and we have pre-booked some 'experience days' with them for key times of the Christian year, such as Christmas. Our worship has always focused on the Value for that half term, but this has now been drilled further into which Bible stories we use each week, ensuring there is no repetitions or omissions. We also have each class leading a worship every term around their own learning, followed by a class workshop with their parents in class.

The school council also lead a whole school worship once a term, under the direction of Ms Cooper (DHT) Vision, Values and Ethos We continue to listen to the pupils and their discussions and directions. Recently, the school council met to discuss the uniform, and returned to class to collect view points

and voting. As the headteacher, I was then invited to attend the next meeting to receive the relevant information and have the discussion.

Pupils voted to keep the uniform, but had a good discussion around possible implications and impact on them, their families and the community. The values remain a significant part of our school lives, along with the vision. Almost all visitors, either to site, or when pupils have been out on visits, have complimented the ethos the school brings with it.

At Christmas, when the main school visited the Norwich Theatre Royal, some members of the public spoke to staff at the time, but also followed this up with an email direct to reiterate their pleasure of attending at the same time. The inclusive nature of our school sets us apart from most others in our community, with staff, parental and pupil voice stating how important this is. We know that senior leaders recognise this, and are supportive of how we work, ensuring personal wellbeing as well as focusing on pupil outcomes equally.

Parent/carer engagement Each class leads a collective worship each term. Parents and families are eager to attend and enjoy seeing and hearing the children's work. Most classes have around 80% attendance. We have extended this to include the time in the hall as well as follow up time in the classroom, with an example lesson, learning session or activity that continues until 10am. This has been a welcomed addition/extension as families have taken the time to be here already.

World Book Day was very well supported too – with children dressing up, parents joining the school for reading and activities, as well as an online (in class) story session with me. Later in the day, there was an individualised session for Nursery, and finally two online stories read before bedtime for those at home to view.

Parents evening this week (9th & 10th March) were very well supported. Every child had an appointment booked, with thanks to the pastoral and admin teams to who direct called several who don't engage. Out of the possible 154 children to be seen (some are for IEP meetings next week), only 2 didn't attend or answer the phone to the teacher. This is an attendance rate of almost 99%. This is the half yearly opportunity for parents to discuss their child's learning.

Parent/carer engagement look at their books, receive a half yearly report with next steps/targets included, as well as a copy of their child's attendance.

Safeguarding We have sign-posted a number of families to Early Childhood and Family Service (ECFS) who support with issues that impact at home and at school. Safeguarding remains of paramount importance, and is logged independently of pupil behaviour. We have had no incidents of physical interventions this term.

A small number of staff were trained in this in September 2025 so are current with the restrictions and requirements.

Future proofing We continue to plan strategically and to manage expected change. The optimisation of considering the work/life balance for staff is always at the forefront of our mind when forward planning. Staff voice has been instrumental in making small changes to positively impact this, including

flexibility for staff around PPA time, how release time is used, relinquishing an INSET day to be used as twilight, moving meetings to a more appropriate week in the term, and only sending messages outside of work hours if completely essential.

6 Cllr Bowes' Report (Norfolk County Council)

Cllr Bowes delivered the following report.

I never cease to be impressed by the number of local voluntary and charitable organisations and individuals who work selflessly in the Watton and Wayland area and whose valuable contribution to the community can easily go unsung. Over the years I have been pleased to support bids for funding for charitable projects and most recently have been pleased to secure funding through Norfolk County Council's Community Fund for Watton Sports Centre with £1,000 going to the new 3G 5 a side pitch project and £500 each going to the Daisy Programme, (supporting those affected by domestic abuse across Breckland) 3rd Watton Brownies and Love Watton.

In the last year I have been pleased to see the planting of the flowering cherries and Horse Chestnuts on Highways land in Carbrooke, funded through my County Member's Highway fund and to win funding from the National Highways Safety Fund for the instalment of the extra road safety signage including flashing 20mph signs through Caudle Springs to Carbrooke Village. I have lobbied for more support for our hospitality businesses and pubs following Government tax hikes and the County Council recently announced a £250,000 "Hospitality Matters" campaign to support the sector with bespoke training, workshops, and potential £1,000 grants.

I applaud the significant successes achieved in recent years by Wayland Academy, of which we should all be proud. As a result of the hard work and dedication of pupils and staff the Academy celebrated record GCSE results in August 2025, with 64% of students achieving 9-5 grades in English and Maths and 80% achieving 9-4. The Academy is a member of the Inspiration Trust and is ranked among Norfolk's top-performing schools, featuring strong progress, a "knowledge-rich" curriculum, and a high Progress 8 score of +0.61 which indicates that students make significantly higher-than-average progress compared to other schools.

The County Council is again holding Household Hazardous Waste days at recycling centres across the county this spring.

These successful events allow residents to dispose of hazardous household waste free of charge, this includes items such as aerosols, anti-freeze, drain cleaners, fertilisers, paint, and weed killer. Booking is required and opens 8 days before each event. Booking can be done online or over the phone. These events are for household waste only - and are not for businesses, groups, or organisations.

Locally, Dereham Recycling Centre will be holding one of the events this weekend on Friday 15th and Saturday 16th May. To check which items are and are not accepted, and to book a slot residents can visit: www.norfolk.gov.uk/hazardouswaste

Norfolk County Council Elections May 7th, Watton Division

The local elections for Norfolk County Council will be held on 7th May and after making a public stand against the previous postponement, I am pleased to be re-standing. It is always an honour and pleasure to be nominated to represent the Watton and Wayland area that I was born and brought up in.

The two polling stations for Carbrooke residents will be Carbrooke Community Hub and Carbrooke Coronation Hall. Polling stations will be open from 7am-10pm. Your polling card will indicate which one you should attend to vote. The last day for registration to vote is Monday 20th April. ***Please do remember that you must now show an approved form of photo ID when voting at a polling station.***

Whilst these are County Council elections, Breckland Council, as the Electoral Authority, oversees the running of the elections. All information about the process and timetable can be found on the 'Council and Elections' page of Breckland Council's website and the 'Elections' page of Norfolk County Council's website.

Norfolk wide achievements and news

Norfolk County Council under a Conservative administration has a strong record on delivering on its promises and investing in the county's future. From new libraries to strengthened local transport, supporting businesses and high streets, expanding opportunities for young people, investing in 90% 5G coverage for Norfolk, taking action to protect Norfolk's heritage and natural environment, (850,000 trees planted) and building 430 houses (the majority for first time buyers). It is a Council that stands up for Norfolk and fights to secure the investment it deserves. Its Children's Services is held to be one of the best in the country.

Delivering a balanced and responsible budget for 2026–27

Norfolk County Council approved a balanced £613.8m budget for 2026–27, demonstrating strong financial leadership and prudent management in what remains one of the toughest funding climates in decades. The administration has once again delivered stability and certainty for residents, setting a balanced financial position while identifying £42.3 million in savings and efficiencies and committing £76.3 million in targeted investment to protect vital services and strengthen Norfolk's economy. Despite significant national financial pressures and ongoing constraints in central government funding, we have ensured the county remains on a firm financial footing, without resorting to emergency measures. This stands in stark contrast to a growing number of upper-tier authorities across the country that have issued Section 114 notices or are facing effective bankruptcy.

The budget enables the council to continue:

- Protecting frontline services
- Investing heavily in adults and children's services
- Delivering new libraries and modern learning hubs in key towns
- Supporting for heritage, culture, and tourism
- Driving transformative reforms to improve efficiency and outcomes
- Backing economic growth and infrastructure
- Maintaining long-term financial sustainability

In line with national funding assumptions a 4.998% increase in council tax was implemented due to the government's continued reliance on placing the burden on local taxpayers to safeguard core

services. This decision reflects the financial realities facing councils nationwide, while ensuring essential services remain protected for Norfolk residents.

This budget reinforces Norfolk's Conservative administration's commitment to careful stewardship of taxpayers' money, strong local services, and a resilient future for the county.

Investment in community led highway improvements across the county

The County Council has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting local communities with the approval of 99 new highway improvement schemes for 2026-27, delivered in partnership with town and parish councils across Norfolk.

The Parish Partnership Programme, now entering its fifteenth year, gave local communities a voice in shaping the highways enhancements that matter most to them, whether that's improving pedestrian safety, slowing vehicle speeds, or making it easier to walk, cycle or access local services.

This year's programme represented a total investment of £769,034, made possible through the longstanding 50/50 funding model. Town and parish councils will collectively contribute £384,517, matched by £384,517 from Norfolk County Council, enabling more than twice as many small-scale schemes to be delivered than could be funded by the council alone.

Bus service improvements deliver record growth and faster journeys

Norfolk County Council's ambitious Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) has transformed public transport across the county, driving a 26% increase in passenger numbers since 2022 and making Norfolk a leading national example for sustainable travel.

A paper discussed at the council's Infrastructure and Development Committee on 22nd January highlighted what has been delivered thanks to the £65.45 million secured for Norfolk from the Department for Transport. That includes;

- New and enhanced bus services on more than 44 routes across Norfolk, including more evening and Sunday services
- Affordable fares: capped single fares in key towns and multi-operator ticketing
- Greener fleet: 75 zero-emission buses in Norwich and 24 more electric buses coming in 2026
- Improved passenger experience: real-time information, safer waiting areas, next-stop announcements and real-time information on more buses.

Not only are we seeing record-setting and increasing numbers of passengers, but customer satisfaction has also risen to 87%, bucking national trends and reinforcing Norfolk's approach to improvements in bus travel across the county.

First place in the Eastern region in annual Highways and Transport Satisfaction Survey

Norfolk County Council has once again demonstrated strong performance in the National Highways and Transport (NHT) Public Satisfaction Survey, taking the top spot in the Eastern region for overall satisfaction and second out of 29 county councils across England. This marks the 15th consecutive year Norfolk has participated in the survey, and the 7th year in a row that we have come either first or second overall.

Norwich Castle Keep reopens following £27m redevelopment

Norwich Castle Keep reopened to visitors following a comprehensive five-year redevelopment project that introduced new accessibility features alongside new galleries and interpretive displays. Funded by £12 million from Norfolk County Council and over £13 million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, all five floors of the newly named People's Palace were opened to the public for the first time ever. The Grade I listed castle, originally commissioned by William the Conqueror 900 years ago and completed by his son Henry I in 1121, retained its historic significance while embracing modern improvements. A new light-filled atrium adjacent to the Keep was unveiled in the first phase of the redevelopment in July 2024. Visitors also benefited from a new café, gift shop, and additional toilet facilities. Importantly, a lift was installed to provide full wheelchair accessibility throughout the Keep, allowing access from the basement all the way up to the battlements, where visitors could enjoy panoramic views across Norwich.

Nationally recognised AI programme to help prevent falls is rolled out across Norfolk

The initiative was delivered in collaboration with local partners including Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSE), city, district and borough Councils and NHS organisations, and aims to reduce falls in vulnerable and older adults. Following a successful pilot with 1250 residents, the programme, which uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) to identify residents at risk of escalating needs, enhances the safety and wellbeing of those at risk of falls. The technology enables the council to identify and prioritise individuals in Norfolk most at risk and allows for proactive intervention before they fall. For more information about preventing falls visit [Preventing and dealing with falls](#).

Local Government Reform

The Government recently announced its intention to abolish Norfolk's existing two-tier system of Local Government which comprises eight district and one county council and replace them with three new unitary authorities for the county. The areas of Breckland Council and the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk, plus a small number of parishes from South Norfolk, will be replaced by a new authority for West Norfolk. The decision will also see two additional unitary authorities established, one for Norwich and one for East Norfolk. These three unitary councils will be responsible for providing all local authority services within their respective areas, including social care, planning, highways, housing, education and waste. The establishment date for the new unitary system is 1st April 2028. The Structural Change Order is expected to pass in Autumn 2026, followed by shadow council elections in May 2027. Current councils will continue to provide services during the transition period leading up to April 2028.

Disappointment at the Government decision to halt Mayoral Election and slash Devolution Funding

Norfolk County Council expressed serious concern following the Labour Government's announcement that the planned 2026 mayoral election for the Norfolk & Suffolk Combined County Authority will be deferred until 2028. The sudden decision meant that Norfolk would now receive only around one-third of the investment previously promised under the devolution programme.

7 Cllr Crane's Report (Breckland Council)

Cllr Crane delivered the following report.

Breckland Council Achievements 2025/26

Thriving Places

- £250k was allocated to repair 7 historic buildings in Swaffham as part of the Historic Town programme.
- £519,453K was committed from the UK shared prosperity fund benefitting individual businesses, improving skills and employability.
- Supported NCC in making improvements to the Market Place in Dereham.
- Thetford's pride in place board, with input from over 1,000 residents enabling an early regeneration plan to be submitted and unlocking 350k for priority projects.
- 30k was released to enable retailers to redecorate their frontages.
- Enabled more than 100 people and students in training for heritage building and conservation skills.
- Re-open grants were awarded to 9 businesses across our high streets.
- Manufacturing day in Thetford engaging 270 school children.
- Start-up grants and growth grants of 285k were awarded to rural businesses.
- Car park transfers to Town councils.

Inspiring Communities

- Safer street wardens are covering our 5 Market Towns, over 1,000 hours of visible patrols.
- £82,695 in grant funding to community projects plus a further £32,295 in match funded grants.
- Over 160 affordable homes have been enabled plus 4 all affordable schemes which will provide over 280 new affordable homes, 200 above policy requirement.
- Delivered a new 3G pitch in partnership with football foundation at Thetford.
- Work has started on the new Attleborough leisure project.
- Distributed 12k in grants to Mark VJ Day 80
- The Community Alcohol Partnership was launched in Thetford, later to be launched in Dereham.
- Together for Dereham launched to tackle ASB.
- Over 750 food and water supply inspections.
- Third consecutive RSPCA platinum award for dog warden services.
- Over 140 incidents of fly tipping were dealt with, with 37 fixed penalty notices.
- 4k in community transport grants distributed.
- PSPO in Dereham introduced.
- Emergency rest centres increased.

Working Smarter 2035

- Ai platform Puzzel introduced which provides 24/7 access
- Installation of solar panels at Thetford leisure centre
- Expanded our trade waste scheme and introduced the new trade food waste.
- £11,500 in grant funding to promote composting and recycling and textile reuse.
- Supported 30 community litter picks.
- We have served 167 notices to private rental sector to fix hazardous housing conditions.

8 Report of the Millennium Green Trust

Jerry Darby delivered the following report.

The Green continues to thrive and has seen a greater footfall attracting visitors from the wider parish and beyond which brings with it additional challenges.

The severe drought has given benefits and problems. The grass has needed fewer cuts but establishing trees and plants has been difficult. However the electric mowers will give additional future savings particularly considering the recent inflation of petrol prices.

We now number 6 trustees and our ability to discover and successfully apply for grants for projects continues.

The Green now has power and water via a supply contract with the village hall also Wi-Fi is now operational. We now have a web site in addition to our Facebook page.

May saw a successful VE Day celebration with music, food, exhibitions, military vehicles including a Sherman tank and lighting of the beacon. All the village organisations worked together to create a memorable and historic event.

July we hosted the school sports day and a successful PTA "colour run" fundraiser. The school continues to hold forest school twice weekly and we have very good communications with the teaching staff and try to involve the children in suitable projects.

August was the annual dip in the pond to attend to invasive weeds and removal of anything that should not be in the water.

November we marked Remembrance Day with flags and Tommy silhouettes Daffodils sponsored by the Parish council were planted on the green and around the village hall with the help of the school children. While we were at it we also planted bulbs around all the new village entrance signs. We also planted, snowdrops, aconites, bluebells and anemones on the green sponsored by Breckland DC.

December was the launch of our first ever Millennium Green calendar. Photo entries taken by and voted for by the community. We sold 100 copies online and at the Christmas Bazaar, Norfolk and Better farmers market and a pop up coffee shop on the green. Financial this was a great success and well received by the community.

January we planted a number of cherry trees sponsored by Breckland DC.

Additionally we have added two new benches, three new owl boxes (two courtesy of Wayland Men's shed and Watton Rotary) constructed a waterfowl platform on the pond and added several new bird boxes.

Ongoing we have been accepted by Tesco for another in store Blue token ballot this time for new recycled plastic picnic benches which will be more durable and hygienic than the existing wooden benches.

The friends of Carbrooke Millennium Green scheme continues to be well supported.

Our battle with dog poo continues to be challenging as the increased popularity of the green brings more dogs and subsequent poo. The vast majority is binned and the weekly volunteers who empty the bins can testify they continue to get heavier but there are still issues to resolve. Thanks to the Parish Council for their continued valuable support

9 Carbrooke Village Hall Report

Rob Poole delivered the following report.

The year has been a busy one for the hall. The entertainment committee led by Rob has been fantastic in organising some great village events. Music evenings with the help of Terry, the Christmas Bazaar and the hugely successful VE day village event was at the heart of things but new events such as Foodie Friday were also a big hit so expect to see more of them this summer. The New Year has seen a sell out Quiz night and a new line up behind the bar. Meanwhile, there is a free karaoke evening on Friday 29th May for all you budding Whitneys and a Terry inspired 70s disco night to follow later this Summer, so please all come and enjoy the fun. Meanwhile, alongside these one off events, we are seeing an increasing number of new regular users with groups ranging from Jujitsu to a tutoring group hiring the Hall and making it busier than ever.

The most significant change at the Hall has been the retirement of Alan Willer from behind the bar after serving the community pints with a smile every Friday and fortnightly Sunday for the last ten years. He has now been replaced by a rota of five who take turns giving up their Friday evenings to tend the Bar. With their arrival has come a host of new ideas ranging from how to improve sales and stock keeping to new ways of attracting members of the community down to the Hall on a Friday evening. A huge thank you to them for their time and for their enthusiasm. I hope you all come down in the weeks to come and notice the difference.

Our efforts continue to try to improve the hall. Thanks to local volunteers who upholstered and repaired the chairs, we now have more comfortable seating in the Bar with more on its way. Outside the Hall and with the help of the Parish Council, we have put in fencing, improved the entrance and put in EV charging. The bottle bank and other bins have now finally been moved from directly outside the entrance and now gives us an opportunity to make the exterior look more attractive and install better signage.

The aim of the management committee is to turn the village hall into a thriving community space by improving facilities and offering the parish ways of coming together. As a result, the committee would like to thank everyone who has given up their time to help with running the hall, organising events and turning up to support it. A particular note of thanks should not only go to Alan but also Debbie Muller who like Alan served on the committee for more than 10 years and helped revive the Hall's fortunes after joining it when it was in dire financial straits. If anyone is interested in helping support the hall or has ideas for new clubs or events, we would love to hear from you.

10 Carbrooke PCC Report

Mark Ward delivered the following report.

Carbrooke St Peter and St Paul church would like to thank Carbrooke Parish Council very much for its enhanced grant to us this year for the cutting of grass in the churchyard. We offer the only place in the parish for the burial of loved ones and, like you, regard the keeping of a neat and tidy churchyard as an important priority for our village. Parts of the churchyard serve as an important area for wildlife too. The church remains open daily from 10am-4pm for visiting. We notice that people enjoy wandering in our grounds, especially in the spring when our display of 21 varieties of daffodils is a spectacular draw.

Since the beginning of this month, Carbrooke church has formally left the Benefice of Ashill to join the new benefice of Watton with Carbrooke, under the leadership of Rev Dave Cossey. We believe it is a better fit, considering Carbrooke's estates on the Norwich Road are naturally more attached to Watton than to other villages.

Unlike many other parish churches, we still maintain weekly services. On 4th Sundays, it's with Rev Dave. We are a small, tolerant, open, friendly and liberally minded community. It's always good to see new faces. No acceptance of any religious dogmas necessary.

11 Carbrooke Fuel Allotment Report

Valerie Delf delivered the following report.

The grants this year were issued on or after 11 December 2025. There were 39 elderly persons grants of £35 each issued and five disability grants of £30 each.

All Annual Returns are submitted to the Charity Commission in October every year – all details are available on requests.

Income for 2025 was £8,983.84.

Expenditure for 2025 was £8,983.84

Bank balances are:

Community account: £4,648.47

Business saver/premium account: £2,760.37

Making a total £7,408.84 on statements ending December 31 2025.

We have four trustees at present – Jo Borrett, Valerie Delf, Paul Kerrison and David Saunders.

Also Paul Kerrison has kindly agreed to take on responsibilities as clerk/treasurer of the Fuel Allotment Charity.

12 Report of Carbrooke Heritage Group

The meeting received a written report as follows.

Carbrooke Heritage Group have not been quite so active during the past year, due to ill health and aging of our active members.

We took part in the VE Day event in the village hall on 8th May. We were also on hand during the afternoon when the whole school visited in groups to find out about Carbrooke during WW2, the children were very interested and asked some interesting questions.

We also attended with a display from Carbrooke at an event to commemorate VE Day at Buckingham Lodge Care Home.

On Sunday 22nd June – we led a Guided Heritage Walk around the centre of the village, followed by tea and cakes in the village hall, with local old photos on display. We had around a dozen people attend, and they appeared to enjoy the event.

On Sunday 28th September 3pm – we presented another showing of the film ‘ Carbrooke in the Past’, followed by tea and biscuits. Although this wasn’t as well attended as the previous showing, it was greatly received by those who did.

We opened the Heritage centre for the Village Bazaar in November.

In February we held an open evening in the Heritage centre to gauge interest in the group and how we may operate moving forward. Those who attended were pleased to have the heritage group facility and see our artefacts which encouraged an ad hoc memory share.

In March we had a visit from Carbrooke school year 3 as we helped with their ‘ Where we Live’ project. The children were extremely interested in the different aspects of Carbrooke in the past.

We continue to get a number of online enquiries regarding ancestors from Carbrooke, and help where we can, one of our members has been updating the website, and having fun colourising some of the old photos. At present we tend to do our own research regarding Carbrooke and publish it online.

New members willing to take an active role in organising and helping at events, as well as ideas for future events would be greatly appreciated.

Website - Carbrookehistory.co.uk

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