

**Minutes of a meeting of the Annual Parish Council Meeting
held in Carbrooke Village Hall on 13 May 2025**

Councillors present: N Defew (Chair), J Borrett, K Jones, W Leport, D Page, L Poole, G Redfern.

In attendance:- N Hartley (Parish Clerk), P Arrowsmith (Community Hub), Cllr C Bowes (Norfolk County Council).

1 Election of Council Chair

It was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Defew as the Council's Chair. He signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2 Election of Council Vice Chair

It was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Page as the Council's Vice Chair. He signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs H Crane and P Bate (Breckland Council).

4 Code of Conduct

Councillors signed the Code of Conduct.

5 Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

6 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Defew declared a non-pecuniary interest as Treasurer of the Millennium Green Trust in its grant application (item 29).

7 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 8 April 2025. The Chair signed the minutes.

8 Matters Arising

None.

9 Report from Breckland and County Councillors

A copy of Cllr Crane and Bowes' reports are attached to the minutes.

10 Planning

10.1 The Council considered the following applications:-

Flintstone, Mill Lane PL/2025/0466/FMIN
Change of use on land and construction of a timber framed oak fronted Cart Lodge with shingled access drive

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council had no objection to the application.

2 Cranwell Road PL/2025/0596/FMIN
Proposed semi detached dwelling (self build)

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council had no objection to the application.

11 Finance

11.1 The following payments were approved in accordance with the budget:-

N Hartley, clerk's salary, £796.68
HMRC, clerk's Paye & Hub manager's Paye (May), £439.80
Clear Insurance, annual premium, £1,618.15
N Hartley, reimbursement for Microsoft subscription re Council laptop, £84.99
Mansfield Fencing, put up litter signs at Blenheim Grange, £60
P Arrowsmith, reimbursement for paint for football goals and benches, £48.40
K Jones, reimbursement of VE Day expenses, £289.45
N Defew, reimbursement of VE Day expenses, £287.32
W Durgan, reimbursement of VE Day expenses, £22.45
Carbrooke Parish Council (Hub account), transfer of funds, £3,000
Norfolk County Council, Parish Partnership Scheme (sign at Hub), £325
Cakes & Moore, food for VE Day commemoration, £237

11.2 The Council made the following payment from the Commuted Sum:-

Mrs Greenfingers, plants and mulch for Washington Drive open space area, £321.75

11.3 The Council noted the following payment received:-

Carbrooke Parish Council (Hub account), payment for manager's Paye (May), £240.80

11.4 The Council's Internal Control Officer noted that he had carried out the checks and everything was in order.

11.5 The Hub's Internal Control Officer noted that he had carried out the checks and everything was in order.

12 Accounts and Annual Return

The Council received its annual accounts to 31 March 2025. It was **RESOLVED** to sign the Annual Return. The Chair and the Clerk signed the Annual Return.

13 IT Policy

It was **RESOLVED** to introduce a new IT policy as recommended as part of the audit process.

14 Appointment of the Budget Committee

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllrs Defew, Page and Redfern to the Budget Committee.

15 Appointment of the Staff Committee

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllrs Defew, Page and Poole to the Staff Committee.

16 Appointment of the Council's Internal Control Officer

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Leport as the Council's Internal Control Officer.

17 Appointment of the Internal Control Officer to the Community Hub

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint the Clerk as the Hub's Internal Control Officer.

18 Representative to the Community Hub

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Redfern as the Council's representative to the Hub.

19 Representative to the Village Hall

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Defew as the Council's representative to the Village Hall.

20 Representative to the Millennium Green Trust

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Page as the Council's representative to the Millennium Green Trust.

21 Representative to Carbrooke Academy

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Jones as the Council's representative to Carbrooke Academy.

22 Representative to Carbrooke Fuel Allotment Charity

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Poole as the Council's representative to the Fuel Allotment Charity.

23 Representative to Carbrooke PCC

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Borrett as the Council's representative to the PCC.

24 Tree Survey

It was **RESOLVED** to carry out all the recommended works at Blenheim Grange. Cllr Jones and the Clerk will meet the inspector re the 2026 report. With regard to the Village Hall car park, the report recommended that the Council install low barriers at a 1.5m radius around the base of the sycamore and apply composted mulch around the base. The Council agreed this is not currently necessary.

25 Community Orchard in the Council's grass cutting schedule

It was **RESOLVED** to include this area in the Council's cutting schedule, the first cut to be made to bring the area under control and monthly cuts thereafter. The work to be carried out by Top Garden Services.

26 Bulbs to plant on the Open Space at the front of Blenheim Grange

The Council considered a proposal to plant bulbs on its land at the front of Blenheim Grange (near Norwich Road). It was **RESOLVED** to purchase and plant bulbs in September.

27 Car boot sale on the Lancaster Avenue playing field

The Council considered a request to allow a car boot on the land next to the Lancaster Avenue play area to raise money for Watton Carnival. It was **RESOLVED** to agree to the request as an act of good will and of value to the community. The organisers will have their own Public Liability insurance and will clear up any mess. If this is not done, the Council will not look favourably on any future request. The Council will ask the organisers why Carbrooke was selected as a location and not Watton.

28 Village Gateways under the Parish Partnership Scheme

It was **RESOLVED** to approve white gateways for the five locations. The wording on each to read Welcome to Carbrooke Village 30mph. It was **RESOLVED** to request an extension to the 30mph limit on Summer Lane to allow for one of the gateways to be suitably located. The Council will consider applying for two more gateways (to be located on Norwich Road) under the Parish Partnership Scheme 2026.

29 Grant application from the Millennium Green Trust

The Council considered a request for a grant of £700 to cover the Green's insurance of its specialist mower, the purchase of security cameras and the first year's remote monitoring. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the grant.

30 Hub Manager's report

A copy of the report is attached to the minutes.

31 Hub's Finance report

A copy of the report is attached to the minutes.

32 Council's Reserves

The Council considered the apportionment of the funds carried forward at the end of the financial year. It was **RESOLVED** to ringfence the reserves as below:-

Purchase of a storage container for the Community Hub.

The balance of funds toward the play areas at the Community Hub and Lancaster Avenue.

33 Storage Container for the Community Hub

The Council considered quotes for an additional storage container. It was **RESOLVED** to purchase a 20 foot container from Square Deal Storage. The ground to be made good by Mansfield Fencing.

34 Resurfacing the Blenheim Grange and Community Hub play areas

See above (item 32).

35 Resurfacing the path on Lancaster Avenue playing field

This was carried forward to a later meeting as the Council is waiting for more quotes.

36 Lighting on the power substation footpath

The Council considered further a request for a light on the power substation footpath. The Council had contacted the Police, who were in favour of lighting as a generality. The Council considered the response from residents who may be affected by a light. It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Redfern will photograph possible locations for a light and send these to councillors in advance of the June meeting.

37 Bench in the Hub garden

The Council considered a request from the Hub for a bench in its garden. It was **RESOLVED** that the Council agrees to the request, the purchase to be funded from the Hub account.

38 Bulbs to plant outside the Community Hub

The Council considered a request from the Hub for bulbs outside the building. It was **RESOLVED** that the Council agrees to the request, the purchase to be funded from the Hub account.

39 Pollarding trees in the Village Hall car park

The Council considered a request to pollard the trees at the front of the car park. It was noted that work would benefit the cherry trees and sycamore. It was **RESOLVED** to request a quote.

40 Fencing in the Village Hall car park

The Council considered a request for one metre high fencing at the front of the Village Hall car park and remove the concrete posts. It was **RESOLVED** to request quotes.

41 High Grove Solar Farm

The Council considered the appointment of a representative re the above. It was **RESOLVED** that no representative was needed at present.

42 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Poole noted that the Council's initial contact was not able to help and had referred her to other contractors. Cllr Poole was waiting for these contractors to contact her. She was also waiting to hear from Breckland Council regarding funding.

43 Request from Age UK

Age Uk made a request for a donation to its running costs. It was **RESOLVED** that the Council would not be able to help in this instance.

44 Representatives' reports

Cllr Defew thanked all the village groups who had contributed to the VE Day commemorations. The event had been a great success and was attended by over 400 people.

Cllr Redfern, representative to the Community Hub, reported that things are ticking along well. The one thing to notice as they have so little on their agenda is that they plan to meet bi-monthly. The group of volunteers who are nurturing the newly planted fruit trees are doing a good job and the trees are flourishing, despite no rain.

45 Items for inclusion on the next agenda

Village Hall car park maintenance.

Memorial benches for Blenheim Grange and the Millennium Green.

46 Next Meeting

The next meeting will be in the Village Hall at 7pm on June 10.

The meeting was closed at 8.05pm.

Signed Chair

Date

Report from Cllr Crane (Breckland Council)

The installation of the solar panels at Dereham leisure centre are now completed. It is expected that the the solar captured will meet around 35% of the centres electricity needs reducing carbon by up to 48 tonnes per year.

The next round of the Inspiring Communities grant scheme is open and details can be found on the Norfolk Community Foundation website. If any community group would like to be considered I am happy to have a conversation with them to see if they meet the criteria.

Devolution-The Government has responded to the joint proposal from Breckland, Broadland, Great Yarmouth, Kings Lynn& West Norfolk, North Norfolk and Norwich City Council's For a 3 unitary model for Norfolk. This model will enable tailored approaches to local economies and housing. Recognise the distinct characteristics and needs of each area. Balance of power across the region ensuring that no single entity dominates and allowing local voices to be heard across the County.

Cllr. Bill Borrett is the Cabinet member for Devolution and LGR (Local government reorganisation).

Why aren't Breckland supporting a single unitary model for Norfolk?

Simply put, it will cost you more and make decision making more remote from you.

Why will it cost more?

- Despite claims to the contrary, we have no confidence that a single unitary will lead to significant savings. The clear experience from the sector is they cost more than they save:
- Somerset Council, unitarized in 2023, created out of four District Councils and one County Council. Seven months after coming into existence (and claiming large savings could be made) the new Unitary Council declared a financial emergency, saying they needed to immediately find £100m. It then went on to ask the Government for Exception Financial Support (EFS) of over £70m, less than half the predicted savings have been identified. Independent reviewers highlighted that "the business case for unitarization may have underestimated the complexity of the transformation and integration of systems has posed challenges for the new authority that it has yet to overcome".
- Cornwall, unitarized in 2009, identified a £50m budgetary black hole in 2024/25 and are having to consider cuts and sale of assets.

In fact, over the last 10 years not one of the new unitary councils has delivered much in the way of savings, the Councils with the highest Council Tax in the Country are both unitary councils one in an urban area (Nottingham) and a rural one (Rutland).

Council Tax harmonisation will force Breckland Residents to pay more, this is because currently Breckland's is the lowest of all the councils in Norfolk. The 3 unitary option will not include Breckland residents with the more expensive councils like Norwich City Council so the increase will be less.

Residents will be required to pay for all transition and implementation costs estimated to be in the 10's of millions of pounds, the more councils are merged into one, the greater the risk of increased costs.

Why will decision making be more remote?

- A single unitary in Norfolk would be, one of the largest authorities in the Country, covering over 2000 square miles and 930,000 people, risking diseconomies of scale (a council that is too large and cumbersome to drive change and appropriate efficiencies).
- A single unitary would lead to a catastrophic loss of accountability, with a councillor to elector ratio over three times larger than current districts and a loss of connection with communities. Far removed from local communities to design appropriate services, maintain flexibility, and adapt to local need in both prevention and reaction.
- Whilst we are committed to not seeing LGR as a “race to the bottom”, and a race to identify the most cuts, we do have robust independent analysis which demonstrates £7.6m of real savings initially, without sacrificing service delivery and local representation. We also believe strongly that the more profound savings are through local work to join up services and better prevent need – which is much more achievable at a local level. This is in direct contradiction to reports that a three unitary will cost more than the status quo.
- Comprehensive and independent research undertaken by Deloitte identified a single unitary as the weakest of the three, scoring lowest against five of the six criteria for Local Government Reorganisation laid out by the Government. It was identified as the worst option for maintaining responsive and localised public services, maintaining place identity, supporting devolution arrangements, and against several other metrics.

As a reminder – we want to work with Members, and parishes – to amplify local voices in the debate. It is important that everyone takes part in the consultation, use the link below:

- Have your say via <https://www.future-east.co.uk/>
- **We will be arranging further briefings and sessions with parishes, and are happy to come and speak at events if you have any upcoming you think would be appropriate**

County Councillor's Report

As part of it's ongoing consultation on Local Government Reform the County Council is holding a series of meetings to engage with parish councils on it's proposal and the process. Locally a meeting is being held this Thursday at the Queens Hall Watton at 2.30pm which all parish councillors are invited to attend.

A hundred businesses in eight pilot towns across Norfolk will take part in a Retail Excellence programme as part of High Streets Matter, the County Council initiative to develop skills and accelerate footfall.

Community groups and individuals will also be able to apply for funding for projects designed to raise awareness of their market town and instil pride in the area through the campaign. Market towns and other business districts are pivotal to the rural landscape and the county's economic prosperity and the programme has been introduced to equip businesses for success and help these areas to flourish. Last year, the Federation of Small Businesses called for more support for small firms and unveiled a plan to help transform high streets into places that meet future needs and support the next generation of entrepreneurs. The County Council has already piloted support measures including the Love Your Market Town programme in Breckland and West Norfolk, and a Market Towns Conference. This year it's retail excellence programme aims to go further with a more targeted offer and the new package of support was recently officially launched at Swaffham Assembly Rooms.

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service has been shortlisted for Project of the Year at the Global Search and Rescue Excellence Awards 2025, for its work with the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust, which sees trained firefighters respond to the most serious medical emergencies in their area. There are ten fire stations in Norfolk where firefighters have been trained by EEA paramedics to co-respond to Category 1 calls in the area, such as cardiac arrests. The aim of the partnership is to get help to patients as quickly as possible, in situations where every second counts. Over the last 12 months, firefighters in Norfolk have responded to 60 Category 1 calls, and arrived first on scene in 40% of those incidents. The fire teams have been trained to deliver basic life support, and can be dispatched by ambulance control if they are not undertaking their normal duties.

The County Council is encouraging people who are interested in home composting to give it a try.

Discounted 220 litre compost bins are currently available at all of Norfolk's 19 recycling centres at the price of just £15. And from June, discounted 330 litre compost bins will also be available to buy at the larger recycling centres(including Dereham and Thetford) for £21.

Norfolk Creativity and Wellbeing Week returns this May, celebrating the power of creativity and culture to support health and wellbeing across Norfolk.

Taking place from 19-25 May 2025, this annual national festival brings together events and activities that shine a spotlight on how creative experiences can support mental health, reduce isolation, and encourage connection. In Norfolk, there's a fantastic selection of in person and online events delivered by Norfolk County Council's libraries, adult learning, museums and record office, alongside brilliant local artists and arts organisations. From craft workshops and dance to music, nature walks and creative writing - there's something for everyone. Whether you're keen to try a poetry session, a wellbeing walk, a hands-on craft class or a musical performance, this year's programme offers something for all ages and interests. Many events are free or low-cost, and designed to be inclusive

and accessible. Find out more and book at www.norfolk.gov.uk/getcreative or email arts@norfolk.gov.uk.

The construction of the long awaited footpath between Redhill Park at Watton Green and Church Rd Watton has begun so there will be a temporary road closure in place to facilitate it. Works are currently anticipated to be from 12th May to 20th June. The works will take place across 3 phases in the period and only a section of the total length will be closed at a time.

Community Hub Report

Bookings Payable hours and Community Hours

	May	June
Total Paid Hours	112TBC	116 TBC
Total Community Hours	28	20

The lighting improvements have been delayed but are due to be completed on the 23rd April 2025.

Update the lighting has still not been completed due to the lights not being the correct specification, Spar tec are looking into alternatives and will advise when an alternative has been found.

New Storage is a priority, and I would like to ask the parish council for a storage container, we have condensed and rationalised the equipment as much as possible but still require more storage space.

As requested, the contents of the containers are as follows

Container 1

Play equipment used every week

Large mats for ball pit (ball pit is stored inside as there is no space in container)

Extra chairs/Traffic cones

Climbing frame

2x Table and benches for children

Container 2

Craft supplies used each week

Warm baby project /Clothing racks used each week

Tables x2

Christmas trees x3

Poppy cascade plus poppy garlands to decorate the memorials

Halloween decorations

Christmas decorations

Litter pickers and rings/ work light

Bins / steps/ salt for water softener/ Poo Bin/ large gazebo / paddling pool/ sack barrow/ Spare cups and saucers / mugs and glasses/ tea pots

Stage Santas grotto equipment

Pam Arrowsmith

Treasurers Report
Community Hub As of 01/05/2025

Produced by P Arrowsmith

Lloyds Business Account

Opening Balance on 01/04/25	£7,380.54
Expenditure	£2006.90
Income	£1,585.00
Closing Balance 30/04/25	£6958.64
Predicted Income May2025	£1112.00 (some groups have already Paid)
Predicted Out goings April2025	£1865.29 Approx
	£150.00 Gas /electric £ 963.91 Salary £69.50 Caretaker Cover £240.80 PAYE £53.11 Breckland Council Waste Disposal £104.00 Internet £30.00 Mobile phone £200.00 Deposit returns £47.97 Expenses £6.00 Bank Charges

£230 ringfenced with in bank account donation from the Kings Arms Public House

For the committee consideration

£963.91 P Arrowsmith Salary

£240.80 Carbrooke Parish Council PAYE

£69.50 Caretaker cover SH

£47.97 Cleaning supplies PA

Total £1,322.18

