

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HEVINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON 14th JANUARY 2025 IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

Present:

Cllr S Ward (Chair)
Cllr A Bunn
Cllr S M Ward
Cllr T Palmer
Cllr C Alpe
Cllr I Nickalls
Cllr M Williamson
Cllr E Mills
Mrs K Medler (Clerk)

Parishioners: 3

The Chairman opened the meeting by wishing all present a Happy New Year.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were accepted from Cllr D Holmes and received from County Cllr D Roper. Cllr A Ramsbottom's absence was noted without contact.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATION REQUESTS

There were no declarations of interest or dispensation requests.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on the 3rd December 2024 were agreed by all.

4. MATTERS ARISING

- The crushed gravel on the Village Hall car park has now been partially scattered but there is still work to be done.
- The Clerk has secured the funding for the .gov domain and the process for implementing this has begun.
- The Clerk has applied for the funding for the climbing wall so if the application is successful Councillors will just need to agree its position in the Village Hall grounds.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Two candidates came forward for co-option onto the Council to fill the existing vacancy and it was agreed Councillors would vote by secret ballot. Mr Grant Peruzzi was voted in on a majority and accepted office.
- Cllr S M Ward advised the Hevingivers did not receive any requests for help this year and so agreed to distribute £100.00 each to the Hevingham Bowls Club, The Rectory, the Under 5's, the Tots Group and the Community Garden.
- Cllr S M Ward gave an update on the bike track: The total raised to date is £7,422.23. A survey was carried out costing £720.00 so there is currently £6,702.23 in the pot. If the Company who did the survey completes the project, the survey costs are refundable. Further fundraising is required to move this forward and if anyone would like to get involved please contact Cllr Ward. It may be that a smaller project has to be considered if enough funds cannot be raised.
- The Chairman advised he has also given a grant to Hevingham Bowls Club, from his District Councillor grant pot, for £500.00, which along with the Hevingivers grant, will enable them to purchase new shirts.
- Cllr M Williamson voiced his disappointment with the outcome of the farmers allotments discussions. The Chairman advised the decision has now been made and will stand as it is. Cllr C Alpe commented that the decision was not taken lightly, was given much consideration and the outcome was felt to be fair.
- A question was asked about footpath 2 and when this will be cleared for access. The Chairman advised this will be cleared when the weather permits and a kissing gate is also going to be installed.

6. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION

a. Finance

Accounts for payment

The following accounts were presented for payment and were approved:

Mrs K Medler (Expenses)	£32.07
Zak Branch (Allotment hedge cutting)	£420.00
F C Hambling (Bus shelter cleaning)	£40.00
HMR&C (PAYE)	£38.00
Anglian Water Business (Water on HP allotments)	£99.71
Freethought Internet Ltd (.gov domain support)	£35.00

The Clerk's standing order was paid on the 5th January.

The following receipts were noted:

Allotment rent	£30.00
Cambridge Building Society (Interest)	£304.99

It was noted that the interest rate on the Councils reserve account will be decreasing to 1.35% on 11th March 2025 and the interest rate on the Cambridge Building Society account decreased to 2.4% on 6th December 2024.

Balance at the bank at the end of December was £27,220.62. The Clerk supplied Councillors with a breakdown of Receipts / Expenditure against the Budget for the year to date for reference.

b. Flooding on Westgate

Cllr G Peruzzi asked that the Chairman meet with himself, the resident affected and a local contractor to see what possible action the Parish Council can take to help alleviate this ongoing issue. The Chairman agreed they would set a date outside of the meeting.

c. Village allotments

i) Updates

Nothing to report.

ii) New issues

One plot has a damaged fence but the Clerk has already contacted them about this.

A tenant has asked if he can plant some wildflowers in the orchard and this was agreed.

The hedging around the car park needs trimming. The Clerk will obtain some quotations.

iii) Trees

No volunteers have come forward to help plant the trees and some of the suggestions on social media for other planting sites are not appropriate. There is room in the orchard for some crab apple trees and some of the hedging needs filling in. The Clerk will speak to the tenant who does a lot on the allotments to see if he can help with that.

d. Planning

i) New applications:

2024/3812 – Land adj 9 The Heath – Single storey side extension to existing agricultural storage. Support.

ii) Outcomes of previous applications:

2024/2431 – 4a The Heath – Approved.

2024/2996 – Heathfield, 32 The Heath – Approved.

e. Highway Matters

Nothing.

f. Financial Regulations

The Clerk had previously circulated amendments to the current policy and these were agreed.

7. MATTERS TO REPORT

a. Correspondence

None.

b. Clerks Report

Nothing.

c. Village Hall Report

Next meeting is on the 22nd January 2025. The New Years Eve party was good and basically paid for itself. Cllr T Palmer asked how the solar panels have fared this year and the Chairman agreed to find out and advise.

d. Police Report

The Clerk advised there was 1 crime recorded in the village during November: 1x Public Order Offence (on or near Town Corner). Further information can be accessed via www.police.uk.

e. Reports

District Councillor Report

- BDC have now agreed various policies relating to being a housing provider.

- Proposals have recently been discussed to update the Green Infrastructure and Recreational Avoidance Mitigation Strategy which is to do with tourism and preventing damage or erosion caused by visitor footfall.

County Councillor Report

- The main local news is the speed limit changes on the Cromer Road are definitely happening. It is all confirmed and signed off. The existing 50mph limit through Hainford will become 40mph and the limit through Stratton Strawless will be 50mph. It is just a question of getting the actual work programmed and I am pressing for this to be done by the end of the financial year.

- As far as our local Councils go you could say we are witnessing the “beginning of the end”. The government published its proposals on devolution and local government just before Christmas. This outlined that all areas will have to have an elected Mayor and that the days of two levels of Council - District (Broadland) and County (Norfolk) will come to an end. Instead, there will be a single unitary Council that does everything. Parish Councils will not be affected. This means Norfolk will have an elected Mayor. However, Norfolk isn’t considered large enough to have a Mayor of its own so instead we will have to join forces with Suffolk. The new Mayor will be for the whole of Norfolk and Suffolk and it has been said that they will also take over the powers of the Police and Crime Commissioners. As far as Councils are concerned, Norfolk County Council, Broadland, Norwich City Council and all the others will be abolished. The question is how big the new unitary Councils will be and what areas they will cover. Given the criteria set down by the government the chances are that Norfolk will either have one Council or two. The government has given County Councils a choice. Either sign up to the government proposals by the end of January on their priority scheme or wait a maximum of two years and have the new arrangements imposed anyway. What has complicated things is that the government has also said that if an area joins the priority scheme it could mean that the County Council elections scheduled for this May are cancelled. Their reasoning is that with all the upheaval there should be no change and existing Councillors should stay in place for an extra two years to work out how the new Councils are set up and wind the old ones down. The elections point has attracted the most controversy with allegations that the government are avoiding elections or that there is an ulterior motive. However, it is not unusual that when a Council is going to be reformed or abolished that elections get cancelled. The exact same thing happened in Somerset, Cumbria and North Yorkshire four years ago when they were reformed and we had a very different national government. The key decision was made at the County Council meeting on 9th January and as your local Councillor I approached it with trepidation. In the end I voted for Norfolk to join the priority scheme and this was passed 52 votes to 7. The main reason I voted the way I did was because I believe it is better to resolve the issue and reorganise sooner rather than later. This is hopefully the best route to getting more government funding for Norfolk at an earlier stage. I also think that if it is done right having a single unitary council can deliver a better service and more efficiently but the devil will be in the detail. On the elections point I did vote for a counter proposal that Norfolk should sign up to the priority scheme but still seek to hold elections this year as planned. However, this was defeated. So, what happens next? If Norfolk is accepted onto the priority scheme by the government (we will know by the end of January) there will probably be no elections this year. Instead in 2026 we will vote for a new Mayor of Norfolk and Suffolk. In 2027 we will vote on the new Councils at which point the old ones will be abolished. In the meantime over the summer and autumn there will be various discussions and consultation over what the new Councils should be.

8. MATTERS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

For future discussion: Nothing proposed.

Next meeting is on 4th March 2025 at 7:30 in the Village Hall.

The meeting ended at 20:20

At the conclusion of the meeting Cllr M Williamson reported his intention to step down with immediate effect as he no longer felt able to keep up with everything, either physically or with all the technology. He will provide the Clerk with a written notification. The Council thanked him for his 25 years of service.