

THARSTON AND HAPTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held at
The Community Building, Holly Lane, Hapton
On Wednesday 19th March 2025 at 7.00pm.

In Attendance: Mr N Potter (chair)
Mr T Ward
MR V Blake
Mr D Daniels
Mr G Bleach
Mr A Arber (clerk)

3 members of the public.

- 1. Public Participation**– County and District Council reports can also be received during this time. (10 minutes maximum).

The parking of vehicles at the bottom of Cow Lane is very dangerous and this could be reported to the police as a safety issue moving forward. The chair will speak to the owners

Both district and county councillors sent their apologies, and no reports were received except the email sent to all councillors today on devolution as detailed below.

Yesterday evening our full council met to discuss our interim submission to the government on both the Devolution (Mayoral Combined Authority for Norfolk & Suffolk) as well as Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

With regards to the Mayoral Combined Authority submission, generally we felt there is not actually enough information on the financing and powers which will be devolved to submit a quality substantive response, but we have answered the questions with agree/disagree as the consultation requested. Our submission was drawn up after robust discussion in a cross-party working group. These can be seen here: https://democracy.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/documents/s10479/DR_AFT%20SNC%20Response%20to%20NS%20MCCA%20Consultation.pdf

On the proposals for how we go about changing from a two-tier county & district system over to unitary councils, there was much debate. Nearly all Councillors agreed that the 3-unitary system favoured by Norwich City Council is unworkable. It cannot be right that Wymondham and Hethersett are part of Norwich whilst Hingham, Ashwellthorpe, Tacolneston, Fornsett etc are governed from Yarmouth. These proposals would put nearly all the business rates income into Norwich and leave the rural areas impoverished. They slice up the travel-to-work areas, school catchment areas, GP catchment areas, Greater Norwich Local Plan area and more. To ensure all the services a unitary council provides are sustainable, it is essential to have a robust tax base to work from.

Therefore, we at SNC have produced a proposal for a two-unitary Norfolk which you can see attached. We believe this is a business case worth hearing as an alternative to the single-unitary option likely to be favoured at County Council. This proposal

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would keep all existing district boundaries intact, ensuring no costs are incurred for breaking up boundaries, and keeping continuity of staff teams which are place-based.

Council agreed to further work up the detailed proposal for a two-unitary Norfolk, and to undertake public consultation. We also agreed to send a letter to the relevant Minister regarding our opposition to the three-unitary proposal favoured by Norwich.

2. Apologies – To consider accepting apologies for absence.

Jenna Goodall Browne sent her apologies. All agreed to accept

3. Minutes – To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on the 4th of February 2025

The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting and duly signed by the chair of the council.

Proposed Nick Potter

Seconded David Daniels

4. Declarations of interests – To receive any declarations of personal or prejudicial interest from members on any item to be discussed.

None

5. Planning

- Planning applications
No Planning applications at this meeting
- To discuss the Planned Open Space Land
- To discuss Planning Applications and any received after the agenda is posted

6. Governance –

No Governance at this meeting

7. Finance –

- To note receipts in March

No receipts detailed

To approving the following invoices for payment March

- To approve Payments to Parish Clerk Alan Arber for Feb salary and expenses (includes SLCC AGM attendance payment as detailed below) £837.86
- To approve payment for Clerks pension for Feb £285.60
- To approve payment to Handyman for salary and expenses Feb £307.00
- To approve payment to SLCC for book purchase at conference £8.95
- To approve payment to SLCC for clerk's attendance at Norfolk SLCC AGM (noted in Clerks salary payment see above) £10.00
- To approve monthly payment for Wi-Fi in the cabin £55.20
- To approve payment to 3 mobile for Direct debit for security sim cards £72.94
- To approve Monthly bank charges £6.00
- To approve Monthly credit card, charge £3.00
- Payments on credit card
No payments made on Credit Card this month
- To receive the financial position of the council

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The Parish council started the month on £13,293.97 and with today's payments totalling £1576.55 the balance on the account is £11,717.42 which is down by the £10,000 spent on the community project from last year's final figure.

The clerk also commented that he has a VAT reclaim of £232.98 which he will reclaim on 31st March 2025

The clerk also commented that he had updated the asset register and all councillors had a copy in their packs and the update asset register was approved

Proposed Nick Potter

Seconded Tim Ward

The chair also undertook the Internal Control and was happy with all aspects of the clerk's work.

8. Highways – to receive any updates regarding highways and footpaths.

- Highway issues
Nothing to report

9. To receive an update on the following current issues and to consider any necessary actions:

- Tree warden's Report
No report
- Footpath Issues
No Report
- Maintenance and Handyman's report

The clerk submitted the handyman's report to the councillors for their attention and all agreed it was excellent. The councillors can contact the handyman with any new jobs they feel should be done. It was agreed to put 2 Treads on the little village green along with a handrail. All agreed

The chair has upgraded the solar system for the cabin and with the new batteries are better with more capacity than the older batteries. The new batteries are Lithium Iron type battery. A question was raised that do we buy 2 Lithium iron battery at a cost of £300 for 2. It was agreed to buy the new batteries when we get our new precept.

Proposed Nick Potter

Seconded Tim Ward

10. To receive an update on the Hapton Community Project

- To discuss the possibility of installing wi-fi in the cabin
This has now been installed and is working well and the costs are very much less than the first quote
- To discuss Vandalism in the community project
This continues to be an issue and unfortunately the latest culprit could not be identified so the police have closed the case. One more camera to put up.
- New Disabled Friendly compostable toilet
The clerk continues to look into this, and it looks like we would need a substantial grant to install the toilet block to meet all these needs of a disabled friendly toilet

11. To discuss the latest Pylons information

There is a new consultation starting on 18/3 going through to 17th April but it seems just for the parishioners around the Tilbury area which is

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disappointing but he clerk has the paperwork and suggested we still send out comments back on this issue

12. To note our comments to East Pye solar

Consultations are still ongoing but as, yet no further information has been sent to the clerk

13. To discuss the Norfolk Homes land and what next steps are

Meetings continue to be held with Norfolk Homes and Watsons the management company and the following information was detailed at this meeting. It was noted large blocks of land have been put up for sale. Norfolk homes plans are finalised.

14. To discuss Parish Projects

- V E Day celebration and grant
A grant of £300 is now available and it was detailed the clerk would apply for this asap. There will also be a donation from the history group of £150. There is a budgeted figure in 2025-26 of £1000 for events to add to the £450 making a total of £1450. Plans are moving forward, and the event will take the normal event shape with a BBQ, drinks along with Simon providing some vehicles and local bands will play along with a local parishioner to speak at the event. It was agreed to ask the church to get involved too. The event will be on the 28/6/2025 from 2pm to 6pm.
- CPRE Membership
We e now members of CPRE and the details are with Tim Ward
- Newsletter
The newsletter is almost ready to go to the printers and the clerk is awaiting any further comments from councillors as he had sent the pages round for councillors to look at and change as they see fit. The clerk thanked Tim Ward for his work in this and it is hoped it will go to the printers on Monday 24th March for printing asap and distributing on the first week of April.
- Sam Machine
Is working great and the clerk will download for April meeting
- Tharston Phone box
Location still needs sorting and should be done asap in Tharston Meadows.
- Parish Councillors/Clerk training/Personal development
The clerk is undergoing the clerk's free mental health training along with the NPTS spring seminar on 20/3/25 and will be attending devolution meeting on 2/4/25
- New Defibrillator and Defib Training dates to be fixed.
Still needs doing if we could source a trainer, The clerk commented that his other parish council Wacton PC are holding training soon and will inform the council when date is known
- Surveyors Land
Nothing to report
- Hapton Phone Box
All good and still used by all parishioners

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- Neighbourhood watch
Nothing to report
- Meeting House Field and CCTV Issues
Continues to be used for dog walking and the CCTV has been removed but is now the subject of a Public Space Protection Order meaning anyone seen not picking up after their dog will be reported and prosecuted.
- Parish Orchard at Old Village Hall site
David will get Simon to do the Tap at the orchard asap. The area needs to be cut, and the hedge needs planting asap.
- Dog mess in the village
Still continues to be an issue but new signs have been put up and all parishioners are urged to report any issues they see with photo evidence to the clerk who will report and ask for full prosecution

15. To discuss Green Initiatives moving forward including recycling and actions on the biodiversity policy

Tim ward is doing an addition to his habitat plan regarding wildlife corridors to connect our land and should be ready for adoption at April meeting.

- **Green recycling of blister packs and razors**

Graham has put a bin in Hapton phone box to collect the blister packs and it was agreed we would purchase the box from the company for them to take them away

16. Public Participation (10 minutes)

For any Parishioners to comment on any items that have been discussed during the meeting only

Nothing to report

16. To receive items for the next agenda.

Year end

WW2 grant application

Internal auditors report and actions to be done

AGAR sign off for year end of parts 1 and 2 of the AGAR

Software upgrade for the laptop to be purchased.

18. Next Meeting Weds 16th April 2025

Meeting finished at 8pm