

Blofield Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Blofield Parish Council on Monday 13th January 2025 from 7.30pm – 10.15pm in Blofield Courthouse.

PRESENT

Stuart Smith (Chair), Sarah Dhesi (Vice Chair), Paul Culley-Barber, Joseph Scholes, Stella Shackle, Yvonne Burton and Eleanor Bannister (Clerk) and Sarah Osbaldeston (Clerk).

1. Welcome and Introduction to the meeting by the Chair, Stuart Smith.
2. **TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies have been received from William Crane and approved by the Parish Council.
3. **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**
Items 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19 - Paul Culley-Barber declared a pecuniary interest.
Item 24 – Yvonne Burton declared a pecuniary interest.
4. **OPEN FORUM - FOR PARISHIONERS TO RAISE QUESTIONS ON AND/OR MAKE STATEMENTS ABOUT MATTERS ON THE AGENDA AND TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR**
 - 4.1. District Councillor Paul Newstead was present together with two parishioners. County Councillor Andrew Proctor sent his apologies and circulated a Norfolk County Council highlights report.
 - 4.2. A Galliford Try A47 dualling representative attended the meeting and shared his maps and timeline of works over the next two years.
5. **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 9TH DECEMBER 2024**
 - 5.1. Following an amendment, the council unanimously resolved to approve the parish council meeting minutes from 9th December 2024, and they were duly signed by the chair.
6. **TO REPORT ON MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT ON THE AGENDA**
 - 6.1. The double gates at Wyngates area 3 have been left open. It is unclear how and the padlock is missing. Clerk (EB) to investigate and replace chain padlock.
 - 6.2. EIBE will carry out a free quarterly inspection of the playground in the current school grounds while also training a few councillors on how to conduct a maintenance inspection. This will take place week commencing 17th February.
 - 6.3. Two Bleed kits have been ordered and will be added to the two defibrillator cabinets in the parish.
 - 6.4. The McDonald's Defibrillator has now been registered with The Circuit and is the responsibility of Brundall Parish Council.
 - 6.5. A large community grant application has been received from Heathlands Community Centre.
 - 6.6. The Community Payback Team has sanded and stained the churchyard gates.
 - 6.7. The parish council insurance has been updated to include two defibrillators & cabinets at Margaret Harker Hall and at Heathlands Community Centre at a total cost of £4,732.80. These devices are now labelled to ensure they are returned to their location after use.
7. **PLANNING**
 - 7.1. Application: 2024/3695
Proposal: Details for condition 2 of 2023/3682 – (2) proposed ground floor development plan
Location: Clarks Loke House, Clarks Loke, Blofield, NR13 4QU
This planning application has already been approved by the planning department.
 - 7.2. Application: 2024/3840
Proposal: Side and rear single storey extension. Covered area to rear and minor internal alterations
Location: The Pink House, Fox Lane, Blofield, NR13 4LW
The Parish Council agreed to submit the following comments:

- **Water run-off from the extensions:** The application states existing watercourse for disposal of surface water. The PC is not aware of an existing watercourse in this area so would like to see more details of how this proposal will not further contribute to surface water flooding by The Chase as identified in the Blofield Parish Neighbourhood Plan - ENV3.
- **The amendments for hardstanding play areas and car parks should be of permeable materials - ENV3.**
- **An element on Blofield NP HOU3 is applicable** to ensure that proposals affecting listed buildings must conserve and wherever possible seek to enhance their significance, quality and character.
- On the basis the proposal is to extend the nursery so more children can attend, **could Planning please consider the footpath network** to see what options there are to make better connections from the surrounding housing estates to facilitate safer walking to the Pink House, rather than using cars, **as well as considering possible road safety measures as Lingwood Road** is used as a rat run to reach Lingwood. (Blofield NP TRA3).

7.3 Application 2024/2451

Proposal: Outline planning application for 3 no. self-build dwellings with all matters reserved except for access

Location: Land West of Woodbastwick Road, Blofield

Following discussion, the Parish Council agreed to submit the following, in some cases, slightly amended comments from those originally submitted by the Parish Council on 17th September 2024 (see email below).

- A key consideration is that the GNLP states that “due to the high levels of existing commitment in Blofield Parish approximately 12-20 new homes are considered appropriate for the Blofield Heath cluster (Blofield Heath and Hemblington)”.
- GNLP Policy B.BH.1 has earmarked up to 20 dwellings on land off Woodbastwick Road (on the RenEnergy side of the road infilling between the white houses and RenEnergy).
- Plus, there is an existing commitment of 36 dwellings under GNLP Policy B.BH.2 (Bennetts).
- The footpath from Hall Road to connect to Blofield Heath is effectively a trod and narrows outside the existing housing. IF Planning is minded to approve, would need to ensure the footpath is conditioned accordingly.
- The application is outside the settlement boundary for Blofield Heath, and
- It is contrary to the Blofield Parish Neighbourhood Plan ENV6 – Distinct Villages as the proposal would further eradicate green space between the two villages (Blofield / Blofield Heath).
- There is no detail about what type of housing would be provided under the self-build proposal raising the question does this really meet local housing need – HOU1?
- **The proposal is in area identified as suffering severely from surface water flooding – how would this proposal ensure that the flooding is not made worse? This has been identified in the Blofield Parish Neighbourhood Plan under ENV3 Drainage. (Identified localised flooding areas include but are not limited to e) The junction of Woodbastwick Road and Hall Road.)**
- Issue of loss of mature hedging – though it was noted this would be offset with a planting scheme.
- **Impact on speeding: Speeds recorded on the SAM2 unit indicate that driver behaviour has not changed since six new dwellings were developed on Woodbastwick Road. This raises real doubt as to whether new dwellings would change driver mindset. The Parish Council believes that there needs to be some physical restriction to reduce speeding.**
- This proposal originally added a further 5 entrances, and now 3 entrances to Woodbastwick Road in an area that suffers from speeding vehicles.

However, IF planning officers were minded to approve the development:

- The Parish Council requests that more is done to improve highway safety than just moving the 30MPH speed limit. It requests that physical changes to the road to limit speeding are conditioned. Options could include but are not limited to, amending the speed limit to 20MPH to cover the length of Woodbastwick Road in Blofield Heath and the installation of speed bumps and speed cameras. [The speeding issue was raised yet again by a resident on 13/1. They also noted the southern speed limit sign should be moved to (at least) the bend near Field Lane, given exiting this junction was now very dangerous as a result of the increased volume of traffic.]

- *Additionally, the existing trod footpath should be upgraded to a proper smooth surfaced path compliant to ensure wheelchair and buggy users can traverse safely and conditioned accordingly to connect with the existing footpaths on Hall Road and the 1.8M footpath on Woodbastwick Road.*
- *Further, the Parish Council would seek reassurances that the very real issue of surface water flooding is addressed as identified in ENV3 policy of the Neighbourhood Plan.*
- *Plus, the Parish Council would request that conditions are added to reflect HOU4 - Rural image, heights and massing - respecting height and massing of surrounding properties and HOU5 Parking.*

8. TO CONSIDER FEEDBACK ON ANY PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED SUBSEQUENT TO THE PUBLICATION OF THIS AGENDA AND NOTE ANY PLANNING UPDATES

- 8.1. 2024/1602 – an appeal to the Secretary of State has been made on this planning application – the council has nothing to add to its previous comments.
- 8.2. 20200077 – Woodbastwick Road, nutrient neutrality credits have been purchased for this unresolved planning application. Clerk (EB) to find out more from Broadland District Council for further discussion at the next meeting.

ITEMS 17 and 23 were discussed here.

9. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM NCC CHILDREN'S SERVICES MEETING ACTIONS REGARDING SITE PREPARATION AND HANDOVER TIMELINE AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

- 9.1. Eleanor Bannister updated the council on progress and circulated the updated document. Various items remain outstanding, including:
- 9.2. Fencing requirements for the land divide. The council has requested solid concrete boards and solid wooden or composite fencing to allow for privacy between the two sites.
- 9.3. A survey report on the year 6 classroom has been shared and all urgent items categorised 1 & 2 have been carried out. Category 3 items may be carried out too.
- 9.4. The Planning application requires 6 Electric Vehicle Charging bays. The council is concerned there is not enough power to provide these. Clerk (EB) to discuss with the planning department.

10. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE SCHOOL / PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON THE 10TH JANUARY 2025

- 10.1. The new school playing field will not be ready to be used when the school moves in April. The school pupils will continue to use the old school playing field for PE in the summer term and for sports day. The school will also use the swimming pool in the summer term.
- 10.2. Clerk (EB) to ensure the school are insured for use and check if access to the year 6 toilet will be required.
- 10.3. The school will not hold a summer fete in 2025.
- 10.4. The council must ensure that the school site remains secure whilst creating the new entrance. Clerk (EB) to see if a little more Heras fencing can be borrowed from Pentaco.
- 10.5. Sarah Dhesi reported that the hedge had only been trimmed a small amount, not as discussed and required. Clerk (EB) to raise with Children's Services.

11. TO REVIEW THE SECTION 278 REQUIREMENTS AND RATIFY THE APPOINTMENT OF THE CONTRACTOR NPS TO CARRY OUT THIS WORK

- 11.1. Work is required to fulfil the Section 278 requirements for the planning application and quotes have been obtained. These were circulated between meetings and approved to enable this work to progress promptly. Stuart Smith proposed (seconded by Sarah Dhesi) the council accepted the cheaper quotation (half the price) and NPS were appointed at a cost of £1,350+VAT. The council resolved to ratify this decision at this meeting. Work has already commenced on the Section 278 requirements.
- 11.2. Clerk (EB) reported that hopefully the Section 278 paperwork will be ready by the 10th February meeting.

12. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE NEW COMMUNITY HUB ACCESS COSTS, APPOINT A CONTRACTOR AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS

- 12.1. NPS will carry out the procurement process and appoint the school contractor who will be carrying out all NCC Children's Services school road improvements such as the zebra crossing. At the same time NPS will liaise regarding the PC's entrance works requirements, submitting the construction drawings and managing the procurement process. Hopefully, by using the same contractor to carry out the works at the same time, savings will be made with costs, time and disruption to the parishioners.
- 13. TO APPROVE COSTS FOR SOME HEDGE REMOVAL AND TEMPORARY FENCING FOR THE COMMUNITY HUB ACCESS**
- 13.1. Work will be required promptly to remove the hedging to provide the access and visibility splay. The council resolved to obtain 3 quotations for this work for the next meeting. If work is required in advance of this, the council resolved to approve up to £2,000 to carry out these works.
- 13.2. It is hoped that temporary secure Heras fencing can be borrowed from Pentaco.
- 14. TO REVIEW ARCHITECT QUOTATIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY HUB, APPROVE AN ARCHITECT FOR CONCEPT DESIGN STAGE AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS**
- 14.1. The council reviewed and discussed quotations received and meetings held with various architects. Stuart Smith proposed (seconded by Sarah Dhesi) the council appoint Chaplin Farrant to carry out the work on the concept design stage. The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal. It was felt that this architectural firm (that have merged with the company (SMG) that created the outline planning drawings) were best placed to help the council with the next stage as they have experience in building community facilities. They also have the facilities in house to provide cost consultants, quantity surveyors and project management.
- 14.2. A visit to the newly built Stoke Holy Cross Community Centre has been arranged for Wednesday 15th January at 3:30pm for any councillors who can attend.
- 15. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE SUBSTATION LEASE AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS**
- 15.1. UK Power Network cannot find the current existing lease, so a new one is being drafted and approved. UK Power Network has a simple standard lease which they will prepare and send to NCC Children's Services. This will then be shared with the parish council for consideration and approval prior to signing.
- 16. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE COURTHOUSE DRAINAGE INSPECTION AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS**
- 16.1. The Courthouse drainage inspection report has been received and reviewed. This is detailed and comprehensive and informative. It shows that there are no pipes under the Courthouse and specifically the Solicitor's room causing any damp.
- 16.2. A damaged pipe has been identified in the area of the Courthouse garden which may be shared with adjacent properties. Clerks to understand further who is responsible for this pipe / area.
- 16.3. The council agreed therefore, that the most likely source of the damp in the Solicitor's Room is the missing gutter to the left of the side door. In addition, some repointing is required in this area and behind the recently replaced downpipe. The council agreed to request adjusted quotations from the two contractors for the work to replace the guttering and repointing initially. Clerk (EB) to obtain quotations.
- 17. TO AGREE A RESPONSE TO FINANCIAL QUERIES FROM A PARISHIONER**
- 17.1. The clerk (SO) prepared a response to the parishioner's queries for the council to review. Some points from the letter and excel detail were briefly discussed with the councillors and parishioner, who was present. Sarah Dhesi proposed (seconded by Paul Culley-Barber) the council send the response to the parishioner. The council unanimously resolved to approve the proposal.
- 18. TO APPROVE INVOICES FOR PAYMENT, NOTE COUNCIL FUNDS AND REVIEW INTERNAL MONTHLY CHECKS**
- 18.1. The council reviewed payments #143 to #154 totalling £5,122.01 (Appendix A) and the council unanimously resolved to approve the payments. The council noted a reconciliation at 4 December 2024 with a total bank balance of £1,149,260.44 (Appendix B).
- 18.2. In addition, the council noted the monthly checks carried out by Sarah Dhesi.

19. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE GRANT APPLICATION TO THE SHARED PROSPERITY FUND FOR SUPPORT WITH THE CONCEPT DESIGN STAGE OF THE COMMUNITY HUB AND S278 DESIGN COSTS

19.1. The council has been successful in a grant application to the Shared Prosperity Fund for support with the concept design stage of the community hub and the S278 design costs.

20. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON MARTY'S MARSH AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

20.1. Two working parties have taken place. A lot of chippings have been spread along the muddy areas of the path, which should improve the path. The Community Payback Team has offered to help with this in the future.

20.2. The working party has cut back the planted hedge behind Langham Green. Lots of brambles have been cleared. The area is busy with walkers and a lot of parishioners using the bridge.

21. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON HANDYMAN WORKS

21.1. Clerk (SO) to contact the bus shelter cleaner to request the leaves are removed, walls wiped down and ivy cut back on the Blofield Heath shelter.

21.2. Yvonne Burton met a new handyman to discuss various works in Blofield, including repair of the bandstand in Wyngates. They will send a quotation for the works to be reviewed in February.

22. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE WATER QUALITY ISSUE IN MARTY'S MARSH

22.1. Yvonne Burton advised that she has received written correspondence from Anglian Water confirming that the water quality issue in the ditch is nothing related to them. They concluded that there is no sewage pollution in the ditch, the smells are that of sulphide naturally occurring as a result of iron and copper in the soil reacting with green and leaves. The council agreed that this should be verified by an 'expert' such as Norfolk Wildlife Trust. Yvonne to make contact to clarify.

23. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE GALLIFORD TRY WORKS IMPACT ON THE ALLOTMENTS

23.1. A Galliford Try representative presented to the council details of the A47 road works planned over the next year with approximate timelines. It is planned that the road will be open by Summer 2026.

24. TO REVIEW THE ALLOTMENTS CHICKENS' POLICY AND AGREE ANY CHANGES

24.1. The council reviewed the current policy. Two small amendments were noted:

- a) overhead fencing is essential to ensure separation between chickens and wild birds
- b) all chickens must be registered with DEFRA.

24.2. In addition, it was noted that there has been an obvious reduction in pests since the chickens have left the site. The council unanimously resolved to add to the policy that any allotment holder keeping chickens will be required to pay an additional £60 (on top of the plot rental) towards the cost of pest control. Clerk (EB) to update the documentation.

25. TO RECEIVE A DEFIBRILLATOR UPDATE AND CONSIDER FURTHER PADS PURCHASE

25.1. The Heathlands defibrillator is now labelled and live on 'The Circuit' and registered to the parish council.

25.2. The council felt, as pads have a short life span of only approximately 2 years, the council will buy new pads as and when they are required.

25.3. The Blofield Primary school has a portable defibrillator it owns for internal use only. Therefore, an external defibrillator will not be fitted on the new site of the Blofield Primary School.

26. TO REVIEW A NEW BENCH LOCATION ON BLOFIELD CORNER ROAD

26.1. NCC Highways has considered a location for a community bench on Blofield Corner Road. They have suggested on the corner with Borton Road. The council resolved to contact the properties adjacent to these locations to check if they are happy with this location. Clerk (EB) to action.

27. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE HEATHLANDS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

27.1. Yvonne Burton reported that the new treasurer has completed a grant application form for funding towards phase 2 of the car park extension, this has been received by the parish council and will be reviewed by the finance working group before the next Parish Council meeting.

28. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE COURTHOUSE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

28.1. Joseph Scholes updated the council on the courthouse film plans and advised that the courthouse is investigating alternative bank accounts that do not charge. The current treasurer is standing down and a replacement has been identified.

29. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE MARGARET HARKER HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

29.1. Their next meeting takes place on the 30th January 2025.

30. TO DISCUSS THE NEXT NEWSLETTER, COMMUNITY HUB UPDATE AND FOCAL POINT

- 30.1. Stuart Smith has requested suggestions for the next newsletter. The school are holding an open day in March 2025 before they move site. This could be added to the newsletter.
- 30.2. Focal Point has not managed to find a new editor so the final edition will be in March 2025.
- 30.3. Clerk (EB) to design a flyer / email for anyone interested in getting involved in the new community hub project.

31. TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

- 31.1. The Town and Parish Forum notes were circulated to the council. This meeting is recorded and it would be good if a councillor was able to watch and report back to the council each month.
- 31.2. A congratulations letter has been sent to Andrew Proctor for being awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours list.
- 31.3. A parishioner has raised the query of 'a missing dropped kerb' on the Yarmouth Road opposite the Manor House Care Home. Clerk (EB) to ask NCC Highways Engineer.
- 31.4. The entrance to Wyngates Area 3 has lost its lock. Clerk (EB) to resolve.
- 31.5. The property 'The Limes' 105 Yarmouth Road has been renamed 'Oaklea'.
- 31.6. A parishioner has raised concerns over the Flying Scotsman vans regularly parked on Yarmouth Road outside the Margaret Harker Hall site. The parish council has raised parking issues along this road on match days to the local police. However, they have confirmed in the past that "*in terms of our powers to deal with parking, they are now quite limited. The road itself doesn't have any parking restrictions on it around that area.*" Clerk (SO) to contact NCC Highways and request they contact the company to remove the vans.
- 31.7. An oak tree on Laburnum Close has been taken down due to chicken fungus. The TPO order was removed after Broadland District Council inspected it and agreed it was infected.

The council unanimously resolved to extend the meeting beyond 10pm in order to complete the agenda and suspended standing order item 3w.

31.8. The government publishes the revised National Planning Policy Framework

The government published the revised **National Planning Policy Framework** (NPPF) on 12 December 2024. The framework sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

The key changes set out in the framework, effective immediately, include:

- Mandatory housing targets for principal authorities to drive housebuilding, with increased targets in areas facing the highest levels of unaffordability.
- Measures to ensure that principal authorities develop or update local plans that cater to the needs of their communities.
- Principal authorities must identify and prioritise lower-quality grey belt land to meet housing targets.
- New Golden Rules for greenbelt development require developers to provide essential infrastructure for local communities, such as nurseries, GP surgeries, transportation, and a higher proportion of affordable housing.
- Increased emphasis on affordable housing, particularly social rent.

31.9. NPTS are holding a Spring Seminar on the 20th March 2025 if anyone is interested in attending.

31.10. Broadland District Council has a Safety Advisory Group (SAG) to support large event organisers.

They now have a new procedure and queries can be sent to sag@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk

31.11. The council agreed to use the parish councillor 'promotion videos' (from the Town and Parish Forum) if the clerks feel they would be useful for our community.

- 31.12. The council noted the **sixth month rule**. Councillors will need to send their apologies along with the reason for their absence before a meeting. The reason for the absence is then to be noted and formally approved at the Parish Council meeting. If the Parish Council approves their reason for absence, then this effectively resets the six-month rule.
- 31.13. The council has received a request from FunTime Club (Blofield School afterschool club) to use the year 6 classroom during the transition phase of the school whilst re-registering with Ofsted. For discussion at the February meeting.

32. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

- 32.1. Tree survey (church and Marty's Marsh)
- 32.2. Good Neighbourhood Scheme
- 32.3. Afterschool fun club
- 32.4. Grant application from Heathlands Community Centre
- 32.5. Cluster meeting update
- 32.6. Names for the old school site

33. TO AGREE MEETING DATES FOR 2025/26 (AND NOTE CHANGE TO THE PUBLISHED MARCH 2025 MEETING DATE)

- 33.1. Dates to be circulated and published on the website. Please note the change of the March meeting date to Monday 24th March 2025.

34. TO CONFIRM THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

- 34.1. Monday 10th February 2025 at 7:30pm at Blofield Courthouse.

35. TO RESOLVE TO PASS A FORMAL RESOLUTION (UNDER THE PUBLIC BODIES AND ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS ACT 1960) TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC FOR THE REMAINING AGENDA ITEMS

- 35.1. The council unanimously resolved to approve this formal resolution, and all parishioners left the meeting.

36. TO DISCUSS LAND WITHIN THE PARISH

- 36.1. The council unanimously resolved to continue to explore all options and possibilities within the parish for allotment land.

37. TO DISCUSS COMMERCIAL MATTERS

- 37.1. The council agreed to explore community hub development further.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10:15pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....