

# Blofield Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Blofield Parish Council on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024 from 7.30pm – 10.30pm in Blofield Courthouse.

## PRESENT

Stuart Smith (Chair), Sarah Dhesi (Vice Chair), Paul Culley-Barber, William Crane, Joseph Scholes, 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 Stella Shackle and approved by the Parish Council.
3. **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**
  - 3.1. Items 7.2, 9, 10, 11, 23 - Paul Culley-Barber declared a pecuniary interest.
  - 3.2. Item 25 – 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 sent his apologies. County Councillor Andrew Proctor updated the council on Norfolk County Council highlights and circulated a report to the council. Significant annual savings have been made on NCC street lighting by changing bulbs to LED bulbs. One parishioner was present.
5. **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 11<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2024**
  - 5.1. Following minor amendments, the council unanimously resolved to approve the parish council meeting minutes from 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024, and they were duly signed by the vice-chair.
6. **TO REPORT ON MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT ON THE AGENDA**
  - 6.1. The Parish Partnership funding bid has been submitted with a request for matched funding of £7,500 towards the cost of the entrance to the new community hub area.
  - 6.2. Marty's Marsh banks have received repairs with logs wired together to avoid further bank deterioration around the bridge.
  - 6.3. Large numbers of daffodil bulbs have been planted on Wyngates Area 3 and on Blofield Corner Road by a group of volunteers. Daffodil bulbs were also planted in the grass by the lay-by close to the Blofield Courthouse. Further bulbs will be planted near the Plantation Road safety barrier near the public footpath entrance. Funding was provided by a Pride in Place grant earlier in the year.
  - 6.4. Photos of the new school playing field have been circulated following the recent rain. There are concerns over the significant 'ponds' of water both on the playing field and the Wyngates 3 land too.
  - 6.5. The land registry certificates for Wyngates Area 1 & 2 have finally been received from the Land Registry.
7. **PLANNING**
  - 7.1. Application: 2024/3335  
Location: Norfolk Premier Golf Yarmouth Road Blofield, NR13 4JS  
Proposal: Two padel tennis courts to replace unused synthetic putting green incl. associated areas of hard standing, means of enclosure and other necessary infrastructure#  
*The parish council resolved to raise the following concerns:*
    - *Operational hours and potential noise pollution generated by Padel Tennis and the impact this could have on neighbouring properties. (No details have been provided on the operational hours in the application.)*

- *Lighting and the impact on neighbouring properties – given the application states that the Courts will be lit by 4 200w floodlights mounted on 6 metre columns. The lighting impact could also be contrary to the Blofield NP ENV5 Dark Skies Policy.*
- *Damage to Tree Roots – As there are tree roots in the proposed development area (the application states that the synthetic putting green has become unusable due to tree roots growing beneath the surface) would construction of the padel tennis courts damage / destroy these roots? The Parish Council therefore agreed it should raise these significant concerns and request further clarity on the points above.*

7.2. Application: 2024/0054 NCC planning

Location: Blofield Primary School, East side of Plantation Road, Blofield, NR13 4PL  
 Proposal: Variation of Condition 2 (approved plans and documents) and Condition 23 (fire hydrant) of planning permission ref: FUL/2022/0055 for 'Proposed new 420 place (2FE) Primary School with associated works including parking, hard play/hard standing and school playing field' to allow compartmentalisation of the school building and omit fire tank.: Executive Director of Children's Services

*The Parish Council unanimously resolved to make no comments. However, please can the Parish Council be informed if there are any further changes to the application.*

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

- 8.1. 2022/1870 – Kings Head, erection of a dwelling, planning application has been refused by BDC planning on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2024.
- 8.2. 2024/3616 & 2023/2622 – A scheme for the protection of retained trees on land south of Hall Road received approval on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2024.
- 8.3. 2024/3030 – Erection of 1 self-build dwelling, permission in principle has been refused by BDC planning on 22 November 2024.

**9. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE 'OLD SCHOOL SITE' PLAYGROUND INSPECTION REPORTS AND AGREE AN INSPECTION CYCLE**

- 9.1. The weekly playground inspection reports are taking place at the school and these have been forwarded to the clerk (EB). Inspection cycle:
- 9.2. Weekly playground inspections take place visually by a trained volunteer.
- 9.3. Quarterly inspections or maintenance checks can also be carried out by a trained volunteer.
- 9.4. An annual playground inspection by an independent inspector needs to take place.

**10. TO NOTE NCC COMMENTS FOLLOWING THE PARISH COUNCIL FEEDBACK ON THE NCC PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE 'OLD SCHOOL SITE'**

- 10.1. Norfolk County Council comments are detailed below in italics following the parish council points:
- 10.2. The Parish Council requests that any future development ensures that the original, external elements of the Victorian part of the school building are maintained as part of Blofield's historic inheritance. *This will be for any future landowner and the Planning Authority to decide.*
- 10.3. The Parish Council hopes that NCC will explore all possible options for maintaining the existing pool as a going concern that can be accessed by parishioners. *NCC Cabinet resolved to sell the whole of the school site, including the swimming pool.*
- 10.4. The Parish Council would like clarity as to how the main school building will be accessed if all the land around it is being sold? *NCC Cabinet resolved to sell the whole of the school site, including the school building.*

**11. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM NCC CHILDREN'S SERVICES MEETING REGARDING SITE PREPARATION, SUBSTATION ACCESS AND HANDOVER TIMELINE AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS**

- 11.1. A very detailed report was provided to the council with notes from the council meeting with NCC Children's Services. This details all the factors to consider in the handover timeline. Clerk (EB) to continue progressing with NCC to ensure outstanding queries are resolved.
- 11.2. It is currently unclear if the bus shelter can remain in situ, slightly south of the new revised bus stop. It is also unclear if the electricity substation will be suitable for a new community hub. Clerk (EB) to chase.

**12. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE BROADLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL MEETING REGARDING THE NEW COMMUNITY HUB PROJECT AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS**

- 12.1. Stuart Smith updated the council with detail on the meeting with BDC. They are keen to support the council with next steps for the community hub project and advised the council to revisit the architectural quotations previously received, refresh and obtain more quotations and then look to appoint an architect to create concept drawings together with outline costings for the project. BDC have a small amount of funding the council could apply for in 2024/25 to assist with these initial costs. They also recommended other new village halls for the council to visit.
- 12.2. It was noted that the year 6 classroom was built in 2009.

**13. TO REVIEW EXISTING ARCHITECT QUOTATIONS FOR OUTLINE COMMUNITY HUB AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS**

- 13.1. The Clerk (EB) is reviewing the historic architect quotations and obtaining new quotations for the council to review and appoint an architect in January. Some on site meetings have already taken place.
- 13.2. The council unanimously resolved to apply for the BDC grant towards architect costs. Clerk (EB) to action in December. Any quotations available will be provided to BDC as part of the grant submission. [See also 16.1.]

**14. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE COURTHOUSE DRAINAGE INSPECTION AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS**

- 14.1. The clerks obtained a 3<sup>rd</sup> quotation of £249+VAT for the drainage inspection and as this was significantly less than the other quotes it was agreed via email to proceed with this inspection in early December for both the foul water and rain/surface water pipes. The council ratified this decision at this meeting. The council are awaiting the report, to be reviewed in January 2025.
- 14.2. Quotations are being obtained from three companies for the refurbishment, stripping, lime-plastering once the source of the damp is removed and the damp resolved. Time may be required to dry out the walls before refurbishment takes place.
- 14.3. The source of the damp still remains unclear, it may be from the leaking down pipes (repaired in Spring 2024) and resultant damaged bricks and mortar or possibly from problems with a drain.

**15. TO APPROVE INVOICES FOR PAYMENT, NOTE COUNCIL FUNDS AND REVIEW INTERNAL MONTHLY CHECKS**

- 15.1. The council reviewed payments #126 to #142 totalling £17,275.09 (Appendix A) and the council unanimously resolved to approve the payments. The council noted receipts between the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2204 and 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024; #45 - #54 totalling £313,459.35 (Appendix B). This included two deposits totalling £260,000 from National Highways designated funds for the new community hub playground. In addition, the council noted the monthly checks carried out by Sarah Dhesi.

**16. TO APPROVE A GRANT APPLICATION FOR PRIDE IN PLACE FUNDING TOWARDS HUB DESIGN COSTS**

- 16.1. The council unanimously resolved to apply for any grant funding towards the community hub design costs or further costs to assist in the project. Clerk (EB) to action.

**17. TO NOTE A QUOTATION FOR NEW ACCESS WORKS AND APPROVE IMPLEMENTATION AND NEXT ACTIONS FOR THE NEW COMMUNITY HUB SITE AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS**

- 17.1. NCC Highways have provided an estimate for the new access works to the new community hub of approximately £8,000. However, this is felt to be an underestimate by all involved. In addition, there will be costs for the S278 if required by BDC Planning or NCC Highways.
- 17.2. The council have therefore applied to the Parish Partnership for funding towards this new access for 2025/26 of £7,500 (50% - of an estimated cost of up to £15,000).
- 17.3. The council agreed to move this project forward working with NCC Highways and obtaining quotations for the necessary works.

**18. TO NOTE QUOTATIONS FOR COURTHOUSE SOLICITOR'S ROOM DAMP REPAIRS AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS**

- 18.1. See Item 14.

**19. TO APPROVE GARDEN GUARDIAN GROUNDS MAINTENANCE QUOTATIONS FOR 2025/26 WITHIN THE PARISH**

- 19.1. The council reviewed the quotations for the various aspects of grounds maintenance within the parish. The council unanimously resolved to appoint Garden Guardian to carry out the work in 2025/26. Clerk (SO) to advise Garden Guardian. The council noted a few small points to clarify:
- 19.2. The council would like the whole of Wyngates Area 3 (land North of Farman Way) to be cut including the Manor Ridge bank.
- 19.3. Please can the gardeners be aware, and cut around, the new daffodils recently planted on the bunds at Wyngates Farman Way and the around tree saplings within the site.
- 19.4. Please can the Beech hedge on Farman Way be cut twice a year, outside of the nesting season.

**20. TO AGREE THE BUDGET AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2025/26 AND SET THE PRECEPT FIGURE**

- 20.1. The clerk presented a finance budget setting written report (Appendix D) detailed breakdown budget sheet (Appendix E). The council reviewed in detail the current reserves (Appendix C), planned projects for 2025/26 and beyond and proposed budget for 2025/26. Following detailed discussion, the council unanimously resolved to approve a precept of £112,200 for 2025/26 this is an increase of £7,200. However, as the number of band D properties has increased in the parish from 1648 to 1671 the resulting estimated total cost is £67.15 per year or £5.60 per month, an approximate increase of £0.29 per month for each band D house in the Parish. This is an approximate increase of 5.4% to each household. Part of this increase is as a result of the NI changes coming into effect in April 2025.
- 20.2. The council agreed to transfer £5,000 from the Marty's Marsh reserve to the Play Reserve, commencing a reserve for replacement / issues with the play equipment long term. The council agreed to maintain the charge of £50 per annum for a full allotment plot.

**21. TO AGREE THE INTERNAL TRANSFER OF CONTINGENCY BUDGET OF £503.27 FOR PLAY OVERSPEND FOR ADDITIONAL BRIDGE NETTING REQUIRED**

- 21.1. The council unanimously resolved to approve the internal transfer of £503.27 from contingency to the play reserve cover the small play overspend as a result of the additional safety netting added to the bridge. Clerk (SO) to action.

**22. TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF 2 BLEED KITS FOR THE PARISH (SD)**

- 22.1. It has been recommended the council purchase a bleed kit for each of the defibrillator cabinets. These cost £85 each and have an approximate life span of 5 years. They will be registered on a system the emergency services use to guide parishioners in need of them. The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal. Clerk (EB) to purchase with Heart2Heart Norfolk charity guidance.
- 22.2. It has come to the council's attention that NCC has a budget to install a defibrillator at all new primary school sites. Clerk (EB) to chase NCC Children's Services regarding this matter.

**23. TO RECEIVE A LEGAL UPDATE ON THE LAND TRANSFER OF PART OF THE 'OLD SCHOOL SITE' AND AGREE ESTIMATED COSTS**

- 23.1. The council unanimously resolved to approve up to £2,000 in legal fees for the land transfer of the partial 'old school site' / new community hub land to the parish council.
- 23.2. Deeds titles have been received noting the parish council interest in part of the 'old school site'. In addition, deed title documents have been received from the Land Registry for Wyngates Area 1 & 2. It is understood that there is a long backlog of work at the Land Registry.

**24. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE FRIENDS OF MARTY'S MARSH 2025 PLANNING MEETING AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS**

- 24.1. Notes from the planning meeting for 2025 were circulated to the parish council. At the planning meeting the Friends of Marty's Marsh agreed to review the type 1 granite paths that have got wet in places which is to be expected on a marsh.
- 24.2. The Friends of Marty's Marsh have agreed to map a circular walk around the Marsh and Cremer's Meadow to promote the sites as part of the orchid day in June 2025.
- 24.3. Friends of Marty's Marsh and Cremer's Meadow have secured logs with wire on the banks near the new bridge to ensure the banks are not eroded.

- 24.4. It was agreed any news / publications regarding Marty's Marsh would be circulated / posted on the parish council website etc by the parish clerk rather than establishing a separate Facebook page.
- 24.5. Yvonne Burton agreed to chase the Scouts regarding the bat boxes.
- 24.6. The next working party will take place on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2024.
- 25. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE QUARTERLY ALLOTMENT WORKING PARTY MEETING AND INSPECTION**
- 25.1. Sarah Dhesi reported that the whole allotment site looks neat and tidy. A couple of plots are in need of some attention; this will be reviewed at the next quarterly meeting before plot renewal.
- 25.2. The chickens have been rehomed and there are no longer any on the site. Evidence of unwanted pests has reduced.
- 25.3. The Cadent gas works (as part of the A47 dualling) should be completed in February 2025. Galliford Try are still making the agreed changes to the allotment site such as new fencing.
- 26. TO CONSIDER HEDGE CUTTING AND ANY TREE WORKS AT BLOFIELD CHURCHYARD**
- 26.1. To be reviewed in January 2025.
- 27. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE ANGLIAN WATER, WATER SAMPLING AT MARTY'S MARSH AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS**
- 27.1. Yvonne Burton reported that she met with Anglian Water on site who tested the unusual water in the ditch. 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. Yvonne Burton to chase the Anglian Water for a written report detailing this conclusion.
- 28. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE COMMUNITY PAYBACK TEAM ADDITIONAL WORK IN THE PARISH AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS**
- 28.1. The Payback team were turned away a couple of weeks ago when they arrived and a funeral was taking place for the majority of the day. Clerk (EB) to re-arrange another visit.
- 29. TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE ANNUAL TOWN AND PARISH SUMMIT**
- 29.1. Sarah Dhesi and Eleanor circulated notes from the event.
- 30. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE MHH AND HEATHLANDS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS**
- 30.1. Yvonne Burton reported that Heathlands Management Committee are not happy with the parish council regarding grant funding for their car park extension. Yvonne has advised that Heathlands Management Committee apply to the new community grants fund for support with their car park. The deadline for applications for 2024/25 is 31 January 2025.
- 30.2. Sarah Dhesi reported that the Margaret Harker Hall have some parishioners interested in becoming trustees. The Tennis Club is considering resurfacing their old hard court tennis court. Margaret Harker Hall are planning on obtaining a visual roof inspection of the Hall.
- 31. TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE**
- 31.1. Yvonne Burton reported that a new post box has finally arrived on Pound Lane after it fell over in May 2023 and was taken away.
- 31.2. A consultation on the Broads Authority's Draft Design Guide and Code Supplementary Planning document is taking place from **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December until Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025** (a period of 6 weeks). Comments can be sent by email to: [planning@broads-authority.gov.uk](mailto:planning@broads-authority.gov.uk).
- 31.3. Anglian Water has finally repaired the dangerous manholes on Yarmouth Road.
- 31.4. To note the final letter from the outgoing president of Norfolk ALC has been circulated.
- 31.5. A large oak tree that has fallen across a PROW has been reported to NCC Highways.
- 31.6. The fund-raising event at the Courthouse for the Brundall First Responders was a success and raised £241.
- 31.7. The next cluster meeting will take place at Brundall – date to be confirmed.
- 31.8. A parishioner has sent an email regarding funding towards Heathlands car park. Details of the new community grant fund will be shared, and the email will be considered at the next parish council meeting in January 2025.

**32. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

- 32.1. New community hub site.
- 32.2. Bench location on Blofield Corner Road.
- 32.3. Meeting dates for 2025/26.
- 32.4. Architect quotations.

**33. TO CONFIRM THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

- 33.1. Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 7:30pm at Blofield Courthouse.

**34. 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**

- 34.1. The council unanimously resolved to pass the resolution detailed above to exclude the press and the public from the remaining agenda items. All remaining parishioners left the meeting room.

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

**35. TO DISCUSS LAND WITHIN THE PARISH**

- 35.1. The council briefly discussed the small thin strip of ancient woodland north of and parallel to the A47, adjacent to Woodbastwick Road and Plantation Road. National Highways no longer require this and they are looking to sell this piece of land. Following a brief discussion Stuart Smith proposed the council do not buy this land. The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal.

**36. TO CONSIDER FURTHER COMMUNITY HUB DETAIL**

- 36.1 The council agreed to obtain quotes from architects and appoint an architect as soon as possible to develop multipurpose/multifunctional designs for a possible community hub together with associated costings.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10:30pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....