

WINFARTHING PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on
Monday 21 July 2025 at 7.30 pm at
Winfarthing Village Hall, Hall Road, Winfarthing IP22 2EJ

Councillors Present: Cllr Richard Steel (Chair), Cllr Lynne Rogers, Cllr David Rix, Cllr Peter Frost, Cllr Eric Cole, Cllr Jono Smith, Cllr Jim Collins

In attendance: Karen Rix (Clerk), District Cllr James Easter (until end of item 7), Cllr Helena Farstad and Cllr Michelle Lanchester - Bressingham & Fersfield Parish Council (until end of item 3)

Members of the Public (MOP): 5

1. To receive and consider apologies for absence

None received

2. To receive or update any declarations of pecuniary interest

None received

3. To receive a presentation on community emergency planning from representatives of Bressingham and Fersfield Parish Council

Cllrs Farstad and Lanchester provided an overview of their proposal for neighbouring parish councils to combine forces to create a community emergency plan. Any plan would identify risks, response plans and emergency contact details relevant to individual parishes e.g. flooding, disruption to power and water supplies, major accident, speeding, potholes etc., any such plan would also benefit from local community input. An open event in each village was proposed, inviting parishioners to attend and put forward ideas and concerns on the issues that impact local people. Bressingham and Fersfield PC had made an application to the SNC Community Action Fund which could be used to support the costs of advertising and hosting the events as well as supporting the roll out of the plan. Subject to the availability the village hall a provisional date has been set for the Winfarthing event on 3 October.

Cllr Steel thanked Cllr's Farstad and Lanchester for their presentation and advised their proposal would be discussed further at agenda item 13.4. Cllr's Farstad and Lanchester left the meeting.

4. To approve minutes of previous meeting held on 6 June 2025

Minutes unanimously approved (error in item numbering was noted)

5. To consider any matters arising from minutes (not covered by an agenda item)

No matters arising.

6. To receive an update on actions from previous minutes

April 2025

- **Item 12.2 Cllr Frost** to draw up Community Speed Watch paperwork for new volunteers and email them by Friday 25 July. Cllr Frost also advised that he had

Signed Chair

contacted the current Speed Watch co-ordinator to ask if they were happy to continue in the role and was awaiting a response.

May 2025

- **Item 15.4 Cllr Frost** has verbally thanked Greene King and donated to their charity.

June 2025

- **Item 9.4 Clerk** to report back on investigations into online banking under item 10.5.
- **Item 11 Clerk** posted request for ideas and suggestions regarding parish council future plans on the council and village Facebook pages – no response received.

Item 11 from February 2025 was closed, all other actions were completed.

7. To receive questions or comments from members of the public.

A MOP asked for the parish councils view on the recent repair/resurfacing of the B1077 between Winfarthing and Shelfanger. All Cllr's expressed their disappointment with the work. It was agreed the parish council would raise their concern with NCC Highways department. Cllr's Cole and Rogers stressed the importance of individual members of the community reporting their dissatisfaction to NCC Highways, explaining that the council is just seen as one comment but with more comments received it was more likely the issue would be addressed.

Action: Clerk to submit comment to Norfolk County Council Highways regarding the repair/resurfacing of the B1077 between Winfarthing and Shelfanger.

A MOP asked about the use of the Park Hotel in Diss being used to accommodate single male asylum seekers. District Cllr Easter explained that the Home Office only advised South Norfolk Council on 17 July that the families would be moved out and replaced by single male adults. Two strongly worded letters had been sent to the Home Office setting out SNC concerns, not least that there were not sufficient police resources to deal with the situation. It was also noted that a protest was taking place outside the Park Hotel that same evening.

A MOP offered to help with the Community Speed Watch. Cllr Frost acknowledged and advised their names were on the list.

8. To receive a report from County and District Councillors

- A report had not been received from County Cllr Rowett at the time of the meeting but has since been emailed and can be found attached to these minutes.
- District Cllr Easter's report had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found attached to these minutes.

As District Cllr Easter needed to leave the meeting, the Clerk brought forward an item from her report under item 9 so District Cllr Easter could comment. The Clerk advised that a message had been posted on Next Door stating that another application had been submitted regarding the Deal Farm AD plant. District Cllr Easter reported that it was an application to turn the existing site to an animal waste storage facility.

Signed Chair

Date

9. To receive the Clerk’s report and update on correspondence

The Clerk reported:

- Attendance at the Social Media Training course on 16 July. Although some new skills had been gained, the course was not as informative as originally hoped.
- Receipt of an email from SNC regarding the Licensing Act policy review; this had been circulated to Cllr’s.
- Receipt of an email from a parishioner regarding a meeting they had attended with Katie Spillman, SNC, concerning the ongoing maintenance of the ditch between the school and The Ramblers. The parishioner was now communicating with the Diocese as joint riparian owner, regarding the matter.
- Receipt of an email from Cllr Cole regarding the location of bus stops in the village, there are 3 locations:
 - on the corner of Chapel Close
 - at the junction of The Street/Hall Road and opposite in the layby in front of Holly Farm
 - at Guildhall Cottages and opposite at the Fighting Cocks PH.
- Receipt of an email from Norfolk Parish Training and support regarding the change of parish council email to a Gov.UK address which must be completed for the next audit. The Clerk explained that Norfolk PTS had negotiated with Parish Online who would complete the transition to the new email address free of charge for Norfolk PTS members. There was also an alternative package at a reduced cost of £240 where all Cllr’s could have a gov.uk address. Cllr’s agreed to move forward with the free option to change the parish council address only.

Action: Clerk to implement the free option to change the parish council email address with Parish Online

10. FINANCE

10.1. To approve payments (C)

| Payment Type/ Cheque No | PAYEE | DESCRIPTION | AMOUNT | VAT |
|----------------------------|-------|------------------------------------|---------------|-----|
| 100310 | HMRC | PAYE June 25 | 55.60 | |
| 100311 | K Rix | June 25 Salary | 222.60 | |
| 100312 | K Rix | Reimburse for printing 07/24-07/25 | 47.00 | |
| | | Total | 325.20 | |

Payments were unanimously approved.

The Clerk advised Cllr’s that if she upgraded her printing package, it would avoid paying the more costly additional fees and reduce the annual printing cost for the parish council. The Clerk asked if the parish council would consider paying the difference of £2/month to upgrade the plan (maximum £24/year). This was unanimously agreed.

Action: Clerk to upgrade printing package

Signed Chair

Date

10.2. Receipts (B)

| DATE | RECEIVED FROM | DETAILS | AMOUNT |
|------|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| | | | |
| | | Total | 0.00 |

10.3. To receive a report from the Responsible Finance Officer

| DETAILS | CR | DR | BALANCE |
|--|---------|--------|----------------|
| Cash book balance brought forward: A | 6141.88 | | |
| Receipts in February (listed above): B | 0.00 | | |
| Payments in February (listed above): C | | 325.20 | |
| Cash book balance carried forward (A+B-C) Community Account Balance | | | 5816.68 |

10.4. To receive spend against budget to 30/06/25

| BUDGET 01/04/25 TO 31/03/26 | | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| INCOME DETAILS | BUDGET Ex VAT | CR TO DATE EX VAT | BALANCE | COMMENTS |
| HMRC Refund | 0 | 67.62 | 67.62 | Additional income not budgeted |
| SNC Litter Pick | 20.00 | 0 | 20.00 | |
| Total Income | 20.00 | 67.62 | 87.62 | |
| EXPENDITURE DETAILS | BUDGET Ex VAT | DR TO DATE Ex VAT | | |
| Clerk Salary | 3531.00 | 778.96 | 2,752.04 | |
| Clerk Expenses | 100.00 | 0 | 100.00 | |
| Training | 200.00 | 134.40 | 65.60 | |
| Insurance | 250.00 | 241.00 | 9.00 | |
| Membership/Subscriptions | 110.00 | 50.00 | 60.00 | |
| Dog Bin Maintenance | 300.00 | 0 | 300.00 | |
| Defibrillator Maintenance | 150.00 | 11.95 | 138.05 | |
| Donations (S137) | 50.00 | 0 | 50.00 | |
| Rent (Glebe Land) | 10.00 | 0 | 10.00 | |
| Village Hall Hire | 150.00 | | 150.00 | |
| Internal Audit | 75.00 | 60.00 | 15.00 | |
| Microsoft Office 365 | 60.00 | 0 | 60.00 | |
| Information Commissioners Office | 50.00 | 0 | 50.00 | |
| Grass Cutting | 840.00 | 0 | 840.00 | |
| Litter Picking Equipment | 0 | 157.27 | -157.27 | Expenditure from CIL funding |
| Total Expenditure | 5876.00 | 1433.58 | 4442.42 | |

Signed Chair

Date

10.5. To discuss online banking arrangements

The Clerk reported that she had contacted Barclays Bank to request a paying in book and asked about the BACS procedure. The Clerk explained that there was no additional cost to use BACS, the Clerk would need to become a signatory on the mandate to upload the online payment transactions, transactions would then be authorised online by two signatories at the council meeting. The Clerk explained that in uploading the transactions, the system would then not allow her to authorise any of the transactions this could only be done by the other signatories.

A discussion took place, and it was suggested BACS payments could be trialled for three months. Cllr Cole advised he was against the change and whilst he was happy to remain as a signatory, did not wish to authorise any online transactions. Cllr's Smith, Frost, Steel and Rix agreed with the trial, Cllr's Rogers and Collins abstained. It was agreed to trial the procedure for three months.

Action: Clerk to contact Barclays to instigate BACS payments.

10.6. To review and approve General Reserve Policy

Approval of the policy had been deferred from the previous meeting as some Cllr's were concerned about the council holding parishioners' money unnecessarily. The Clerk reminded Cllr's that the parish council was required under statute to hold adequate financial reserves to meet the needs of the parish council and this policy provided transparency for parishioners. The Clerk also reminded Cllr's that the auditor had recommended the implementation of a Reserves Policy. The Clerk advised that she had reviewed the General Reserve figures for a Working Balance and Contingency and had reduced some of the amounts under Contingency. The Earmarked Reserves had also been amended as some of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money had been spent on the additional litter picking equipment.

A discussion took place; Cllr Collins was still concerned about holding parishioners' money. Cllr Cole agreed with concerns, but recognised the policy was a requirement of the council. MOP's in attendance were asked their opinion and they understood that the parish council needed to hold sufficient funds to offer services to the parish and to deal with any unexpected events that might arise.

Approval of the policy was proposed by Cllr Cole, seconded by Cllr Frost, the policy was approved with one abstention.

11. To discuss and agree a 3-year Parish Action Plan

The Clerk advised that there had been no response to the call for ideas from the community.

Cllr Frost suggested that as the children's play area had been removed from the Mill Road planning application that this could be a project to add to the Action Plan. Cllr Cole reported that Cllr's from other parishes had commented on the financial burden of maintaining and servicing their play areas. It was agreed the play area could be added to the Action Plan as a long-term idea and kept under consideration.

Signed Chair

CLlr Steel advised that 2 or 3 MOPs had talked to him about the issue of speeding through the village adding that installation of flashing speed awareness signs had also been brought up by an MOP at a previous parish council meeting. Cllr Steel suggested this was a project that could be considered for the Action Plan and advised he had contacted a company who supply portable speed Indicator devices to establish cost. It was agreed that Cllr Steel should explore the project further.

Cllr Rogers commented how Mitchells Yard has expanded with the completion of the new family sized houses but there was no footpath from the site into the village. It was agreed this could be added to the action plan for consideration.

The Clerk advised that the council had received notification from NCC that the Parish Partnership Scheme would be running again for 2025/26, bids would need to be submitted by 1 December 2025, and the footpath and speed indicator device would be considered under the scheme.

Action: Cllr Steel to gather additional information on cost and installation of speed Indicator devices

12. To comment on any planning applications

No new applications had been received

12.1. To discuss application no. 2025/0004 - Mill Road

A MOP commented on how the latest parish council comments had been uploaded to the SNC planning portal and were pleased to see they still focussed strongly on the flooding issues in the village. They commented on how some of the changes made to the application were positive i.e. replacing the fence with a hedge and removing the play area from the site due to its proximity to the road.

12.2. To discuss application no. 2024/2476 - Hall Road

The application is pending on the portal as it has only received outline planning permission.

13. To receive and discuss updates concerning parish infrastructure

13.1. Village Hall Governance

The Clerk advised that a meeting had been arranged between 7.30 and 8.30 pm on Monday 11 August 2025 to discuss next steps in changing the governance status of the parish council from custodian to sole trustee. Tonya Winsley the Community Action Norfolk representative would be on Teams, Cllr's would gather in person. The Clerk agreed to email all Cllr's with the date for their diaries.

Action: Clerk to email time and date of the village hall governance meeting to all Cllr's

13.2. Community Speed Watch

Discussed under agenda item 6.

Signed Chair

13.3. Parish Footpaths

Cllr Cole advised that the footbridge was broken on FP12. Cllr Smith agreed to report the issue.

Action: Cllr Smith to report broken footbridge on FP12 to NCC.

13.4. Village Emergency Plan

The proposal from Bressingham and Fersfield Parish council was discussed. Cllr's Rogers and Cole were unsure this needed to be a combined project, but it was agreed to move forward with the proposed 'drop-in' event and to start drafting a formal emergency plan, using the template from Norfolk Resilience Forum.

Action: Clerk to confirm availability of the village hall on 3 October 2025 and feedback to Bressingham and Fersfield Parish Council.

14. To receive items for the next Agenda and confirm date of next meeting

Clerk Appraisal including review of job description/pay.
To confirm the location of sandbags for use of the village.

Next Meeting 1 September 2025

Meeting closed 21:45

Action List

July 2025

- **Item 7 - Clerk** to submit comment to Norfolk County Council Highways regarding the repair/resurfacing of the B1077 between Winfarthing and Shelfanger.
- **Item 9 - Clerk** to implement the free option to change the parish council email address with Parish Online.
- **Item 10.1 - Clerk** to upgrade printing package
- **Item 10.5 - Clerk** to contact Barclays to instigate BACS payments.
- **Item 11 - Cllr Steel** to gather additional information on cost and installation of speed Indicator devices
- **Item 13.1 - Clerk** to email time and date of the village hall governance meeting to all Cllr's
- **Item 13.3 - Cllr Smith** to report broken footbridge on FP12 to NCC.
- **Item 13.4 - Clerk** to confirm availability of the village hall on 3 October 2025 and feedback to Bressingham and Fersfield Parish Council.

Signed Chair

Progress report

The main issue at the moment across the division is the rash of problematic energy infrastructure planning proposals, including the pylons, vast solar parks (East Pye and Tasway proposals) and gross and ill-placed BESS storage units. Alongside parishes and district councillors and the MPs, I am working hard to ensure that we get proper assessment of the environmental impacts, proper consultation, proper attention to local residents, and correct reports concerning the quality of the land, to ensure that the planning system can do its job properly. But the situation has become truly overwhelming and in some cases we seem to be left powerless. I'm working with both the local MPs to address the weaknesses in the UK's national rules for planning, and to get strategic commissioning instead of the current free market for speculators. The government has now said it is intending to do this, but it's come a bit late in the day. In addition South Norfolk has also usefully adopted some new guidelines to indicate which places are suitable and likely to succeed if planning applications are lodged for energy schemes. I'm pleased to see that the unsatisfactory BESS proposal for Rushall seems to have been paused, perhaps never to rise again, and maybe also the much-talked-of but never-seen energy park in Gissing.

I remain alarmed that the government's chief desire seems to be to slash protections for nature and heritage. I raised the issue of protection for chalk streams with Ben Goldsborough recently and he has forwarded the reply he received from the Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for Housing and Local Government. I have posted it on my facebook page.

I've attended scheduled meetings with Field about the BESS proposed in Great Moulton (which will be decided at South Norfolk DC), and with East Pye Solar (about their mega solar farm plans) which will be decided in Westminster. I set up a site visit to Long Stratton and Great Moulton along with with my counterpart in Long Stratton to look at the road route suggested for construction traffic for the BESS proposal in Great Moulton, and a meeting with the NSIPs officer at County Hall to look at their East Pye response. In all these cases I'm feeding into the County Council responses, raising issues about roads, drainage and ecology etc. Watch my facebook for daily updates on what actions I've been taking on these and other things. I am also hoping to deliver a newsletter soon.

At the May County Council meeting, I submitted a motion to address the concerns about the number of simultaneous applications for energy schemes. There was a Conservative amendment, but nevertheless the motion was still mostly intact, and it passed with a substantial majority. You can read the motion on my facebook page, and there is also a link to the recording where you can watch the debate including what I think is a very informative speech that I made about energy security (see whether you agree!). At the July Council meeting I submitted an amendment to the Conservative motion calling for more regulation relating to BESS schemes. The debate was cut short, and there was limited understanding of the importance of avoiding creating alarm by misrepresenting the risk of fire in BESS schemes, so I am hoping that the press will do some coverage to row back on the sensationalist misinformation which is being spread by campaign groups and reinforced by ill-informed Councillors who are causing serious anxiety among residents by appearing to endorse the suggestion that there is a high risk of fire. The chance of being killed by lightning are 300,000 to one. The risk of a fire in a battery cell in a BESS is 40 million to one.

Meanwhile I note that the government is going to make it mandatory for energy developers to provide substantial community funding. See link here(it's not just coastal but rural areas as well): [Cash boost for coastal towns hosting clean energy infrastructure - GOV.UK](#). It is important to

insist on this in any parish response to a proposal within the vicinity. We might also want to look into more community based energy schemes that would be for local people to have cheap power directly, instead of mega industrial stuff for London.

In other local work, I've been working with landowners and the footpath officer to solve a footpath issue in Winfarthing, and with residents and the riparian rights and water management teams to solve problems in Bressingham. We are looking forward to the completion of resurfacing on two of the important B roads in the division, at Tivetshall and the horrible pitted surface at Winfarthing/Shelfanger. I note that several roads have also been given surface dressing. There will be various closures on the A140 over the summer for joining up the new bypass at Long Stratton, and in August there is an opportunity to walk, cycle or run on the new road when it opens for a community fun day.

New community fund

Thanks to a new member fund, I can offer grants between £200 and £2,500 to support projects that promote things like social inclusion, volunteering, and community engagement. This can include church groups if they serve the community. Larger grants require matched funding, but there is support for this via a crowdfunding scheme. Please ask me for a leaflet, or you can find details and how to apply on the county council website [here](#). Anyone with an eligible project should contact me on Catherine.rowett.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk.

Info from County Council

Norwich Castle Museum – Castle Keep opening date announced

Norwich Castle Keep will re-open on 7 August 2025. Priority booking with a Norfolk Museums Pass opens: Thursday 17 July. General booking opens: Thursday 24 July. Further information about the Norwich Castle, Museum and Art Gallery is available [here](#).

Summer Reading Challenge at Norfolk libraries

Norfolk libraries are inviting families to take part in The Reading Agency's 2025 Summer Reading Challenge, encouraging children aged 4-11 to explore the magical connection between storytelling and the natural world with this year's theme: Story Garden - Adventures in Nature and the Great Outdoors. In 2024, the Challenge reached nearly 600,000 children and inspired over 100,000 new library memberships across the UK. To find out how to join in and discover events happening at your local library, visit the [Summer Reading Challenge page](#).

National Govt

NHS Dentistry

The Government has announced new reforms to the dental contract to deliver more NHS work and fix the foundations of dentistry. They've launched a [consultation](#) (closes 19 August 2025).

VJ Day 15 August

The government is encouraging members of the public to participate in a national two-minute silence on Friday 15 August to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. More details are available [here](#).

Contact me

Catherine.rowett.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk. See also my Facebook page [here](#).

Catherine Rowett

23rd July 2025

Winfarthing July report

Park Hotel

As you are now aware the asylum families hosted in the Park Hotel will have been moved today to make way for Single Male Asylum seekers. No one is happy with this arrangement and SNC were only told on Thursday by the Home Office.

2 strongly worded letters have been sent to the Home secretary and the Home Office dept which deals with asylum seekers. I only hope that we do not see a repeat of the scenes in Epping.

Solar Farms, pylons and battery parks etc

The issue of solar farms in my opinion is getting out of hand with the East Pyle site and now the Tas Vally site. It seems companies are all jumping on the wagon and offering farmers large sums of money to allow them to use their land.

SNC are looking to find constructive ways to oppose inappropriate over development of South Norfolk with proportionate arguments, talking about cumulative impact, enclosure of settlements and loss of good agricultural land. The first part of this the catchy Supplementary Planning Documents on Landscape Susceptibility to Energy Transmission, Storage and Design went through at a full council meeting , whilst this not law but companies will be expected to comply with the detail of the policy when submitting planning applications.

There has been a big comms push on this including press releases, interviews and social media, which you have no doubt seen in the EDP.

We will not be able to stop them all , but it will show SNC residents we are on their side without looking unreasonable.

LGR/Devolution

LGR and Devolution continue forward with SNC starting to put together their business plan for the changes.

Village Clusters

The documents relating to the Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan (VCHAP) passed through a full Council meeting and will now proceed to the Planning Inspectorate for a final inspection and comment it should allow some 1200 houses to be built in the villages of South Norfolk. Most villages welcome this approach as the houses should be affordable and attract young families to them. This will have the effect of rejuvenating the villages and adding much needed pupils to local schools and save them from closure.

We are all aware that there are 2 sites in Winfarthing that are currently in their planning stages.

Dog Fouling and Dog Control (PSPO)

The Public Spaces Protection Order which controls Dog fouling and control in public spaces was renewed for a further 3 years. The order comes with fines for those who are reported for fouling public spaces and those who do not have their dogs under control. This is a controversial topic but SNC Community Protection Team will investigate and impose fines on those who disregard the content of the order.

I have your dog fouling signs!!