

WRETHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Julie (Jules) Challenor, Tofts Barn, Church Road, Wretham, IP24 1RL

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Minutes of the **Ordinary Monthly Parish Meeting of Wretham Parish Council** held on Thu 13th February 2025 at 7:00pm in Wretham Village Hall.

Present: Cllr Sharon Ford (SF) – Vice Chair, Cllr Paul Barnard, Cllr Jon Ford, Cllr Natalie Bissessur (NB) and Parish Clerk, Jules Challenor (JC)

1. **APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE** – Cllr Harold Smith (6-month sabbatical).
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - None
3. **DISPENSATIONS** - None
4. **MINUTES** – The minutes of the meeting held on Thu 9th Jan 25, were agreed by all and signed by the Vice-Chair. These will be available to view on the Parish Council website.
5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
6. **DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT**
 - 6.1 District Councillors Report – Cllr Phil Cowen attended meeting and submitted report, attached.
 - 6.2 County Councillors Report - Cllr Fabian Eagle - none
7. **MATTERS ARISING**
 - 7.1 **OUTSTANDING HIGHWAY MATTERS** – discuss any outstanding issues + report any new issues.

ENQ-716436-B6N9B1 Lechmere Corner Trees. Contractors seen on site cutting trees. Clerk is disappointed with work carried out. All councillors agreed not satisfactory. Prior to meeting, Clerk emailed Highways and they are going to give feedback to the contractors and get it resolved.

“Wretham Camp” sign - bent towards the A1075 road – Not seen as dangerous so currently nothing to be done.

General maintenance by Highways, they have emailed stating that they will ensure their grass cutting contractors cut all verges and ensure it is carried out to a satisfactory standard.

Speeding of vehicles on Croxton Road by camp – Clerk informed this is a matter for Norfolk Police. Residents that witness speeding need to report directly.
 - 7.2 **ANY OTHER MATTERS** - None
8. **CORRESPONDENCE** – All correspondence regularly circulated via email to all councillors.
9. **FINANCE**
 - 9.1 Monthly Financial Report - to sign payments for Feb 25. All sent to Cllrs via email for consideration prior to meeting and approval. Agreed to pay Community Heartbeat (annual support cost defibrillator), sum £198, Wix Ltd annual domain renewal already paid by Joy Townsend so to be reimbursed, sum £230.40, Clerk salary, sum £449.74 and HMRC £12.80. It was noted that HMRC have now taken payment of £70.80 on 23rd Jan 25 in respect of o/s PAYE/NI due. Clerk secured grass cutting two year agreement with Serco for 2025/26 at current prices paid, so no increase!

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10. PLANNING APPLICATIONS – new planning applications, planning decisions and correspondence, and to decide on comments to be made where necessary.

- 10.1 ENF/271/22/PAR** – 4 Manor Cottages - Appeal ongoing & Breckland Council managing – Update from Breckland Council – “The Council are awaiting the inspector’s determination following their site inspection.”
- 10.2 3PL/2023/1107/F** - Sunnys Trees Hockham Road IP24 1SD - Tourism development to include erection of 2 holiday cabins, service block, stables, manege and paddocks for equestrian use– Revised plans submitted – Decision by 28th Nov 24 – Extension until 07-02-2025 and permission granted – Matter closed.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 11.1** History/Memory Cafe - . Clerk to check next newsletter.
- 11.2** Community Action Norfolk (CAN) offering energy advice talks to community groups – Clerk emailed Newsletter editorial team. It was suggested we put a date in for March 25 and liaise with newsletter.
- 11.3** High speeds by vehicles on Croxton Road by Military Camp – Camp made aware and will liaise with all persons on camp. Nothing can be done on changing speed limit.
- 11.4** **SNAP Meetings** – new dates SNAP Meeting(s) PC Dion Philips, Beat Manager Attleborough informs meeting dates for 2025.
Wed 9th Apr 2025 at 18:30hrs held at LOPHAM VILLAGE HALL, Church Rd, North Lopham, Diss IP22 2LW
Thu 10th Jul 2025 at 18:30hrs held at Harling Old School Village Hall School Lane, East Harling, Norfolk, NR16 2LU
Fri 17th Oct 2025 at 18:30hrs held at Attleborough Town Hall
- 11.5** Defibrillator update – Clerk to investigate if new pads are needed.
- 11.6** Water Pressure - It is important that if anyone has a problem to complain to Anglian Water.
- 11.7** List of Trees in village with protection orders – Clerk is investigating.
- 11.8** Map of Village of who owns what land – Clerk is investigating.
- 11.9** Road Safety Sign (Deer) share with Stow Bedon & Breckles PC – sharing agreement update – SB&BPC have a meeting in March and will get back to us. We agreed that the responsibility of the sign needs to be shared between the two parishes, ie moving rather than just Wretham PC managing.

12. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA AND DATE FOR NEXT MEETING(S)

2025 - 13th Mar tbc, 10th Apr, 8th May, 12th Jun, 10th Jul, Aug tba, 11 Sep, 9th Oct, 13th Nov & Dec tba

NB Vice Chair, Sharon Ford and Clerk, Jules Challenor both having surgery and may not be able to make 13th March so currently tbc.

District Councillors' report February 2025

As you will all no doubt be aware, the government have announced that Norfolk will be amongst the first wave of District Councils to be invited to propose arrangements to become a Unitary authority or authorities and that will see the dissolution of all district councils in Norfolk. Meanwhile Breckland continues as an elected council to provide all the services required of it until such time as Parliament passes the appropriate legislation for change.

Much has been written about the topic, but the common theme is undoubtedly the undue haste with which this major change is proposed; the County and Districts are required to produce unified proposals by the middle of March some 6 weeks or thereabouts after government made the announcement.

An unbiased view of the above is provided as the Opinion in the EDP today, February 12th, under Peter Franzen's byline and in particular the comparison timeline of 3 years, which the 1974 reorganisation took and the relative size of the Unitary authority that is proposed to be a minimum population of 500,000 with little or no recognition of the size of the county or its geography and road networks.

The second element of the government's proposals to 'reform' local government revolves around the election of a Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk in whose control will be vested such diverse functions as strategic planning and taxi licensing. It is somewhat challenging to grapple with the ability to fulfil such diverse functions across two counties the sizes of Norfolk and Suffolk and retain intimate detailed knowledge of both in order to arrive at a balanced and considered decision making process. Nevertheless, this initiative has commenced and the Mayor is to be elected in May 2026. For those interested in the detail please refer to gov.uk web pages relating to devolution and the mayoral elections.

In light of the publication of the draft White Paper by MCHLG Breckland has taken the decision to pause further work related to the proposed introduction of car park charges pending the establishment of a new authority that would assume responsibility for Breckland's assets, car parks being one component.

Council on the 20th of February will focus on the budget setting for the coming year and the proposed increase in council tax that would see the band D charge rise by £4.95 p.a. to £118.53p. This will retain Breckland's enviable position of charging the lowest district council tax in Norfolk and the country whilst providing all of the statutory services we are obliged to provide and the many discretionary functions that we fund that are so valuable and in many cases, essential, for our residents, communities, groups and businesses. All of this without resorting to borrowing unlike many other authorities.

Councillors Sarah Suggitt and Phil Cowen

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