

Blofield Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Blofield Parish Council on Monday 8th December 2025 at 7:30pm – 11:10pm at Blofield Courthouse.

PRESENT:

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

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO THE MEETING BY THE CHAIR

2. TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Paul Newstead and Stella Shackle and accepted by the Council.

3. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

No interests were declared at this meeting.

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

Three parishioners were present.

One parishioner raised concerns regarding planning application 2525/3580, 24 Yarmouth Road, including the ongoing damage to the verge.

The owners of 2025/3625, 26 Stocks Lane provided detail about their plans for the site.

5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 10th NOVEMBER 2025

These minutes will be reviewed at the January 2026 meeting.

6. TO REPORT ON MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT ON THE AGENDA

- Both Parish Partnership scheme bids have been submitted.
- The grant application to the Future for Nature Fund at BDC has been submitted.
- ITEM 33 - Significant concerns have been raised around the traffic safety at the school site regarding the pedestrian crossing, parking and no barriers at the bottom of the hill. The Council will raise this with NCC Children's Services who were involved in designing the road improvements and a meeting is to be set up with the NCC Highways Engineer to discuss concerns too. Clerk (EB) to action and also ask the police to visit again.

7. PLANNING

Application: 2025/3625

Location: 26 Stocks Lane, Blofield, NR13 4JZ

Proposal: replacement of self-build dwelling

On discussion, the Parish Council resolved not to object but would like reassurances from BDC Planning that the following points have been considered and will be addressed appropriately:

- With the increased foul water flow, is the current connection to the mains sewer in Stocks Lane capable of coping with the increase?*
- Surface water draining into onsite soakaways: Will these be new and able to cope with the increased flow of a substantially larger roof footprint than the current dwelling? (Plans must not create any surface water issues for the neighbouring properties and the Council requests the use of permeable materials for the front parking area – NP Policy ENV3.)*
- Soft site boundaries and trees: The Council would welcome some softening of the proposed wall with native hedgerow.*
- The application is conditioned so that any potentially harmful material is removed by properly trained handlers.*

Application: 2025/3580

Location: Blafelda, 24 Yarmouth Road, Blofield, NR13 4JS

Proposal: Alteration of gable roof by raising ridge to allow for rooms in the roof. Erection of single storey front, side and rear extensions and provision of double garage.

The Parish Council resolved to restate its comments and objection submitted on 15th October in relation to the earlier application of 2025/2899:

Following discussion, the Parish Council unanimously agreed to object to the application and to raise the following points.

- *The Parish Council requests that a representative from Broadland District Council Planning visit the site to assess the site and whether building standards are being met, and assess the work to date given it appears plans, including retrospective plans, have not been followed, and that the officer considers / addresses all the points raised below.*
- *In the latest plans, the garage roof is substantially different. It appears the latest proposed amendment to the garage would lead to a ridge height higher than the adjacent bungalow and this would be out of character for the street scene. (The adjacent property's garage has a flat roof and is a bungalow.)*
- *Though the main dwelling roof and pitch is unchanged, additional windows have been added to the main dwelling which were not part of the original plans.*
- *Two additional bedrooms have also been added to the dwelling one of which is an ensuite within the roof void. Each of these additional bedrooms and ensuite have been provisioned with windows at the rear.*
- *A further window has been added to the rear extension, which is shown as a bedroom. These additional "bedroom" rooflights / windows could lead to a loss of privacy for the occupants and neighbouring properties to the rear.*
- *The Council understands that there has been a structure erected in the rear of the property. The Parish Council is concerned whether this fulfils the Party Wall Act etc. 1996, including in relation to the height and proximity to the boundary, or whether this should be included in the planning application?*
- *Also, the Council understands that there may have been some 'boundary movement' and there is a question in relation to whether 'no man's land' / unadopted land has been encroached on.*

If the local authority is minded to approve any of these changes which should not have been incorporated, the Parish Council requests:

- *The ridge height of the garage is conditioned, so that it is no higher than the ridge height of the neighbouring bungalow.*
- *New (upstairs) windows in the main dwelling are frosted to ensure the privacy of the neighbours remains paramount.*
- *There is consideration as to the number of parking spaces; will there be sufficient parking spaces for the now five-bedroom dwelling? (Blofield NP Policy HOU5 stipulates for a 4-bedroomed dwelling or more, parking for a minimum of 4 cars to be provided.)*
- *The Party Wall Act etc. 1996 is complied with, as currently this might not be the case in relation to the height of new fencing, and as above, in relation to structure erected in the rear of the property.*

The Council also resolved to highlight the following concerns for Planning to consider:

- *The plans appear to be inconsistent as some note a single garage, yet the frontage suggests otherwise. (As the plans have limited dimensions, it is impossible to determine.)*
- *If the garage has now been amended to a double width garage; is this now an overdevelopment of the site?*
- *There is no mention of outbuildings that have been built at the rear and it is unclear about boundary treatments.*
- *As mentioned in email of 15th October: The Parish Council requests that a representative from Broadland District Council Planning visit the site to assess the site and whether building standards are being met, and assess the work to date given it appears plans, including retrospective plans, have not been followed, and that the officer considers / addresses all the points raised below. [Above and below in this instance.] Can Planning please confirm to the Parish Council that the site will be inspected?*

The Council requests that all the above are addressed by Planning. Additionally, if Planning is minded to approve the application, the Council requests:

- *That there is a condition to ensure the NP ENV2 – ‘Soft site boundaries and trees’ is adhered to, so the existing front fencing of 6ft (which is not part of the plan – the plan indicates block wall) is replaced with a soft site boundary.*
- *That there is a condition to ensure that the revised garage ridge height does not exceed that of the neighbouring property bungalow. [As previously requested.]*
- *As mentioned previously, that the issue of whether there is sufficient parking for a 5-bedroomed house is looked at, and that it is checked whether cars can exit in a forward motion.*

The Council also agreed to request that Dist. Cllr. Paul Newstead call-in the application.

Application: 2025/3366

Location: Norfolk Premier Golf, Yarmouth Road, Blofield, NR13 4JS

Proposal: Construction of new canopies above two existing Padel Courts Application

The Parish Council agreed to request that BDC Planning conditions ensure that:

- *The canopies are of a suitable colour so they blend in with the skyline.*
- *All opportunities for reducing light pollution are included in the plans/build, and that spotlights are lowered slightly to remove the light pollution issue experienced by a neighbour who has already written to share their concerns.*
- *Drainage issues are addressed ensuring there is a rainwater collection management and soakaways plan.*

Application: 20211844

Location: Land Immediately South of Newstead Gardens, Blofield

Proposal: Erection of 21 dwellings (Outline) Planning

The Council resolved to reiterate concerns raised previously in emails of 15 November 2021 and 15 February 2022 and to reiterate that if BDC Planning is minded to approve this development, then the Council requests the following road safety improvements are addressed/conditioned for Yarmouth Road:

- *Relocation of the existing fixed position flashing 30MPH sign currently located near Brewster Court.*
- *A pedestrian crossing facility on Yarmouth Road.*
- *Enhancement of the traffic lights at The Kings Head junction to enable safer pedestrian crossing.*
- *Some form of speed reduction measures for Yarmouth Road.*

Plus:

- *The visibility issues in relation to the current access from Newstead Gardens are addressed with recalculated visibility splays to ensure the current hedges do not create further issues on exiting on to the Yarmouth Road.*
- *Ensuring that the drainage strategy is robust enough to mitigate against any flooding, and the LLFA’s conditions are followed.*
- *Ensuring that the social housing commitment is adhered to.*

8. TO CONSIDER FEEDBACK ON ANY PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED SUBSEQUENT TO THE PUBLICATION OF THIS AGENDA AND NOTE ANY PLANNING UPDATES (INCLUDING 2020/0077)

No further applications have been received and no updates are available on 2020/0077.

9. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM OUR SOLICITORS / NCC CHILDREN’S SERVICES REGARDING THE BLOFIELD PARK LAND TRANSFER TO THE PARISH COUNCIL AND THE UKPN SUBSTATION LEASE, AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

Progress has been made with the lease and details have been agreed. Three matters remain unresolved. The Council are happy to be flexible around the fixed location of the blue line and the break clause. A query remains with NCC regarding the boundary and UKPN cable rights access which clerk (EB) will raise with NCC Children’s Services. Clerk (EB) to liaise with Council’s solicitor to complete the lease as soon as possible.

10. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE GNGB FUNDING

A meeting is taking place regarding the Greater Norwich Growth Board funding this week.

11. TO RECEIVE A COMMUNITY HUB PROJECT UPDATE - INCLUDING FROM THE HUB WORKING GROUP AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS

A drains survey has been completed and the details reviewed. The drains from the year six classroom join the main drains on the divided old school site. It may be necessary to find an alternative solution, this could result in unexpected, unbudgeted costs. Clerk (EB) to liaise with the Project Team to understand best solutions and liaise with NCC Children's Services regarding impacts.

Detailed notes have been circulated from the Project Team meeting on the 24th November 2025. A hub timeline / programme and risk register has been circulated to the Council.

12. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE ARCHITECT PLANS AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

Revised and developed plans of the new hub were circulated to the Council. Any items that need changing should be emailed to Clerk (EB). It was noted that the image still does not show 57 car park spaces which are required.

The Council noted that all changes requested were not actioned. A further project team meeting is taking place on the 16th December 2025 (Clerk (EB) to attend).

13. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE NCC CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EARLY YEARS LEARNING & CHILDCARE MEETING ON 3RD DECEMBER, AND THE MEETING WITH BLOFIELD PRESCHOOL

Notes from the NCC Children's Services meeting were circulated to the Council. Detail regarding toilet provision, storage and layout were discussed.

Costs of the preschool conversion are increasing significantly and NCC Children's Services will identify if there is any funding available towards the project from the Department of Education and forward relevant forms. The Council agreed to complete an application for extra funding and the Clerk (EB) is to obtain approximate costs for the preschool part of the project.

Notes from the Parish Council / Preschool meeting were circulated. Current draft plans of the hub were shared and timelines discussed.

14. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE FARMAN FIELD PLAY FUNDS, TRIM TRAIL QUOTATIONS AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

Section 106 funds of £13066.80 are available for a trim trail at Farman Field. Will Crane has contacted three contractors for quotations and these will be available to discuss at the January 2026 meeting.

15. TO APPROVE INVOICES FOR PAYMENT, NOTE COUNCIL FUNDS, NOTE PAYMENT #98 AND REVIEW INTERNAL MONTHLY CHECKS

- The Council reviewed the proposed payments and Sarah Dhesi proposed (seconded by Stuart Smith) the Council pay payments #111 to #123 totalling £31,581.01. The Council unanimously resolved to approve these payments (Appendix D).
- The Council noted internal monthly checks carried out by Sarah Dhesi.
- The Council noted a bank reconciliation at 4th November 2025 (Appendix E) with a total balance of £1,197,629.42.
- The Council noted payment between meetings of the agreed sum of £5,000+VAT, payment #98 to Ovamills for the car park improvements at Heathlands Community Centre from the Council's community grant scheme.
- The Council noted transfer of CIL funds to the BDC deposit scheme are taking place (subject to Barclays technical restrictions).

16. TO REVIEW THE COMMUNITY HUB BUDGET AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

Clerk (SO) talked through the high-level Community Hub budget from the project advisor. This will be updated monthly.

17. TO NOTE ANY FURTHER VAT CONSULTANT GUIDANCE AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS

The Council unanimously resolved to 'opt in' to paying VAT on the community hub leasing areas with effect from 1 December 2025. Clerk (SO) to action. Clerk (SO) to submit a S126 VAT claim up to the 30th November 2025 first.

18. TO APPROVE GARDEN GUARDIAN GROUNDS MAINTENANCE QUOTATIONS FOR 2026/27 WITHIN THE PARISH

The Council unanimously resolved to approve the grounds maintenance quotations from Garden Guardian for 2026/27. However, the Courthouse gardens will not be maintained by Garden Guardian in 2026/27 this will be taken on by Blofield Courthouse Management Committee. Clerk (SO) to action.

19. TO REVIEW THE PARISH COUNCIL RESERVES POSITION AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

The Council noted various reserves transfers (Appendix F), reviewed and then discussed the Council reserves position in detail in preparation for the precept / budget discussion at item 21. See Appendix A.

20. TO AGREE THE BUDGET AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2026/27 AND SET THE PRECEPT FIGURE

The finance working group has met and discussed the budget and cost centres and codes in great detail. A proposed budget was presented and discussed with the Parish Council. Following small changes, the Council unanimously resolved to set the precept for 2026/27 at £119,600 an increase of £7,400. The number of 'average' band D properties has reduced in the parish from 1671 to 1666 the resulting estimated total cost is £71.79 per year or £5.98 per month, an increase of approximately £0.38 per month for each band D house in the Parish. (See Appendices B & C. This is an increase of approximately 6.8% to each household. Clerk (SO) to advise BDC.

At 10pm the Council resolved to suspend standing orders.

21. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE BUS SHELTER IMPROVEMENTS GRANT FUNDING REQUEST

Clerk (EB) reported that the Council has been successful in obtaining grant funding for the bus shelter works of £2,090.40. Subsequently a quotation has been obtained to refeel the roof in Blofield at a cost of £950+VAT. Clerk (EB) to obtain a second / third quotation to ensure value for money and also see if the bus shelter grant funding can be increased slightly to cover the cost of these repairs.

22. TO AGREE 'BEYOND THE PRECEPT FUNDING SOLUTIONS' TRAINING

Stuart Smith proposed Sarah Dhesi attend the 'Beyond the Precept Funding Solutions' training on the 11th February 2026. The Council unanimously resolved to approve this training.

23. TO CONSIDER REDUCING THE HEIGHT OF THE BOUNDARY HEDGE OF BLOFIELD PARK

The Council discussed the pros and cons of reducing this boundary hedge. It was agreed to consider the matter in June 2026 in time to be cut early Winter 2026 if required.

24. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE MEETING WITH THE COURTHOUSE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND THE REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION AGREEMENT, AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS

Stuart Smith provided an update on the meeting with the Courthouse. Changes to the Courthouse / Council constitution agreement have been suggested which will be reviewed and approved in the January meeting. A list of each parties responsibilities has been drawn up to add to the constitution. It is now recognised that the Courthouse is an unincorporated body. Clerk (EB) to check that the Courthouse is not affected by VAT / tax requirements.

25. TO AGREE THE DNS (DOMAIN) HOSTING CHANGES TO ANGLIAN INTERNET WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT

The Council resolved to change the domain hosting to Anglian Internet with immediate effect. Clerk (SO) to action.

26. TO AGREE QUARTERLY MEETINGS WITH NCC HIGHWAYS ENGINEER

The Highways engineer has agreed to meet 6 monthly as his workload is heavy. The next meeting will take place in February to discuss zebra/pedestrian crossing safety at Blofield School and SAM sign locations, together with other updates.

27. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON MARTY'S MARSH AND THE ANNUAL PLANNING MEETING, NOTE THE SPECIES LIST AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

Yvonne Burton provided a report from the annual planning meeting for the Council. Many varied species can be found on the site.

Community Payback has visited but only spread chippings near the entrance. The Marty's Marsh working group are meeting next weekend. Yvonne Burton has met with an individual who clears ditches and may be able to help with Marty's Marsh and Town Pit. Yvonne will obtain quotations for the work required for the Parish Council to consider.

A dead tree on the bank of the site (on NCC Highways land) requires removal. Clerk (EB) to ensure this is discussed with the NCC Highways Engineer in February.

28. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE COMMUNITY PAYBACK SUPPORT

See item 27 update.

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

Yvonne Burton provided an update from the Management Committee meeting.

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

Sarah Dhesi provided an update from the Margaret Harker Hall. Lots of fund-raising activities are taking place. The planned work in the old boiler room is scheduled for the beginning of January 2026 and Cllr. Andrew Proctor has provided a small grant of £550 towards this work together with the Parish Council funding of £5,000.

More volunteers are available to carry out the defibrillator checks. Clerk (EB) to arrange training. Sarah Dhesi proposed kids pads should be purchased for the defibrillators (on both sites) as well as adults pads. Pads have a shelf life of 2 years. This will be reviewed in March when they expire. Eleanor Bannister confirmed that the defibrillator at MHH, whilst reaching its 10-year life span, can continue beyond this if still in good condition. Sarah Dhesi to carry out necessary check (with guidance from Heart2Heart) to ensure this is the case.

31. TO CONFIRM MEETING DATES FOR 2026/27

These are being reviewed by the Courthouse as there is a clash for a number of the preferred dates. Clerk (EB) to issue the dates to the parish councillors once they are confirmed.

32. TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE

- Roads in the Kier development, Blyth Close, Burdett Close, Gunns Close, Shreeve Road and Smith Close have all had a 20mph Speed Limit Zone order put in place.
- A Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) consultation is open until the 11th January 2026.
- Concerns by a parishioner have been raised over the safety for pedestrians on Doctors Road.
- Rabbit proof fencing is being installed by NCC Children's Services at the boundary with the school site and Farman Field.
- The Local Authority Cluster meeting has been postponed and Beigton PC has encouraged another PC to host if it is considered necessary. No date has been set yet.
- There is a further consultation on the 'Local Plan' taking place until the 16th January 2026. The Sustainability Appraisal has been amended.
- Broadland District Council are organising a consultation on the Sex Establishment and Sexual Entertainment Venue policy from 3rd December 2025, ending on 25th February 2026.

33. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

- Community Hub Project Update in subheadings where possible.
- Clerk 1:1 reviews
- Unity Trust Bank considerations
- Courthouse constitution
- NCC Highways Tom Cox update (for February Council Meeting)
- Police Crime Commissioner meeting update
- Farman Field play quotations for review

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

Monday 12th January 2026 at 7:30pm at Blofield Courthouse.

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

The Council unanimously resolved to pass the above resolution, and the two remaining parishioners were thanked for their attendance and left the meeting.

36. TO NOTE CHANGE LAND OWNERSHIP CHANGES

The Parish Council noted the land ownership change for part of the allotment site.

37. TO DISCUSS COMMERCIALLY SENSITIVE MATTERS RELATING TO THE COMMUNITY HUB AND APPOINTMENT OF CONTRACTORS

No commercially sensitive matters were discussed.

38. TO DISCUSS CLERK WORKING HOURS

Stuart Smith raised concerns again over the number of clerk hours being worked. The Council suggested trying using AI solutions for all notes and minutes of meetings to see if this will assist and reduce time requirements in this area. Clerks to action.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11:10pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....