

Blofield Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Blofield Parish Council on Monday 24th March 2025 from 7.30pm – 11.00pm in Blofield Courthouse.

PRESENT

Stuart Smith (Chair), Sarah Dhesi (Vice Chair), Paul Culley-Barber, Joseph Scholes, William Crane, Paul Newstead, 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 were received from Stella Shackle and accepted by the parish council.
3. **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**
 - 3.1. Yvonne Burton declared a pecuniary interest in item 35.
 - 3.2. Stuart Smith declared an interest in item 8.1.
 - 3.3. Paul Culley-Barber declared a pecuniary interest in items 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 25 and 38 all related to the school.
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. Two parishioners were present together with District Councillor Paul Newstead.
 - 4.2. County Councillor Andrew Proctor sent his apologies and sent a report to the Council.
5. **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 10TH FEBRUARY 2025**
 - 5.1. The Council unanimously resolved to approve the parish council meeting minutes from 10th February 2025, and they were duly signed by the chair.
6. **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 10TH MARCH 2025**
 - 6.1. The Council unanimously resolved to approve the parish council meeting minutes from 10th March 2025, and they were duly signed by the chair.
7. **TO REPORT ON MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT ON THE AGENDA**
 - 7.1. The editor of Focal Point has advised the Council that the publication is unlikely to restart.
 - 7.2. Yvonne Burton is awaiting more woodchip before contacting the Community Payback team to discuss this work at Marty's Marsh and the kissing gate work on Yarmouth Road PROW.
 - 7.3. Large numbers of aggregate lorries have been driving through the village rather than following the traffic management plan taking traffic out of the village. National Highways / Galliford Try will ensure this is stopped and have added signs to the McDonald's / Cucumber Lane roundabout advising no A47 traffic should be driving through the village.
 - 7.4. Lingwood Road speeding - National Highways will discuss with the local police the best solution to stop speeding on Lingwood Road. This is as a result of this being used as a cut through since the A47 dualling works have commenced. Clerk (EB) to chase for a resolution.
8. **PLANNING**
 - 8.1. Application: 2025/0779
Proposal: Demolition of barn and erection of a self-build, eco-friendly dwelling and associated works
Location: Beatrice House, Garden Road, Blofield, NR13 4JL
The Parish Council would like to raise the following concerns / queries:
The Council has concerns over another access to Garden Road being so close to the shared driveway adjacent to the proposed dwelling and wonder if there would be any highway issues. The replacement dwelling is considerably taller than the existing barn and would be equivalent in ridge

height to the current dwelling. The height of the building could create overshadowing issues for the neighbouring properties, and this feels like overdevelopment of the plot. Amenity value of the existing property would be impacted and would question if there is sufficient amenity value for the proposed dwelling due to the length and width of the driveway.

In addition, is the drainage system sufficient to cope with another new property feeding into the main sewer system given the flooding regularly seen at The Kings Head junction?

8.2. Application: 2025/0795

Proposal: Single Storey rear extension

Location: The Forge, Plantation Road, Blofield, NR13 4PL

The Council resolved to make no comments on this application but would request they are kept informed of any changes to the application.

9. TO CONSIDER FEEDBACK ON ANY PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED SUBSEQUENT TO THE PUBLICATION OF THIS AGENDA

9.1. No further planning applications were received.

10. TO NOTE PLANNING UPDATE ON 20200077 AND ANY OTHER PLANNING APPLICATIONS

10.1. There are no further updates on the revised drainage strategy for planning application 20200077. Parishioner comments have not been added to the website; the Council agreed to re-request this. Clerk (EB) to action.

10.2. 2024/3840 – The Pink House extension has received approval.

10.3. Heathlands Community Centre car park phase two extension has received approval subject to pre-commencement tree works.

10.4. FUL/2024/0054 (NCC School planning application) – variation to planning conditions have been approved regarding compartmentalisation of the school building instead of a fire tank.

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

11.1. NCC Children's Services has not provided clarity on the legal transfer date (the final 'long stop' date in the contract is 31st July 2025 plus a further 20 days for legal works) and options for the site to be open to the public in the school holidays. The council are very keen to work with NCC to see if there is any possibility of the playground being available for the summer holidays. Clerk (EB) to contact NCC Children's Services and where necessary, contact County Councillor Andrew Proctor for further support.

11.2. Eleanor Bannister provided detailed notes regarding the site preparation and meeting actions. Items will continue to be progressed.

11.3. The Council has been unable to get any 'volunteer' help from Galliford Try or Pentaco to move the octagon outdoor classroom and small play train / house. The School PTA will investigate the possibility of moving these items.

12. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE NEW ACCESS CREATION AND PLANNING PERMISSION CONDITIONS APPROVAL, HEDGE REMOVAL AND APPROVE NEXT ACTIONS

12.1. BDC Planning have provided a Letter of Comfort for 3 conditions to enable the Council to progress with the installation of the new access to the 'old school site', and the required confirmation of 'approval of details reserved by condition 4'.

12.2. The required section of hedge has been removed in preparation for the new access. Heras fencing (kindly on loan from Pentaco) has been installed by Pentaco across the gap with black mesh to maintain privacy and site security for the School. The school caretaker is carrying out regular health and safety checks of the Heras fencing.

12.3. Work on the access creation will hopefully take place around the end of May (at the same time as the new school road improvements including the zebra crossing). Costs for this work are being obtained by NCC.

13. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE NEW COMMUNITY HUB CONCEPT DESIGNS AND MEETINGS AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS

13.1. The working group has met with the architect to revisit the plans and concept designs to date. Various designs were presented to the Council for reference and discussion.

- 13.2. The Council agreed three key points to feedback to the architect to input to the concept design and initial costs phase, for further development within the concept phase. Any additional thoughts will be developed by the working group and provided to the architect this week as time is short. Clerk (EB) to action.
1. In the year 6 classroom the 'utilities' area is better along the south wall of the structure (as it is currently).
 2. The Council overall preferred the Option C layout as an initial starting point.
 3. The Council were keen to maintain the option to divide the main hall east to west across the site.
 4. The Council has arranged to meet Jo-anne Lamb (Senior Adviser in Early Years Learning from NCC Children's Services) at the beginning of April at the year 6 classroom to discuss requirements / possible costs etc. of this space becoming a preschool. The Council resolved to invite a preschool representative to the meeting too. The Council agreed to invite Preschool on the understanding that this meeting will be focused on cost and mandatory preschool requirements, it may involve difficult conversations around choices of the levels of provision provided on the site for a restricted budget. Clerk (EB) to arrange.
- 13.3. The Council agreed to ask BDC Planning department about any restrictions on adding a gate to the new hub access being created. In addition, does the year 6 classroom require a change of use application to become a preschool? Clerk (EB) to action.
- 14. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REGARDING THE FOREST SCHOOL LAND AT THE COMMUNITY HUB AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS**
- 14.1. Sarah Dhesi and Sarah Osbaldeston visited the forest school site, shared images and reported back to the Council. There is a small shed in disrepair which the Council agreed should be removed by NCC Children's Services. In addition, there is a large shed in better condition. The Council resolved to keep this shed for preschool use at the forest school site. This would be the property of the preschool to maintain and keep in good condition.
- 14.2. It was noted that new fencing will be required along the forest school east boundary with the playing field. The Council resolved to obtain multiple quotations for fencing. Clerk (EB) to action.
- 15. TO DISCUSS OUTSTANDING TREE WORKS AT MARTY'S MARSH AND BLOFIELD CHURCHYARD AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS**
- 15.1. The Council discussed the outstanding tree works and quotes obtained. Medium risk works need to be carried out at Blofield Churchyard and in addition a large oak at Marty's Marsh requires a crown reduction. The Council unanimously resolved to appoint Conservation Arboriculture, as the best value tree surgeon to carry out the work. The company will liaise with the district council regarding any permission required and take the chippings to Marty's Marsh for the paths. Logs will be left stacked neatly. Clerk (EB) to confirm contractor.
- 16. TO DISCUSS A BUSINESS PLAN FOR THE COMMUNITY HUB AND AGREE A COUNCILLOR WORKING GROUP**
- 16.1 Sarah Dhesi reported that she has commenced a business plan for the community hub. The Council agreed to set up a community hub working group for all aspects of the project. This will make it easier to discuss detail in more length outside of the meeting and make recommendations to the parish council. The Council resolved to appoint Sarah Dhesi, Paul Newstead, Stuart Smith and Paul Culley-Barber on the group.
- 17. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE COMMUNITY HUB PLANNING REQUIREMENTS & SPORTS ENGLAND POSITION**
- 17.1 Within the planning requirements for the community hub is a requirement for the new school playing field to be in use before any further development can take place on the old school site. Given the delays on seeding the new school site field this requirement is restrictive to the parish. The Clerk (EB) has written to BDC planning department detailing the parish council concerns and they will then liaise with Sports England to discuss a possible change. Clerk (EB) to progress.
- 18. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE SUBSTATION LEASE, RATIFY THE UK POWER NETWORK ACCESS PLAN AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS**
- 18.1. The Council resolved to ratify the revised UK Power Network access plan. This now runs parallel to the west boundary and then west to east towards Plantation Road, exiting through the existing access to the site.

- 18.2. Eleanor Bannister advised that the UK Power Network lease could result in additional legal fees if this is delayed beyond the land transfer date. The Council resolved to discuss our legal position with our solicitor and understand if these charges can be incurred by NCC Children's Services not the parish council. Clerk (EB) to action.
- 19. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON EV CHARGERS ON THE COMMUNITY HUB SITE AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS**
- 19.1. The following extract 20.2 is from the 10th March 2025 Meeting Minutes:
- 19.2. 'The Council has met with EV charger experts at NCC and found out more detail. One single pole with two sockets could be installed with a slow charge and funding may be available. However, this is unlikely to be used often given the cost and fast charging available 1.5 miles up the road. In addition, contracts with maintenance / management / installation firms could make the installation prohibitive to the parish council. Further detail on running costs to be obtained to ensure the parish council make an informed cost-based decision.' Clerk (EB) to action.
- 20. TO CONSIDER POSSIBLE NAMING OF THE COMMUNITY HUB SITE**
- 20.1. Various names were put forward and discussed at the meeting. Sarah Dhesi proposed (seconded by Paul C-B) the community hub is called Blofield Park. The Council resolved to approve this name. Many significant parish names were discussed with associations with the village / school. It was agreed that these would be used to name various aspects of the building such as the café / hall / rooms to hire. This detail will be discussed at a later date.
- 21. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE COURTHOUSE GUTTERING AND REPOINTING REPAIRS AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS**
- 21.1. The Council have appointed the agreed contractor and are awaiting confirmation of a start date. The Management Committee understand that the walls will be left bare for a significant period of time to allow them to dry out.
- 22. TO DISCUSS THE TRIM TRAIL FOR WYNGATES AREA 3 AND CONSIDER NEXT ACTIONS**
- 22.1. The S106 funds allocated to Wyngates area 3 of £13,066.80 require spending within the next year. Following detailed discussion, the Council resolved to ask Broadland District Council if it would be possible to use these funds to help install a trim trail on the new school site. Clerk (SO) to action.
- 23. TO APPROVE INVOICES FOR PAYMENT, NOTE COUNCIL FUNDS AND REVIEW INTERNAL MONTHLY CHECKS**
- 23.1. The Council reviewed payments #171 to #186 totalling £7,766.65 (Appendix A) and the Council unanimously resolved to approve the payments. In addition, the Council noted that further payments of the clerk March salaries (including overtime to be discussed at item 48) and other invoices including those related to the Shared Prosperity Funding from BDC will be paid before the end of March.
- 23.2. The Council noted a reconciliation at 4 February 2025 with a total bank balance of £1,127,450.14 (Appendix B). The Council also noted the monthly checks carried out by Sarah Dhesi.
- 24. TO NOTE HISTORICAL INVOICE FOR CULVERT WORK / EEL TILES AND APPROVE PAYMENT**
- 24.1. The Council noted this outstanding invoice of £2,214.37 + VAT recently issued by the company and this will be paid from Marty's Marsh reserves.
- 25. TO AGREE A DONATION TO BLOFIELD SCHOOL FOR WATER COSTS / CARETAKER TIME AND AGREE HERAS FENCING CHECKS (SO)**
- 25.1. Sarah Dhesi proposed (seconded by Stuart Smith) the Council give a donation to the school of £50 towards the water costs (used during the playground installation) and £200 towards caretaker costs for the extra work carried out inspecting the play area and Heras fencing. The Council resolved to approve this proposal.
- 26. TO NOTE APPOINTMENT OF FMG CONSULTING FOR COST OF £1,000 TO OBTAIN RUNNING COSTS OF A PRESCHOOL / COMMUNITY HUB SPACE**
- 26.1. The Council noted the appointment of FMG Consulting at the reduced cost of £1,000 negotiated by Eleanor Bannister. The report will be available shortly.

27. TO CONSIDER MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL WITH NALC OR NPTS

- 27.1. The Council unanimously resolved to move their membership to NPTS for 2025/26.

28. TO CONSIDER A SMALL GRANTS FUNDING REQUEST FROM EAST ANGLIAN AIR AMBULANCE

- 28.1. Joseph Scholes proposed (seconded by Stuart Smith) the Council make a donation of £100 to the East Anglian Air Ambulance. Clerk (SO) to action.

29. TO AGREE A MEETING WITH COUNTY COUNCILLOR ANDREW PROCTOR TO SHARE THE COMMUNITY HUB AND PRESCHOOL PLANS TO DATE AND UNDERSTAND IF THERE IS ANY FUNDING AVAILABLE

- 29.1. The Council agreed to delay this item until April.

30. TO CONSIDER AN AWARDS FOR ALL NATIONAL LOTTERY GRANT TOWARDS THE COMMUNITY HUB

- 30.1. The Council had a brief discussion and agreed to work towards the Greater Norwich Growth Board funding initially and then consider a larger sized National Lottery grant at a later date.

31. TO NOTE RECEIPT OF A PARISH PARTNERSHIP 2025/26 AWARD FOR 50% FUNDING (UP TO £4,285.50) TOWARDS THE ENTRANCE TO THE NEW COMMUNITY HUB SITE

- 31.1. The Council noted the successful funding grant of £4,285.50 towards the entrance of the new community hub. In addition, Cllr. Andrew Proctor has given a £1,000 grant from his members fund towards this project. The Council also has a grant of £2,500 of Parish Partnership 2024/25 funding for the kerb creation on this site.

32. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE REVE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION / BLOFIELD RELIEF-IN-NEED CHARITY

- 32.1. The secretary of the Reve Educational Foundation/Blofield Relief-in-Need Charity has updated the Council with the following changes:

- 32.2. The secretary, Debbie Smith and the Treasurer of the above two charities have decided to stand down. In June it will be necessary for new Trustees to be elected and the appropriate forms signed for a further 3-year term of office. Under the terms of the constitution, our posts were nominated by the Churchwardens of Blofield Church and new Trustees have therefore, been sought from the Church Committee. The new Secretary will be Rosemary Youngs and the Treasurer, Martin Tyrer. The necessary paperwork to deal with this change has commenced and Yvonne Burton and Joseph Scholes as representatives from the Parish Council are aware of the situation and are happy to continue. The handover will take place at our meeting on Monday 9th June 2025.

33. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE BLOFIELD ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION / PARISH COUNCIL QUARTERLY MEETING AND AGREE NECESSARY ACTIONS

- 33.1. The quarterly meeting and inspection took place today, a couple of plots require some attention. Key points to note:

- An AGM is being considered but date to be confirmed.
- The chicken shed and chickens have gone.
- Hedge legislation means that cutting cannot take place between 1 March and 31 August – the lease will be adjusted accordingly.
- There are 2 half plots available which will be advertised on Facebook etc.
- There are plans to have an onsite meeting with Galliford Try regarding a wind break.

- 33.2. The Council resolved to reduce the inspections / meetings to 6 monthly.

34. TO CONSIDER A FURTHER ASBESTOS REVIEW AT BLOFIELD COURTHOUSE

- 34.1. To be reviewed at a later date.

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

- 35.1. Yvonne Burton advised the Council that chippings had been received and spread on the paths. Yvonne will be meeting with Garden Guardian to discuss the required cutting for the summer season. On 14th June 2025 a joint orchid open day is planned at Marty's Marsh and Cremers Meadow.

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

36. TO DISCUSS THE TIDYING OF PROW FP4 PARALLEL TO THE A47

- 36.1. The Council resolved to get a quotation from Garden Guardian to tidy this footpath. Yvonne Burton agreed to meet the contractor to discuss the detail.

37. TO DISCUSS A REPAIR TO THE STREET BLOFIELD BRICK BUS SHELTER ROOF

- 37.1. Stuart Smith agreed to further investigate and hopefully repair.

38. TO NOTE AND DISCUSS THE GATE ADDED TO THE BOUNDARY OF THE SCHOOL FENCING ONTO WYNGATES AREA 3 LAND

- 38.1. The Council has been advised by NCC Children's Services that the gate added to the school boundary is for maintenance only.
- 38.2. Some tree guards have been pulled / knocked off the trees, this needs checking and seeing if replacements are required. Clerk (EB) to contact the tree wardens to investigate and advise.
- 38.3. The Council agreed to consider a name for the 'Wyngates Area 3' site at the next meeting.
- 38.4. There is a hole that has appeared on site and a gathering of wooden / corrugated items. Clerk (EB) to obtain a quote to tidy and remove these items.
- 38.5. Clerk (EB) to contact BDC to discuss if suitable signage should be added to the site to deter unwanted behaviour and advise parishioners of the purpose of the land, and advise that it is undergoing development with delicate young trees and bulbs.

39. TO CONSIDER LOCATIONS FOR 3 OAK TREES SAPLINGS IN THE PARISH

- 39.1. Yvonne Burton agreed to liaise with the tree wardens and return to the Council with a proposal.

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

- 40.1. Yvonne Burton advised the Council that the committee are revising their constitution and bringing it up to date.

41. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE COURTHOUSE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- 41.1. The Courthouse Management Committee now has a new treasurer.

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

- 42.1. Sarah Dhesi reported that a meeting is taking place on Thursday 27th March for potential new trustees to find out more. Sarah Dhesi will attend as a council representative. Their AGM is on 15th May 2025 and it is essential they find new trustees before then.

43. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE LA CLUSTER MEETING & NOTE THE NEXT MEETING DATE

- 43.1. Joseph Scholes provided a summary from the meeting. The next meeting will take place in June and Blofield will host.

44. TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

- 44.1. Waterlogged flooding images on Wyngates 3 - BDC has visited Wyngates 3 and were surprised how dry the land was despite the recent rains and the amount of water on the school side. They reported that, 'in relation to the bund, despite the drainage works its height is level with the undisturbed areas. It should be remembered that the bund would not contain any significant flood as there are natural breaks for the footpath and gates. At this time, they don't believe any extra works are required on the part adjacent to Farman Way.'
- 44.2. There is a government initiated consultation, seeking views on a proposal to form a Mayoral Combined County Authority for the local government areas of Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council. The consultation is open until 13 April 2025 at midnight to make a response.
- 44.3. Wix charges will increase this year from £108 to £129.60.
- 44.4. Parishioners have experienced some issues with the Saturday buses stopping at Blofield Heath bus stop opposite the Tamarind. This has been reported to the bus company for investigation.
- 44.5. Some VE Day community funding has been provided for the parish.

45. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

45.1. All items discussed in the meeting.

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

46.1. Monday 28th April 2025 at 7:30pm at Blofield Courthouse.

47. 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

47.1. The Council resolved to pass this resolution, and all parishioners left the meeting.

48. TO DISCUSS THE CLERKS ANNUAL REVIEW

48.1. The Chair conducted the Clerks Annual review in March 2025 and reported that both Clerks were comfortable in their roles even though currently they are both over stretched with the involvement and time spent on current major projects. The consequence of extra working hours expended over and above contract hours will be addressed in the main within this financial year and more frequent monitoring will be put in place to track the hours being spent, both from a financial and wellbeing point of view. The Council approved this action.

The Chair also requested that all Councillors who would be willing, and feel able, take on responsibility for some of the smaller and routine activities and projects in order to release the Clerks' time for the more major and complex projects / issues going forward.

As it was agreed that both Clerks had performed above and beyond in the past year the Chair had no hesitation in proposing and it was agreed by the Council, that both Clerks receive a one increment rise effective from April 2025. These increases are built into the budget for 2025/26.

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

Signed.....

Dated.....