



# Blofield Parish Council

Chair – Stuart Smith Clerk to the Council – Sarah Osbaldeston and Eleanor Bannister  
e-mail: [blofieldpc@gmail.com](mailto:blofieldpc@gmail.com)



## Blofield and Blofield Heath Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Blofield and Blofield Heath, held at Blofield Courthouse on Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 at 7:30pm

### PRESENT

Stuart Smith (chair) and the clerk, Sarah Osbaldeston presided.

Blofield Parish Councillors present – Stella Shackle, Stuart Smith, Paul Culley-Barber, Sarah Dhesi, Yvonne Burton Joseph Scholes.

#### 1. WELCOME

Stuart Smith, Chair of the council welcomed everyone.

#### 2. TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 12<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2020

These were approved by all present and duly signed by the Chair. A bundle of reports were produced for 2021 as the Annual Parish Meeting could not take place last year due to COVID 19.

#### 3. CHAIRMAN / COUNCIL'S REPORT (prepared and presented by Stuart Smith)

The past year has continued to be both difficult and frustrating due to the pandemic and lack of movement on certain things. The Council has returned to meeting physically, albeit attempting to reduce the frequency to once a month, and to hold virtual meetings with other key authorities we have to deal with at their request.

Sadly, the Parish continues to see an increase in vandalism, speeding and traffic through the village. The Council is continuing to work with Norfolk Constabulary and Norfolk County Council Highways on these issues to raise awareness and seek support. Unfortunately due to lack of volunteers, the Community Speedwatch team has had to be disbanded and the equipment returned to the Police due to lack of use.

Whilst we do what we can, we are unfortunately reliant on other authorities to assist in mitigating these issues.

The Council has, and will continue to support, the Brundall and Blofield Good Neighbours team to assist with deliveries of essential items and transport to and from medical appointments in these times when a few people have continued to shield and are at risk. We thank the team for their efforts during these difficult times.

The Council remains with 4 vacant seats with some interest shown during the year but no takers to date. This continues to remain an ongoing concern in order for the Council to function effectively.

#### Planning

The Council has seen a reduction in planning applications during the year being in the main limited to residential extensions and conditions associated with already approved major developments. Certain developments continue to cause concern with the Council, particularly in Blofield Heath and especially in relation to the risk of increased flooding caused by new development. The Council attempts to represent existing resident's concerns by commenting



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strongly on applications and at Planning Committee, where possible, with Broadland District Council Planning who are ultimately the deciding authority.

## Finance

The Council has held the precept this year by prudent budgeting and management.

The Council continues to financially support, amongst other smaller items:

- The community land at Marty's Marsh
- Maintenance of the churchyard at St. Andrew & St. Peter
- Continuing maintenance of the various green spaces through the Parish, for which we have accepted responsibility
- The Courthouse, a listed building and owned by the Parish

## Projects

### Village Gateways

The Council are sad to report that minor adjustments to the village gateways are still outstanding and the Council is continuing to work with Highways Norfolk on this and other matters that still require attention. In discussions with other local Parish Councils we are not alone in this and it is probably reflective of cost reduction exercises at County Council level.

### Marty's Marsh

Volunteer work parties have continued throughout the pandemic, where possible, to maintain and enhance the land. The Council anticipates significant expenditure this year on further repairs to the culvert and river bank at the entrance from Brundall Road.

New volunteers are always welcome to support this area.

Talks are in progress with Brundall Parish Council regarding the possibility of a bridge linking Marty's Marsh to Cremer's Meadow and work will continue to explore this possibility.

A formal opening took place in July 2021 with the presentation of a bench donated by our local district councillor Justine Thomas. Further funding has been received from Cllr. Thomas for a second bench to be positioned sometime in the near future.

### A47

National Highways, as they are now called, have progressed with plans for the dualling works of the A47 from Acle to North Burlingham and have submitted the Development Consent Order to the government for final approval. We await the final decision.

As a consequence of these planned works the Council are actively pursuing various funding options available from National Highways to support local projects, primarily for the funding of new play equipment across the Parish, but we are as yet to hear whether these have been successful and indeed it will likely be sometime before the outcome is known.

### Community Project

The Council's decision still stands to retain the significant CIL monies to be spent on the site to be acquired as part of the transfer of lands as a consequence of the plans for a new school in the village.

Unfortunately, the land transfer and final decision on a new school have continued to be increasingly protracted delaying any final and definite planning, but we hope for some closure



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and clear direction in 2022 (last year I said 2021 !!) not least to ease the current and increasing pressure for spaces at the school. The Council remains in regular contact with Norfolk County Council Children's Services and the local school on these developments.

You will have seen the temporary road adjacent to Blofield Surgery constructed recently with pressure from both the Surgery and the Council on NCC. This road now enables the expansion plans for the practice which we expect to start soon, but unfortunately have no further information or dates at this present time.

## Country Park

In 2020 a developer (now Hopkins Homes) received planning approval to build 170 new homes on the land to the East of The Memorial Hall in Brundall Parish. While the houses are in Brundall, the plans also see the creation of a new country park along the Witton Run which is in Blofield, as well as a village green in Brundall.

The Witton Run land is 17 acres of land within the development site which lies within Blofield Parish. It is an area of low meadow land and rough mixed habitat with a ditch running the length of the area that is prone to flooding. It will separate the new development from the golf course with the Witton Run being the northern boundary of the site. It connects to a public footpath in the west and Brundall Road/Blofield Road in the east, just opposite the entrances to Marty's Marsh and Cremer's Meadow

Part of the offer from Hopkins Homes is to financially support the transformation of the open green space along the Witton Run into a country park. Blofield Parish Council and Brundall Parish Council have agreed to work in partnership on the development of this Country Park. The developer will be providing financial support for the initial establishment and maintenance.

Just to set realistic expectations, it is unlikely that monies from the developer or work on the design will commence much before the end of 2023.

Blofield Parish Council will shortly be publishing an online questionnaire for Parishioners' input.

## Newsletter

In order to enhance communication the Council has, over the last year, introduced our own newsletter to inform on various matters. It has been decided to make this newsletter easily available through our digital platforms – our website and facebook page, with limited printed copies available throughout the two villages at various locations to pick up.

Details of how to access the questionnaire in relation to the Country Park are detailed in the latest edition.

## Acknowledgements

Our District Councillors, Nigel Brennan and Justine Thomas continue to be supportive. Our County Councillor and Leader of NCC, Andrew Proctor, is still very helpful and supportive also.

I would also like to say thank you to the parish councillors who have been able to work on projects and issues over the year. Without their efforts things couldn't happen.



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During the year our previous Assistant Clerk, Melanie Eversfield, resigned, but we have been fortunate in recruiting a new Clerk, Eleanor Bannister, and welcome her to our fold.

So last – but not least – a big thank you to our two Clerks who do an awful lot and do it to a high standard. We are fortunate to have such a good team.

## Conclusion

It would be good to have a full complement of councillors, so anybody who wants to help make the village an even better place to live, help decide how the council spends up to £750,000 of CIL over the next few years, or just thinks they can help us do a better job, they should seek co-option onto the Council.

## 4. BLOFIELD COURT HOUSE REPORT (prepared by Mike Coley, read by Sarah Osbaldeston)

Firstly I would like to record my thanks to the Management Committee who have given many unrecognised voluntary hours to keep the hall in operational state and look after the users and provide a service to the Parish.

Covid continued to dictate restrictions on the use of the hall through 2021 until September/October when we started to allow users back in, with a degree of normality.

However as soon as we could we welcomed back our users with continued reduction in any restrictions. Over the last six months we have almost seen a return to normal activity.

Unfortunately we have lost some of our regular users but gained some new ones. Notably the Blofield Pensioners Group has not returned, we believe primarily due to concerns left from the pandemic within the senior citizens in our village.

We have recruited a new bookings officer in Dez Bruce. Dez has taken over from Hayley as her new job eliminated her available time to manage the bookings for us. Robin Bunce declared in January that he wishes to stand down from his role as Treasurer at our AGM in June. We have advertised for a replacement to this role via social media and local newsletters, but unfortunately no interest to date. Robin has held this position in the committee for 15 years and also provides a greater service to the management of the hall by regular checks and dealing with contractors attending to our services. I would ask for support from the Parish Council to find a replacement to this important function within the Committee.

As mentioned earlier most of our regular customers have returned to full operation and use of the hall. New regular users include two different Yoga classes operating for three sessions per week, 'Chocolate Pot' a decorative chocolate class is meeting twice a month on a Saturday. Village Screen resumed in December and continues to be well supported, all be it the last show in March was our lowest audience numbers. Jazz evenings are resuming in April and again retain their regular audience.

The Committee members remain focused on the task of managing the hall on behalf of the Parish and more ideas are being considered to attract more users, both regular and one off hires.

Ongoing projects are to replace windows in Judges Room and one of the toilets. Thank you to Eleanor for her assistance and involvement in the dealings with Broadland Planning application.

Repointing work is expected to start soon as a summer long project. The Committee would like to resurrect the project to redesign/resurface the car park area and entrance way.

The financial status remains healthy, despite the pandemic, thanks mainly to the grants offered by Broadland DC/Government.

## 5. HEATHLANDS COMMUNITY CENTRE REPORT (DELIVERED BY CLAIRE NORTON)

In March last year, England began a phased exit from lock down, but it wasn't until September last year that we entered the Government's Phase 4, relaxing all restrictions. Since then Heathlands has begun a slow recovery with the future now beginning to look much brighter.



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However, there has been some really bad times. The Social club lost two members who both died, so tragically and so suddenly. Apart from being dearly loved family men they were both dedicated supporters and will be missed terribly by all of us at Heathlands.

As you may be aware Heathlands has over 50 trees within it's boundary, apart from the Oak's beside the road there are many trees, including groups along the north boundary in the Forest School. The Survey carried out reported that much work was needed, many branches had to be removed and trees topped etc. etc., at a total cost of £2800. Of course, these will be a constant problem we have to deal with in the future.

The good news is, that with the help of the Parish Council, and a small grant from NCC, we can now replace all of the very tired and worn out Under 6's play equipment and also provide a new SeeSaw for the older children., the total cost is just under £30,000. Unfortunately we will have to wait until about July before work can start, but it will be an exciting event which is well overdue. Nippy Chippy still comes to Heathlands every Friday, which we feel is a great attraction for the village. The Social Club benefits too, especially in the warmer weather when families can sit outside with a pint enjoying their fish and chips. Many of the hirers are coming back, including the Monday Club, Badminton, Short mat bowls etc.. Pre-School fought it's way through the pandemic and I am sure Fiona is hopefully not quite so stressed.

Bingo, Jack & Jill's Tea and Chat are also making a come back, as was the Christmas Fair and Jumble sale, which both proved very popular and well supported. The Village Lottery, which continued through the pandemic and has been taken over by Graham Rose, these are of course all part of the activities we have to do every year to raise money.

Our next biggest problem now will be the car park. Apart from over use by the weekend footballers, the car park is used by a great many people, not necessarily related to Heathlands either and gradually the surface has pot holes which are getting bigger all the time. We are beginning to research into this with a view to increasing the size, but it's early days, so more to report later.

Dog litter bins continue to be a problem, due to the huge increase in ownership throughout the pandemic and we are desperate to have more bins to cope with a messy situation. The twice weekly emptying has worked over the past 2 weeks, so hopefully this will continue.

I have to say another thank you to the Parish Council for clearing the pond and we really would like the dead tree in Blofield Corner road chopped down. With all the new smart houses around, it is looking rather an eyesore.

In conclusion, whilst we are very grateful for all the money we receive from the Parish Council, costs have risen and it now costs nearly £70,000 every year just to run Heathlands. That is a huge amount of money and it is only through the hard work and effort everybody makes that this facility can remain open every day, for the benefit of everyone.

We would like to think that the Harker family would be proud.

## **6. MARGARET HARKER HALL REPORT (delivered by Julian Rudd)**

This last year has been good for the Margaret Harker Hall and we have seen an improvement of our hall users from April of last year and then by September most of our groups have been back and apart from a reduction in bookings we don't think the hall has been hugely effected. Another good thing is we have had several face to face meetings and have not had to resort to zoom meetings at all this last year. I myself have had a bad year health wise and must thank all the trustees and committee members for their understanding and in keeping things going.

On the bookings side, we are slowly getting back to normal with our usual groups taking up their times and places through every week. Unfortunately for us one of our long standing trustees Margaret who was our bookings secretary and has been with the hall for many years is moving out of the area so has had to give up the position, Margaret is and was one of our outstanding members and took on a lot of work for the Hall she will be missed greatly and I would wish her the very best in her new home.





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We have had some new members join us who we met last week and we already have a replacement for our booking secretary though we are still looking for more villagers not only from Blofield but from surrounding areas as well to volunteer and come forward to help with the running of the Margaret Harker Hall, we are only just beginning to see just exactly how much work Margaret did and more members are needed to help run the hall.

As we all know during the Covid times many have taken a bit of a loss financially but as usual we will be looking for funding and grants to help bring up the building and play areas to our usual high standards. This is one of the areas we are looking for help with, so any new members with experience of funding and grants will be very helpful, we are also looking for members to help in other areas as well and we will also be looking at some training in other skills too.

Looking forward we really hope that the Scouts, Tennis Club, football Club and all the hall users can get back to their usual activities as planned and continue to prosper as before and with the continued support from the Parish Council and the growth of the village and all the new families, we can once again prosper and be the greatest asset not only to Blofield but also the surrounding areas as well as making our village a better place to live.

Again I would like to thank all of our trustees and committee members and look forward to support from our villagers and people from surrounding areas and of course the Parish Council for this coming year.

## **7. BLOFIELD ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION REPORT (written by Max Stephenson, read by Sarah Osbaldeston)**

There are currently 50 allotment plots of different sizes on our site. As at 31 March 2022, all the allotments are let, and there is a waiting list of two people. In addition, an area equivalent to just under four full plots has been put aside for use by National Highways for the proposed A47 project and associated works. Once this has been completed, it is expected that some of this land will be returned to the BAA for use as allotments.

- During the year April 2020 to March 2021, ten changes of tenancy took place and at the year end three plots were vacant.
- During the year April 2021 to March 2022, twelve changes of tenancy took place, and there are currently no vacant plots.
- When vacancies do arise and there is nobody on the waiting list, an advertisement is placed in Focal Point.
- Several working parties comprised of volunteer plot holders took place over the two year period, carrying out tasks such as hedge cutting, grass cutting and strimming, repairs to the car park and general tidying up of common areas on the site. Overall, the allotment site is well maintained.
- The Parish Council set up a new pest control contact for the BAA in December 2020. A considerable reduction in the previous rat and mouse infestations has been noted, and the BAA are very grateful for this change. The new contractor provides regular feedback to the Parish Council and the BAA. They respond quickly if problems are reported.
- There have been a number of meetings with National Highways. The Parish Council and BAA have been working together to try to minimise the adverse effect that the proposed A47 works will have on the allotment site. As a result of these negotiations, a number of positive changes have been secured, including re-routing the diversion of the gas main, so that it will now run under the new allotment car park rather than across the centre of the allotments. National Highways have also agreed to provide an upgraded car park with perimeter fencing and gates, as well as some replacement mature trees along the boundary with the road. In addition, the amount of allotment land they were proposing to take for the project has been very substantially reduced.
- In Spring 2022, The Parish Council very kindly agreed to let the BAA use a half allotment plot free of rent, to create a new social area for all plot holders. The BAA has done some



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preliminary work on this plot already (levelling and planting of perimeter flowering shrubs), and is planning to fence the area, and erect a wooden shed/summerhouse, which will have a table and chairs inside. There will also be an outdoor table with seating, and allotment holders will be encouraged to help develop and maintain the plot. Once up and running, it is hoped that we will be able to provide some basic training e.g. in “no dig” growing techniques and fruit tree grafting.

## 8. FOOTPATH WARDEN REPORT (written by Yvonne Burton/Tricia Dolamore)

Generally the footpaths are easily walked at this time of year as vegetation growth has not started to be a problem. However it is anticipated that some paths will become over grown with nettles, brambles etc. during spring and summer.

Issues encountered can be reported to the PC and will be assessed and dealt with or passed on to Norfolk CC Highways for action if necessary.

The Annual walking of the Parish Footpaths will take place over the summer in both Blofield Heath and Blofield.

Notices inviting parishioners to join the walks have been placed in June's Focal Point, Blofield News, the PC website and PC Newsletter.

### Blofield Heath

**FP1** is the cross field path between Pedham Road and Bonds Road, which is in good condition and well used and is always marked and reinstated after any field work.

**FP2** Path at the edge of field between Blofield Corner Road and Hall Road. Last summer's undergrowth has been cut back and the path is now clear and being regularly used. The nettles and brambles will be regrowing, which last year forced walkers on to the edge of the field.

### Blofield.

**FP3** This path goes from Shack Lane to Holly Lane.

From the Shack Lane end the foot path sign indicates the original driveway to Woodlands Manor (Red House), but the path created alongside the fence is clear and walkable. The path has been cleared by new occupant of Woodlands Manor, but nettles and brambles may grow up. An opening in the hedge leads into the field, which has been recently sown and there is no indication of the path direction to Holly Lane.

From Holly Lane the sign points across the field but the footpath has not been reinstated or marked in any way. When reaching Woodlands Manor, the gap in the hedge which take walkers round the property and back onto Shack Lane is not obvious and therefore difficult to find.

The continuation of Footpath FP3 across Shack Lane and up the steps is passable but again will be overgrown soon. This section of the footpath does appear to be occasionally walked.

**FP4** which runs along the embankment parallel to the A47 and then turns right towards the Loke, has been cut back and is clear at present. The section that slopes down towards the bypass is a problem when it is muddy and can be slippery in places. The path is bound to become overgrown with vegetation, which forces walkers further towards the road.

This has been reported to NCC, stressing that there is no fencing to shield walkers from the slope. This may be resolved with the development of the new school and Doctor's Surgery.

**FP4a** is a continuation of FP4 North of the A47, but there is no access to cross the A47, so this path is a dead end. The path is clearly signed across the field, which has been sown and not trampled indicating it is never used. NCC says it is too dangerous to cross the A47 on foot and the PC agrees.

**FPs 5&7** went across what is now the Hopkins Homes Site. Access is from West View and Yarmouth Road – Various tarmac paths cross the site approximately where the old paths went. The path is closed where building is taking place where the path would meet the A47.





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The issue of the stile access to cross the A47, which is adjacent to a children's playground is unresolved. However the Parish Council is in conversation with Norfolk Highways, PROW Officer and Hopkins Homes to try and get the edge of the site fenced, the footpath closed where it crosses the A47 and redirected towards Globe Lane and the existing path parallel to the A47. There is also access into the Hopkins Homes development from Globe Court on Globe Lane. **FP8** parallel to Garden Road is clear and has recently been trimmed /mown. However it is little used, partly because the FP sign from the Street in Blofield is not easily visible. Access is from the shingle area in front of the dwelling opposite the bus stop near the Shops on The Street and from Globe Lane.



We should encourage walkers to use this footpath, to help keep it clear by. The Parish Council has it mown twice a year.

**BOAT11** (Byway Open to All Traffic) which leads from the end of Pound Lane to Lingwood Road is clear but can have a large puddle at the Lingwood Road end.

**FP10&12** which goes from The Street, then beside Blofield Church to Braydeston Church is very well used. FP12 has been improved this year by a successful Parish Partnership Bid with NCC. The surface has been vastly improved and is now easy to walk even in wet weather. There is also access to Marty's Marsh (Blofield's Community Open Space and Wildlife Conservation area) from the path.



Marty's Marsh in Winter



Marty's Marsh in Summer

## 9. KEEP BLOFIELD SPECIAL REPORT (written by Peter Mackness, read by Sarah Osbaldeston)





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Keep Blofield Special is a small group of volunteers who undertake litter picking for an hour or so on the first and second Mondays of each month in our two villages. An average of seven people participate..

We have experienced a second year of the Covid pandemic however, with care, we have been able to continue the litter-picking around the two villages. The usual “hot spots” continue to generate litter which is mainly take-away food packaging and drink cans. It is “low-level litter” and picking it up regularly hopefully discourages further littering. We have used the online Broadland Fly tipping Report Form a few times to report items that are too large for us and Broadlands’ response has been excellent.

During 2021 we undertook a light sanding and application of wood preservative to the bench at the junction of Mill Road/Pedham Road but advised the Parish Council that the bench at the junction of Mill Road and Mill Close had some decay and required professional attention. If it is acceptable to the PC, KBS is happy to continue this minor maintenance in 2022 as required.

The bank between the Library and Blofield School which was prepared and planted by KBS a few years ago continues to provide colour through the seasons.

The Spring daffodils donated several years ago and planted at the various entrances to the villages continue to bloom and add to the pleasant aspect of Blofield and Blofield Heath.

KBS is pleased to help keep our two villages looking attractive and always welcomes suggestions and new members. It is a very informal group of people and can be contacted via the Parish Clerk. KBS are not alone in collecting litter and we would like to thank others who also regularly collect litter around the village.

## **10. TREE WARDENS REPORT (written by Richard Codling and David Pilch, read by Sarah Osbaldeston)**

Blofield parish has two tree wardens, they are David Pilch and Richard Codling. They are members of the Broadland Tree Warden Network (BTWN) which provides training and funding for tree planting via Broadland district council.

As tree wardens we keep a keen eye on any applications for tree work on TPO trees. We receive monthly updates on these tree works from John Fleetwood who is the Broadland tree warden network coordinator.

David has recently planted a commemorative The Queen's Platinum Jubilee oak tree near the west entrance to Marty's Marsh. Richard will water the tree regularly throughout the growing season to ensure its establishment. The 2.5m container grown oak was supplied with stake and deer guard through the tree warden network which offered a similar tree to all Broadland parishes supporting the BTWN.

Last year we reported on the “Blofield Russet” apple variety that was registered with the RHS as a local cultivar. For the very first time Richard was successful in grafting 5 trees onto M25 rootstocks (standard). These trees in time will grow up to 8 metres tall so if anyone knows of a suitable location where these could be planted please get in touch.

During 2021 it has been challenging with the various covid restrictions not knowing if we could meet up and be safe, fingers crossed we can meet up this coming year with other Broadland tree wardens and share our ideas and aspirations for the trees in our parish.

## **11. BLOFIELD ORCHARD CONSERVATION GROUP (WRITTEN BY RICHARD CODLING, READ BY SARAH OSBALDESTON)**



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This year the project celebrates its 8 year and continues to go from strength to strength and despite covid the fruit trees continue to blossom and bear fruit.

2021 saw a marked improvement in tree growth and subsequent yield of fruit, this was probably as a result of regular rainfall throughout the growing season.

Due to covid restrictions and some of our volunteers health concerns we were unable to host any public events at the orchard however during the autumn we ran a successful apple stall at the Strumpshaw shoulder of Mutton apple day event. The sale of heritage varieties was nearly enough to pay our ground rent. Contacts were made with a group looking to set up a community orchard in Strumpshaw.

Hopefully this coming year we can organise some public events and show how we've made progress over the last 8 years.

Another important aspect of the orchard is wildlife habitat and we manage the ley by plug planting wildflowers for the benefit of butterflies and bees. Then in the autumn the ley is scythed by hand and cleared to reduce the nitrogen levels to make it more wildflower friendly.

During 2021 and looking forward we have a working party every Tuesday from 10 until midday. This is a great way to do some manual work with likeminded people and experience the orchard as it moves through its yearly cycle from winter dormancy to blossom and then a fruitful harvest. Everyone is welcome and tea is always provided. No need to book just turn up. The orchard is located through the allotment site near Norwich Camping.

## **12. BLOFIELD FUEL CHARITY REPORT (written and read by Sarah Russen)**

For the people who are not aware of this Charity, it was set up in the 1800's for the Poor and Needy of the villages of Blofield and Blofield Heath. It was originally for a bag of coal at Christmas, but now things have changed it is put towards the applicants fuel bills, as we now have gas and oil in the villages.

The land consists of approx. 27 acres, which is leased to two farmers, who pay a twice yearly rent and the Eastern Power Network plc, who have pylons going across the land. This is where our main income comes from.

The Charity is made up of 5 Trustees, who are appointed by the Parish Council, and a clerk, who helps administer the income.

The Charity stipulates that the applicants are over 65 years of age and have lived in the village for more than 7 years.

The applicants apply to the Charity in October of each year, by getting an application form from the local shops. The number of applicants is discussed in a Trustees meeting, who meet twice yearly, and is distributed to the applicants. The money is divided into two parts, one for single person and one for a couple. This is depending on how much money we hold at the time.

This year has been good financially and the Trustees were able to give £70.00 to a single person and £66.00 to a couple (there were a total of 42 applicants this year as against 45 last year.) We are expecting that next year there will be an increase of applications due to the increase of fuel.

This year the money was gratefully received by some of the applicants.

The Trustees would like to say `` thank you `` to the Parish Council for their continued support for this Charity.

This brings me to the end of my report for 2021-2022.

## **13. BLOFIELD RELIEF IN NEED CHARITY / REVE EDUCATION FOUNDATION REPORT (written and read by Kevin Bilson)**



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Rev. Kevin Bilson advised that the relief in need charity made a grant of £250 in the year 2021/22.

Rev. Kevin Bilson advised that the Reve Education Foundation charity made a grant of £250 in the year 2021/22.

## **14. BLOFIELD CHURCH REPORT (written and read by Kevin Bilson)**

Rev. Kevin Bilson provided a brief verbal report on the year of the church.

## **15. SPEED WATCH REPORT (Paul Culley-Barber)**

Unfortunately, due to a lack of volunteers speed watch in the parish has been disbanded.

## **16. DISTRICT COUNCILOR'S REPORT (written by Cllr Justine Thomas and read by Sarah Osbaldeston)**

The year 2021-2022 has still been a difficult one for many. Covid continues to have an impact in our community and many of us have either lost someone to covid or know someone who has. The impact on people's Mental Health and Wellbeing due to covid should not be underestimated, and I'm pleased that Broadland was able to launch a new service launched over the summer 2021 for young people and children in South Norfolk. It offered up to 20 hours of personalised support to young people aged 5-25 years.

We have all seen the impact on local businesses and also on public services. Officers at Broadland District Council have done a wonderful job of administering Covid grant funding for businesses, ensuring it reached the intended recipients as fast as possible. Residents are facing rising inflation, food and fuel prices so I was very pleased to have been able to vote in February 2022 to agree to freeze Council Tax for the coming year. The result of the Council's decision is that a band D property remains at £129.91, among the lowest Council Tax levels in Norfolk. The Council leads the Norfolk Warm Homes Partnership which provides heating and insulation grants to help people keep warm in winter. The Council also led a successful bid for £3.85 million in government funding to provide energy efficiency improvements for people living in low-income households across Norfolk.

There is a new digital engagement service to help residents keep on top of their Council Tax payments. It means Council Tax payers who fall into arrears will now be sent a text, email or voice message reminder before taking further recovery action. It is all about making it as convenient as possible for residents to pay for services that we provide, and to help prevent customers from falling further into arrears.

The council was able to extend the geographical reach and opening hours of "The Help Hub", which offers practical help, advice and guidance via its "Community Connectors". They can put residents in touch with activities and groups where they live, or support people to start their own project, group or event. They are to help residents are available to help with any issues that may be causing residents concern and they really do a fantastic job.

On a personal note the last year has been difficult for me to get to Parish meetings in person due to work commitments in other time zones. However, I have kept up to date by reading minutes of meetings and am always ready to make myself available if residents need me. I am actively involved in the Council and I am a member of; the Appeals Panel, Place Shaping Policy Panel, Licensing & Regulatory Committee. I chair the Service Improvement & Efficiency Committee, which has been involved in a number of transformation projects such as IT infrastructure changes and the accommodation review in relation to a potential move of the One Team" to the Horizon Building, Broadland Business Park. That committee was also involved in the work relating to the new Customer Charter, launched in October 2021, which sets out the service that residents can expect to receive and outlines the councils' dedication to delivering exceptional customer service. Across the Parishes I serve, the most frequent issues I have assisted with are of planning and dog mess, however there is other work to undertake for example I have also been helping a resident promote an interesting recycling project to the Council.





# Blofield Parish Council

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Flooding in Blofield remains a contentious issue and I think that Blofield Parish Council is worthy of raise for the proactive approach it has taken on behalf of residents.

I was delighted to have been asked to attend the Broadland Community at Heart Awards held on 15 October 2021. The awards recognise and celebrate the outstanding achievements of residents from across Broadland who go above and beyond to support others or complete incredible achievements.

I was so pleased that Marcus Pearcey from Blofield Farm Shop won the award for Business Community Support of the Year. At the Broadland and South Norfolk Business Awards, another Blofield Based business, SNAP, won the award for business resilience. I am sure we are all proud to have these and other thriving businesses in the Parish.

I was invited by the Parish Council to officially open Marty's Marsh, an outdoor community space in our Parish. I used my Member Funding to donate a bench to the site, which I am pleased to say I have seen in use on numerous occasions!

I'm very conscious that a good waste collection service is high on residents' agendas. Following a stringent procurement process Veolia was awarded a 10-year contract starting in April 2022 with the option for Broadland to extend for another 10 years. Veolia will use HVO fuel (hydrotreated vegetable oil) in all vehicles (apart from electric vehicles) thus reducing CO2 emissions from the waste vehicles by 90% a major contribution to our Environmental Strategy.

The latest recycling figures for our Council at 49% are the best in Norfolk. Other District and city figures range from 29.2% to 42.1%. I am sure I am not alone in the Parish in thinking that the new electrical, battery and textile service for residents will be most helpful. I am planning a clear out this weekend! There will also be a roll out of food waste collection across the District in October 2022.

In a further excellent environmental initiative launched last year, The Community Tree Planting scheme will help to improve public outdoor spaces for people and nature and forms part of our overall aim to plant one tree for every resident, as set out in their environmental strategy. Grant funding was available of up to £500 and is for the tree planting season November 2021 to March 2022.

The Council's Community at Heart lottery which has been in place for a year now has raised more than £46,500 for the local community. Friends of Hemblington Primary School have raised £598 at the last count. As we enter the second year it would be great to see more groups in Blofield benefiting, more information about the lottery can be found here <https://www.communityatheartlottery.com/>

It has been my pleasure to serve local residents in this last year and I look forward to providing you with more updates in the coming months.

## 17. COUNTY COUNCILOR'S REPORT (written by Andrew Proctor, highlights read by Sarah Osbaldeston)

### Norfolk County Council highlights for 2021/22

- [Helping the NHS deliver over 2 million Covid-19 Vaccination to over 12yr olds in Norfolk](#)
- [70% of Norfolk streetlights converted, or work underway to convert to LED](#)
- [Nearly 2,000 salt grit bins across the County for community use](#)
- [During past 5 years on average 18,000 tonnes of salt used on Norfolk's roads](#)
- [96.7% of highways inspections completed within timescale](#)
- [99.6% of dangerous highway defects dealt with within timescales set out in the](#)



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## Transport Asset Management Plan

- 94% of Looked after Children (LAC) with an up to date Personal Education Plan
- Completed 51,000 Adult Social Care Assessments for 20,700 people.
- Major infrastructure projects under way or being developed
- Co-ordinating work across the county to help Ukrainian refugees settle in Norfolk

In the same way as the whole county responded to Covid, work is ongoing to welcome our **new residents from Ukraine to Norfolk**. In a fast moving situation key responsibilities are about keeping people safe through DBS checks and checks on properties.

A **£464 million** net revenue budget for 2022/23 has been agreed, a **£25m increase** from last year, with increased spending across key service areas and capital programmes, along with a 2.99 per cent Council Tax rise was agreed to enable Norfolk to build back better after the pandemic. The overall capital and revenue spend is £1.45bn. **Adult Social Services** will see an additional **£35.4m** of investment, against savings of £10.5m, **Children's Services** will receive **£23.2m** of further investment, with a further **£10m** this year for the **SEND School Programme**, with £12m against planned savings and **Community and Environmental Services** will see an additional **£11.2m**, against savings of £3.5m. There is a new **£10m pothole fund** to draw upon, **new recycling centres** across the County, **£5m on library upkeep** and extension of services and **£12m on the Better Broadband project**.

The major financial challenge will come in 2023/24 which is why we are commissioning an organisational review to ensure we are as efficient and effective as we can be.

There has been substantial **Beryl Bikes and E-Scooters** uptake during the past year, with the average journey being over 3.5km (taking multiple car journeys out of the City) and multiple Local Cycling, Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPS) plans being developed across the County (including Greater Norwich, King's Lynn, Great Yarmouth and Dereham).

**In a major boost to Norfolk's ambitions to run a net zero transport system £3.2million in funding has been secured to introduce 15 electric buses to the network in Norwich.** The funding has been secured from Department for Transport (DfT) in a joint bid with First Bus for the 'Zero Emission Bus Regional Access' (ZEBRA) scheme. This bid is matched by £3.6m of local investment from First Bus and will deliver 15 battery electric buses which will be in operation by March 2024.

Norwich Western Link is a key **strategic infrastructure project** alongside the Long Stratton By Pass and the West Winch Housing Access Road demonstrating how we are working across the whole county. The Great Yarmouth Third River Cross is due for completion in 2024. Following analysis of the data obtained from our 2021 surveys re the **Western Link**, it was determined that there is a roost location used by a maternity colony of barbastelle bats (that has a significant level of environmental protection) near to part of the proposed road alignment. Work is currently being undertaken to assess, refine and develop the relevant length of the route alignment of the scheme and to assess and address the need for mitigation to minimise the impact of the scheme on the relevant area of woodland.



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Norfolk County Council and New Anglia LEP were part of an ambitious cross-border project which helped to deliver a **unique package of Covid-19 recovery support for local businesses and people**. The C-CARE (Covid Channel Area Response Exchange) initiative, funded by the Interreg France (Channel) England programme which has allocated €2.2m for C-CARE in Norfolk, was set to reach businesses and people that were been hit hardest in the pandemic. In Norfolk the project will work to support over 600 people into employment or self-employment and provide support for up to 800 businesses.

As the national Great British Spring Clean launched on Friday 28 May 2021, there was good news for litter pickers as the county council announces that it was able to accept litter at any of Norfolk's recycling centres. People can now bring up to three bags of the waste to a recycling centre for disposal as part of **Love Norfolk, Hate Litter**.

A new service to support some of Norfolk's most vulnerable young people to live within families and achieve their full potential called **New Roads** launched on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2021. It was set up by Norfolk County Council with significant investment to give young people access to a dedicated support team that sticks with them, understands them, and helps them to achieve and succeed. Based out of two hubs, in Dereham and Norwich, the service's aim is to give young people stability, reduce risk-taking behaviour and help to avoid the need for long-term residential care, as well as longer term costs to themselves, the wider system and communities.

**The Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance (NSFA) has formally adopted an overall Strategy**, designed to enable county wide responses to flooding across all agencies involved. The Strategy, which lays out the NSFA's vision, objectives, approach and structure, is a major milestone in the development of the Alliance, which was founded in 2021 to bring together all agencies and partners involved in planning for and responding to flooding in Norfolk.

**A new single point of contact for flooding in Norfolk has been launched, allowing residents to report any sort of flooding quickly and efficiently.** In the event of flooding residents can call 0344 800 8013 giving residents a single point of contact and allowing reports to be made swiftly. Alternatively, residents can continue to report flooding online via [our flooding pages](#). Where there is a potential risk to life from flooding people should still call 999 immediately.

**The Council's £1.5m Flood Reserve Fund** will be used for additional highway and ditch maintenance, drainage asset improvements work and drainage grips and kerb drains on Norfolk's highways, as well as operations to clear some of the county's 145,305 gullies that help drain rain water.

Pavements, cycleways and roads all benefited from the county's **£29m maintenance programme** taking place right across Norfolk. The crucial upkeep work is a key part of the £42 million budget for roads and infrastructure that was agreed in February 2021. This year £4.5m is being spent on maintaining pavements and paths, for example a £167,000 scheme to remove the existing worn and uneven pavement surface on Kennedy Avenue in Gorleston and replace it with a new smooth asphalt surface.

We have an ambitious **Local Transport Plan** supporting a growing economy, strengthening communities and reducing our impact on the environment. A carbon cutting commitment is central to the transport plan which supports the county council's pledge to achieve net zero carbon by 2030, which councillors adopted as part of the authority's Environmental Policy in November 2019.





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Tripling the number of **Roadside Nature Reserves** in Norfolk were among a range of green measures agreed last July. Fewer cuts for rural roadsides, a pollinator action plan, and 188 more roadside nature reserves are all on the cards as part of plans to boost biodiversity along roads and paths across the county. There are plans to help **boost cycling and walking across the county**, and development of a new verge management policy which will include information for parish and town councils wishing to take on responsibility for verge cutting in their local area. The aim is to help involve local communities more in decisions about verge management near them.

**Norfolk County Council has been recognised for its outstanding support of the armed forces community in Norfolk**, following an announcement from the Ministry of Defence. The council has been given the Gold Award, the highest honour handed out through the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme. The award is given to organisations that employ and support those who serve in the armed forces, service leavers, veterans and their families, with the Gold Award also acknowledging the Council's partnership working through the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Board.

The Business & IP Centre (BIPC) Norfolk, managed by Norfolk County Council's Library and Information Service, ran a free online **Summer School in 2021** for 16-25-year-olds to help them decide whether starting their own business might be right for them.

Norfolk is to receive between £115m and £195m of funding as part of the **Government's Project Gigabit to provide 1GB per second broadband** to up to 119,000 premises. Contracts will be awarded from February 2022. Rural homes and businesses across Norfolk and Suffolk will get next-generation gigabit broadband brought to them under a £5 billion plan to level up internet access across the UK. It means families no longer having to battle over bandwidth giving people in rural areas the freedom to live and work more flexibly, with the speed and reliability needed to start and run businesses.

**Community and voluntary organisations across Norfolk were awarded £1m from the [Norfolk Social Infrastructure Fund](#)**. Total awards were £1.02 million to 25 different organisations, with grants ranging £3,400 all the way up to £250,000. The fund saw 64 applications with funding requests that totalled almost £5million. This was more than double the number of applications received last year.

Most children in care in Norfolk are well looked after and receive good support for their emotional and mental health and education, **Ofsted inspectors have found as they praised the support for children in care get in Norfolk**. Ofsted's visit follows a [similar focused visit in 2019](#), which looked at how the council responds to child safeguarding calls and referrals. Following that visit, inspectors described the quality of decision making as "consistently strong".

**Norfolk Adult Social Services** have faced a level of unprecedented challenge in 2021/22 as a result of the pandemic, with national and local workforce shortages, rising demand in hospitals and the community and the continued infection risk posed by COVID-19 as well as other recurring respiratory viruses such as flu.

Action being taken by the Council includes:

- Expanding action to support people at home or, where appropriate, in short term residential settings
- Stepping up the council's care recruitment campaign, to tackle staff shortages
- Providing wrap-around support for care settings
- Providing assistive technology, with 100 video phones sent out to homes
- Improving capacity in the Norfolk First Response service



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- Supporting mental health services, with three new step-down services

**The new Norwich South recycling centre opened at Harford on 1 December.** The £1.9m recycling centre is the sister site to the new Norwich North recycling centre that opened on 22 September. Together the two sites will provide improved recycling facilities for the growing greater Norwich area. The move to a larger site allows room for a one-way traffic system to smooth traffic flow and reduce queues, low-level bins meaning people will not have to climb steps to recycle their waste, and there is plenty of parking for cars, bicycles and vehicles with trailers.

**Bookings are now open for [The Big Norfolk Holiday Fun](#), a programme of free activities that will run over the Easter holidays for 5–16-year-olds across Norfolk.** The scheme is provided as part of the government’s Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme and is being delivered by Norfolk County Council in partnership with Active Norfolk. After the success of HAF over the Christmas break and some brilliant feedback from parents, it’s returning from 4 April though till 19 April with free activities for children eligible for means-tested free school meals.

**18. TO HEAR AND DISCUSS ANY MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**  
Concerns regarding antisocial behaviour within the parish were raised by a parishioner. A parishioner asked about plans to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee within the parish. Heathlands Community Centre are holding a Jubilee event. Stuart Smith confirmed the council has planted a tree within Marty’s Marsh and purchased a new bench to commemorate the Jubilee.

**19. CLOSING COMMENTS**  
The chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at approximately 8:45pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....