Blofield Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Blofield Parish Council on Monday 14th September 2026 at 7.30pm to 10.20pm at Blofield Courthouse

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

County Cllr. Jan Davis attended. Four members of the public attended.

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO THE MEETING BY THE VICE-CHAIR**
   The Vice-chair, Sarah Dhesi, welcomed everyone to the meeting, explained that it was a meeting held in public rather than a public meeting, and advised that the meeting was being recorded to assist with the preparation of the minutes. Councillors and the Clerks introduced themselves.

2. **TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
   Apologies were received from Cllr. Will Crane and were duly accepted by the Council.

3. **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**
   No declarations of interest or requests for dispensation were received.

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**
   County Cllr. Jan Davis provided an update, a copy of which will be added to the Parish Council's website as an Appendix to the Minutes.
   A parishioner raised concerns about parking on North Street and Mill Road.

5. **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 10TH AUGUST 2026**
   The Minutes of the meeting were unanimously approved as a true and accurate record and duly signed by the Vice-chair.

6. **TO REPORT ON MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT ON THE AGENDA: FOR INFORMATION ONLY**
   The Council noted that outstanding installations of benches at Farman Field and life rings, these will be installed before the end of September.

7. **PLANNING**
   Application: 2026/2341
   Proposal: Demolition of conservatory and erection of new replacement single-storey rear extension; installation of roof lantern on flat roof
   Location: Lynsley, The Street, Blofield, NR13 4JH

   At the meeting Blofield Parish Council resolved it had no comments but requested that it is advised if there are any changes.

   Application: 2026/0834
   Proposal: Erection of two storey café with external seating, 3 polytunnels, revised car parking and extension of site to include overflow carparking to the east and redesign of warehouse & service yard following planning permission 20222050.
   Location: Norwich Camping & Leisure, 58, Yarmouth Road, Blofield, NR13 4JZ

   At the meeting the Council resolved to request confirmation of the footpath layout plans and confirmation that the proposed footpath crossing is appropriate.

   Application: 2026/0365
   Proposal: Proposed solar park and EV charging station including substation and battery storage with associated roadside services including a drive through café & 2 no cafes, erection of a retail

unit, associated accesses, parking circulation spaces, landscaping, ecological enhancements and drainage infrastructure.
Location: Adj MacDonald's, Yarmouth Road, Blofield

At the meeting the Council unanimously resolved to request that:

- *The speed limit is reduced to 30mph – between Blofield and the proposed application.*
- *A continuous footpath to Blofield is included – as is regularly requested by residents given the risk of accidents. Potentially, if required, by a narrowing of the width of Yarmouth Road.*
- *Bollards are included to provide clear delineation of road/footpath.*
- *Double yellow lines are included to prevent inconsiderate parking for users of both Sports Hub, McDonald's, and proposed café units.*

Further, the Council agreed it fully endorsed and would like to restate NCC Highways position dated 26th March 2026 and that of 18th August.

It also agreed to reiterate points in the ***Parish Council's email of 18th August*** *including the request to be added as a consultee on any further communications related to 2026/0365, given the Council had already commented on the related earlier application - 20211493.*

Application: 2025/3580
Proposal: Retrospective alteration of gable roof by raising ridge and eaves to allow for rooms in the roof, erection of single storey front, side and rear extensions, changes to boundary treatment, erection of outbuilding and new garage
Location: Blafelda, 24 Yarmouth Road, Blofield, NR13 4JS

At the meeting the Council resolved to unanimously restate its previous position – most recently noted in the Council's email of 11th August 2026 – as once again, there appear to be minimal changes since the Parish Council's pervious comments which are left unaddressed.

It was also noted that rather than addressing concerns, the latest set of plans appear to have doubled the number of velux windows in the roof which would add more weight to the concern of overlooking and loss of privacy for the neighbouring properties at the rear.

Further, the Council is supportive of requests by neighbours for a condition requiring completion of the main dwelling works within X time frame of the decision date, prior to works starting on the garage and parking areas, in order to minimise the prolonged adverse visual impact on neighbouring properties.

8. TO CONSIDER FEEDBACK ON ANY PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED SUBSEQUENT TO THE PUBLICATION OF THIS AGENDA, RECEIVE ANY PLANNING UPDATES AND NOTE THE GNGB CALL FOR ALL SITES DOCUMENTATION NOW AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC

The Council noted that no further applications have been received since the agenda publication.

The Council noted that the GNGB call for sites documentation is now publicly available. Councillors noted that it includes a number of potentially large housing sites in and around the parish. Concerns were raised about the additional traffic that would pass through the parish and about wastewater capacity.

9. TO NOTE THE COMMUNITY HUB REPORT AND RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON PLANNING CONDITIONS AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

The Council noted the community hub report circulated at the meeting, which included the following updates:

- Stump grinding and hedge works along the boundary with neighbouring properties had taken place, with three additional stumps removed at a small additional cost. In November the hedge along the boundary with Plantation Road will be reduced in height to approximately five feet, on advice, to ease maintenance and improve visibility; this cannot be done sooner because of the bird nesting season and contractor availability.
- Staging that the school no longer required has been kept and stored safely until the building work is complete.

- A National Lottery grant application for furniture, equipment, including tables and chairs, and catering equipment has been drafted by Cllr. Sarah Dhesi. Clerk (SO) to submit as soon as possible.
- The mechanical and electrical designs have been printed for councillors to review the café layout. The Council agreed to have questions to take to the contractor pre-meeting on the 18th September.
- A forest school working party is taking place on the 15th September, run by preschool.
- WIP insurance has been purchased for the duration of the works at a cost of £1,227.48.

The Clerk (EB) updated the Council on the planning conditions relating to the full planning application. A number of conditions must be varied or discharged, some before any works begin. The Clerk is preparing the application and will include on the same form the variation/discharge of:

- Condition 6 (traffic management plan) and Condition 7 (compliance with the traffic management plan);
- Condition 8 (external lighting);
- Condition 10 (external materials);
- Condition 12 (opening hours);
- Condition 15 (tree protection); and
- Conditions 17, 18 and 19 (biodiversity net gain)

Combining these on one application reduces the fee to £608. The application will be submitted this week.

10. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE APPOINTMENT OF A CONTRACTOR AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

The Clerk (EB) reported that the contractor had signed the building contract and the Council resolved to approve signing the contract at this meeting. The start date for the works is confirmed as Monday 5th October 2026, with Section 1 completion on 23rd March 2027 and final completion in July 2027. The Council agreed to post a short public update announcing the contractor appointment and project timeline.

11. TO NOTE THE CLOSURE OF BLOFIELD PARK PLAYGROUND DURING CONSTRUCTION WORKS

The Council noted the closure of Blofield Park playground during the construction works.

Cllr. Dhesi also raised the condition of the old trim trail at the hub, which has needed several repairs over the summer holidays. The Council agreed to obtain costs for removal of the trail by the contractor whilst on site and costs for repairing the trail. Clerk (EB) to action.

12. TO AGREE ANY ON SITE ACTIONS BEFORE WORK COMMENCES, A PRE-MEETING AGENDA AND NOTE THE COMMENCEMENT DATE OF BUILDING WORKS

A pre-meeting with the contractor and design team will take place on Friday 18th September, attended by a small group of councillors and the Clerk. A works timetable and payments timetable will be shared. Clerk (EB) will share key dates with Blofield Preschool.

13. TO AGREE TO FURTHER DEVELOP THE BUSINESS PLAN FOR THE COMMUNITY HUB

The Council agreed to further develop the business plan. The Clerk (EB) will collate the existing feasibility study, draft business plan and other data and circulate. It was agreed to hold a working group meeting on Monday 28th September open to all councillors to consider the business plan, kitchen and café layout and preschool lease.

14. TO AGREE TO FURTHER DEVELOP THE PRESCHOOL LEASE

The Council agreed to further develop the Preschool lease draft already prepared. The Clerk (EB) reported that this can now be progressed now build dates are clear.

15. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE ALLOTMENT A47 WORKS INCLUDING THE CARPARK AND AGREE ANY ACTIONS

The Clerk (EB) reported that the car park had not been completed when it should have been and that the arrangements agreed had not been followed. Construction of the car park has now started but no plans had been shared with the Council. The Council expressed concerns that the works were not fit for purpose and this will continue to be progressed with National

Highways with reference to the Heads of Terms and the Statement of Common Ground. A further meeting with the contractor has been arranged for 23rd September.

16. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE BENCH INSTALLATIONS AT 'THE PADDOCKS' ON BLOFIELD CORNER ROAD AND FARMAN FIELD

The Clerk (SO) reported that the management committee for The Paddocks, which had previously agreed to a bench on Blofield Corner Road and its position, had withdrawn its agreement following objections from some residents. The Council regretted the decision, noting that the bench would benefit parishioners in and around the development. The Council agreed that a formal letter be sent setting out its position.

The three benches for Farman Field are ready and awaiting the installer, who was expected to confirm a date in September.

17. TO NOTE THE REMOVAL OF THE PERGOLA AT WYNGATES AREA 1, NOTE A DONATION OF £150 TO BRUNDALL MEN'S SHED AND CONSIDER A REPLACEMENT ITEM

The Council noted the removal of the pergola at Wyngates Area 1 by Brundall Men's Shed, who had left the area neat and tidy, and noted that a donation of £150 to Brundall Men's Shed had been made as a delegated decision and was on the payments list.

Feedback has been gathered from local residents and this will be reviewed in the November meeting.

18. TO RECEIVE THE FOOTPATH REPORT AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

Cllr. Yvonne Burton shared the footpath report and advised that the footpath walk held in July had been poorly attended, however all paths were walked. All small matters regarding the paths have been actioned. It was noted that a walker had reported dogs barking and intimidating people on the path from Shackle Lane to Holly Lane, it was agreed to notify the footpath officer of this.

19. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON MARTY'S MARSH WORKING PARTY BVCG WORKS AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

Cllr. Burton reported that BVCG have cut the meadow; around 25 volunteers worked on the site over 2 days. The mowing of alternate sides of the area on the left of the gate each year still needs to be organised and unfortunately the bank reinforcement near the bridge has been dismantled by children playing, this may be reinstated when the weather is colder. The handrail proposal (to the mini bridge) is still being investigated and costed.

20. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE FIRE DAMAGED FP12 PROW BRIDGE

The Clerk (EB) reported that the bridge remains fully closed, with a more effective closure now in place after the previous barriers were thrown into the river. The footpath officer has advised that the bridge may not be repaired for a few months as it is beyond repair and in need of replacement. The cost will be met by Norfolk County Council, who will programme the work as soon as possible.

21. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE CHURCHYARD INSPECTION AND STONEMASON REPORT AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

The Clerk (EB) reported that she and Cllr. Joseph Scholes had met the Churchwarden to look at the war memorial, where the lettering is fading. Two quotes for re-lettering have been obtained. The clerks, under delegated powers, accepted the lower quotation. The Parochial Church Council has obtained diocesan approval. The work is hoped to be complete before the Remembrance service.

Work on the Peter Eade Cross - work still pending for this repair and cost already approved. Eleanor Bannister and Cllr. Scholes carried out a churchyard inspection and various matters require follow up.

Following a gravestone inspection the Council noted that a small number of older memorials are rated level 4 (needing remedial action), that remedial work costs around £200 per memorial compared with circa £60 to lay a memorial flat. The Council resolved to contact the Parochial Church Council advising that three headstones need repair and request they investigate and contact the family of the named individuals to pay for the necessary repairs. The Council agreed that if no family can be found the Council will arrange for the headstones to be laid down respectfully.

The Council discussed the next phase of the churchyard wall repair (estimated at £6,000) and agreed not to commit funds at present given other calls on the Council's reserves. The Clerk (EB) will let the contractor know that the work should be planned for spring 2028.

22. TO NOTE THE COMMUNITY AWARD SCHEME PROPOSAL IN PRINCIPLE

Cllr. Scholes introduced the proposal to recognise people in the parish who go above and beyond for the community. The Council welcomed the proposal in principle, and agreed to defer further work until April 2027, with a view to launching it around the opening of the hub.

FINANCE & GOVERNANCE

23. TO NOTE ALL DELEGATED DECISIONS MADE SINCE THE JULY MEETING

The Clerk (SO) presented a table of the delegated decisions made since the July meeting; items #1 to #9 were noted by the Council.

24. TO APPROVE INVOICES FOR PAYMENT, NOTE COUNCIL FUNDS AND REVIEW INTERNAL MONTHLY CHECKS

The Council unanimously approved the invoices for payment #100 to #132 totalling £31,012.04 (#100 to #112 standard payments actioned in August). It was noted that opening Blofield Park playground over the summer had cost approximately £1,000, which the Council considered money well spent.

25. TO REVIEW THE COUNCIL'S CURRENT RESERVES POSITION

The Clerk (SO) presented the reserves sheets for 2025/26 and 2026/27 and reviewed the expenditure to date. The Council noted that the community hub project reserve began at £772,883.93 of CIL funds and just over £100,000 has been spent so far. In addition, funding from council Section 106 funds, the Greater Norwich Growth Board grant and Early Years Funding grant is in place to fund the project.

26. TO NOTE WIP INSURANCE COVER APPROVED

The Work in Progress Insurance Cover is a requirement of the developers contract and has now been arranged for the period of the works at a premium of £1,227.48.

27. TO APPROVE A ROYAL BRITISH LEGION POPPY WREATH PURCHASE AND DONATION

The Council agreed to purchase the larger poppy wreath and make a donation to the Royal British Legion at a total cost of £100. The wreath will be laid by Cllr. Stuart Smith on the 8th November 2026.

28. TO NOTE THE AGAR EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT CONCLUSION

The Clerk (SO) reported that the external audit report and conclusion documentation has been received. Following a minor amendment identified by the auditor this has been published on the council website.

OTHER

29. TO NOTE THE PARISH PARTNERSHIP SCHEME 2027/28

The Council agreed to further consider small projects at the October meeting.

30. TO CONSIDER WIX & WEBSITE NAVIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS AND AMENDMENTS

The Council thanked the volunteer working on the Council's WIX website and the Council agreed to review the demonstration page.

31. TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE

The Council received the Clerk's report and correspondence and noted its contents.

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

Cllr. Burton provided a brief update from the Heathlands Management Committee meeting.

At 10pm the Council resolved to suspend standing orders to extend the meeting beyond 10pm.

33. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE COURTHOUSE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING & NOTE THE CONSTITUTION PAPERS CIRCULATED

The Council noted that all proposed constitution papers have been circulated in advance of the meeting with the Courthouse Management Committee/Parish Council meeting the following week.

34. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

The Clerk noted that there is a long list of items for the next agenda.

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

This was confirmed as Monday 12th October 2026 at 7.30pm at Blofield Courthouse.

36. 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 formally pass the resolution to exclude the press and the public for the remaining agenda items (items 37 and 38, commercially sensitive and confidential staffing matters). The members of the public left the meeting.

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

The Council discussed commercially sensitive matters relating to the community hub and the appointment of contractors. The Council agreed to obtain written legal advice; clerk (EB) to action.

38. TO DISCUSS STAFFING DETAIL IN CONFIDENCE

The Council discussed staffing matters in confidence.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.20pm.

Signed…… Dated……