

Blofield Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Blofield Parish Council on Thursday 22nd May 2025 from 7.30pm – 10.15pm in Blofield Courthouse.

PRESENT

Stuart Smith (Chair), Sarah Dhesi (Vice Chair), Yvonne Burton, Joseph Scholes and William Crane and Eleanor Bannister (Clerk) and Sarah Osbaldeston (Clerk).

1. Welcome and Introduction to the meeting by Chair

2. TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Paul Culley-Barber, Paul Newstead and 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. There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation.

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. No parishioners were present. 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 28TH APRIL 2025

5.1. The Council unanimously resolved to approve the Parish Council meeting minutes from 28th April 2025, and they were duly signed by the chair.

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

6.1. Clerk (EB) reported that the tree works company have been contacted regarding the missing work on G3. The Sycamore cutting has been missed, they will return to complete this work in the next 4 weeks and send images.

6.2. Heathlands Community Centre are commencing phase 2 of their car park and have been in contact regarding the Parish council grant that was granted to them of £5,000 plus VAT towards these works. A part invoice will be sent to the Parish Council when the work is completed.

6.3. The Defibrillator cabinet at Heathlands has come open again, Clerk (EB) has been in touch with the company as it is still under warranty.

6.4. Stuart Smith has obtained a quotation for the cost of moving the existing canopy from old school to year 6 classroom.

7. PLANNING

7.1 Application: 2025/0919

Proposal: Single storey rear extension and garage conversion and cladding/rendering of front elevation

Location: Ashlea, Ranworth Road, Blofield, NR13 4PJ

The Parish Council resolved to submit the following comment requesting that there is an assurance that there is no loss of light / overshadowing for the neighbouring property as the proposed extension is quite close to the boundary line. Additionally, could the Parish Council please be kept informed should plans change.

7.2 Application: 2025/0528

Proposal: Erection of 3 bay extension to existing livestock building

Location: Land South of Hall Road, Blofield, NR13 4DD

The Parish council resolved to make no comments, but to request it is kept informed should plans change.

7.3 Application 2025/1366

Proposal: Loft conversion, first floor side extension, single storey rear extension and re-roofing of existing roofs

Location: 4 Mill Close, Blofield, NR13 4QT

The Council resolved to not comment but to request it is kept informed should plans change.

7.4 Application 2025/1423

Proposal: Variation of condition 2- alter the design of the carport of consented permission 2024/2818 (Which gave permission for Variation of condition 2 of 20220658 - amendments to design) Date of Decision: 28th January 2025

Location: Aldersbrook, Woodbastwick Road, Blofield, NR13 4QH

The Council resolved to not comment but to request it is kept informed should plans change.

8. TO CONSIDER FEEDBACK ON ANY PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED SUBSEQUENT TO THE PUBLICATION OF THIS AGENDA AND NOTE ANY PLANNING UPDATES

- 8.1. 20200077 – The council agreed to submit detailed comments to the planning department on this application. The council also request that if this application goes to planning committee, the council request that District Councillor Paul Newstead read the council comments. Clerk (EB) to action.

9. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM OUR SOLICITORS REGARDING THE BLOFIELD PARK LAND TRANSFER AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

- 9.1. The council solicitor has advised the Council that it would be possible to bring the date forward for the exchange of the old school land, however this is subject to both parties agreeing.
- 9.2. Clerk (EB) received an update from NCC Children's Services that contractors will be on the old school site between the 21st July and 22nd August. These are significantly later than discussed and extremely disappointing to the council. This will not make it possible for the play area to be open during the summer holidays. The council unanimously agreed to contact NCC Children's Services to discuss these revised dates and request detailed explanations regarding these changes and understand if the date can be brought forward. NCC Children's Services are aware the parish council are desperate to open the site to parishioners over the summer holidays.
- 9.3. The Council agreed to ensure the council solicitor has everything in place to ensure that the date of completion does not slip later than the 28th August *at the latest*. The Council agreed if the UK Power Network lease is not resolved by the agreed completion date, then the solicitor should include a condition in the revised contract stating that NCC has an obligation to ensure the matter is resolved after the land transfer. The council also agreed that any additional solicitor or site costs relating to any time delays beyond the long stop date or agreed completion date in August, should be paid for by NCC Children's Services. Clerk (EB) to action.
- 9.4. The council also agreed to update National Highways who provided the funding for the playground as they are awaiting an opening date.

10. TO RECEIVE ANY UPDATE FROM NCC CHILDREN'S SERVICES REGARDING THE BLOFIELD PARK SITE AND HANDOVER TIMELINE AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

- 10.1. See notes in agenda item above.

11. TO REVIEW HUB CONCEPT DESIGNS AND QUOTATIONS FROM THE ARCHITECTS FOR THE NEXT STAGES AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS

- 11.1. The Council have received the latest concept designs and quotations from the architects. The Council reviewed and discussed some of the detail. These will be reviewed in further detail at the next working party meeting on Monday 10th June 2025.
- 11.2. The Council agreed that the total project cost (including all consultancy fees, building regulations, planning costs, contingency etc) of £1,400,000 detailed in the designs should be used for the Great Norwich Growth Board funding application, applying for £400,000.
- 11.3. The Council agreed to go out to tender as soon as possible for RIBA Stage 3-6 architect phases to obtain further quotations for this work. This is the next step towards appointing an architect to take the project forward.

12. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE BUSINESS PLAN AND AGREE AN APPLICATION FOR FUNDING TO THE GREATER NORWICH GROWTH BOARD

12.1. The business plan is still being worked on. Broadland District Council (BDC) has contacted the Parish Council requesting further detail for an expression of interest form required by the Greater Norwich Growth Board. It was agreed that Sarah Dhesi and Eleanor Bannister would work on this on Tuesday 27th May and submit detail to BDC.

12.2. In addition, the Council agreed to work on the business plan and preschool costs to provide more detail and clarity to the preschool. This information is also required for the preschool to apply for grant funding.

13. TO REVIEW GATE OPTIONS FOR THE NEW ENTRANCE TO BLOFIELD PARK

13.1. Clerk (EB) has consulted with NCC Highways regarding entrance gate requirements. In addition, the clerk has obtained some quotations for gates. The council has agreed to find out which contractor NCC Children's Services are using to install their gates to consider matching the gates and obtaining quotations from there too for fencing & gate at the forest school and possible fencing at the preschool. Clerk (EB) to action. The council also agreed to consider apply for funding towards the fencing from the National Highways Social Value Fund.

14. TO DISCUSS THE TRIM TRAIL FOR FARMAN FIELD (WYNGATES AREA 3) AND CONSIDER NEXT ACTIONS

14.1. The council are awaiting an update from BDC regarding placing the trim trail on Farman Field, as this land is currently still owned by them. Clerk (EB) to chase.

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

15.1. The Council reviewed the payments for April, #19 - #30 totalling £10,716.62 (Appendix A) and unanimously resolved to approve the payments. In addition, the council noted internal monthly checks have been carried out for February, March & April.

16. TO CONSIDER A FUNDING DONATION TO THE NEW SCHOOL FOR SMALL KITCHEN SUPPLIES

16.1. Stuart Smith proposed the council make a small grant of £100 to the new school for mugs and crockery equipment in the staff room. The council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal. Clerk (SO) to arrange.

17. TO NOTE THE RENEWAL OF THE COUNCIL INSURANCE

17.1. The council noted the annual insurance premium of £2,648.68 including the full insurance of the Blofield Park play equipment.

18. TO CONSIDER DONATING A VE DAY 80TH ANNIVERSARY WREATH TO BE LAID AT BLOFIELD CHURCH

18.1. Joseph Scholes proposed the council lay a wreath for the VE Day 80th Anniversary at Blofield Church. The council unanimously resolved to approve this at a cost of £20. Joseph Scholes to arrange and lay the wreath.

19. TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL DONATIONS OF £250 TO THE BADCOG FOR HOWES MEADOW MAINTENANCE AND A DONATION OF £150 TO THE TREE WARDEN NETWORK

19.1. The council noted and approved the annual donations detailed above.

20. TO NOTE THE INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS, AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS AND APPOINT SUE LAKE AS AUDITOR FOR 2025/26

20.1. The Council will review the auditor's report in further detail in the June meeting. The council unanimously resolved to appoint Sue Lake as the internal auditor for 2025/26.

21. TO REVIEW THE COUNCIL'S CURRENT RESERVES POSITION

21.1. The council noted the bank balance at 31 March 2025 of £1,129,065.96 (Appendix B). The council reviewed the current reserves report, of which £1,011,324.04 of the balance is allocated to earmarked reserves. During 2024/25 £324,332.66 of earmarked reserves were spent and £325,432.35 were received. (see Appendix C).

21.2. The council noted that the outstanding grant of £10,000 spent against in 2024/25 will be received from BDC in early April 2025.

22. TO APPROVE BLOFIELD PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT 2024/25

22.1. The council approved the annual financial report 2024/25 (Appendix D) and this was duly signed by the chair and RFO.

23. TO APPROVE THE 2024-25 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

23.1. The council unanimously resolved to approve the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25. (Appendix E).

24. TO APPROVE THE 2024-25 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

24.1. The council unanimously resolved to approve the Statement of Accounts 2024/25 (Appendix F).

25. TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING REVISED DOCUMENTS DRAFTED BY THE FINANCE WORKING PARTY

- Standing Orders
- Finance Regulations
- LGA Code of Conduct
- Risk Assessment
- Freedom of Information Scheme
- Annual Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Control
- Annual Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit
- Duties of the Responsible Financial Officer
- Investment Policy
- Business Continuity Plan
- Communications Policy
- Co-option Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Filming and Recording Policy
- Dark Skies Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy

25.1. The Council unanimously resolved to approve all the documents detailed above. The council has adopted the NPTS new template for Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. In addition, key documents have been updated to reflect the playground purchase and defibrillator responsibility.

26. TO NOTE THE LOCAL AUTHORITY CLUSTER MEETING AT 7PM ON 10TH JUNE 2025 AND AGREE ANY ACTIONS

26.1. Blofield Parish Council are hosting the next meeting at 7pm on 10th June 2025 at St Lawrence Church Hall, Brundall. Clerk (EB) to attend to take notes and will circulate an agenda and request reports in advance of the meeting. Joseph Scholes, Stella Shackle and Stuart Smith to attend.

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

27.1. The working party has removed a dead tree from the ditch. The open day is still planned for the 14th June in conjunction with Cremer's Meadow.

27.2. The Bure Valley Conservation Group has recently cut the conservation area and 3 oak trees will be planted shortly.

27.3. To consider a possible picnic bench on the site at the next meeting.

28. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE ONSITE MEETING REGARDING IMPROVEMENTS TO PROW FP4 PARALLEL TO THE A47

28.1. The onsite meeting regarding PROW FP4 was very useful. Eleanor Bannister shared a detailed report of all matters discussed and various actions to be taken on by NCC Highways, including urgent health and safety matters. This should result in a more usable footpath for the benefit of all parishioners, especially the school users.

29. TO AGREE THE ANNUAL PLAY INSPECTION FOR BLOFIELD PARK IS CARRIED OUT

29.1. The council unanimously resolved to approve the play inspection at a cost of £180+VAT, this will take place on 30th May 2025.

30. TO CONSIDER MOVING ANY SPECIFIC ITEMS FROM THE OLD SCHOOL SITE

30.1. The council discussed keeping the concertina doors and temporary staging unit if a location to store them can be found. The reception play equipment was briefly discussed, it was agreed to get those who moved the school equipment to take a look to see if this is movable.

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

31. TO AGREE ATTENDANCE AT THE CAN ENERGY UPGRADE AND FUNDING SESSION 4-6PM, 4TH JUNE 2025

31.1. Sarah Dhesi and Eleanor Bannister plan to attend this training session.

32. TO CONSIDER A FURTHER ASBESTOS REVIEW AT BLOFIELD COURTHOUSE

32.1. Eleanor Bannister advised the council that the cost of an updated asbestos inspection (last carried out in August 2021) would be £245+VAT. The council unanimously resolved to approve this ensuring the council obtain an updated revised full report. Clerk (EB) to arrange.

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

33.1. Yvonne Burton reported that the constitution is still under review and advised that Hemblington Preschool are considering leaving Heathlands Community Centre and relocating into Hemblington School.

34. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE COURTHOUSE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

34.1. Joseph Scholes provided an update from the Courthouse.

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

35.1. Sarah Dhesi reported that a new committee has been established at MHH with 6 new trustees.

36. TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

36.1. The police have agreed to chat to Blofield Motor Company regarding the parking / signage across the footpath.

36.2. NCC are consulting on 'Help shape the future of Local Government' The feedback form is available until 20 May 2025 at www.norfolk.gov.uk/lgrfeedback and people can answer as many or as few questions as they wish to.

36.3. There is a broken roundabout at the play area on Shreeve Road, this is the responsibility of the management company for this development. They have reported they currently do not have enough funds to repair the roundabout.

36.4. A consultation for the new Norfolk Nutrient Mitigation Fund (NNMF) is taking place.

36.5. The Norfolk and Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategies are now both live for Public Consultation!

36.6. The consultation is open until 11 June 2025.

36.7. The third stage of public and stakeholder engagement has now commenced in relation to the Broadland and South Norfolk Design Code. To take part in the consultation, which finishes at 5pm on Monday 23rd June, please visit [Broadland and South Norfolk district-wide Design Codes | Broadland and South Norfolk \(southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk\)](https://www.broadlandandsouthnorfolk.gov.uk/broadland-and-south-norfolk-district-wide-design-codes) and follow the link to the online engagement platform.

37. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

37.1. Approval of the next newsletter

37.2. PROW Footpath 4, further update

37.3. New picnic bench at Marty's Marsh

37.4. Blofield park update

37.5. Farman Field Norfolk Wildlife Trust update

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

38.1. Monday 23rd June 2025 at 7:30pm at Blofield Courthouse.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10:15pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....