

Blofield Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Blofield Parish Council on Monday 12th January 2026 at 7:30pm at Blofield Courthouse.

PRESENT

Sarah Dhesi (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Yvonne Burton, Joseph Scholes, Will Crane, Stella Shackle, Paul Culley-Barber, Eleanor Bannister (Clerk) and Sarah Osbaldeston (Clerk)

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO THE MEETING BY THE VICE-CHAIR

The Vice-Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished members and attendees a Happy New Year. It was noted that the meeting was being recorded for transcription purposes as part of a trial. The Vice-Chair reminded those present that this was a meeting held in public, not a public meeting.

2. TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Stuart Smith (Chair) and from Paul Newstead. These apologies were 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

Bob Fossey, the Chair of Martham Parish Council visits the parish of Blofield regularly and attended the meeting to introduce himself and offer help with defibrillator checks. The Council accepted this offer and Bob Fossey together with Sarah Dhesi and Yvonne Burton will coordinate defibrillator checks and update 'The Circuit' as required. The Council noted that separate paediatric pads are not required; adult pads are suitable. In addition, Bob Fossey intends to train as a defibrillator and CPR trainer and will then be able to carry out training in the parish.

District Cllr Andrew Proctor sent apologies and provided a written update and continues to work on reducing road closures on Yarmouth Road / Cucumber Lane.

A parishioner raised concerns regarding planning enforcement issues at 24 Yarmouth Road, including fencing, parking, and boundary matters associated with planning application 2025/3580. The Council confirmed that the application has been called in to Planning Committee by District Cllr Paul Newstead and advised the parishioner on how to register to speak at the meeting.

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

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record and duly signed by the Vice Chair.

6. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 8TH DECEMBER 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record and duly signed by the Vice Chair.

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

- The Council was unsuccessful in its application to the **Future for Nature Fund** for Marty's Marsh due to the high number of applications received. The Green Infrastructure Officer at BDC is continuing to explore alternative funding opportunities.

- **VAT forms** have been completed by the Clerk (SO) and sent to HMRC for the Council to register for VAT on the area of land that will be occupied by the community hub and Blofield Preschool.
- Parishioner concerns regarding speeding on **Lingwood Road** were noted and the Clerk (EB) continues with enquiries regarding signage for the road by the contractor working on the A47 dualling. The verges are becoming severely damaged, and vehicles are getting stuck in the mud.

8. TO CONSIDER FEEDBACK ON ANY PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED SUBSEQUENT TO THE PUBLICATION OF THIS AGENDA AND NOTE ANY PLANNING UPDATES (INCLUDING 2020/0077 AND 2025/3580)

No new planning applications had been received since publication of the agenda.

Concerns were raised by a parishioner regarding application **2025/3580**. This application has been called in to the Planning Committee at Broadland District Council and the Parish Council will continue to monitor progress and submit representations as appropriate. Parishioners are also able to make representation at the Planning Committee.

9. TO REVIEW COMMUNITY HUB PROJECT UPDATES AND PROGRESS REPORTS AND AGREE NECESSARY ACTIONS

a. UK Power Network lease and land transfer from NCC

Progress was reported on the UK Power Networks substation lease, with agreement reached on removal of the break clause, and UKPN has approved the PC's rights to vary the access way.

Concerns were raised regarding fencing installed over UK Power Network cables. NCC is being asked to clarify responsibility and costs.

Additional legal fees relating to the lease were discussed. The Council solicitor has reduced the cost of the incurred fees, the Parish Council agreed that Norfolk County Council should be asked to cover / contribute to these costs. If unresolved, the matter will return to the February Parish Council meeting.

b. Design Team Meetings

Councillors were asked to review the latest drawings that were circulated before the meeting and submit comments by next Wednesday afternoon. The next design team meeting is scheduled for Thursday 15th January. Notes from this meeting will be circulated (Clerk (EB)).

c. GNGB Funding

The community hub project has progressed to the next stage of Greater Norwich Growth Board funding, which will be formally decided in March.

d. Other funding applications

A grant application to the NCC Capital Fund for support with the preschool costs is being prepared with support from NCC Early Years Senior Advisor. The Council agreed to submit costs of the project without a fixed funding request to reflect rising project costs and end-of-year funding availability. Clerk (EB) to action.

The Council are awaiting the outcome of the National Highways Social Value grant application.

e. Cost forecasts

Stage 2 cost forecasts were reviewed and noted to be based on square metre estimates rather than detailed specifications. It was acknowledged that costs will be refined as the project progresses.

f. Additional costs / finances

Potential savings were discussed, including removal of the hall divider, estimated at £23,500 plus associated works. Clerk (EB) to assess the impact on income generation from the Feasibility Study and understand any grant conditions.

Drainage matters were discussed, with existing drainage running beneath the old school site. It was noted that this may be insufficient for the Community Hub and that connection to the main sewer

could cost approximately £25,000. The Council agreed to request a contribution from NCC if this spend is required, as utilities were originally intended to be shared. This figure is not budgeted for. Clerk (EB) to action.

g. Insurance

The Council require Material Damage insurance for the old year 6 building. The Council need to obtain a replacement value and will approach the costs consultants working on the community hub to see if they can provide this figure. Clerk (SO) to action.

Once the Parish Council is in ownership of the site / land then it is covered for Public Liability on the Councils existing insurance policy.

h. Planning application

It was noted that the Community Hub planning application is expected to be submitted in February 2026. External works, including drainage and car parking, must be resolved prior to submission.

The design team are working on these matters currently. Types of car park surfacing were discussed and the Council agreed to understand the cost implications further. The Council agreed to tarmac roads with BODPAV / Type 1 parking bays, however this has implications on the site drainage. Clerk (EB) to obtain more detail and report back to the Council.

i. Preschool

Clerk (EB) met with the Preschool to discuss more detailed plans. A different solution to the toilets was proposed by Sarah Dhesi and the Council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal. The Preschool has £10,000 NCC Early Years grant secured towards outside / play area works / white goods etc.

j. Community engagement

The Council resolved to approve Monday 9th February 3:30pm – 6:30pm for a public engagement event with the parishioners. It was agreed that a clerk / councillor / design team members would be present at various times. Clerk (EB) to circulate amongst local groups and social media and arrange logistics.

k. Site security and health & safety

NCC remains responsible for site security until land transfer is completed. Before the land transfer, a site meeting will take place.

l. Play park and grounds

It was noted that tree works, including Silver Birch and conifer removal, must be completed before March / the nesting season. Clerk (EB) to obtain quotations for this work.

The ROSPA report has been received; just items requiring tightening. To be discussed in February.

m. Other

No further matters were raised.

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

Will Crane is in the process of finalising detail on three quotations. He will return to the Council in February to discuss and approve a provider.

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

The Council reviewed the proposed payments and Sarah Dhesi proposed (seconded by Paul Culley-Barber) the Council pay payments #124 to #138 totalling £16,785.27. The Council unanimously resolved to approve these payments (Appendix A).

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

The Clerk (EB) discussed the high-level figures from the QS Cost Consultancy. These are still at a very high level; more detailed figures will be produced as the designs are finalised and building contractor quotations are obtained.

13. TO CONSIDER A GARDEN GUARDIAN GROUNDS MAINTENANCE QUOTATION FOR 2026/27 FOR BLOFIELD PARK HEDGES AND GRASS

A quotation from Garden Guardian for grounds maintenance at Blofield Park for the 2026/27 season was considered. The Council unanimously resolved to accept the quotation for the works of £1360 for all the grass cutting and hedge works. Clerks to liaise with Garden Guardian once the land is in the Parish Council ownership.

14. TO NOTE INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR BLOFIELD PARK AND AGREE NECESSARY ACTIONS

See item 9(g) above.

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

It was noted that grant funding has been secured and further quotations are being obtained to ensure best value for money for the required works. Clerk (EB) to return in February with an update.

16. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON MARTY'S MARSH, CONSIDER A QUOTATION FOR 'SLUBBING' OUT THE DITCH AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

Yvonne Burton provided an update on the quotations for 'slubbing' out the ditch at Marty's Marsh. These costs are significant and the two quotations are very different. The Council agreed to see if any further funding could be obtained for this work. Yvonne Burton to action.

In addition, Yvonne Burton has obtained a quotation of £680 for two days' work from TCV Volunteers for works to clear out the Town Pit in Blofield Heath. The Council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal. Reserve funds are available to fund this work.

17. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE FP4 PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY AND AGREE ANY ACTIONS

The Parish Council noted that the NCC Corporate Property Team has approved a small bit of their land to provide a permissive footpath from FP4 to Blofield Primary School. The Council noted that the permissive path can be temporary and access can be removed by NCC with 3 months' notice. The Parish Council resolved to accept this restriction and agreed to fund the creation of this path and maintain the permissive path. Parish Partnership Funding has been sought for FP4 footpath improvements.

18. TO NOTE FURTHER ROADWORKS PLANNED FOR YARMOUTH ROAD / CUCUMBER LANE AND DISCUSS ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS (EB)

There are still significant planned road works for Yarmouth Road and Cucumber Lane for various utilities. NCC Highways and our County Councillor are reviewing these and ensuring they are grouped and actioned to minimise impact on the Parishioners of Blofield, Brundall and surrounding areas.

19. TO CONSIDER WATER SIGNAGE AT TOWN PIT / MARTY'S MARSH

The safety around the water at Town Pit and Marty's Marsh was discussed, especially when there is ice and snow covering the water. The Council unanimously resolved to purchase 'danger water' signage and possibly life rings for both sites. Clerk (SO) to explore options suitable for the sites and arrange install.

20. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER MEETING

Yvonne Burton provided an update from the Police & Crime Commissioner meeting arranged by a local parishioner. Speeding in the village was discussed. For monitoring to be carried out it is a cost of £700 (for two points).

A meeting is already planned with the NCC Highways Engineer in February to discuss speeding past the new school and safety on the new zebra crossing. In addition, replacement of the SAM signpost near the fish and chip shop on Plantation Road will be discussed. Clerk (EB) to action.

At 10pm the Council resolved to suspend standing orders.

21. TO CONSIDER PARISHIONER REQUESTS FOR A ZEBRA CROSSING ON YARMOUTH ROAD

A parishioner has gathered signatures requesting installation of a zebra crossing on Yarmouth Road. It was noted that this matter links to ongoing highways discussions and safety concerns in the area. The Parish Council understand that the Kings Head crossroads are due for an upgrade. This has been costed and is on NCC Highways long term plans, however the cost is significant. The Parish Council do support the need for some improvements on Yarmouth Road with the upgrade to the Kings Head traffic lights incorporating pedestrian crossing points being a priority. The Council will raise this at their next meeting with NCC Highways and continue to request improvements where housing developments are planned in the parish. Clerk (EB) to update the parishioner.

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

Yvonne Burton provided an update from the Heathlands Management Committee meeting.

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

Sarah Dhesi provided an update from the Margaret Harker Hall Management Committee. The removal of the old insulation has been completed. Clerk (SO) to arrange payment of the grant for these works in February.

24. TO CONFIRM MEETING DATES FOR 2026/27

Monday	12 th January 2026	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	9 th February 2026	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Thursday	12 th March 2026	Annual Meeting of the Parish	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	16 th March 2026	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	20 th April 2026	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	18 th May 2026*	Annual & monthly	Blofield Courthouse

* The Annual Parish Council meeting starts at 7.00pm, the Parish Council meeting at 7:30pm

Monday	15 th June 2026	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	20 th July 2026	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	17 th August 2026	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	14 th September 2026	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	12 th October 2026	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	9 th November 2026	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	7 th December 2026	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	11 th January 2027	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	8 th February 2027	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	8 th March 2027	monthly	Blofield Courthouse

Monday	19 th April 2027	monthly	Blofield Courthouse
Monday	17 th May 2027*	Annual & monthly	Blofield Courthouse
* The Annual Parish Council meeting starts at 7.00pm, the Parish Council meeting at 7:30pm			
Monday	14 th June 2027	monthly	Blofield Courthouse

25. TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE

- Notes from the Town and Parish Forum were circulated to the councillors.
- A Parishioner requested an update on the installation of a Zebra Crossing on Woodbastwick Road. The PC was informed that from the survey conducted last year, though there were benefits for a zebra crossing, the survey noted that 'speeds are well complied with' and 'not beyond the 85% rule' and given this, and as there was no funding to deliver these measures, it was currently not a priority to install a zebra crossing with an estimated cost of £300,000.
- The footpath sign in Blofield churchyard has kindly been repaired by a Parishioner.
- A Parishioner has requested a SAM sign location on Mill Road as their cat was hit and died recently. Clerk (EB) to pursue the possibility of installing it on the 30mph repeater to the west end of the road.
- Clerk (EB) again contacted NCC Highways, the Police and Galliford Try on 11 December 2025 regarding speeding on Lingwood Road. The Traffic Management team has been requested to provide community speed signs to help encourage drivers to slow down along Lingwood Road. This should assist in improving safety. (Relates to item 7.)
- The Blofield WEA branch is closing down. For 74 years, the Blofield branch offered short courses to local people wishing to keep their minds active and meet socially. However, a combination of a lack of tutors willing to offer face to face courses with the WEA, and national funding restrictions for non-work-related courses, now mean that the volunteers at Blofield are not able to continue to organise this much appreciated service. The team thanks all who have enrolled for courses over the years and supported the branch in many ways. The Parish Council would like to thank all the volunteers who have supported the branch for 74 years.
- A parishioner has emailed regarding the overflowing sewage system on Blofield Corner Road in Blofield Heath which has been an issue over the years and has reoccurred overnight. The Parish Council agreed to contact Anglian Water expressing its concern, support for the parishioners and requesting an urgent permanent solution. Clerk (EB) to action.

26. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

The following items were requested for inclusion on the next agenda:

- Community Hub project update
- NCC Highways meeting
- Farman Field play trim trail quotations
- Unity Bank
- Courthouse Constitution

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

The next meeting will take place on Monday 9th February 2026 at 7:30pm at Blofield Courthouse.

28. TO RESOLVE TO PASS A FORMAL RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC

The Council unanimously resolved to pass this resolution.

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

No commercially sensitive matters required discussion this month.

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

Signed:

Dated: