

Blofield Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Blofield Parish Council on Monday 20th July 2026 at 7:30pm to 10:00pm at Blofield Courthouse.

PRESENT

Sarah Dhesi (Vice-Chair), Yvonne Burton, Will Crane, Paul Culley-Barber, Paul Newstead, Joseph Scholes, Eleanor Bannister (Clerk) and Sarah Osbaldeston (Clerk).

Four residents were present in the public gallery. County Cllr Jan Davis also attended.

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

The Vice-Chair, Sarah Dhesi, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Stuart Smith and these were duly accepted by the Council.

3. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Cllr Paul Culley-Barber declared an interest in item 29 and abstained from the vote on that item.

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, having circulated his report to the Council in advance. His update included: Norfolk County Council's submission of its judicial review of the Local Government Reorganisation proposals; the Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service fire safety campaign; and an update on Blofield Library, which may require building work to address damp.

One parishioner spoke in relation to planning application 2026/1840, noting that they had sought pre-planning advice to ensure all requirements were addressed.

5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 15TH JUNE 2026

Cllr Paul Culley-Barber indicated one amendment to item 12. Clerk (EB) to amend and post. The amended minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 15th June 2026 were then 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 the signage for the Permissive Footpath linking to FP4 is now in place. A parishioner noted their support for the request for buses to stop in Blofield travelling to Great Yarmouth, raised under item 18.

It was noted that work on the allotment car park has still not started, this is disappointing and restrictive for the allotment holders. Clerk (EB) to request an update from Galliford Try. BADCOG have agreed to open Howes Meadow in March/April 2027 for an open day when it is at its best and accessible.

7. PLANNING

Application: 2026/1261

Proposal: Conversion of office/hobby room into annex.

Location: Willow Farm, Field Lane, Blofield, NR13 4RP

The Council unanimously resolved to submit the following comment: The Parish Council agrees with the NCC Highways stipulation and requests that the following condition is applied — SHC 26: The living accommodation hereby approved shall be incidental to the use of the main dwelling and shall not be occupied at any time as a separate and un-associated unit of accommodation.

Application: 2026/1840

Proposal: Demolition of existing dwelling and replacement with a single self-build dwelling.

Location: 26 Stocks Lane, Blofield, NR13 4JZ

The Council resolved to reiterate previous comments submitted in relation to application 2025/3626 on 9th December 2025, as follows:

- As there is a substantial increase in potential concurrent foul water flow from the increased number of toilets, showers etc., the Parish Council requests confirmation that the current sewer connection in Stocks Lane is capable of handling the increased flow rate.*
- As asbestos has been identified on site, it should be stipulated that it must be removed by properly trained handlers prior to commencement of demolition.*
- Confirmation is requested that the surface water drainage strategy is able to manage the increased flow from a substantially larger roof footprint than the current dwelling; the plans must not create any surface water issues for neighbouring properties.*
- The Council requests the use of permeable materials for the front parking area, in line with its Neighbourhood Plan Policy ENV3.*
- The Council requests that planners confirm there is no loss of light or overshadowing for neighbouring properties, given neighbour comments on the previous planning application.*

8. TO CONSIDER FEEDBACK ON ANY PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED SUBSEQUENT TO THE PUBLICATION OF THIS AGENDA AND RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON 20200077

The Council unanimously agreed to write to BDC Planning noting its disappointment that its requests to the Planning Committee for improved safety on Woodbastwick Road were not included in any planning conditions for application 20200077. Clerk (EB) to submit.

9. TO NOTE THE PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED AND RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE DISCHARGE OF CONDITION 12 FROM THE FIRST HUB PLANNING APPLICATION

The Council noted with pleasure that planning permission has been granted for the Community project (application 2026/0809).

Clerk (EB) provided an update on Condition 12 (regarding land usage) from the first hub planning application, noting that further information has been submitted to BDC Planning, who are hopeful that condition 12 will be discharged shortly. Clerk (EB) to continue to progress, together with EV charger conditions and also to progress conditions related to application 2026/0809. Network Management – Electric Vehicle Infrastructure has confirmed that there is no funding for Electric Vehicle chargers.

10. TO REVIEW COMMUNITY HUB PROJECT UPDATES REPORT AND AGREE NECESSARY ACTIONS

- Under delegated authority the Clerk (SO) has carried out necessary tree works to allow the playground to open for the summer holidays. Oak trees T151 & T152 deadwood removed, and crowns reduced and canopy raised to the South in accordance with the planning tree survey and as required for the building works. Quotations were obtained. Final cost was £1020+VAT and work took place on 9th July 2026. The resulting wood chip was taken to Farman Field.

- Various works have been carried out in order to open the playground. Under delegated authority the Clerk (SO) has appointed a local playground inspector to carry out initial playground tightening and adjusting as required following the operations inspection. This will follow weekly inspections at a cost of £50 per week.
- Various fencing adjustments have been carried out under delegated authority at a cost of £258 and various padlocks and CCTV cameras have been purchased and installed to secure the site.
- Garden Guardian did an initial site cut to assist with overgrown areas and will mow the grass bi-weekly (mindful of children on the site).
- A working party of volunteers took place clearing the site on 16th July 2026; the Council would like to thank all those parishioners who came to assist and give up their time to enable the playground to open.
- A meeting was held with the National Lottery team to consider option of large grant funding. The Council does not fulfil the criteria for this fund as it is designed for highly deprived areas with no facilities. The Council plan to apply for a smaller lottery grant; Sarah Dhesi to progress.
- Eleanor Bannister reported that NCC Corporate Property Services have confirmed that the old school site has been sold and they anticipate completion by the end of July. The Parish Council solicitor has requested of NPLaw/NCC relevant documentation including a signed and certified copy of the Deed of Covenant that the new owners would be signing. Clerk (EB) to chase.
- Blofield Preschool plan to start clearing the forest school at the end of July.
- The Council agreed to check with Gary Waterton whether the hoop-topped fence needs to be removed by the Council before building work commences. Clerk (EB) to action.
- Tender Documents were opened on 17th July. The Council QS consultant will review these and they will be brought to the parish council meeting on 10th August and discussed in confidence given the commercial sensitivity.

11. TO REVIEW QUOTATIONS FOR REDUCING THE HEIGHT OF THE BOUNDARY HEDGE OF BLOFIELD PARK

Further tree work is required on site; the grinding out of three tree stumps, the cutting of the south hedge next to the trim trail, and the cutting of the front hedge to fence height and full trimming of both sides. Three quotations will be obtained for this work and the Council resolved to approve the progress of this work (up to £1,800) by the clerks and schedule it for early September.

12. TO NOTE THE OPENING OF BLOFIELD PARK FOR THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

- a. In June, the Council approved the installation of a fire safety gate onto shared land. Clerk (EB) to action in September.
- b. The Council agreed to request of NCC Highways 'SLOW' road marking signage near the zebra crossing, as speeding is being reported regularly and this is a very busy area with the school, doctors surgery, Blofield Park and bus stop. Clerk (EB) to action.
- c. Forest School access: Clerk (EB) to email the Preschool regarding access to the Forest School on 29th July 2026.
- d. Playground and gym equipment: Clerk (EB) to follow up on action points identified by Andy Bruce following his inspection, including asking EIBE how best to grease the ski gym equipment.
- e. High Bar area: Clerk (EB) to discuss with EIBE.
- f. Play netting: Will Crane to email a photograph of the area to the Clerk so it can be discussed with EIBE.

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

Clerk (SO) reported that all benches are on order and are expected to be delivered and installed in August. Three for Farman Field and a fourth for Blofield Corner Road. It was suggested a small opening ceremony would be nice on Blofield Corner Road once it is in place.

14. TO NOTE BREAK-INS AT THE ALLOTMENTS SITE AND ALLOTMENT CAR PARK UPDATE

Cllr Sarah Dhesi reported that several garden sheds had been broken into, though nothing was stolen. Work on the allotment car park has still not commenced.

15. TO DISCUSS THE REMOVAL OF THE PERGOLA AT WYNGATES AREA 1 AND A REPLACEMENT ITEM

The pergola remains taped off. The Council agreed that it will be removed by Brundall Men's Shed on 4th August 2026. An eight cubic yard skip will be arranged on the roadside. A circular, straight or round bench was suggested as a possible replacement; this will be discussed at the September Parish Council meeting.

Clerk (EB) to progress arrangements with the skip company, to confirm to Brundall Men's Shed that the wooden base should also be removed, and to request an assessment of the depth of the concrete foundation.

16. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE FOOTPATH WORK AT FP2 AND MARTY'S MARSH AND AGREE ANY ACTIONS

The annual footpath walks were conducted in both Blofield Heath and Blofield; Cllr Yvonne Burton will write a report for the Council. The FP2 path in Blofield Heath has been completed as requested. The new path at Marty's Marsh has been completed and looks really good.

17. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE STONEMASON WORKS AT BLOFIELD CHURCHYARD

The stonemason's report has recently been received but is still to be reviewed. This item will be brought back to the September agenda.

18. TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM A PARISHIONER FOR BUSES TO STOP IN BLOFIELD TRAVELLING TO GREAT YARMOUTH

The Council considered the parishioner's request. Clerk (EB) to contact the bus company and request that buses stop in Blofield on the route to Great Yarmouth. Given the bus already stops at Acle there is a reasonable case for a stop at Blofield. It was noted that demonstrating active lobbying and passenger numbers would be helpful, and the Council will keep a note of any requests it receives. Cllr. Jan Davis will raise where appropriate with NCC.

19. TO NOTE A DAMAGED GRIT BIN AND REVIEW OTHERS

The damaged grit bin has been reported and a repair/replacement requested. The Council's other grit bins have been reviewed and checked. It is worth noting that the two grit bins located outside the doctor's surgery and Blofield School are not in public ownership.

20. TO REVIEW REGULAR INSPECTIONS OF FARMAN FIELD TRIM TRAIL

Clerk (EB) to create a visual inspection checklist for weekly checks of the trim trail and Farman Field and to carry out a visit to the site on 24th July 2026. The checklist will be circulated to councillors/local residents to see if this can be checked by volunteers regularly. Clerk (EB) to ensure Farman Field is to be added to the BDC RoSPA Inspection list in October 2026.

The Council agreed to work with the tree wardens to spread wood chippings on the new trees in the Autumn. Clerk (SO) to note for the September agenda.

21. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON MARTY'S MARSH WORKING PARTY, MOTH COUNT AND REVIEW 'SMALL BRIDGE' AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

Cllr Yvonne Burton reported a successful working party: Items have been removed from the run and the bank has been repaired. The moth count recorded 150 species, bringing the total species list to 1,500.

The small bridge now has a greater drop on either side following clearance of vegetation from the ditch, and requires protection along its sides. Tree Warden, Richard Codling has volunteered to cost post and rail fencing on either approach to the bridge (he would construct this, with the Council covering the cost of materials); fencing must be strong enough for someone to lean on.

The fencing at the roadside boundary of Marty's Marsh is still damaged and in urgent need of repair. Cllr Yvonne Burton to report to NCC Highways and send photographs to Clerk (EB), who will check with Tom Cox (NCC Highways Engineer). It was also noted that willows have grown over the roadside and this will be raised with NCC Highways.

22. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE PEOPLE'S EMERGENCY SCREENING AND CONSIDER A FURTHER VIEWING

Cllr Yvonne Burton attended the screening, which focused on climate change and positive actions communities can take. Blofield Parish Council does not currently have an Emergency Resilience Plan. Cllr Davis outlined what such a plan could include noting that templates are available and he offered to help the Parish Council.

The Council agreed to consider a further screening of the People's Emergency Screening in Blofield at the Courthouse. Clerk (EB) to investigate costs/options and bring to the September meeting.

23. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE MARGARET HARKER HALL FAYRE STAND AND MHH COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

Cllrs Sarah Dhesi, Yvonne Burton and Paul Culley-Barber attended the Fayre and received compliments from residents on how clean the bus shelters now are. The Margaret Harker Hall Committee is working effectively on grant applications.

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

Cllr Yvonne Burton reported that events are running well. The next Heathlands Management Committee meeting is on 4th August 2026.

25. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE COURTHOUSE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Cllr Joseph Scholes reported that he was unable to attend the last Courthouse Management Committee meeting but that all is running smoothly.

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

The Council reviewed proposed payments #74 to #99 totaling £17,812.33 and unanimously resolved to approve these payments (Appendix A). Clerk (SO) to make payments. The Council noted that #74 & #75 were made in June as they required urgent payment. The Council noted receipts received #1 to #28 totalling £62,840.40 (Appendix B).

27. TO REVIEW THE COUNCIL'S CURRENT RESERVES POSITION

The Council did not discuss reserves this month.

28. TO CONSIDER WIP INSURANCE COVER

The Council discussed WIP (Work in Progress) insurance and agreed that additional WIP insurance cover is not required at this stage. Cllr Paul Culley-Barber proposed (seconded by Cllr Sarah Dhesi) that the Council do not take up WIP insurance. Clerk (EB) to confirm with Big Sky Living that their finance director will carry out an additional check on the recommended contractor.

29. TO CONSIDER A FUNDING REQUEST FROM THE HEATHLANDS BOWLS CLUB

The Council considered the funding request from the Heathlands Bowls Club. As the club operates as a paid membership club, the Council resolved not to award a grant, in line with its Grant Policy which requires applicants to be open to the community without membership. Cllr Paul Culley-Barber had declared an interest and abstained from the vote. Clerk (EB) to advise the club.

30. TO CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE COUNCIL MEETING STRUCTURES

The Council discussed how to make its meetings and communications more effective. The following was agreed:

- a. Delegated authority: The Clerks' delegated spending limit will be increased from £500 to £1,000, to be reviewed after three months.
- b. Meeting format: Agenda reports to include a clear action point or recommendation to assist discussion and decision-making.
- c. Minor works such as dog bins/parish upkeep to be delegated to the clerks for their approval and action without council discussion.
- d. Sub-committees: It was noted that sub-committees are not currently feasible given the size of the Council.
- e. Community Hub working group: The Council to consider establishing a working group from September 2026, focused on the end product (grants, equipment, advertising, income from letting).
- f. Volunteer recruitment: The Council agreed an ongoing recruitment drive is needed, with regular updates on the Council's Facebook page and a summary of 3–5 key points from each meeting to be posted after meetings. The Council's website also needs refreshing to help attract residents.

31. TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE

- It was noted that the Brundall Neighbourhood Plan wording indicates that Marty's Marsh falls within Brundall, but the map does not reflect this. Clerk (EB) to write to Claudia (Brundall Parish Council Clerk) to seek clarification. Clerk (EB) also to ask Brundall Parish Council what they are considering naming the Country Park.
- A parishioner has reached out and requested a cycle/path from Blofield Heath to Blofield. This would enable people to walk/cycle safely to the surgery/library from Blofield Heath, as the road is dangerous for non-drivers. Clerk (EB) responded detailing the work done to date on this by the Parish Council and BDC.
- Two fallen / leaning trees on FP10 have been reported to NCC Highways.
- The two tree wardens are happy to continue as tree wardens to the Parish Council. Clerk (SO) to ensure they are covered by the parish council insurance.

32. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

The following items were noted for the August and September agendas: Permissive footpath update; preschool contract; Courthouse constitution; recruitment/job advertisement; tarpaulin for the mobile stage unit; footpath report; community award scheme; draft AI policy; tenders report; People's Emergency screening (Courthouse); pergola replacement; stonemason report.

33. TO CONFIRM THE DATES OF THE NEXT TWO PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Monday 10th August 2026 at 7:30pm at Blofield Courthouse.

Monday 14th September 2026 at 7:30pm at Blofield Courthouse.

34. 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

At 9:15pm the Council unanimously resolved to formally pass the resolution (under the Public Bodies and Admission to Meetings Act 1960) to exclude the press and the public for the remaining agenda items.

35. 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 project and the appointment of contractors.

The Council also discussed the Permissive Footpath; Clerk (EB) to confirm details to Simon Waters.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10:00pm.

Signed..... Dated.....