

Blofield Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Blofield Parish Council on Monday 12th October 2026 at 7.30pm to 10.50pm at Blofield Courthouse

PRESENT

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

County Cllr. Jan Davis attended. Two 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.

2. TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr. Paul Newstead and were duly accepted by the Council.

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

Cllr. Will Crane declared an interest in item 35 (Preschool lease). No 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

A parishioner advised that he had prepared a draft web page for Marty's Marsh, and this will be reviewed by Cllr. Yvonne Burton.

County Cllr. Jan Davis provided a report, a copy of which has been posted on the Parish Council's website as an Appendix to the Minutes. Highlights included Norfolk County Council's budget proposals (savings of £32.3 million identified), the recycling centre survey and household hazardous waste days.

County Cllr. Davis advised that it is for developers to request the adoption of estate roads and the District Council has no control over this. He has met with NCC Highways regarding the Council's concerns with the boundary finish of the A47/allotments site and has also contacted First Bus regarding the X1 service not stopping in the village.

5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 14TH SEPTEMBER 2026

Following minor amendments, 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 staging from the old school is in storage until it is required at the hub.
- The Forest School held a working party with volunteers from Barclays Bank and is now investigating the pond.
- The benches at Farman Field, a new dog bin post and two life rings have been installed. The life ring at Marty's Marsh has been installed in the wrong location; the installer will return in the next couple of weeks to relocate it to the bench by the bridge.
- There has been no response to the Council's letter regarding the bench on Blofield Corner Road; the Clerk (EB) to chase.
- The FP12 bridge remains closed and the replacement may not be in place until early February 2027.
- Application 2026/0365 (solar park, adjacent to McDonald's): Amended plans now include a 1.8m wide footpath along the extent of the proposal, linking to Blofield; however, the Council's other requests (bollards, double yellow lines and a 30mph speed limit) have not been included. These have been added to the list for discussion with Tom Cox (NCC Highways).

7. PLANNING

Application: TPO 2026/2282

Proposal: Works to trees under a Tree Preservation Order – coppice all cherry laurels to 200mm above ground in the woodland; cut back overhanging yew hedging by 3m from 6m to 3m.

Location: Land adjacent to Blofield Hall, Hall Road, Blofield

At the meeting the Council unanimously resolved to object as the application provides no rationale for the coppicing of all cherry laurels and no arboricultural report has been submitted, as required by the guidance on the application form. It was noted that a parishioner had also raised related concerns about the intent of the works.

Application: 2026/2712

Proposal: Works to TPO trees – T1 Oak, fell to ground level due to extensive dieback and evidence of colonisation of Ganoderma and Inonotus at the base of the tree.

Location: Blofield Hall, The Street, Blofield

At the meeting the Council resolved to make no comment, noting that the application had been completed by a tree surgeon. It was also noted that the address given is inaccurate (the site is in Blofield Heath), although the postcode is correct.

Application: 2025/3580

Proposal: Consider BDC correspondence and any further Parish Council comments

Location: Blafelda, 24 Yarmouth Road, Blofield, NR13 4JS

The Council noted correspondence from the BDC planning officer advising that the application will not be heard at the October planning committee and that, from 31st October 2026, the new National Scheme of Delegation comes into force; as a retrospective application it will be subject to the Gateway Test/Triage. The Council also noted correspondence from the applicant's agent suggesting the application could be withdrawn and resubmitted to be determined under delegated powers, and that an appeal would follow any refusal.

The Council expressed its disappointment and resolved to submit a short comment to BDC expressing its disappointment at how this long-running application is being handled, so that parishioners' concerns remain on record. Cllr. Paul Culley-Barber to draft. Clerk (EB) to submit.

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

Application: 2026/3017

Blofield Parish Council Reserve Matters for the community hub therefore no comments.

Application: 2026/0152

Proposal: Non-material amendment of 2026/0152 - changing the Home Office/Gym French doors to a window and the lounge window to become French doors. Timber cladding gable section to be changed to brick on the west facing elevation.

Location: Green Croft, Villavon Way, Blofield, NR13 4QP

At the meeting the Council resolved to submit no comment in relation to this application.

COMMUNITY HUB PROJECT

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

The Clerk (EB) presented the community hub report circulated at the meeting. The application for the removal/variation of conditions (2026/2788) is now live and under consultation.

Car park: Surveys and aerial photographs taken by Pentaco on site have established that the 57 parking bays in the approved plans cannot be accommodated, owing to the position of the play equipment. The architects (Purcell) can fit 49 bays, having tried many combinations. The following points were noted:

- A reduction in the number of bays will require a variation of the car park condition in the original planning permission (2023/3727), at a fee of £607, and will be subject to consultation with NCC Highways.
- The Greater Norwich Growth Board (GNGB) has formally confirmed that the change will not affect its funding; a supporting narrative will need to be provided.

The Council unanimously resolved to ratify the confirmation given to the architects that the 49-bay configuration is accepted and to proceed with a variation of condition application, unless another option was identified quickly. The Council will seek to reclaim the cost of the variation fee if possible.

Drainage run: The drainage run to the soakaway crosses the play area. Purcell is investigating a revised route, including checking with the arboriculturist given the nearby maple tree.

Bay demarcation: The car park bays will be demarcated using inserts in the geotextile membrane. The cost is awaited from REAL Consulting.

Bike stand: The Council approved the revised location of the bike stand as a single Sheffield-style stand with cover for 20 bikes. Cllr. Dhési is working on obtaining a grant for the bike shelter.

South side main hall windows: The Council agreed to have clear glass windows. Obscuring glass film can be added and removed as required.

Defibrillator: The defibrillator, being donated by Big Sky Living, will be purchased via Heart2Heart. The Council agreed location 'option 2', under cover of the porch on top corner.

Breaking Ground event: The event will take place on Monday 2nd November 2026 and the GNGB is being advised. The Clerk (EB) will liaise with Pentaco on arrangements, and it is hoped the County & District Councillors will attend. Councillors were asked to keep the date free.

10. TO NOTE THE PROJECT SPEND AND CONTINGENCY SPEND TO DATE

The Clerk (SO) reported that there has been no significant change since last month, with just two small contractor payments this month. The GNGB has agreed to reimburse invoices promptly once claimed. The NCC Early Years grant will be paid up front for the project and Section 106 funds will be drawn down as required. It was noted that the BDC CIL loan has been approved.

11. TO DISCUSS BT OPENREACH / BROADBAND CONNECTION AT THE COMMUNITY HUB

Cllr. Culley-Barber reported on a meeting with the BDC digital connectivity officer. There is an internet connection into the site. Clerk (SO) is chasing the council registration as a new site.

12. TO AGREE NEXT ACTIONS FOR THE BUSINESS PLAN FOR THE COMMUNITY HUB

The draft business plan has been circulated and comments will be included by Clerk (EB). Clerk (EB) to extract action points from the plan to progress. Clerk (EB) to contact a surveyor regarding leasing the café space.

13. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON CAFÉ / KITCHEN REQUIREMENTS AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

Following the working group meeting, Cllr. Dhési met the manager of a local café, who provided very helpful advice. Points arising were noted and a list of requirements has been circulated.

A meeting with the M&E designers is being arranged by the Clerk (EB) to discuss the operational layout, plumbing, water and electrics requirements.

The Awards for All application (approximately £20,000 for kitchen equipment) has been submitted.

Further input will be sought from other café operators in the area.

14. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE PENTACO SOCIAL VALUE MEETING AND RATIFY THE REMOVAL OF OLD PLAYGROUND TRIM TRAIL EQUIPMENT

Cllr. Dhési reported on the social value and community meeting held on 23rd September with Pentaco. An update showing progress against the social value commitments will be circulated regularly. A client charter setting out what the Council expects from Pentaco has been

circulated; councillors were asked to suggest any additions. A community update meeting ('meet the contractor') will be held on 9th November from 5pm to 7pm, at Blofield Courthouse.

The Council unanimously ratified the decision to remove the old trim trail equipment, which Pentaco will remove whilst on site as part of their social value commitments. No additional cost has been notified.

PARISH MATTERS

15. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE GALLIFORD TRY / ALLOTMENT MEETING AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

Cllr. Dhesi reported that the allotment car park remains incomplete and there has been no progress since the September meeting. A list of concerns has been gathered and the Council agreed to take these to National Highways providing photographs and referring to car parking standards, the Heads of Terms and the Statement of Common Ground.

16. TO RECEIVE AN ALLOTMENTS QUARTERLY INSPECTION REPORT AND AN UPDATE ON THE ALLOTMENT MEETING AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

The site is generally in good order. Letters will be sent to tenants with a reminder about bonfires and safety, and keeping plots tidy. The Council agreed unanimously to continue with the current pest control contractor for 2027/28, as the price is being held.

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

Cllr. Burton reported that a small working party was held; the next will be on 24th October. A dry hedge has been built up to the small bridge to channel people onto the path. The bank reinforcement was dismantled during the summer and the bank continues to erode; the working party will consider a more permanent repair, possibly with signage.

18. TO AGREE THE REPLACEMENT FOR THE PERGOLA AT WYNGATES AREA 1 AND REVIEW THE GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

The Council agreed in principle to replace the pergola with a cherry tree. Cllr Crane will investigate a solution and obtain quotations to bring back to the Council.

The grounds contractor left hedge cuttings and has been asked to return to tidy the site. Councillors questioned the value of the maintenance costs and this will be considered when budget setting.

FINANCE & GOVERNANCE

19. TO NOTE ALL DELEGATED DECISIONS MADE SINCE THE SEPTEMBER MEETING

The Clerk (SO) presented the table of delegated decisions made in the last month, #10 to #16 were noted by the Council.

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

The Council unanimously approved the invoices for payment #133 to #154 totalling £22,274.03 (#133 to #136 invoices were paid late September). Clerk (SO) to make payments.

21. TO REVIEW THE COUNCIL'S CURRENT RESERVES POSITION

The Clerk (SO) reported that the reserves position has changed very little since last month. The Council noted that significant payments will commence from November for the Community Hub and agreed that funds will need to be drawn down from the BDC Deposit Scheme to cover these invoices as required. Clerk (SO) to action.

22. TO NOTE CIL PAYMENT FOR THE COMMUNITY HUB BUILD

The Council noted the CIL invoice from Broadland District Council of £12,263.39 (CIL ref. 2026/0809, Community Building, Blofield Park), due for payment by 4th December 2026.

23. TO APPROVE SIGNING THE EARLY YEARS GRANT AGREEMENT WITH NCC

The Early Years grant agreement with Norfolk County Council has been reviewed and the Council unanimously approved signing the agreement. Clerk (EB) to complete. The Council also approved signing the agreement with Broadland District Council setting out how GNGB funds will be drawn down and paid to the Council.

24. TO APPROVE A PARISH COUNCILLOR TO SPEAK FOR A NATIONAL HIGHWAYS INTERVIEW

The Council resolved to ask Cllr. Paul Newstead if he would be willing to carry out the interview. Clerk (EB) to action.

25. TO NOTE THE PARISH PARTNERSHIP SCHEME 2027/28 & DISCUSS ANY ACTIONS

The Council agreed to consider measures to address speeding through The Street / Plantation Road, near the school/doctors/new community hub and along Mill Road in Blofield Heath. The Council agreed to arrange an urgent meeting with NCC Highways engineer to discuss this so an application can be made by December as necessary, but that if difficult to obtain quotes and/or NCC Highways advised considering solutions not related to Parish Partnership funding, to save the budget for the following year.

26. TO NOTE THE PARISH COUNCIL PRESENCE AT THE GREENER COMMUNITY DAY ON THE 22ND NOVEMBER AT THE MARGARET HARKER HALL AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

Cllr. Burton will prepare a display including a map of places to visit around Blofield. Information on volunteering at Marty's Marsh and becoming a councillor will also be available. Cllrs. Burton and Scholes will attend the event.

27. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE TREE WARDENS REGARDING PLANTING PROPOSALS FOR FARMAN FIELD AND HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

The tree wardens will replace the dead trees at Farman Field. The Clerk (SO) will let them know that the Woodland Trust is offering free trees and ask them to advise the planting date so that volunteers can help.

The Clerk (EB) reported that a volunteer was carrying out health and safety checks visits weekly, providing reports and has attended play inspection training. Sovereign is due to inspect the trim trail in November and the volunteer will be invited to attend.

28. TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE

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

- A resident has reported a dying cypress tree in Symonds Close, which will be investigated.
- A resident has raised concerns regarding speeding on Holly Lane where the speed limit is 60mph. The Council will raise these concerns at the next meeting with the NCC Highways Engineer.
- The Town and Parish Forum notes were circulated to councillors.
- The Council was supportive of Broadland District Council's Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) vehicle-related anti-social behaviour being extended for a further three years. Clerk (EB) to confirm.
- The BDC Winter Pressures Grant has been applied for by Blofield Church and Heathlands Community Centre.

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

Cllr. Burton reported that new bookings are replacing the preschool's sessions, parking associated with junior football has improved, a jumble sale has been held, new kitchen unit doors are being fitted and a winter pressures grant application has been submitted.

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

30. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE COURTHOUSE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING & NOTE THE CONSTITUTION PAPERS CIRCULATED

The minutes of the Courthouse Management Committee meeting were circulated. The Committee are keen to move towards a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), leasing the Courthouse from the Parish Council, which would retain ownership. The Council agreed to consider this preference and understand the implications. Clerk (EB) to seek guidance from CAN etc, however the Council recognise this may not be until Spring 2027.

A leak in the roof has been identified in the cells block of the courthouse. The Clerk (EB) is obtaining quotes from roofing contractors.

31. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

The Clerks will compile the items for the next agenda.

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

This was confirmed as Monday 9th November 2026 at 7.30pm at Blofield Courthouse. This will follow the Pentaco 'meet the contractor' open evening from 5pm to 7pm (set-up from 4.30pm), which Cllrs. Burton, Culley-Barber, Smith and Dhesi and the Clerk (EB) expect to attend.

33. 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 34 to 36, commercially sensitive and confidential matters). The members of the public left the meeting.

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

Various commercially sensitive matters were discussed in relation to the community hub.

35. TO DISCUSS THE PRESCHOOL LEASE AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS

Various points were discussed and it was agreed that the Clerk (EB) would look at reviewing the draft lease this month.

36. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE NEW OWNERS OF THE OLD SCHOOL MEETING

The Clerk (EB) reported on the meeting with the new owners of the old school.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.50pm.

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