

Blofield Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Blofield Parish Council on Monday 18th May 2026 at 7:30pm at Blofield Courthouse.

PRESENT

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

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO THE MEETING BY THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All councillors were present.

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

Will Crane declared an interest in ITEM 10h, Blofield Preschool.

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

Four parishioners were present. Newly elected County Cllr Jan Davis attended and provided a brief update from his first week in his new role. District Councillor Paul Newstead was also present. Three Parishioners raised queries regarding Farman Field. The parishioners expressed disappointment they were not consulted regarding the trim trail installation.

The parishioners are keen to see further landscape improvements on Farman Field, the Council explained progress made to date with regular cutting, tree planting, daffodil planting and confirmed benches will be installed this year. The land is still owned by Broadland District Council.

5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 20th APRIL 2026

Following a minor amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 20th April 2026 were approved as a true and accurate record and duly signed by the Chair.

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

The churchyard memorial stones survey and repairs to a stone cross will take place late May - June.

7. PLANNING

Application: 2026/0834

Proposal: Erection of two storey cafe with external seating, 3 polytunnels, and redesign of warehouse, service yard & revised car parking (extant permission 20222050)

Location: Norwich Camping and Leisure, 58 Yarmouth Road, Blofield, NR13 4LQ

The Council resolved to support the application but would like clarity and/or confirmation that the points below will be followed or conditioned to ensure the application is mindful of all of Blofield's NP policies:

- The café building will be substantially higher than the rest of the site. The PC requests that there is shielding and masking of the development from the neighbouring properties on Shreeve Road and Smith Close.*
- There will be an increase in traffic coming through the village from Norwich to Yarmouth to reach Norwich Camping & Leisure, and potentially an increase in traffic going through The Street to reach the A47 slip road or traversing the old A47 to rejoin at Lingwood for onward travel to Acle. Therefore, to encourage safe pedestrian access to the site for Blofield residents, the Parish Council recommend*

and welcome the addition of a pedestrian crossing in the vicinity of Wyngates junction with Yarmouth Road (or as close as is possible) - and continuation of footpath from Shreeve Road fronting Norwich Camping & Leisure, to reach the existing entrance.

- *Opening hours (of the café and site) are not confirmed. The Parish Council requests that there is a condition for deliveries during social hours to minimise noise disturbances for the residents in Shreeve Road and Smith Close.*
- *Lighting schemes: The Parish Council requests that Blofield NP Dark Skies Policy is complied with wherever possible and that a sympathetic lighting scheme – low level lighting, is introduced.*
- *The Transport Statement contains various inaccuracies. It needs to be noted that Blofield does not have a bus service that operates every 15 minutes. At best it is hourly from Blofield and every 30 minutes if residents walked for 30 minutes into Brundall to catch the No.16. The Parish Council agrees with NCC Highways recommendation that the existing disabled parking spaces are relocated into the main parking area to prevent conflict with vehicles entering / leaving the site along with additional secure cycle storage, to minimise the risk of accidents.*

Application: 2026/1159

Proposal: Erection of a single-storey detached garage, with solar panels, to the front of the dwelling.

Location: Bayridge, Brundall Road, Blofield, NR13 4LB

The Council noted concerns over the possible loss of any mature hedging near the roadside.

Application: 2026/1029

Proposal: 2-bedroom self-built bungalow on the existing side garden of no.2 and new vehicle crossover to no.2

Location: 2 Skedge Way, Blofield, NR13 4RY

This is the third time this proposal has been submitted and has been refused each time.

Ref. No: 2024/1602 | Status: Refused. Ref. No: 2025/2488 | Status: Refused.

The Council objected to this application and agreed to submit the previously submitted comments.

Application: BD0806 tree preservation order

The Broadland District Council Blofield Tree Preservation Order 2026 No. BD0806

Tree(s) at : Land Between Cremers Meadow And Marty's Marsh, Brundall Road, Blofield

Easting : 633314 Northing : 308720

The Council resolved to support this TPO request.

Application: 2026/1151

Proposal: T1- Oak- Remove significant Deadwood. Raise crown on the Western aspect in order to create a clearance height of 2m (minimum) from the adjacent building.

Location: Margaret Harker Hall, Yarmouth Road, Blofield, NR13 4LE

This work has already been approved by BDC Planning on 14th May.

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

No further applications were received.

9. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE DISCHARGE OF CONDITION 12 FROM THE FIRST HUB PLANNING APPLICATION

Eleanor Bannister reported that Condition 12 on the original planning application regarding construction on the playing field must be discharged. NCC Children's Services are very supportive and have provided a letter of support. Clerk EB to progress with the planning department and action as soon as possible. There may be a charge for this discharge. In addition, there are other conditions that require discharging which Eleanor is progressing.

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

- a. **Design Team Meetings** – Notes were circulated from the meeting on Monday 27th April 2026 that the Council attended. (A further meeting took place without the Council to coordinate plans.)
It was noted that there may not be space for a full hedge between the play area and car park. This will need to be considered when contractors are on site.
The Council discussed the LADS (Liquidated and Ascertained Damages) figure required for the tender document. After a detailed discussion, the Council unanimously resolved to request that £600 per week is noted in the document. Clerk (EB) to advise the design team.
- b. **Programme / Timings & Risk Register** - This has not been updated by the design team for some time as much is dependent on the tender process. However, it was identified that the Council need to have a meeting/working party meeting after the tenders have been returned in July. Clerk (EB) to liaise with the design team and consider timings for this.
- c. **Funding Application** – The Early Years funding contact requires a long stop date (when Blofield Preschool will move in). The Council unanimously resolved to consider this date following the Council September 2026 meeting. Clerk (EB) to advise NCC Children’s Services department.
- d. **Cost Forecasts / Budget** – These were reviewed and discussed by the Council. The Council is awaiting tender documentation before considering next options.
- e. **Additional Costs / Finances** – The Council discussed a quotation of £191.50+VAT for moving the Heras fencing and spare panels, and in addition, a quotation for further security fencing at the westerly point of the Forest School grounds at a cost of £586.90+VAT. This will increase security of the site. The Council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal. Clerk (EB) to arrange works. These works will be funded from the Blofield Park Cost Centre.
- f. **Planning Application 2026/0809** – The planning department will come back to us by 9th June 2026.
- g. **Tender** – This is still being worked on by the design team and will be sent out in approximately one week. The Council have requested they review the document before it is circulated.
- h. **Preschool** – The lease agreements have been put on hold until timings of the hub are clearer.
- i. **Site Security and H&S** – Sarah Dhesi and Eleanor Bannister have secured free assistance from British Sugar to help fill in the ruts on the site created by the onsite surveys. This will make the grounds safe for children to play on. Our thanks go to British Sugar for their kind help and assistance. Clerk (EB) has contacted Garden Guardian to arrange grass cutting of the whole Blofield Park site shortly. Joseph Scholes requested that the wheely bins are removed from beside the gates, close to the entrance as they act as a climbing access point to the site. Clerk (EB) to ensure actioned and that they emptied.
- j. **Community Engagement** – To consider next month
- k. **Play Park and Grounds** - The Council discussed options for simple pedestrian access of Blofield Park if the site is opened in the summer. Consideration was given to leaving a pedestrian gate open at all times or opening/closing it every day. Further consideration is required in the June meeting together with consideration on whether to cut the roadside hedge lower to ensure the site is more visible at all times.
- l. **Kitchens** – No update
- m. **Insurance** - Council to consider whether to insure the fencing as a listed item on their policy. Clerk (SO) to obtain a cost from the insurers.
- n. **Other** – NCC have been in touch regarding clause 12.6.3, in our legal land transfer documentation. This is regarding the shared entrance area. They require urgent resolution before the sale of the old school site section they own takes place by auction. Clerk (EB) to urgently refer to the Council’s solicitor to get the matter resolved. The Council approved this referral and associated costs with agreement that, where possible, costs are directed to NCC.

11. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE FARMAN FIELD PLAY TRIM TRAIL INSTALLATION, AND AGREE ANY ACTIONS

Will Crane reported that the play equipment has been installed and the fencing will be coming down this week. The trail has been signed off and is ready for play. Signage has been put up. Clerk (SO) to ask Garden Guardian to weedkiller around the legs of the trim trail as part of their works on site to ensure it does not get overgrown.

- 12. TO APPROVE INVOICES FOR PAYMENT, NOTE COUNCIL FUNDS AND REVIEW INTERNAL MONTHLY CHECKS**
The Council reviewed the proposed payments #27 to #49 totalling £32,585.46 and the Council unanimously resolved to approve these payments (Appendix A). Clerk (SO) to make payments. The Council noted the monthly internal review carried out by Sarah Dhesi.
- 13. TO CONSIDER A SMALL FUNDING REQUEST FROM THE CHARITY 'PLAYING FOR CAKE'**
The Council discussed this small grant request for support with a dementia café run at Blofield Courthouse and unanimously resolved to fund them £300. Clerk (SO) to make payment.
- 14. TO CONSIDER A SMALL FUNDING REQUEST FROM BLOFIELD CHURCH FOR THEIR SEPTEMBER HERITAGE WEEKEND**
The Council discussed this small grant request for support with the printing of a booklet for the Blofield Church Heritage Weekend event. The Council unanimously resolved to fund them £300. Clerk (SO) to make payment.
- 15. TO APPROVE ANNUAL DONATIONS OF £250 TO BADCOG FOR HOWES MEADOW MAINTENANCE**
The Council discussed this donation and agreed to contact BADCOG to understand further how often the site is open to the parishioners.
- At 10pm the Council resolved to suspend standing orders.*
- 16. TO AGREE THE INSURANCE COSTS FROM JUNE 2026**
The Council unanimously resolved to accept the 3-year agreement with Zurich and the annual insurance premium of £3,119.03 (inc. IPT) with effect from 1st June 2026.
- 17. TO NOTE THE INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS, AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS AND APPOINT SUE LAKE AS AUDITOR FOR 2026/27**
The Council noted the internal auditors detailed report and the observations and recommendations. Clerk SO to ensure these are actioned. It was noted that as the income/expenditure has dipped below the £200,000 threshold the Council does not need to change its accounting basis and can continue on Receipts and Payments for a further three years.
- 18. TO REVIEW THE COUNCIL'S CURRENT RESERVES POSITION**
The Council reviewed the current reserves detailed report (Appendix B). Community Hub project CIL reserves totalling £45,829.30 have been spent in 2025/26 (Appendix C), and a further £33,265.29 has been spent so far in 2026/27 (Appendix D).
- 19. TO APPROVE BLOFIELD PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT 2025/26**
The Clerk (SO) presented the Annual Financial Report 2025/26 for the Council to review. The Council unanimously resolved to approve the report.
- 20. TO APPROVE THE 2025-26 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**
The Clerk (SO) presented the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 for the Council to review. The Council unanimously resolved to approve this statement and this was duly signed by the Chair.
- 21. TO APPROVE THE 2025-26 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**
The Clerk (SO) presented the 2025/26 Statement of Accounts for the Council to review. The Council unanimously resolved to approve this statement and this was duly signed by the Chair.
- 22. TO CONSIDER A S106 ALLOCATION REQUEST FROM THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT**
The Council discussed this request and agreed that section 106 funds for any costs related to open space within the parish would be most beneficial. Clerk (EB) to advise Broadland District Council.

23. TO CONSIDER AN ADVERT FOR MAINTENANCE SUPPORT

Following auditor feedback the Council agreed the clerks explore further the best options available to the Council for extra staff support. Clerks (SO/EB) to action.

24. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE PLANNED FOOTPATH WORK FOR FP4, FP2 AND MARTY'S MARSH AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS

Clerk (EB) reported that work will commence on FP4 next week over half term. All the necessary paperwork is in place to allow work on a public right of way. This is being carried out by JDMA through the Norfolk Rivers Drainage Board (NRDB) at a slightly lower cost than expected. The Council agreed to pay a 50% deposit before the work commences. Clerk (SO) to arrange. A quote has been obtained from NRDB for loose stones to be spread along FP2 to improve the surface of the pathway. This is at a cost of approximately £900. The Council unanimously resolved to approve this proposal. Clerk (EB) to progress.

Work at Marty's Marsh has not been scheduled yet. This will hopefully take place in September by NRDB. Clerk (EB) to continue chasing.

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

Yvonne Burton reported that the working party met last weekend and carried out various works; the site is looking lovely. There is a planned working group picnic on 4th July 2026. The conservation area will be open to the public too.

26. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE BUS SHELTER REPAIRS AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

Re-roofing the Blofield brick bus shelter has taken place and painting of both shelters too. The majority of this work was funded by the recent bus shelter grants scheme.

A new bus shelter grant has been opened for 2026/27. The Council agreed to consider applying for re-roofing the Blofield Heath Shelter and a possible bike shelter/store at the community hub. Clerk (EB) to liaise with grant team. Stuart Smith to investigate shelter roof.

27. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON NCC HIGHWAYS MATTERS AND CONSIDER ANY ACTIONS

Sarah Dhesi reported that a good solution has been found for the entrance 'Welcome to Blofield' signs at the east end of Yarmouth Road.

Unfortunately, the NCC Highways Engineer is unable to install speed bumps on The Street, these require street lights which the parish do not have. In addition, a feasibility study was discussed but it was felt the cost of £5,000 and the resultant data would not produce an effective outcome that would result in action being taken. Sarah Dhesi to update the parishioner who raised concerns of speeding.

28. TO NOTE A MEETING WITH A PARISHIONER REGARDING THE FOREST SCHOOL SITE AT BLOFIELD PARK

Sarah Dhesi and Eleanor Bannister met with a parishioner regarding the forest school. The Council confirmed that they are not able to sell any of the Blofield Park land received from NCC Children's Services in lieu of part of the Wyngates Area 3 land, as it needs to remain for community use.

29. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE ALLOTMENT SITE CAR PARK AND GALLIFORD TRY WORKS

Galliford Try are liaising with the local land owners to ensure there is a car park available for the allotment holders. Works are taking place to the footpath to improve access for wheelbarrows etc.

30. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON BLOFIELD CHURCHYARD WALL REPAIRS AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS (EB)

Eleanor Bannister reported that the works on the churchyard wall repairs are commencing on Tuesday 26th May 2026. A councillor will liaise with them at the beginning of the works to ensure the scope of work is clear.

- 31. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE HEATHLANDS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**
Yvonne Burton provided a brief update from the meeting.
- 32. TO NOTE THE DISSOLUTION CLAUSE AND MARGARET HARKER HALL ANNUAL REPORT**
The Council noted the dissolution clause addition and the contents of the Margaret Harker Hall annual report.
- 33. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE RECENT LOCAL AUTHORITY CLUSTER MEETING**
Joseph Scholes circulated a report from the recent local authority cluster meeting.
- 34. TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE**
The S106 officer has confirmed that funds are available for the maintenance of Farman Field and Blofield Park.
The Keep Blofield Special Group have thanked the Council for the equipment it provided.
Anglian Water is currently preparing its long-term plans for the future of water supply and water recycling in Norfolk and Suffolk through its Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) and Drainage and Water Recycling Management Plan (DWMP), which cover the period 2030 to 2055. A workshop is being held on 21st May 2026.
Partly dead sycamore trees have fallen over on PROW Footpath 10 and have been reported to NCC Highways.
BDC Parish Deposit Scheme staff have confirmed they take Cyber security very seriously across the Council and have regular training on ways to identify scam emails. Should they suspect a scam email they would contact the parish to confirm. Should bank details change they ask parishes to let them know and provide a bank statement to check against.
A free bike 'Learn to Fix Workshop' is taking place at Margaret Harker Hall, Blofield on 3rd June 2026 from 6.00 to 9.00pm.
- 35. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA**
Courthouse constitution.
- 36. TO CONFIRM THE DATE OF THE NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**
Monday 15th June 2026 at 7:30pm at Blofield Courthouse.
- 37. 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 passed the resolution (under the public bodies and admission to meetings act 1960) to exclude the press and the public for the remaining agenda items.
- 38. TO DISCUSS COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE MATTERS RELATING TO THE COMMUNITY HUB AND APPOINTMENT OF CONTRACTORS**
The Council discussed various commercially sensitive matters regarding the community hub project and appointment of contractors.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10:55pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....