

Blofield Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Blofield Parish Council on Monday 9th February 2026 at 7:30pm at Blofield Courthouse.

PRESENT

Stuart Smith (Chair), Sarah Dhesi (Vice-Chair), Yvonne Burton, Will Crane, Stella Shackle, Paul Culley-Barber, 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

Apologies were received from Joseph Scholes. These apologies were accepted by the Council.

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

William Crane declared a pecuniary interest in item 8i related to 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

No parishioners were present. District Cllr Andrew Proctor sent apologies and provided a written update which was shared with the councillors.

5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 12TH JANUARY 2026

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2026 were 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

Town Pit clearance is scheduled for 11/12 February by TCV volunteers to improve the area.

7. PLANNING

Application: 2026/0194

Proposal: Variation of condition 2 - change of design to permission 2025/0078 (which consented to a single storey rear extension including internal & external alterations) Date of Decision 23.04.2025

Location: Willow Lodge, 51 Yarmouth Road, Blofield, NR13 4LE

The Council agreed that it had no comment but requests that it is kept informed should plans change.

Application: 2025/2488 DCLG Reference 6003515

Proposal: planning appeal

Location: 2 Skedge Way, Blofield, NR13 4RY

The Council agreed to restate its previous concerns sent on 12 September 2025; as it continues to be concerned about overdevelopment and highways safety.

Application: 2025/3580

Proposal: Retrospective alteration of gable roof by raising ridge and eaves to allow for rooms in the roof, erection of single storey front, side and rear extensions, changes to boundary treatment, erection of outbuilding and new garage

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

The Council agreed to resubmit comments to planning and reiterate the request for planning to visit the site. In addition, as this application has been 'called in' Paul Culley-Barber will prepare a statement that can be read at the BDC Planning Committee meeting.

Application: 2026/0152

Proposal: Single storey front extension forming Garage and Gym. Single storey side extension with Veranda, and Porch.

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

The Council agreed that it had no comment but requests that it is kept informed should plans change.

Application: 2025/3366

Proposal: Construction of new canopies above two existing Padel Courts – amended application

Location: Norfolk Premier Golf, Yarmouth Road, Blofield, NR13 4JS

Detail about canopies translucent fabric.

The Parish Council discussed concerns related to the rainwater being directed to an overflow pond onsite but it was not clear where this was located. The Parish Council therefore requests clarity as to where the water will flow to and a reassurance that there is no possibility of flooding elsewhere due to insufficient capacity.

8. TO CONSIDER FEEDBACK ON ANY PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED SUBSEQUENT TO THE PUBLICATION OF THIS AGENDA AND DISCUSS PARISHIONER QUERY REGARDING PLANNING UPDATE 2024/0751

Updates were noted on application 2024/0751 entrance changes and 2023/1269 Atlantic Trading hedging installation.

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

- a. UK Power Network lease and land transfer from NCC** - The Parish Council Solicitor has confirmed that the UKPN lease is now progressing and hopefully the land transfer will take place in the next month. The Council unanimously ratified an alteration to the UKPN lease detailing the Tenant (UKPN) rights to access if the Landlord (Blofield Parish Council) requires an alternative route of access.

b. Design Team Meetings

- i. Notes from the design team meeting have been circulated to the Parish Council.
- ii. The Council discussed possible drainage issues on the site and resolved to install a separate drainage system to the mains sewer (independent of the existing old school drains). This will be at an additional cost of approximately £25,000.
- iii. The Council discussed creating bunds on Blofield Park if there is surplus soil that needs removing from the site. The Council did not make a decision on this matter.
- iv. Ventilation and heating across the hall were discussed and this detail will be taken to the next design team meeting.
- v. The overspend and cost of the project was discussed in detail and it was proposed that the hall divider is fully removed from the design, enabling one double entrance door and one storeroom door, and aiming for just one wind catcher. This should overall reduce the costs in a number of areas.
- vi. The Council agreed that the windows size could be adjusted at the design team meeting with the aim of creating larger windows in the hall and smaller ones in the café, therefore not impacting costs.
- vii. Ventilation/heating in the clerks' office was discussed, and it was agreed this would be discussed at the design team meeting and installed in the most cost-effective manner.
- viii. The Council agreed to install film over any 'privacy windows' themselves, reducing costs.

c. Programme / Timings & Risk Register

The Council reviewed the risk register and timeline. A second SI report is required for the site to establish better drainage solutions for the build. This could result in a more expensive solution than planned.

d. GNGB Funding

The Parish Council has received a GNGB Funding in principle offer letter on 20th January 2026. Clerks to review the documentation and fulfilment requirements. Clerk (EB) to continue to progress the land transfer as a priority.

e. Other funding applications

- i. Big Skies Living has kindly offered to fund the Defibrillator and cabinet for the new community hub. The Council thanked Gary Waterton from Big Skies Living for this generous donation.
- ii. Other grant applications are progressing, and other fundraising opportunities are being considered such as 'buy a brick' / engaging with local businesses.

f. Cost Forecasts / Budget

- i. Broadland District Council has confirmed the Parish Council will need to pay £12,500 in CIL contributions.
- ii. The CIL funds spent to date on the project were reviewed by the Parish Council.
- iii. The budget costs document provided monthly by Big Sky Living was discussed in detail. The largest 'estimated figure' in the budget is the build cost and this will remain unclear until tenders have been sought.
- iv. The total CIL funds spent to date on the hub are £31,361.70. (see Appendix C).

g. Additional Costs / Finances

- i. A further SI survey has been approved by the clerks at an additional cost of £3,829 +VAT. This is currently a project overspend and it is unclear how this will impact the final budget until the contractors costs are obtained.
- ii. Installation of a separate drainage system to the mains sewer (independent of the existing old school drains) will be at an additional cost of approximately £25,000. This is currently a project overspend and it is unclear how this will impact the final budget until the contractors costs are obtained.
- iii. The Council considered tree works required on the site at a cost of £1,200 for the removal of the Silver Birch, Indian Bean Tree and shrubbery at Blofield Park site. See item 14. This will be funded from the Blofield Park precept budget.
- iv. The BRUKL thermal model indicates that on current designs the hub does not meet minimum standards. Alternative options and cost implications are being explored by the design team.
- v. Council to consider if a Contractors PQQ insurance should be purchased. The Council will consider this at the next hub working party meeting on Monday 23rd February 2026.
- vi. The Council has incurred an unexpected legal cost of £4,500+VAT in order to progress the UKPN network lease. This will be funded from general reserves.

h. Planning Application

The Blofield Park hub planning application will be submitted in the next month.

i. Preschool

The Preschool has agreed to fund the cost of artificial grass at a cost of £11,600.

The adult sink in the main hall has been removed. Preschool will need to carry out health and safety checks instead.

j. Site Security and H&S

This will be reviewed once the site is owned by the Parish Council.

k. Community Engagement

The Community Update Event took place today, 9th February with a good number of parishioners attending. Plans were available to share with parishioners, and these will also be displayed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish on 12th March.

l. Play Park and Grounds

The Annual ROSPA Inspection Report has been shared. Some items need tightening before the new play area is opened to the public.

m. Kitchens

Kitchen designs are being developed, these will be progressed by the working group and design team.

n. Insurance

The clerk (SO) will arrange for the insurance of the empty year 6 classroom to be added to the Council policy. The company have come back with detailed questions and the clerk is awaiting their responses. There will be a requirement for regular checks to be carried out on site which will be detailed by the insurers. Clerk (SO) to action.

o. Other

Clerk (EB) to put the prequalification document (PQQ) on the GOV.UK Contract Finder.
A temporary home for the staging needs to be found during the build process.

10. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE FARMAN FIELD PLAY TRIM TRAIL QUOTATIONS AND AGREE A CONTRACTOR

Will Crane gave an update on the quotations received so far. He will return with final comparable figures for the working party meeting on 23rd February when the Council will choose a preferred supplier and then place the order. This will be funded from the section 106 funds allocated to this piece of land.

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 #139 to #154 totalling £25,708.89. The Council unanimously resolved to approve these payments (Appendix A). The Parish Council noted the bank balance at 2 January 2026 of £1,163,394.97 (Appendix B).

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

Clerk (EB) to compare the two quotations and maximise the funding available and appoint the contractor. Clerk (SO) to claim bus shelter grant from NCC.

13. TO NOTE THE ALLOCATION OF FUNDS TO COVER THE SALARY OVER SPEND IN 2025/26

The Council reviewed the document summary provided by the clerk (SO) and agreed the overspend was covered by the overtime budget allocation, and underspend on Focal Point and Parish Upkeep budgets.

14. TO CONSIDER TREE WORKS QUOTATIONS FOR VARIOUS WORKS

The Council reviewed the quotations obtained for the works. The Council unanimously resolved to appoint Treecare and Conservation at a cost of £670 for the removal of the Ash in Blofield Churchyard and £1,200 for the removal of the Silver Birch, Indian Bean Tree and shrubbery at the Blofield Park site.

15. TO APPROVE A UNITY TRUST BANK APPLICATION FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL

The Council has had difficulties with Barclays Bank processing large payments to suppliers. The Council reviewed the costs of moving to Unity Trust Bank. These will be approximately £120 per annum. The Council unanimously resolved to approve opening a Unity Trust Bank Account.

16. TO APPROVE ATTENDANCE AT THE NPTS SEMINAR / AI TRAINING

The Council resolved to approve clerks attending any AI training available that they feel will assist.

17. TO CONSIDER THE COST OF INSTALLING 2 FURTHER SAM2 SIGNPOSTS

The Council reviewed the existing list of available posts throughout the parish and agreed no further posts are required. There is a post already available on Mill Road which can be used for speed checking on Mill Road. The post missing from The Street (near the fish and chip shop) will be reinstated. Clerk (EB) to arrange.

18. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE COURTHOUSE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REGARDING THEIR CONSTITUTION AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS

A meeting has been arranged with the Courthouse regarding their constitution to clarify points. Clerk (EB) to refer queries to CAN and seek advice prior to this meeting to assist.

19. TO NOTE CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE DOCTORS SURGERY REGARDING PARKING

Blofield Surgery has contacted the Parish Council to advise that a lot of parents are parking at the surgery when dropping off/picking up at school and this is stopping patients being able to park. They plan to introduce a parking monitoring system to stop this.

20. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM MARTY'S MARSH AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

Yvonne Burton advised that the January working party was cancelled due to bad weather conditions. The next working party will be on 21st February.

The Council discussed the ditch clearance quotations and as specific environmental approval is not needed, the Council unanimously resolved to approve the quotation of £1,160 for the work. This will be funded from Marty's Marsh Reserves. Clerk (EB) to arrange.

21. TO NOTE FURTHER ROADWORKS PLANNED FOR YARMOUTH ROAD / CUCUMBER LANE AND DISCUSS ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

Closures are planned for the installation of electric charging at the Shell garage. These will be delayed until the east end access to Yarmouth Road is opened. However, there will still be significant impacts to Blofield and Brundall. The Council agreed to share all comments they have with Postwick with Witton Council (where the site is actually located) and with Brundall to ensure all Blofield Council's concerns are raised. Comments will continue to be shared with the NCC Highways Engineer and County Councillor Andrew Proctor.

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

The Council discussed signage at Marty's Marsh. It was agreed to install clear signage on the bridge regarding water/mud and clerk (EB) to contact Brundall Parish Clerk to see if the Cremer's Meadow life ring can be moved so it is visible on both sides of the bridge (at the cost of Blofield Parish Council). Clerk SO to review the requirements for signage / life-rings with insurance requirements for Town Pit.

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

Yvonne Burton provided a brief update from the Heathlands Management Committee.

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

Sarah Dhesi provided a brief update from the Margaret Harker Hall Management Committee.

25. TO DISCUSS PROPOSED SIGNAGE CHANGES ON YARMOUTH ROAD FROM NATIONAL HIGHWAYS

These signs were paid for by the Parish Council in conjunction with the Parish Partnership Scheme. National Highways have proposed solutions which the Parish Council are unhappy with. Clerk (EB) to contact the National Highways Engineer to discuss an alternative solution.

26. TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE

The next Local Authority Cluster meeting will be scheduled in April, councillors to let Eleanor know if they are able to attend.

The invitation to the Town & Parish Forum has been circulated for 10th February 2026.

Galliford Try has confirmed that the new allotment car park will be larger than the original one. The new car park is in progress, and final size is to be confirmed. The opening date for the road itself has been delayed to March, due to the recent wet weather.

The Council continues to search for new allotment provision for the parish.

The Greater Norwich authorities (Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk Council, working with Norfolk County Council) are now preparing to review the Greater Norwich Local

Plan which was adopted in March 2024. The Call for Sites is open from 9th February 2026 – 23rd March 2026.

Woodland Trust tree packs are available by application. The Parish Council may apply for packs for the allotment site subject to the progress of the Galliford Try works. Clerk (EB) to contact landowner regarding option of hedging between carpark and allotments.

27. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

- Allotments Noticeboard
- Courthouse drainage & constitution
- Beyond the precept fund training
- NCC Highways engineer update from meeting
- Town Pit clearance update

28. TO CONFIRM THE DATE OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Thursday 12th March 2026 at 7:30pm at Blofield Courthouse

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

Monday 16th March 2026 at 7:30pm at Blofield Courthouse

30. 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

No parishioners were present at the meeting.

31. TO DISCUSS COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE MATTERS RELATING TO THE COMMUNITY HUB AND APPOINTMENT OF CONTRACTORS

No matters were discussed.

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

Signed.....

Dated.....