

Blofield Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Blofield Parish Council on Monday 21st July 2025 at 7:30pm – 11:05pm at Blofield Courthouse.

PRESENT:

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

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

2. TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Joseph Scholes, Stella Shackle and Stuart Smith and accepted by the Council.

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

No declarations were made.

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.

5. TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 22ND MAY 2025

The Council unanimously resolved to approve the minutes and they were duly signed by the vice-chair.

6. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 23RD JUNE 2025

The Council unanimously resolved to approve the minutes and they were duly signed by the vice-chair.

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

- Yvonne Burton has a meeting with BADCOG to discuss FP4 improvements and see if they are able to assist with improvements.
- Eleanor Bannister reported that the gym equipment signage has been ordered in English.
- The tree works have now been completed in the churchyard on tree G3.
- No issues were raised at the annual play inspection on the old school site. Weekly play inspections have been completed by the school until now. These will be paused while the site is closed and the PC will organise the next inspection in September.

8. PLANNING

Application: 2025/1940

Proposal: T1 Ash – reduce branch ends of southern aspect of crown by 1.5-2m, T2 Acer – To crown lift to 5m clearance to the adjacent outbuilding

Location: Fir Tree House, 86 Mill Road Blofield, NR13 4QS

The Parish Council resolved to make no comments.

Application: 2025/2031

Proposal: Proposed single storey rear/side extension

Location: 18 Newstead Gardens, Blofield, NR13 4FN

The Parish Council would like to request that a condition is added that any damage to the footpath is repaired following the building works.

9. TO CONSIDER FEEDBACK ON ANY PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED SUBSEQUENT TO THE PUBLICATION OF THIS AGENDA AND NOTE ANY UPDATES (including 20200077)

- No further applications have been received.
- Planning application 20200077 has not yet been discussed at the BDC Planning Committee. The Council resolved to agree to make representation at the committee in August if someone is available to attend (Clerk EB or Chair Stuart Smith).

10. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM OUR SOLICITORS / NCC CHILDREN'S SERVICES REGARDING THE BLOFIELD PARK LAND TRANSFER TO THE PARISH COUNCIL, APPROVE THE UKPN LEASE AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

The UKPN lease was discussed in detail. Various points are still unresolved. The Council solicitor is working to progress this as a matter of urgency. The Council unanimously resolved to approve the working group / clerks agree the lease before the next meeting if all the matters discussed are resolved and the solicitor advises the Council should proceed. Clerk (EB) to progress.

The Council approved the land transfer goes through as soon as possible. If the UKPN lease is holding this transfer up, this will be discussed at the September meeting.

11. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE FENCING INSTALLATION FOR THE FOREST SCHOOL AREA AND RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE COST OF FENCING/GATES AT THE ENTRANCE TO BLOFIELD PARK

The quotation has been accepted and the fencing installation for the forest school is booked in for August 2025. Clerk (EB) to liaise with NCC CS regarding access for these works. Clerk (EB) to see if any grants available from National Highways Social Fund.

An approximate cost of the fencing for the entrance area has been received of circa £6,850 but this very much depends on the requirements and final design.

The entrance works are taking place by NCC during July/August. Clerk (EB) to liaise with NCC to arrange a site visit and check planned works match with our expectations.

The Council resolved to contact the neighbouring adjoining properties to the forest school to inform them that the land will not be for sale and the plans to fence off the area for the forest school. Clerk (EB) to action.

12. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE TENDER PROCESS FOR RIBA STAGES 3-6, REVIEW SHORTLISTED COMPANIES AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS

The clerk (EB) updated on the tender process. Detailed reviews of all 15 tender documents have been taking place, reviewing the detail against the criteria for selection, and a cost table for comparison has been established. Further work is needed and the Council unanimously resolved to approve seeking advice and guidance from another organisation / expert in the field to help guide the Council, hopefully inviting them to a working group meeting as soon as possible. Following this, the Council agreed to progress and arrange meetings with the four-five shortlisted architects as soon as possible. Clerk (EB) to progress.

The Council agreed to keep the meeting date of 26th August pencilled in for a council or working group meeting, as required, and to develop a list of questions for the shortlist architects meetings.

13. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE MEETING WITH THE PRESCHOOL TO REVIEW RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE PRESCHOOL / PARISH AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS

Sarah Dhesi updated the Council on the meeting with the preschool. The responsibilities document was reviewed at the meeting and various items of detail discussed. Some items are still unclear such as the cost of the bin collections.

A detailed discussion took place regarding charges for the preschool site. The Council unanimously approved rental rates and associated detail and approved a meeting with the working group and Preschool as soon as possible to discuss the detail. Clerk (EB) to action.

Following this, the Council agreed to progress with a heads of terms document for agreement by both parties and subsequently a lease.

14. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE BLOFIELD PARK GREATER NORWICH GROWTH BOARD (GNGB) APPLICATION AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS

The Council noted that the application for the GNGB has been submitted in draft. The Council have applied for funding of £500,000 towards the Blofield Park community hub.

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

The Council reviewed the payments of July, #46 - #60 totalling £8,866.59 (Appendix A) and unanimously resolved to approve the payments. In addition, the Council resolved pay its contribution for the entrance creation to Blofield Park by NCC when the invoice is received.

16. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE MEETING WITH THE VAT CONSULTANT, PROVIDING ADVICE TO THE PARISH COUNCIL REGARDING VAT ON THE BLOFIELD PARK COMMUNITY HUB PROJECT AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS

Sarah Osbaldeston reported that the VAT consultant has provided the Council with initial guidance and the meeting today was very helpful. The Council will receive a detailed report before the meeting in September to review.

17. TO CONSIDER ANY PARISH PARTNERSHIP SCHEME FUNDING BIDS FOR 2026/27

The Council discussed possible funding bids from Parish Partnership for footpath FP4 improvements (adjacent to the new school, parallel to the A47), and road markings for speeding on Woodbastwick Road and other areas of the parish. Council to revisit in September / October.

18. TO CONSIDER A DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY POLICY FOR BLOFIELD PARK / BLOFIELD COURTHOUSE AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

The Council unanimously resolved to approve the Diversity and Equality Policy.

19. TO CONSIDER FURTHER AN AWARDS FOR ALL APPLICATION AND CONSIDER NEXT ACTIONS

The Council discussed the detail around an Awards for All application and agreed to find out more detail before applying.

There are two further grants available in the County currently, the Broadland Community Grant Scheme and the Norfolk Community Fund available to community groups. Clerk (EB) to advise local groups / organisations.

The Council unanimously resolved to extend the meeting beyond 10pm in order to complete the agenda, following Standing Order item 17.n.

20. TO CONSIDER A FUNDING REQUEST TO THE NORFOLK COMMUNITY FUND

The Council agreed to contact the Andrew Proctor to see if the Council could match fund a request through this grant towards the year 6 classroom kitchenette facility. Clerk (EB) to action.

21. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE WORKING PARTY FOR THE FOREST SCHOOL SITE AT BLOFIELD PARK IN SEPTEMBER AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS

The Council agreed to proceed with a working party in September. Clerk (EB) to action. Clerk (EB) to contact NCC CS to understand what they are clearing, preferably as much as possible. Clerk (EB) to arrange movement of three items from the old school if required.

22. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REGARDING THE NEXT PHASE OF THE SOLICITOR'S ROOM REPAIRS AND AGREE NEXT ACTION

Clerk (EB) to report back at next meeting.

23. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE FARMAN WAY BIN COLLECTION, CONSIDER THE COST AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS

Following a brief discussion, as there are three bins in close proximity in Farman Way, the Council unanimously resolved to accept the removal of the bin on the green near to Lynes Close near Farman Way. Clerk (SO) to advise the contracts officer at BDC.

24. TO CONSIDER THE ASBESTOS REVIEW FOR BLOFIELD COURTHOUSE AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS

The Council noted that the asbestos review for the Courthouse was positive. All material is in ok condition and can be managed in its location.

25. TO CONSIDER A PARISH BOUNDARY CHANGE REQUEST FROM BRUNDALL PARISH COUNCIL

Following a brief discussion, the Council resolved for this boundary change to be investigated further by Brundall Parish Council, subject to Blofield Parish Council not being financially affected by the change.

26. TO CONSIDER REQUESTING FUNDING FOR ANY BUS SHELTER IMPROVEMENTS / SEATING

Stuart Smith has visited the shelters and taken images of works that need doing. The Council resolved to obtain a quotation for the small works (painting / minor repairs) from the Council handyperson and then apply for the grant to carry them out. Clerk (EB) to action.

27. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE WOODBASTWICK ROAD PEDESTRIAN CROSSING ASSESSMENT AND AGREE NEXT ACTIONS

Paul Culley-Barber summarised the report. The speeding is not significant enough to warrant immediate improvements. The large costs for road improvements include a zebra crossing at £300,000, and traffic calming installations at the entrance/exist to the village at a cost of £50,000 for each make any improvements prohibitive. This is a disappointing outcome.

28. TO NOTE PARISHIONERS CONCERNS REGARDING SPEEDING ON BULLACEBUSH LANE RESULTING IN ACCIDENTS AND AGREE ANY ACTIONS

The Council are not the authority responsible for road maintenance and speeding on the roads. This has been reported to the police; however, the road is not safe enough to conduct speed checks.

29. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON MARTY'S MARSH AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

Yvonne provided a brief update on activities and confirmed the next working group will take place on Saturday 13th September 2025.

30. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE ROYAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE MEETING

Sarah Dhesi reported that the Royal Voluntary Service run groups around the country and are interested in setting up groups in Norfolk. They are interested in using the future community hub facility and are keen to collaborate with the Council.

31. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE PARISH WALKS AND AGREE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS

Yvonne Burton updated the Council on the annual parish walks in Blofield and Blofield Heath. Various paths are in need of clearing / works. FP3 requires clearing and cutting back, FP12 requires wire mesh replacing and the byway off Pound Lane has an overgrown hedge. Yvonne Burton agreed to report these issues to NCC Highways.

In addition, FP8 parallel to Garden Road is overgrown and requires cutting. Clerk (SO) to contact Garden Guardian.

Clerk (SO) to contact the Hopkins Homes management committee regarding the graffiti on their boundary fencing (visible from the A47).

32. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE RECENT HEATHLANDS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Yvonne Burton provided an update from the recent Heathlands meeting. Trustees have completed their members forms and the constitution will shortly be updated. Hemblington Preschool is moving premises so there will be more Heathlands hall availability.

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

The new management committee are progressing with plans to improve the facilities. Key priorities are the boiler room / wrought iron railings and minor roof repairs. They are progressing with fund raising activities too.

34. TO CONSIDER SIGNING AN ARMED FORCES COVENANT

The Council unanimously agreed to sign the Armed Forces Covenant. Clerk (EB) to action.

35. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE DEFIBRILLATOR CABINET AT HEATHLANDS

The faulty defibrillator cabinet is being replaced and the old one returned to the supplier. Clerk (EB) to arrange.

36. TO REVIEW A DRAFT NEWSLETTER FOR THE PARISH

To be reviewed in September.

37. TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE

- A parishioner raised concerns over the safety of the trod between Heathlands Community Centre heading north on Woodbastwick Road towards SHES Garden Centre. NCC Highways have confirmed this is in a safe walking zone in a rural area.
- Blofield currently has four wellbeing champions trained and only requires two more to become a Mindful Village. Training, run by Broadland District Council takes place every month, if anyone is interested in attending, the following booking link can be used for detail: <https://forms.office.com/e/tQasbwdFn9>
- The next Town and Parish forum will take place on the 2nd September at 2:00pm on Teams.
- Potholes are being repaired promptly within the village by NCC Highways.
- The licensing act is being reviewed and is under consultation at BDC. This will run for 6 weeks commencing on the 21 July 2025 until the 1 September 2025.

38. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

- Bench location on Doctors Road.
- Hemblington Preschool request for funding.

39. CONFIRMATION OF AN AUGUST MEETING

A provisional date of 26th August 2025 is available for a meeting or working group meeting. Clerk (EB) to confirm nearer the time if this is required.

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

Monday 8th September 2025 at 7:30pm at Blofield Courthouse.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11:05pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....