

## **HOLME HALE PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Holme Hale Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023 in the Tony Evans Centre, Holme Hale Village Hall.

Present: Cllr Andy Scarlett (Chair)  
Cllr Wendy McNeil (Vice Chair)  
Cllr Neville McBrien  
Cllr Simon Broke  
Cllr Simon Joll

D/Cllr Nigel Wilkin  
Two Members of the Public  
Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

### **1. Election of Chairman and signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.**

Cllr Broke notified the meeting that he no longer wished to stand as Chairman. He had been on the Council for 50 years with nearly half of that as Chairman and felt it was time to hand over to someone new.

Cllr McBrien proposed that Cllr Scarlett be elected as Chairman, this was seconded by Cllr McNeil and unanimously agreed by Council. Cllr Scarlett signed his declaration of acceptance of office form.

### **2. Election of Vice Chairman and signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.**

Cllr Scarlett proposed that Cllr McNeil be elected as Vice Chairman, this was seconded by Cllr McBrien and unanimously agreed by Council. Cllr McNeil signed her declaration of acceptance of office form.

### **3. Welcome and apologies for absence.**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, there were no apologies for absence.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Broke for his long service on the Council and particularly all the good work he has carried out as Chairman and hoped that he would stay on as a Councillor.

### **4. To receive any declarations of interest and consider any dispensations.**

Cllr Broke declared an interest in item 9a - 3PL/2023/0442/HOU & 3PL/2023/0443/LB and will take no part in the decision making.

### **5. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and the extra-ordinary meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2023.**

Cllr McNeil proposed that the minutes of the meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> March be accepted as a true record of the meeting, this was seconded by Cllr McBrien and unanimously agreed by Council. The Chairman duly signed the minutes.

Cllr McNeil proposed that the minutes of the extra-ordinary meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> April be accepted as a true record of the meeting, this was seconded by Cllr Broke and unanimously agreed by Council. The Chairman duly signed the minutes.

## **6. To consider the co-option of new members to fill the three Council vacancies.**

Mr Simon Joll was in attendance and said a few words about himself and why he wished to join the Council. Cllr McNeil proposed that Mr Joll be co-opted onto Council as a new member, this was seconded by Cllr Scarlett and unanimously agreed by Council. The Chairman thanked Mr Joll for his interest and Cllr Joll joined the meeting, after signing his declaration of acceptance of office form.

This leaves two vacancies on the Council and there was a member of the public in attendance who, it was hoped, would be considered for co-option at the July meeting, leaving just one vacancy.

## **7. To receive County/District Councillor reports.**

There was no report from the County Councillor.

D/Cllr Wilkin circulated a written, annual report which is attached. In addition, he reported that the recent elections had been a good opportunity to speak with constituents and the main areas of concern had been bin collections and council tax. There had been a good turnout at the election, 36%, but he had a reduced majority of just 14. The Conservative Party has a reduced majority too but were still in overall control at Breckland.

D/Cllr Willkin said his biggest issue was the A47 junction at Necton which he had campaigned for some time now. Increased housing, the Vattenfall traffic, and the proposed NNDR link to the A47 will all bring higher traffic levels and exacerbate the problem. The current 40mph from Fransham is a trial but the lower speed makes it more difficult to get out of the junction, not easier. Unfortunately, National Highways will only act if there are fatalities at the junction. D/Cllr Wilkin has contacted the County Councillor, Mark Kiddle-Morris, George Freeman, MP, the Chair of Necton Parish Council, as well as the Chairman of Holme Hale, and will involve the media to raise awareness of this issue to try and get something better done.

Finally, the D/Cllr reported that he will be continuing as Chairman of the Planning Committee.

The Chairman thanked the D/Cllr for his report.

## **8. Open Forum for Public Participation (max 15 minutes).**

A dropped manhole on Cook Road and the Church Lane sign which has been knocked over were reported and these will be passed onto Highways for action.

## **9. Planning Matters**

### **a) To consider any new planning applications.**

- 3PL/2023/0328/VAR – The Old Rectory, Church Road - variation of Condition 2 and 4 on 3PL/2022/1132/VAR - To provide further room in roof over utility room to form

ensuite with velux window & change approved roof tiles – Council raised no issues in respect of this application and a ‘no comment’ response was agreed.

- 3PL/2023/0442/HOU & 3PL/2023/0443/LB – Stable Cottage, Bradenham Road - single Storey Side and Rear Extensions to Dwelling - Council raised no issues in respect of these two applications and a ‘no comment’ response was agreed for both.

**b) To note any planning decisions (information only).**

Council noted the following application has been refused.

- 3PL/2023/0117/HOU – Hunters Lodge, Hale Road - two storey annex side extension, front bay extension and single storey side extension.  
Parish Council: Objections raised re size & position.

Council noted the following application has been approved.

- 3PL/2023/0174/HOU – 27 St Andrews Close, single Story Side Extension.  
Parish Council: No comments.

Council noted that no decision has been made on the following application. However, it had been brought to the attention of Council that Japanese Knotweed is thought to be present on the site and this would delay construction.

- 3PL/2023/0283/F – 5 & 7 Cook Road - demolition of 2no. bungalows and redevelopment erection of 2no dwellings with garages.  
Parish Council: Objections raised re scale, design and highway safety.

**c) To receive an update in respect of Vattenfall and consider any action.**

There was no update in respect of this matter.

**d) To receive a report regarding the proposed Statkraft Necton Greener Grid Park.**

There was no update in respect of this matter.

**e) To receive an update regarding the Breckland Local Plan Issues and the public consultation process.**

Council had not submitted any comments and the consultation is now closed.

## **10. Highway Matters**

**a) To receive updates on highway faults previously reported and consider any further action.**

- Brown’s Lane – fly-tipping (asphalt) – it was noted that the asphalt is now thought to be part of a pull-in and this will be removed from the agenda.

**b) To receive an update regarding the roadside drain gratings and associated flooding issues.**

Council noted that the drains have been cleaned, jetted out and dug out where required.

Council will continue to monitor the situation but the item will be removed from the agenda.

**c) To receive an update in respect of the Village Gates installation.**

Council noted that the Village Gates had been installed in the wrong place and a meeting with a Highway Engineer will take place at the end of May to resolve the issue.

**d) To receive an update in respect of the Parish Partnership application for a SAM II Speed Sign and a request to Highways for roadside kerbing to stop erosion near to highway signage on Cook Road.**

The parish partnership application for 50/50 funding for a SAM II speed sign had been successful and a meeting with a Highway Engineer will take place to discuss the locations of the camera and some issues which may arise from one particular site. Council agreed that additional brackets will need to be purchased to make it easier to move the sign.

D/Cllr Wilkin left the meeting at this point.

## **11. Open Spaces**

**a) To receive a report regarding the Holme Hale Playing Field Trust trees.**

Cllr McNeil, on behalf of the Trust, requested assistance from the Parish Council for the purchase of some substantial trees to prevent cars driving too far onto the field when parking. Two car lengths will be available for parking with a knee barrier and the trees preventing anything further. Council requested a formal proposal from the Trust for consideration at the next meeting. Cllr McBrien reminded Cllr McNeil that Council had not offered to purchase trees for the Playing Field but had previously advised where to obtain free tree packs from various organisations.

**b) To receive a report regarding dog walking on public rights of way.**

Cllr McNeil reported that there was a regular dog walker who let their dogs off the lead, did not clear up their dog mess and the dogs worried other walkers. The Dog Warden will be notified and asked to speak to the person concerned.

## **12. To receive an update regarding the purchase of a village defibrillator.**

There was no update in respect of this matter.

## **13. To consider any maintenance to the School Road Bus Shelter.**

Council agreed to obtain two quotes to refurbish the bus shelter for consideration at the next meeting.

## **14. Finance and Governance**

**a) To receive a financial report for the years ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.**

The financial reports (attached) were noted.

**b) To receive the internal auditors report and consider any recommendations.**

Council noted the report and the recommendations.

**c) To approve the annual governance statement in the 2022-23 Annual Return.**

Cllr Scarlett proposed that the annual governance statement be approved, this was seconded by Cllr Broke and unanimously agreed by Council. The Chairman duly signed the statement.

**d) To approve the Statement of Accounts in the 2022-23 Annual Return.**

Cllr Scarlett proposed that the statement of accounts be approved, this was seconded by Cllr Broke and unanimously agreed by Council. The Chairman duly signed the statement.

**e) To approve the certification of exemption from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015.**

Cllr Scarlett proposed that the certificate of exemption be approved, this was seconded by Cllr Broke and unanimously agreed by Council. The Chairman duly signed the certificate.

**f) To consider an alternative option to NALC membership.**

Council considered an alternative option but agreed to stay with NALC for the coming year, particularly as they had received excellent advice in the past.

**g) To consider an alternative option for the Parish Council website.**

Council agreed to continue with the current website but to update it. Cllrs Joll and McBrien will forward their ideas to the Clerk.

**h) To receive an update regarding Council banking.**

Council noted that the transfer of banking details was now complete but the recent application for online banking had expired. A second application will be submitted.

**i) To receive an update regarding the Council Insurance renewal.**

Council noted the renewal of the insurance, year two of a three year deal, with a £40.43 increase due to the current economic climate.

**j) To consider approval of the following payments and note any receipts.**

Cllr Scarlett proposed approval of the following payments, this was seconded by Cllr McNeil and unanimously agreed by Council. The receipts were noted.

**PAYMENTS**

• Clerk (Salary & Office Allowance) – April	£213.95
• HMRC – PAYE	£51.00
• Clerk (Salary & Office Allowance) – May	£214.15
• HMRC (Apr/May)	£ 50.80
• Brisley PC (Clerk Training – FOI)	£6.86
• BHIB Insurance (Year 2 of 3)	£425.72
• Npower – Street Lighting	£234.16*
• Grass Contractors	£1059.72
• Internal Auditor	£35.00
• NALC Subscription	£238.70
(includes National ALC £32.54 & Website £70.00), or	
• Cutting of Village Green	£40.00

*\*, SO or DD indicates payment has been made previously.*

**RECEIPTS**

• Precept	£4,000.00
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**15. To consider any reports and correspondence received.**

Council noted the thank you letters received from St Andrew's Church, Norfolk Age Concern & Norfolk Citizens Advice.

Council agreed to consider a nominee to the Royal Norfolk Show Community Champions Tribute and forward to the Clerk prior to the closing date of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023.

**16. Pursuant to s 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it is resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and the press leave the meeting during consideration of a staffing matter.**

Council noted that the Clerk's probation period had been successfully completed, her salary had now been increased as set out in the contract of employment and an amendment made to her monthly hours.

**17. To confirm the next meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023 in the Tony Evans Centre, Holme Hale Village Hall.**

The date of the next meeting was noted and the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.08pm.

Signed:

Date:

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**YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2023**  
**FINANCIAL REPORT AT YEAR END**

<b>BUDGET UPDATE</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>%</b>
	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>date</b>	<b>Spend</b>
<b>PAYMENTS*</b>			
Admin	1,462	609	42%
Salary**	3,290	3593	109%
Open Spaces	2,491	2291	92%
Street Lights	275	115	42%
Grants/Donations	1,187	1220	103%
Projects	-	2500	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,705</b>	<b>7828</b>	<b>90%</b>
			<b>Received</b>
<b>RECEIPTS</b>			
Precept	8000	8000	100%
Bank Interest	1	21	2115%
Grants	0	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8001</b>	<b>8021</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>SURPLUS/DEFICIT</b>	<b>-704</b>	<b>193</b>	

\*includes payments as listed on agenda.

\*\*Salary budget higher than expected due to pay award.

<b>Bank Reconciliation</b>	
<b>Balance at 01.04.2022</b>	<b>14,380.50</b>
Plus Receipts at 31.03.2023	8,512.16
Less Payments at 31.03.2023	<u>10,646.48</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>12,246.18</u></b>
<b>Bank Balance at 31.03.2023</b>	
Current Account	6,990.20
Business Reserve Account	<u>4,828.27</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11818.47</b>
Less outstanding payments	50.00
Plus outstanding deposits	<u>477.71</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,246.18</b>

**YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2024**  
**FINANCIAL REPORT - MAY 2023**

<b>BUDGET UPDATE</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>%</b>
	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>date</b>	<b>Spend</b>
<b>PAYMENTS*</b>			
Admin	2,622	726	28%
Salary	3,744	510	14%
Open Spaces**	562	0	0%
Grass Cutting	2,480	923	37%
Street Lights	350	223	64%
Grants/Donations	1,200	0	0%
Projects	3,528	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14,486</b>	<b>2382</b>	<b>16%</b>
			<b>Received</b>
<b>RECEIPTS</b>			
Precept	8000	4000	50%
Bank Interest	0	0	
Grants	0	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8000</b>	<b>4000</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>SURPLUS/DEFICIT</b>	<b>-6486</b>	<b>1618</b>	

\*includes payments as listed on agenda.

\*\*Open Spaces includes permissive pathway, bus shelter, general maintenance

<b>Bank Reconciliation</b>	
<b>Balance at 01.04.2023</b>	<b>12,246.18</b>
Plus Receipts at 25.04.2023	4,000.00
Less Payments at 25.03.2023	<u>234.16</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>16,012.02</u></b>
<b>Bank Balance at 25.03.2023</b>	
Current Account	10,940.20
Business Reserve Account	<u>4,828.27</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15768.47</b>
Less outstanding payments	234.16
Plus outstanding deposits (2022/2)	<u>477.71</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,012.02</b>

## Achievements 22'23 (to December 22)

### 1. To support our local environment, we have -



- Reduced our output of Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions by 437 Tonnes since 19/20
- Invested £850k in LED replacement streetlights.
- Reduced emissions by improving lighting and other infrastructure at our Elizabeth House headquarters.
- Encouraged Developers to reduce their carbon footprint, through our Planning advice.
- Trialled sustainable alternatives to chemical weed treatments.
- Saved energy by installing new LED lighting and pool covers at our leisure centres.
- Increased protection of our natural environment by employing a Forestry Officer.
- Showcased how we can – with others - become NetZero by 2035, by holding an Environment Awareness Month including a NetZero Conference.
- Supported more businesses by providing them with a cost-effective trade waste solution, generating income which can be ploughed back into other Council services.
- Kept our communities cleaner by taking enforcement action against 100 waste offenders for fly tipping or littering.
- Reduced recycling contamination meaning less items to landfill.
- Become more sustainable, by planning a collection scheme for batteries and small electrical items.
- Enabled communities to progress their 'Green' agenda by successfully distributing £100k for local schemes.
- Supported greener transport options by awarding a contract for the installation of EV charging points in Swaffham and Watton town centres.
- Helped make Breckland an even greener and beautiful place, by planting 700 trees in Attleborough and Watton to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee.



- Showed how we can reduce waste by working with school children in Thetford to recycle and use waste products to grow vegetables and flowers.

## 2. To help our district thrive we have -



- Invested £750K into projects which support our local high streets and enable our 5 Market towns of Dereham, Swaffham, Watton, Thetford and Attleborough and their surrounding areas to thrive.
- Supported economic growth in the district by project managing and funding a new primary substation in Snetterton.
- Encouraged footfall in Thetford to support local businesses by providing free cinema by the town's riverside.
- Helped businesses bounce back from the COVID Pandemic, by allocating £4.2M of funding.
- Provided a tranquil space for the community and transformed a derelict piece of land by refurbishing the Queen Mothers Garden in Dereham.
- Brought arts and culture to new audiences by helping to bring outside theatre to Thetford Priory.
- Supported over 45 new enterprises and created more than 65 jobs with our successful Start Up Programme
- Started to plan how we'll help people in Breckland access better homes through a new Strategic Housing Plan.
- Put in plans to restore four of Swaffham's historic buildings with funding from Heritage Action Zone.
- Secured £1.6m national funding for local projects to boost local skills and training, reduce carbon emissions and support our most vulnerable residents.
- Bid for £1m in national funding to help support rural businesses and communities over the next two years. This funding will be vital in helping us provide new infrastructure and support to help grow our important rural economy.

### 3. To inspire our local communities, we have -



- Helped provide accommodation for our residents by investing over £4.6 million in emergency housing.
- Helped domestic abuse survivors, by supporting the Daisy Programme with £100,000 of funding over 3 years.
- Supported our local communities with the increased cost of living pressures by introducing a local food store and a mobile food bus, providing food at more affordable prices.
- Promoted the importance of Mental Health Well-being by providing our partners in Breckland with Mental Health First Aid training.
- Helped to support community well-being by training over 200 residents to become mental health champions.
- Helped the community recover from the pandemic through our 10-year Future Breckland vision and plan.
- Helped to link residents with support groups by our new Social Prescribers, easing the pressure on the NHS.
- Plans in place to improve our leisure provisions by increasing our level of investment.
- Helped people to stay living in their homes, avoiding admission to care homes, through a new pilot handyperson scheme.
- Made a difference to resident's lives every day by awarding over £120,000 to local community projects.
- Helped meet local housing demand by starting to build 21 highly efficient homes in Colkirk by Breckland Bridge, a joint venture between Breckland Council and private sector developers.
- Enabled community groups and voluntary organisations to come together and celebrate the Platinum Jubilee, by allocating over £12,000 in grants.
- Supported local students to achieve their potential by launching a £10,000 educational bursary.

- Helped the district celebrate the Jubilee, by illuminating the Swaffham Ecocity Turbine, making it the tallest beacon in East Anglia lit up in honour of The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.
- Continued to enhance the lives of our residents by working with more than 12 Norfolk partners.
- Welcomed almost 100 Ukrainians to the district, providing them with temporary homes and recruited native-speaking welfare officers to provide the best possible support to refugees.
- Launched Norfolk's first 'mindful village' recognising Swanton Morley as a community who put provision in place to enhance the mental health of local residents, with Mindful Town or Village award status.



#### 4. **To work smarter, we have -**

- Made our website more user friendly and accessible for our customers, particularly for those with a disability. This puts us in the top 10 Councils for website accessibility.
- Helped teams see how they can use data to improve services to residents through our 'Great to Greater' sessions.
- Enabled residents to get answers to their queries 24/7 through our new Chatbot, Bobbie and soon, residents will also be able to get answers to queries through Amazon Alexa
- Helped our people provide better services with 16 staff completing apprenticeship courses.
- Upskilled our people, to better serve our residents, by delivering Leadership Development Programmes
- Generated rental income from commercial properties which will exceed our target this year.
- Made £344,000 in efficiencies this financial year.
- Kept residents informed by sharing a press release at least every 3 days.
- Reached out to more of our community through increasing our use of social media channels.

- Helped counter the rising cost of energy bills, by processing over £5 M in £150 Council Tax Rebate payments.
- Given residents more choice in how they pay for Council services through new on-line forms.
- Won high levels of trust from residents with 79% telling us they felt this way in a recent survey.
- Enabled residents to access advice and support with Customer Contact Services open in Dereham and Thetford

Organisational Development and Performance Team, Jan 2023