

HOLME HALE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Holme Hale Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 7th July 2025 in the Tony Evans Centre, Holme Hale Village Hall.

Present: Cllr Andy Scarlett (Chair)
Cllr Neville McBrien (Vice Chair)
Cllr Simon Broke
Cllr Simon Joll
Cllr Andy West
Cllr Julian Pearson

County Cllr Fabian Eagle
Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies received from Cllr McNeil were approved.

2. To receive any declarations of interest and consider any dispensations.

Cllr Broke declared an interest in item 7 and Council agreed that he should remain in the meeting during that item as his knowledge and input was thought likely to be useful.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6th May 2025.

Cllr McBrien proposed that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting, this was seconded by Cllr Pearson and unanimously agreed by Council. The Chairman duly signed the minutes.

4. To receive County/District Councillor reports.

C/Cllr Eagle reported the following:

- The County Council has submitted its response to the High Grove and The Drovers solar farms, raising highway and glare issues.
- The County Council is awaiting the offer from Government re devolution and could withdraw if it is not acceptable. Cllr Eagle confirmed there is no plan to increase the parish council responsibilities.
- In respect of Local Government Reorganisation, a single unitary authority is the preferred option of County Council and would give the best financial savings of the options put forward.
- The High Street Matters campaign is ongoing for all Norfolk market towns, with advice being given to local retailers and it is seen as being a success.
- C/Cllr Eagle has purchased some Village Fete equipment which is available to every village in the ward.

In respect of access to the southern development area of the High Grove Solar Farm, he said the sensible, direct route for all villages concerned is via Station Road (Holme Hale) and one project to install a footpath on this route would save many other works on alternative routes.

The Chairman then agreed to bring forward item 7 whilst the C/Clr was in attendance –

7. To receive an update in respect of the proposed High Grove Solar Farm, to approve the draft submission to the High Grove consultation; and any other related solar farm matters.

Following the Village meeting, points raised at parish council meetings and meetings held directly with RWE, the Parish Council reviewed and agreed a submission to the High Grove consultation. This document is attached.

It was hoped to hold a further meeting with RWE before September to ensure that they are fully aware of the needs of the parish.

5. Open Forum for Public Participation (max 15 minutes).

There were no members of the public present.

6. Planning Matters

a) To consider any new planning applications.

- PL/2025/0924/HOU – 25 St Andrew's Close – single storey extension to front of house – Whilst the Council had no specific objection to the proposed development, Cllr McBrien proposed that comments regarding its proportion and possibility of obscuring light from neighbouring properties were submitted, this was seconded by Cllr Scarlett and unanimously agreed by Council.

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

Council noted the following application has been refused.

- PL/2025/0342/FMIN – Cutbush Barns, Common Road, Ashill - regularising application for a replacement dwelling and annex, following previous granting of planning for conversion of existing barns under planning reference 3PL/2018/1167/F.

Council noted the following application has been approved.

- PL/2025/0496/HOU – 30 Station Road - two storey rear extension.

c) To receive an update regarding enforcement matters.

There was no update in respect of enforcement matters.

d) To receive an update regarding the Local Plan.

Cllr Broke declared an interest in this matter and left the meeting during discussion of this item.

Council noted that one new site for potential housing development had been submitted in response to Breckland's recent call for sites. The Council agreed that there was no local need for the type/size of house to be built on the site. Given the proposed density, it is likely they would be large, detached properties and there is no shortage of this type in the village and many currently remain 'for sale'. There are no services in the village, making it an unsustainable area. There is also an absence of affordable housing for local people. These comments will be submitted to the consultation.

Cllr Broke returned to the meeting.

7. To receive an update in respect of the proposed High Grove Solar Farm, to approve the draft submission to the High Grove consultation; and any other related solar farm matters.

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

8. Highway Matters

a) To receive updates on highway faults previously reported and to receive any new reports.

Council noted the following updates:

- Road drains, asphalt surround too high with steel work showing nr St Andrews Close (x2), and corner of School Road and Cook Road (x1) – this will be reported to Highways again.
- Browns Lane potholes reported to Highways and repaired.
- Water leak on Station Road reported again to Anglian Water – the area is now dry so this will be removed from the agenda.
- Overgrown hedge on School Road – owners asked to cut back and clear pavement.
- Church Road potholes – repairs completed.
- Ashill Road – drains are blocked following the resurfacing and Highways will be asked to clear them.
- Bollards on house on Necton Road, recently installed next to highway – Highways will be asked to investigate to ensure they meet regulations.
- Lower Road, 2 x potholes – will be reported to Highways.
- Roadside Nature Reserve – NCC had agreed not to change the verge cutting arrangement when the reserve was created but the roadside verge in the reserve has not been cut at the same time as the rest of the road – Highways will be contacted.

b) To receive an update regarding the request to Highways for a footpath on Station Road.

Council noted that Land Registry maps clearly show a roadside margin separate to the properties suitable for installation of a pavement. However, it was agreed to leave this matter in abeyance for the time being given the ongoing negotiations with RWE regarding the solar farm HGV traffic access routes and the possibility of funding becoming available.

c) To consider a request to Highways for an 'Unsuitable for HGV vehicles' on Lower Road.

Following a suggestion from a resident to install a sign, Cllr Joll confirmed that HGV sat navs take such vehicles down Lower Road, when a safer, more appropriate alternative is available. It was agreed to approach Highways to see if signs could be installed.

d) To consider any projects for funding under the Parish Partnership Scheme.

Council noted the available 50/50 funding for highway projects and this item will remain on the agenda until November should there be any suggestions.

9. Council Assets.

a) To receive an update re maintenance of the Phone Box.

Council noted the fully restored and pristine Phone Box.

b) To receive an update regarding the new bench at Red Lion Close.

Council noted the new bench has been installed.

c) To receive an update in respect of the School Road Bus Shelter renovation.

Council noted that the bus shelter renovation is now complete and it looks much better. A letter of thanks will be sent to the volunteer who assisted with the renovation work.

d) To consider any action in respect of the Station Road Notice Board.

Council thanked Cllr Joll for removing the obscuring growth and Cllr Scarlett will now remove the notice board door and replace the Perspex.

10. Finance and Governance

a) To receive a financial report for the year ending 31st March 2026.

The financial report (attached) was noted.

b) To receive an update regarding the Council insurance renewal.

Council noted that the insurance has renewed, on a three year deal, and that the cost was considerably over budget, with insurance costs increasing greatly this year.

c) To consider Council email requirements.

Cllr Joll proposed that Council use NALC to supply a compulsory .gov email address for the Clerk at £20 per annum, this was seconded by Cllr McBrien and unanimously agreed by Council.

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

Cllr McBrien proposed approval of the following payments, this was seconded by Cllr West and unanimously agreed by Council. The receipt was noted.

PAYMENTS

Annual Council Insurance	£564.80
CPRE Annual Subscription	£60.00 (DD)
Clerk (Salary & Office Allowance) – June	£304.47 (SO)

<https://holmevaleparishcouncil.norfolkparishes.gov.uk/>

HMRC – PAYE	£1.40 (deducted from credit)
RE Dawson – Bench Purchase	£399.00
NALC – Subscription	£179.52
Clerk (Salary & Office Allowance) – July	£304.47 (SO)
HMRC – PAYE	£1.40 (deducted from credit)
Bank Charges (x 2)	£12.00
Bench Installation	£260.00
NALC Website	£84.00
Grass Contractor (2 of 4)	£589.68
<u>RECEIPTS</u>	
HMRC VAT Return (2024/25)	£414.86

11. To consider any correspondence received.

There was no correspondence to consider.

12. To receive any new items for the next agenda.

No new items were received.

13. To confirm the next meeting of the Parish Council will be held at 7.30pm on Monday 1st September 2025 in the Tony Evans Centre, Holme Hale Village Hall.

The date of the next meeting was noted and the Chairman then closed the meeting at 9.15pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Holme Hale Parish Council – Input to High Grove Solar Farm Statutory Consultation

Given the proposals documented to-date by RWE regarding the proposed High Grove Solar Farm development, the following is a summary of the concerns held by Holme Hale Parish Council (HHPC). In the main they relate to the proposed plans for the construction and subsequent operation of the proposed High Grove Southern Panel Area.

1. Proposed Routing of Construction Traffic

HHPC are of the view that both Lower Road and Brown's Lane are unsuitable for use by HGV traffic involved in construction of the Southern Panel Area. These are narrow single-track roads, whose carriageway width and underlying sub-base is incapable of accommodating and sustaining the frequent passage of HGV traffic. Lower Road also contains a NCC-designated Roadside Nature Reserve of ecological importance. As such we do not believe that these roads should be used as designated access routes for traffic associated with the High Grove development.

HHPC recommends that a more practicable option would be to route HGV construction traffic from the A47 via the North Pickenham Road (*past Petygards Hall*), this being the designated HGV access route from the A47 to the North Pickenham Industrial Area. It could then be routed along the C117 Station Road / Bradenham Rd to the Holme Hale, (West) Bradenham and Ashill access points of the Southern Panel Area (*see Blue line(s) on Fig.1*).



Fig.1 HHPC recommended access route(s) for High Grove Construction Traffic (*as denoted by Blue lines*)

(©Microsoft 2025)



Fig.2 HHPC proposed locations for provision of additional HGV passing bays (as denoted by Red boxes)

(©Microsoft 2025)

In order to go some way to mitigate disruption likely to result from the undoubted increase in HGV traffic along Station Road and Bradenham Road (Holme Hale), HHPC requests that RWE consider the installation of additional (HGV) passing bays in sections of this route within Holme Hale Parish (see Fig.2), specifically:

- i) On Station Road, before the Ashill / Hale Road junction (where the road narrows), and
- ii) In the particularly narrow section of the Bradenham Road (incorrectly marked as Station Rd) between the junction with School Road & the entrance to Hill Farm.

HHPC are also of the view that the likely increase in HGV traffic volumes along the residential area of Station Road, Holme Hale during the construction phase of the proposed development, will pose an increased safety risk to pedestrian traffic in this area. This is of particular concern given that Station Road links both to a network of Permissive Paths within the Parish and also to the Public Footpath which leads to Church Road. Consequently, pedestrian traffic within Station Road does not originate solely from residents of Station Road.

HHPC is therefore of the view that it would be appropriate for RWE to consider possible funding options for the installation of a roadside footpath in this location (subject to resident consultation).

(continued)

2. Provision of Additional Visual Mitigation Measures

HHPC are extremely concerned that areas of proposed Southern Development Area (*particularly parcels S-10 & S-11*) will have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of Holme Hale Residents when viewed from the following locations (*see Fig.3*):

- Holme Hale Pavilion Playing Field
- The roadside pedestrian footpath which extends around the eastern and southern periphery of the HH Playing Field
- The Permissive Paths which extend along the roadside field margins of the:
 - Bradenham Road (*incorrectly marked on maps as Station Road*)
 - Ashill Road, Holme Hale (*marked as Hale Road*).

HHPC is also concerned regarding the specific type of the solar panels that RWE proposes to install in the Southern Development Area; particularly whether they will be of 'fixed' or 'tilting' design. It is understood that 'tilting'-type panels would have a far greater visual impact on the vicinity and therefore will require significantly greater visual mitigation. Is this the case?

HHPC asks for clarification of this aspect and also clear information regarding the overall height and likely on-site orientation of such 'tilting' panels, were they to be used.



Fig.3 Viewpoints of concern to HHPC (as denoted by the Blue arrows)
- Orange line indicates location of proposed tree planting