

HOLME HALE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Holme Hale Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 3rd November 2025 in the Tony Evans Centre, Holme Hale Village Hall.

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

County Cllr Fabian Eagle
One Member of the Public
Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies received from Cllrs Joll, McNeil and West were approved.

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

Cllr Pearson declared an interest in item 6 a & b – PL1618 and PL1170. Cllr Broke declared an interest in items 6d, 7 and 12 b (permissive path payment). The two Councillors will take no part in the declared matters.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 1st September 2025.

Cllr McBrien proposed that the minutes 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.

4. To receive County/District Councillor reports.

C/Cllr Eagle reported that the Castle Museum is now open again after an extensive refurbishment and is well worth a visit. He also reported:

- The County Council voted to proceed with a Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk which should bring financial advantages to the two counties.
- All is quiet in respect of High Grove; they are currently in discussion with the National Grid to confirm a site for the sub-station.
- A stretch of Petyguards Road is to be resurfaced on the 16th and 17th December.
- Cllr Eagle will assist with funding (for installation of 'Unsuitable for HGVs' signage in Lower Rd) if the application to the Parish Partnership Scheme is successful.

In response to a question regarding High Grove vehicular access and that RWE have been carrying out traffic surveys on minor roads despite confirming to the Parish Council that the more suitable, larger roads are to be used, Cllr Eagle said he continues to lobby RWE not to use any minor roads

and select a route on the major road system, with some upgrades necessary, such as a footpath on Station Road etc. RWE will have to reinstate any damage caused to the highways by construction traffic. He said it was important to have one route that all other road users can be aware of.

Cllr Pearson said he had attended a Breckland presentation regarding Local Government Reorganisation and reported the following:

1. The County Council submitted a case for a single 'Norfolk' council, whereas Breckland had submitted a case where Norfolk is broken into three areas, to better provide services at a local level.
2. A consultation for formal bodies will take place from Nov 2025 to Q1 2026. It is unclear if that process will include parish councils; it does not include members of the public.
3. Following consultation, Government will make the decision on size, geography, etc. from the different cases submitted for consideration.
4. Shadow elections will be held in May 2027 to elect members of the new authority, and the new authority will take over all of Breckland's functions in 2028.
5. Breckland considers there are financial flaws in the proposals, in that:
 - a. Breckland has the lowest council tax of any district in England.
 - b. Breckland is debt free, but the other Norfolk Councils are not by a significant amount. Government is willing to pay half of that debt, but any new, re-organised Norfolk Authorities will begin with at least £700m of debt overall, over £300m of which was generated at District level outside of Breckland.
 - c. It appears that despite having higher Council tax revenues per capita, those other Norfolk Councils which have debt have been significantly financially mismanaged.
 - d. All of the cumulative debt and surplus will be pooled, putting the council that subsumes Breckland immediately into significant debt and the bigger the new authority, the bigger that proportion of ex district council debt will be. If the County case for a single, unitary authority is approved by Government, the new authority will end up with all of the debt.
 - e. There will be a single opportunity for a 'levelling up' of Council tax across the new 'Norfolk' authority, this increasing over a period of years, probably to the highest level that currently exists across the various District & City Councils (Breckland has the lowest council tax and fewest amenities of all the current councils). This will potentially provide opportunity to hide revenue increases to service the debts; and is being referred to as "harmonisation".

Cllr Pearson said he has concerns that those in the current Councils who mismanaged their way into those debts, will continue to serve on the new authority (or authorities), making the debts worse and resulting in significantly higher bills, for an already pressed public.

The County Cllr said it was important to bear in mind that these views are weighted in respect of Breckland and that there were three options on the table, of either one, two and three unitary authorities in Norfolk. In 2027 a Shadow Authority will be elected, who will then take control in 2028, with number of councillors being a decision for Government. A Boundary Commission review is to take place between 2027 and 2031. He acknowledged concerns expressed regarding Breckland Council Tax levels in that they are currently the lowest in the county and that Breckland has no debt. He agreed that Breckland residents may have an increase in Council Tax and be required to

take on debts of the other amalgamated authorities in the county, although this is not a given. He did confirm that there are no plans to increase the workload of parish councils.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Eagle for his input and the County Cllr then left the meeting.

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

There were no matters raised by members of the public.

6. Planning Matters

The Chairman took the following two items in reverse order.

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

Council noted that no decision had been made on the following application:

- PL/2025/1170/FMIN – 34 Station Road – construction of a 2 storey, 4 bedroom detached house.

Council noted that the following application had been approved:

- PL/2025/1154/CLEUD - Pipers Mede, 8, Church Lane - use of land from agricultural to residential garden for more than of 10 years.

a) To consider any new planning applications.

PL/2025/1618/FMIN – Field adjacent to 34 Station Road - proposal: Proposed change of use from agricultural field to mixed use agricultural/storage/sui generis for enclosed dog walking facility with associated parking area – after consideration, Cllr Scarlett proposed that Council object to this application on the following grounds:

- There is no need for a dog walking field in the village, given the extensive Permissive Path network and the availability of such facilities in surrounding villages.
- No detail has been supplied regarding potential vehicular movements and access onto Station Road at the existing exit is a potentially dangerous section of Station Road with limited visibility and highway safety would be a concern.
- The change of use could lead to the site becoming a ‘brownfield’ site, leading to further spread into the rural countryside of the built area.
- Whilst the application provided details of the proposed partial use of the site for a dog walking facility, no details had been provided regarding its proposed partial use for storage of construction equipment & materials, or the extent and/or management of vehicle movements in relation to this potential use.

This proposal was seconded by Cllr McBrien and unanimously agreed by Council.

b) To receive an update regarding enforcement matters.

Council noted that this matter is in the hands of Breckland and agreed to remove it from the agenda.

c) To consider a response to the consultation regarding the Breckland Local Plan.

Cllr Pearson reported that Breckland has no intention of imposing car park charges in the five major market towns, but that may not be the case for the incoming new authority, which will

likely look to standardise car parking charges within its new boundary. Kings Lynn currently generates a surplus above cost of £3.1m per annum from car park charges. Breckland would like to see car park responsibility passed to relevant Parish/Town councils who can decide to maintain 'free' car parking, through additions to their own precept, or to have charges incurred, with any surplus above cost being ploughed back into the immediate vicinity, to encourage more footfall.

In respect of historic evidence of footfall impact on those locations where car park charges have been implemented, it was reported that there is a short term drop in footfall, which then increases back to where it was previously.

Council then noted the draft Local Plan and that no development sites have been approved in Holme Hale. Between 2024 and 2042, a further 13 dwellings are approved. Council agreed that no response to the consultation was necessary.

7. To receive an update in respect of the proposed High Grove Solar Farm; and other solar farm matters.

The Chairman reminded Council that they had responded to the High Grove consultation back in July 2025. The application is now delayed going forward as no location for the 400kV sub-station has yet been agreed.

The Grove solar farm near Swaffham is proceeding with the application being submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by the end of the year.

The Chairman reported he had attended a further meeting of the George Freeman Steering Group and the advice in respect of High Grove was now to wait for RWE to submit the application to the Planning Inspectorate, which is understood to be likely in April 2026. Council will confirm that the Parish Council are a statutory consultee.

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), – reported to Highways again.
- Overgrown hedge on School Road – this continues to be an issue and the householders will be contacted again.
- Ashill Road – drains are blocked following the resurfacing and Highways asked to clear them.
- Lower Road, 2 x potholes – programmed for repair.
- Fingerpost at junction of Lower Road and Bradenham Road – post rotting and sign leaning – reported to Highways and programmed for repair.
- Church Lane – 2 x potholes – reported to Highways and repaired.

- Overgrown hedge on the corner of Church Road and School Road – the householder will be asked to cut it back as it is now obstructing the Post Box.
- Lower Road, pothole outside No. 7 will be reported to Highways.

b) To receive an update to the request to Highways for installation of ‘Unsuitable for HGVs’ signage on Lower Road and the application for funding under the Parish Partnership Scheme.

Council noted that the application has been submitted, C/Cllr Eagle will assist with funding, and the item can be removed from the agenda until March 2026 when a decision is due.

9. Council Assets.

a) To receive an update in respect of the Station Road Notice Board.

The Chairman reported that no action had taken place to date, due to a lack of time.

10. To consider the grass cutting contract for 2026.

Council noted that the current contractors had been appointed on a one year contract, following the contract going out to tender. As their work was satisfactory, it was agreed to request a one year and three year cost from them, for consideration at the next meeting.

11. To note the meeting dates for 2026.

The meeting dates for 2026 were noted.

- Monday 5th January
- Monday 2nd March
- Tuesday 5th May (moved from the Monday due to bank holiday)
- Monday 6th July
- Monday 7th September
- Monday 2nd November
- Monday 13th April (7.00pm) - Annual Parish Meeting

12. Finance and Governance

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

The financial report (attached) was noted.

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

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

PAYMENTS

Clerk (Salary & Office Allowance) – October

£312.13 (SO)

HMRC – PAYE

£3.20 (deducted from credit)

Grass Contractor (4 of 4)	£589.68
Clerk (Salary & Office Allowance) – November	£311.93 (SO)
HMRC – PAYE	£3.40
Permissive Path Annual Fee – 2025	£649.00
SLCC Membership (Clerk)	£30.40
Bank Charges (x 2)	£12.00

RECEIPTS

Breckland Precept (2 of 2)	£4,500.00
Bank Interest	£42.80

13. To consider any correspondence received.

There was no correspondence to consider.

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

Cllr Pearson reported that trees over the highway adjacent to Willow House, Bradenham Road, were hanging low over the highway and being knocked by HGV traffic. It was agreed to report these, in the first instance, to Highways.

15. To confirm the next meeting of the Parish Council will be held at 7.30pm on Monday 5th January 2026 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 8.40pm.

Signed:

Date:

HOLME HALE PARISH COUNCIL						
YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2026						
FINANCIAL REPORT - NOVEMBER 2025						
BUDGET UPDATE	Actual	Budget	To	%	Balance at 01.04.2025	9,641.19
	2024/25	2025/26	date	Spend	Plus Receipts at 30.09.2025	9,501.55
					Less Payments at 30.09.2025	5,762.79
PAYMENTS*					TOTAL	13,379.95
Admin	936	1,240	1,066	86%		
Salary	3425	3,692	2,417	65%	Bank Balance at 30.09.2025	
Permissive Pathway	618	649	649	100%	Unity Current Account	5789.66
Grass Cutting	1975	2,056	2,009	98%	Unity Savings Account	7,590.29
Street Lights	458	350	420	120%	TOTAL	13,379.95
Grants/Donations	1200	1,220	-	0%	Less outstanding payments	0.00
Projects	0	280	593	212%	Plus outstanding deposits	0.00
TOTAL	8612	9,487	7,154	75%	TOTAL	13379.95
				Received	TOTAL	13,379.95
RECEIPTS						
Precept	8500	9000	9,000	100%		
Bank Interest	36	25	87			
Grants	0	0	-			
Salary	7	0	-			
TOTAL	8543	9025	9,087	101%		
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	-69	-462	1,933			
*includes payments as listed on agenda.						
Amounts shown above do not include VAT.						