

HOLME HALE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Holme Hale Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 5th January 2026 in the Tony Evans Centre, Holme Hale Village Hall.

Present: Cllr Andy Scarlett (Chair)
Cllr Neville McBrien (Vice Chair)
Cllr Simon Broke
Cllr Andy West
Cllr Julian Pearson (arrived later in the meeting)
Cllr Wendy McNeil (arrived later in the meeting)

County Cllr Fabian Eagle
Two members of the Public
Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

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

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

Cllr Broke declared an interest in items 6c and 7 and will take no part in the discussions.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 3rd November 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.

County Cllr Eagle reported that the gritters had been out 13 times so far during 2026 but not all roads are treated, fortunately, the road through to Necton is one of those on the list.

C/Cllr Eagle kindly agreed to help fund the proposed new signage on Lower Road by £1,000, this would leave £362 to be found by the Parish Council, with the remaining 50% funded by the County Council, subject to the success of the Parish Partnership Bid. A decision on the signage is due in March.

At this point, Cllr Wendy McNeil joined the meeting.

C/Cllr Eagle also reported that devolution and Local Government Reorganisation continue, although the Mayoral elections have been suspended until 2028.

At this point, Cllr Julian Pearson joined the meeting.

The C/Cllr said that rural areas are receiving less funding from Government for this and next year but he continues to push for the additional verge cutting and hazardous waste collections.

The scheme to assist High Streets is being extended to include pubs and cafes and help will be available to youths and veterans in setting up their own businesses.

The Chairman thanked C/Cllr Eagle for his report.

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

There were no matters raised by members of the public.

6. Planning Matters

Cllr Pearson declared an interest in planning relating to 34 Station Road and will not take part in the discussions.

a) To consider any new planning applications.

- 3PL/2025/1941/PAAF – Old Nags Head, 5 Church Road – application to determine if prior permission is required for the erection of a timber framed farm office – Council noted that they had been copied in for information only but considered a response querying the agricultural need for the farm office be submitted to Breckland.

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

- PL/2025/1170/FMIN – 34 Station Road – construction of a 2 storey, 4 bedroom detached house – Council noted this application has been refused (see appeal below).
- PL/2025/1618/FMIM – 34 Station Road – change of use from agricultural field to mixed use agricultural/storage/sui generis for enclosed dog walking facility with associated parking area – no decision has yet been made regarding this application.
- Appeal against the refusal decision relating to 34 Station Road – construction of a two storey, four bedroom detached house (PL/2025/1170/FMIN) – Council noted that its original comments in respect of this application will be considered by the Planning Inspectorate and agreed to add its endorsement of the original Breckland decision.
- Appeal against the refusal decision relating to Cutbush Barns, Common Road, Ashill – erection of one dwelling and annex (retrospective) (PL/2025/0342/FMIN) – Council noted that its original comments in respect of this application will be considered by the Planning Inspectorate and agreed there was no need for any additional comments.

c) To receive an update regarding the Breckland Local Plan.

There was no update in respect of the Local Plan.

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

The Chairman reported that The Drovers Solar Farm application had been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in November and accepted for evaluation. This site has a confirmed connection to the National Grid.

In respect of High Grove, RWE propose to submit their application to the Planning Inspectorate in April and plan to engage (probably not a consultation) with Parish Councils during March. RWE are apparently in the process of contacting Parish Councils, but to-date no communication has been received. Council agreed that a request be submitted to RWE to strongly suggest engagement before March, with feedback on Council's submission to the first consultation.

To date, the High Grove project has not been provided with a confirmed connection to the National Grid. A decision is expected in late-Spring.

There was no update from the group set up by George Freeman, MP, who had previously met at the end of November.

8. Highway Matters

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

- Road drains, asphalt surround too high with steel work showing nr St Andrews Close (x2), – will be reported to Highways again with photographic evidence.
- Overgrown hedge on School Road – Highways instructed householders to deal and will now be updated on the lack of any action.
- Ashill Road – drains are blocked following the resurfacing and Highways have now cleared them.
- Nr No 7 Lower Road, pothole – reported to Highways and now repaired.
- Fingerpost at junction of Lower Road and Bradenham Road – post rotting and sign leaning – reported to Highways and now repaired.
- Adjacent to Willow House, Bradenham Road – large trees hanging low over highway – reported to Highways but does not currently meet intervention criteria – will be monitored.
- Corner of Church Road and School Road – overgrown hedge obstructing post box – household will deal.
- Ashill Road, pothole between bridge and Hunters Lodge – will be reported to Highways.
- Lower Road – roadside degradation – will be reported to Highways.
- Coping stones damaged on parapet of Necton Road bridge – will be reported to Highways.
- BT Pole on Bradenham Road – staywire in an inappropriate and unsafe position – will be reported to Open Reach.

9. Council Assets.

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

The Chairman reported that no works had yet commenced due to the poor weather conditions.

10. To consider the grass cutting contract for 2026.

Council considered quotes from the current contractor of £2,063.89 for 2026 and £2,125.76 for 2027 and, given the good performance during 2025 and value for money, Cllr McBrien proposed acceptance of the two quotes. This was seconded by Cllr Pearson and unanimously agreed by Council.

11. To consider the future of The Pavilion and the Playing Field Trust due to the imminent resignation of key members of the committee (Cllr McNeil on behalf of the HHPFT).

Cllr McNeil reported that the Holme Hale Playing Field Trust (HHPFT) Chairman was considering stepping down after a long period of service. However, there is no Vice Chair in place to succeed him, despite regular appeals for volunteers in Moonraker.

Council noted that the Hall is in a good financial position and a valuable asset for the village and it would be a real shame if it were to be lost. However, the Parish Council can only advise that succession planning is put in place and the situation must be made clear to the village.

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 policy documents (with major changes):

Cllr McBrien proposed approval of the following documents, this was seconded by Cllr McNeil and unanimously agreed by Council.

- Standing Orders - updated to include new Procurement Regulations.
- Financial Regulations - updated to include new Procurement Regulations.
- Code of Conduct - Local Government Assoc model policy.
- Data Protection Policy - new model policy.
- IT Policy - new document now required under 'Assertion 10'.
- Planning Policy - new document to include delegation and dark skies policy (previously within Standing Orders).

c) To consider approval of the following policy documents (with minor changes only):

Cllr McBrien proposed approval of the following documents, this was seconded by Cllr West and unanimously agreed by Council.

- Risk Assessment & Management Policy - now includes Reserves (as advised by our internal auditor), the SAM II sign and Data Protection.
- Asset Register - document is updated as and when necessary.

- Publication Scheme - only minor changes, nothing of note.
- Retention & Disposal Policy - updated as the advice re the length of time to keep some documents has increased.

d) To consider approval of the following policy documents (remain up to date and accurate):

Cllr McBrien proposed approval of the following documents, this was seconded by Cllr McNeil and unanimously agreed by Council.

- Safeguarding Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Equality Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Grievance Policy

e) To receive a report regarding the Annual Governance Statement - Assertion 10.

Council noted the new requirements under Assertion 10, which related to websites and accessibility, data protection, an IT policy and email accounts. The Clerk reported that policies and systems have been put in place and the Council can fully meet the new requirements of Assertion 10 and be able to answer YES on the Annual Governance Statement.

f) To consider the draft budget and set the precept for the year 31st March 2027.

Council noted the draft budget and increased costs in most areas of expenditure, they also acknowledged that many households were currently struggling with the cost of living and agreed a smaller increase would be appropriate, rather than the increase required by the budget. Cllr McBrien proposed the budget be accepted, with the exception of the grant payments which will be considered at the next meeting, and a precept of £9,500 be set for the year ending 31st March 2027. This was seconded by Cllr Scarlett and unanimously agreed by Council.

g) 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

Clerk (Salary & Office Allowance) – December	£312.13 (SO)
HMRC – PAYE	£3.20
ICO Data Protection – Annual Fee	£52.00 (DD)
Clerk (Salary & Office Allowance) – January	£312.13 (SO)
HMRC – PAYE	£3.20
Bank Charges (x 2)	£12.00
Village Green Grass Cutting	£43.37

RECEIPTS

HMRC PAYE	£103.94
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13. To consider any correspondence received.

There was no correspondence to consider.

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

With the exception of grant payments as agreed at item 12f, there were no new items received for the next agenda.

15. To confirm the next meeting of the Parish Council will be held at 7.30pm on Monday 2nd March 2026 in the Tony Evans Centre, Holme Hale Village Hall.

Council noted the date of the next meeting and the Chairman then closed the meeting at 9.26pm.

Signed:

Date:

HOLME HALE PARISH COUNCIL										
YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2026										
FINANCIAL REPORT - JANUARY 2026										
BUDGET UPDATE	Actual	Budget	To	%		Balance at 01.04.2025	9,641.19			
	2024/25	2025/26	date	Spend		Plus Receipts at 30.11.2025	9,605.89			
						Less Payments at 30.11.2025	7,671.33			
PAYMENTS*						TOTAL	11,575.75			
Admin	936	1,240	1,180	95%						
Salary	3425	3,692	3,028	82%		Bank Balance at 30.11.2025				
Permissive Pathway	618	649	649	100%		Unity Current Account	3985.46			
Grass Cutting	1975	2,056	2,009	98%		Unity Savings Account	7,590.29			
Street Lights	458	350	420	120%		TOTAL	11,575.75			
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	7,879	83%		TOTAL	11,575.75			
				Received						
RECEIPTS										
Precept	8500	9000	9,000	100%						
Bank Interest	36	25	87							
Grants	0	0	-							
Salary	7	0	104							
TOTAL	8543	9025	9,191	102%						
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	-69	-462	1,312							
*includes payments as listed on agenda.										
Amounts shown above do not include VAT.										