

HOLME HALE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Holme Hale Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 2nd March 2026 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

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

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

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

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

Cllr Broke declared an interest in items 6c and 7. Cllr McBrien declared an interest in item 11b, the Norfolk Citizens Advice. Cllr Scarlett declared an interest in item 11b, St Andrew's Church.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 5th January 2026.

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

4. To receive County/District Councillor reports.

County Cllr Eagle reported that this would be his last visit to Holme Hale Parish Council as, following the May elections, Holme Hale will no longer be in his ward. Following a boundary review, Holme Hale will then be in the same ward as Necton, represented by a different councillor.

In respect of Local Government Reorganisation, a decision from Government is awaited as to how many unitary authorities there will be.

Devolution is currently in abeyance due to the timescales of elections being altered by Government, and promised funds being withdrawn. Any decision as to the way forward will rest with the new County Council administration following the forthcoming elections.

Council tax will increase by the maximum permitted 4.998%, due to funding being withdrawn by Government.

The following initiatives continue, High Streets Matter, pub and hospitality grants, small business funding, business set-up grants for 18-30 year olds and veterans. Nominations are open for the rural business awards.

The County Council continues to lobby National Highways for improvements to the A47; the road in either direction from Swaffham is currently in a terrible condition. County Highways will repair the many potholes on Station Road and Hale Road.

The Chairman thanked C/Cllr Eagle for his contribution to the parish partnership fund and all his hard work on behalf of Holme Hale over the years.

D/Cllr Wilkin reported the District elections will take place in 2027, together with elections for the new Shadow Unitary Authority(s).

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

No matters were raised by the member of the public.

6. Planning Matters

a) To consider any new planning applications.

There were no new applications to consider.

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

Council noted that no decisions have been made on the following applications/appeals.

- 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.
- 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.
- Appeal against the refusal decision relating to 34 Station Road – construction of a two storey, four bedroom detached house (PL/2025/1170/FMIN).

Cllr McBrien queried the timescale for a decision on the PL/2025/1618/FMIM application and an update from the Case Officer will be requested. D/Cllr Wilkin said delays were normally at the request of the applicant or that additional information was required.

The Chairman asked the D/Cllr for advice regarding a new highway entrance cut into an old established hedge on the Necton Road. The D/Cllr said it would be a matter for either the Breckland Tree & Countryside Officer, or Highways. Council agreed to write to the household and invite them to the next meeting to address the concerns raised by members of the public.

Council noted that the following appeal has been dismissed.

- Appeal against the refusal decision relating to Cutbush Barns, Common Road, Ashill – erection of one dwelling and annex (retrospective) (PL/2025/0342/FMIN).

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

The Chairman reported that a total housing allowance of 20 dwellings has been allocated to Holme Hale, with seven already confirmed. Council agreed that number seemed reasonable given the Local Plan will run to 2042.

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 has a confirmed connection to the national grid and the application has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for a decision. C/Cllr Eagle reported that Highways has objected due to the proposed tilting solar panels which are 4.5m high and will cause glare onto the adjacent highway.

In respect of High Grove, the proposed meetings with parish councils have been delayed, apparently due to no confirmed connection to the national grid. The location of a sub-station has yet to be agreed and any connection may not be available until as late as 2035.

Council noted that the proposed large scale solar farms will cover 25,000 acres in Norfolk, both in this local area and along the route of the proposed Norwich to Tilbury pylons.

The Chairman agreed to bring forward **item 10**, whilst the D/Cllr was in attendance - **Breckland Community (land) Transfer Policy – to consider the transfer of Breckland land to Holme Hale Parish Council.**

The District Cllr said that there may be some advantages to parish councils transferring plots of Breckland land to parish council ownership, before the change to unitary. There are two plots of land in Holme Hale, at Red Lion Close and a pathway alongside the Village Hall car park. Council agreed it was not advantageous to take these on as it would only lead to additional responsibilities and costs for the Parish Council.

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 with photographic evidence.
- Overgrown hedge on School Road – this has now been cut back from the pavement.
- Corner of Church Road and School Road – overgrown hedge obstructing post box – the household will deal.

- Ashill Road, pothole between bridge and Hunters Lodge – reported to Highways and repaired.
- Lower Road – roadside degradation – reported to Highways and repaired.
- Coping stones damaged on parapet of Necton Road bridge – reported to Highways and will be repaired.
- BT Pole on Bradenham Road – staywire in an inappropriate and unsafe position – Open Reach have inspected the pole and confirmed it is safe.
- Church Lane – two potholes reported to Highways and repaired.
- Browns Lane – two large potholes near the ford will be reported to Highways.
- Church Lane – deep pothole opposite No. 8 will be reported to Highways.
- Corner of School Road/Cook Road – pothole on inner bend will be reported to Highways.
- Ashill Road – pothole between bridge and Hunters Lodge will be reported to Highways.
- Necton Road – pothole between Bridge Cottage and South View Cottage will be reported to Highways.
- Potholes on Station Road and Hale Road have been reported to Highways by C/Cllr Eagle.

The Chairman then thanked the County and District Councillors for their attendance and input, they then both left the meeting.

- b) To receive an update on the Parish Partnership application for signage on Lower Road.**
Council noted that a decision is awaited.

9. Council Assets.

- a) To receive an update in respect of the Station Road Notice Board.**
Council noted that repairs are awaiting better weather.

10. Breckland Community (land) Transfer Policy – to consider the transfer of Breckland land to Holme Hale Parish Council.

This item had been dealt with earlier in the meeting.

11. 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 grants awarded to local organisations and charities.**
Discussions took place regarding the grants awarded due to a budget shortfall of £500. The discussions included the valuable service the Norfolk Citizens Advice provides to residents, the parish precept increases over the past three years, the ever-increasing grass cutting costs paid by the Parish Council in support of the Playing Field Trust (£1,530 in 2026), the need for an additional grant to the Playing Field Trust, the availability of grant funding from the Fuel Allotment Trust for community groups, the possibility of reducing grant funding by inflation reductions only, and the high Council Tax increases putting additional pressures on already strained household budgets.

Cllr McBrien proposed that the grant to the Playing Field Trust be reduced by the annual increase in grass cutting costs for the playing field (£150), resulting in a grant of £300, with the other grants remaining the same, this was seconded by Cllr Scarlett and put to the vote. There were four votes for the proposal, with one against, the vote was carried. The Playing Field Trust will be invited to the next meeting to discuss funding needs.

c) To consider any other charitable requests for donations received.

Given the budget shortfall, there was no proposal for any additional donations.

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

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

PAYMENTS

Clerk (Salary & Office Allowance) – February	£312.13 (SO)
HMRC – PAYE	£3.20
Clerk (Salary & Office Allowance) – March	£311.93 (SO)
HMRC – PAYE	£3.40
Bank Charges (x 2)	£12.00

GRANTS

Holme Hale Playing Field Trust	£300.00
St Andrew's Church	£600.00
Swaffham & Litcham Hospice	£50.00
Norfolk Citizens Advice	£50.00
East Anglian Air Ambulance	£50.00

RECEIPTS

Bank Interest	£41.83
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AMENDMENT

ICO Data Protection payment was shown in January as £52.00 - was £47.00

12. To consider any correspondence received.

There was no correspondence to consider.

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

There were no new items for the next agenda.

