

**Methwold Parish Council Meeting**  
**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 7.30pm**  
**21 Room, St George's Hall Complex, Methwold**

Present

Councillors: Cllr French (Chairman), Cllr Grassick, Cllr Riches, Cllr O'Ware, Cllr Minkler, Cllr. Horton.

Cllr. Ryves

Cllr. Storey

6 members of the public

Clerk

1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, always lovely to see you all. We as councillors really do appreciate you taking the trouble to come out and join in.
2. Apologies for absence accepted from Cllr Rodriguez, Cllr Rodwell & Cllr Thomas.
3. Declarations of Interest (In accordance with S31 of the Localism Act 2011) and requests for dispensations – None
4. Cllr Minkler proposed to accept the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2024. Cllr Grassick seconded the motion, APPROVED – Cllr Horton abstained as she were not present at this meeting.
5. Matters arising from the Minutes not included on the agenda but for information only – None.

6. Open Forum for Public Participation

An opportunity to hear from members of the public, Borough, and County Councillor.

NCC Cllr Storey – New bus stops are being installed across the county, the budget for this is £1.25million, the project will run for 2 years until September 2025, enough money to build approx. 400 bus stops.

The bus stops will be a built-up tarmac area, signage and built to enable disabled access.

Process is – Highways, consultation with some parish councils & bus operators.

Some funds are still available for bus stops.

Old sites may need updating/New sites – must be in safe location/Historic sites.

There is an opportunity for Methwold to apply if there is a need and the parish council wish to.

Devolution deal-this was for £600m - £20 million spend over 30 years, the new government have decided not to proceed in Norfolk. The leader of Norfolk County Council Kay Mason-Billing has been to London to visit Ministers and there will be a report back to the County Council.

Tree project – 5 year period – there is 50% off the original price, limited number of single Norfolk oak trees available.

NCC meeting – 3 applications for solar farms – 2 applications cover 8000 acres and 1 application to cover 4000 acres, the Leader of the council has voiced concern over the use of arable land for power instead of crops.

As a member of the Planning Committee Cllr Storey is unable to make any comment.

Norwich Western Link – still being continued but held up at present with some issues.

Blue Tongue – the outbreaks across Norfolk are serious but not spread as quick as expected, the Leader has written to DEFRA to ask what they are doing.

National grid pylons across Norfolk, taking up the land, the power going through Norfolk and not for Norfolk.

On news, Norfolk schools - lathe & plaster ceilings, 1 school needed work, there are 60 schools across Norfolk which will be surveyed, 44 showed no immediate action, small number require a follow up, those schools which need immediate action will either move to neighbouring schools or online teaching, ongoing issue being dealt with.

Winter fuel allowance – all information which may be needed is online <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/> hopefully local events will be arranged regarding this important issue.

Cllr Storey contact details - [martin.storey.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:martin.storey.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk)

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[https://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Councillors/tabid/63/ctl/ViewCMIS\\_Person/mid/383/id/53/ScreenMode/Alphabetical/Default.aspx](https://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Councillors/tabid/63/ctl/ViewCMIS_Person/mid/383/id/53/ScreenMode/Alphabetical/Default.aspx)

Chairman voiced concern regarding food security as opposed to energy, do not think arable land which can feed us should be used for energy production. Chairman asked those attending the meeting whether they preferred arable land to be used for energy or food? Those attending were unanimous that land should be used to produce food.

Borough Cllr Ryves – Thanked the parish council for all they do, also thanked the speedwatch team for what they do.

QEH – pleased to see that we will still get the funding to build a new hospital by 2030, costs may go up.

Cranswick application – Applicant are approaching the Environment Agency, there will need to be a full public consultation where the public will have the opportunity to make their comments. Cllr Ryves will do his best to publicise any information regarding this.

Planning is a separate consultation. The parish council will be hosting a public meeting before they have to submit their comments, Cranswick will be invited to attend. There is national and international interest in this application so unlikely to be a small meeting. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Environmental Impact Statement is believed to be ready by the end of October, Borough has engaged environmental professionals who will address the statement. Cllr Ryves believes there could be a stand-alone planning committee meeting in February 2025.

The meeting which will be held in this parish is critical to the process. It is understood that the WWF is now involved, and Quorn has voiced concerns. Ammonia scrubbers are now included in the application. It is not too late for people to make comments on the planning portal.

In 2016 planning was granted to build an anaerobic digester locally, this is to process approximately 66,000 tonnes a year, approximately 6000 additional vehicle movements, these will be coming on site via A134 and leave via Mundford, this might have an impact with the Cranswick application and is something Cllr Ryves will be looking at. The Borough Council is trying to be as proactive as possible in supporting those who are under financial pressure, particularly the elderly. Workshops and meetings in parish have been offered, advice and meeting bills and an operation by Age UK to be held on 6<sup>th</sup> November The Blue Bell Stoke Ferry between 10am and 2pm, if the parish council wish to invite Age UK to the parish to make a presentation to the elderly they would be pleased to do this, possibly in conjunction with Northwold?

Cllr Ryves has been chairing of the audit committee and the taxi contract committee.

Bus stops issues with signage being removed.

Northwold issue with the rights of dog owners to walk their dogs on the recreation ground vs the rights of the footballing community to have a pitch without any dog waste, Cllr Ryves and Cllr Storey are doing their utmost to try and resolve this.

The County Council are spending millions on bus stops, yet they can't maintain one bus stop here?

The Hythe bus stops have been improved. Is it possible the councillors could put in a Freedom of Information request to ask what is being done to solve the problem of the bus stop outside the chapel? Anyone can put in an FOI, details are online.

What work is going on at The Chapel? The Chairman reminded the meeting that this is a private property, the parish council have no jurisdiction.

Cllr Storey has been working on this for many years, Highways have stated that the area is being looked at.

Chairman asked Cllr Storey to Officially escalate all enquiries to the highest order of council officer to find out what is going on and give the parish council an answer. Is there an extant licence for the hoarding, Chapel Lane bollards etc. There are planning and Highways issues.

Thank you to the parish council for the second dog waste bin on the fence at the recreation ground.

A big thank you to Cllr Grassick for installing the second bin and for re-installing the original. The cost for this was £11.62 plus the weekly cost to empty the bin.

Should dogs on the recreation ground be on a lead? If the childrens play area was fenced dogs would not be allowed in there.

There are restrictions at the recycling centre, appointments are needed to drop off items, will this lead to more fly tipping? Who will foot the bill when this happens, Borough, County or Parish council? The Chairman explained that Open Spaces are looking at having a recycling bin in the recreation ground car park, there is a lot of recyclable rubbish put in the litter bins. Fly tipping is a Borough issue to manage, you can report fly tipping on the borough council website [https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/homepage/312/fly-tipping\\_illegal\\_dumping](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/homepage/312/fly-tipping_illegal_dumping) or this can be reported on [www.fixmystreet.com](http://www.fixmystreet.com)

Will the cost of installing the appointment system at recycling centres actually save money?

Sycamore trees, White Road now taller than houses next to it and undermining the chalk wall. Reported there are at least 7 trees, the wall needs to be protected. The Borough council are aware and have been out to inspect the trees in the last 2 years. The trees on the opposite side of the road are very close to the electric cables. The parish council will chase this.

7. Reports: Update and Report from the Open Spaces Working Party to consider the recommendations made at the Open Spaces Working Group on 26th September 2024 to include:

The Chairman gave an overview of the items discussed in the meeting.

7.1 Bench in the Cemetery - Permission is requested to spend £300 to renovate the bench which has cast iron ends and replace the slats either in wood or plastic, the money which was allocated to purchase a new dog bin is now not required, an old one has been re utilised and fixed to the recreation ground fence. Cllr B Horton proposed to re-allocate the funds to this project, Cllr Riches seconded – APPROVED.

7.2 Cemetery – Memorial Topple Test – 2 quotes have been received – Cllr Minkler proposed Quote A £1089 is accepted, Cllr O’Ware seconded – APPROVED.

## Finance

### 8.1 Accounts Update – Bank Reconciliation

#### Accounts Update – Bank Reconciliation

Current Account total on 27th September 2024	£45,260.34
Tracker Account total on 27 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	£30,295.97
Saver Account (CIL & S 106) total on 27 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	£63,931.32
Emergency Reserve Fund on 27 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	£25,672.60
Total	£165,160.23

### 8.2 Income & Invoice list – The Clerk went through payments,

Late invoices to be added to the list of payments –

Replacement zip wire seat £145.80

Recycling – emptying of bottle bank £15.00

Electricity supply for Streetlights – contract ended – costs have gone up from 20p/kWh to 50p pkWh Npower are the only supplier who will accept unmetered supply. New contract to be confirmed.

Streetlights could be converted to LED’s at a cost of approx. £250 per lamp but there are 65 streetlights and only 2 have already been converted to LED, this will be a substantial cost and will be a major upgrade, if all changed to LED’s it will take 5 years to payback, there aren’t funds to do all at once. Could the streetlights be on for less time?

This will be discussed at Open Spaces and will be bought back to full council at a later date. Budget 2025/26 item.

Cllr Grassick proposed approval of payments, Cllr Riches seconded the motion – APPROVED

The issues with the grounds maintenance service are thought to be resolved.

The External Audit has been signed off.

Clerk gave an update from the Finance meeting.

## 9. Planning

### 9.1 To receive planning decisions

24/01223/CU The Swan Stoke Road Brookville Thetford Norfolk IP26 4QZ - Change of use of residential annexe/holiday let to single dwelling. Application Permitted 20 September 2024

#### Delegated Decision

24/01307/F Eccleston 17 Holders Lane Brookville Thetford Norfolk IP26 4RE - Timber carport to the front of the property. Application Permitted 20 September 2024 Delegated Decision

### 9.2 To receive planning applications

24/01462/F Single storey extension and garage at 64B High Street Methwold THETFORD Norfolk IP26 4NX – NO OBSERVATIONS

### 9.3 To consider planning applications received after the agenda was published.

24/01689/FM Creation of a new water storage reservoir in connection with the sugar beet processing and the animal feed drying technology from the British Sugar site at Land At E566627 N298166 College Road Wissington

Wereham Norfolk – NO OBSERVATIONS

#### Planning appeal – For information

24/00458/F Whitegates Methwold Road Methwold Hythe Thetford Construction of one dwelling and garage

## 10. Items received for the agenda:

### 10.1SAMS2 & Community Speedwatch Report – Cllr Minkler

Over the last month the Speedwatch team has been actively monitoring the roads in the parish and we have been supported by visits from Speed Camera Partnership and their officers.

The SAMs sign continues to give us good feedback of problem sites and this information is passed on a regular basis to Norfolk Police and used to deploy their resources.

Statistics taken from the Police website show that 200 drivers have been prosecuted for speeding this year to August on the road from Stoke Ferry roundabout to and including Brookville. The Hythe had 4 prosecuted in August.

Since I joined the council team, I have tried to push the relevant authorities for more action on speeders in the village and continue to put pressure on Police and Speed Camera Partnership to put their resources in this parish. I have graphed and kept detailed information from the parish SAM sign in order to make the case for more support. Originally, we expected that the Parish would have to pay for a survey to be done in order to put a case to Highways for any changes.

I am pleased to tell you that today we finally had a meeting with Highways and their project engineer Kevin Allen. Based on the information collected over the last 6 months Kevin has made some suggestions to changes to signs and road markings in the Parish. These changes are being made by Highways at no cost to the parish.

The changes recommended are:

North bound into Methwold Hythe:

1. Replace Speed terminal sign - This is on order and will be erected once delivered)
2. Paint 30MPH roundels on the road at the terminal signs either end of limit and prior to right angled bend.
3. Instal 30MPH repeaters to serve as a reminder of limit.

Entrance to Methwold from the Hythe direction:

1. Add repeaters between terminals and Buntings Lane.
2. Paint 30MPH roundels on the road at the terminals and at regular intervals where appropriate.

B1112 Brookville

1. Paint 'SLOW' marking on the road by the village gates south bound
2. Change the terminal signs to yellow backed mantle signs with BROOKVILLE written below.
3. Faded or damaged repeater signs to be replaced
4. 40MPH roundels to be painted between terminals and the bends before the School.

B1112 general:

1. Check all repeaters from the southern terminals to the School and replace faded or damaged signs. Continue to monitor after work complete using SAM SIGN and compare figures.

10.2 Projects suggested to be considered for 2025/26 Budget -

- a. Cycle racks at the recreation ground
- b. Traffic calming – signage
- c. Maintenance fund for the play equipment on the recreation ground – to be investigated to obtain costs.
- d. Repair/replace roof on The Pound
- e. Crime prevention scheme
- f. Hedge along the back of the recreation ground – to replace fence
- g. Increase to the Support Grant to the Trust - £15,000 – Maintenance Grant to upgrade and replace?
- h. Defibrillator for the Complex (Trust)
- i. Cycle racks at the complex (Trust)

Suggestions to be added for consideration –

Streetlight Upgrade

Chairman stopped the meeting to ask the public if there was anything they would like to be considered as a project.

Outside of the complex make more attractive and tidy up(Trust)

Investigate fencing off the childrens play area

Rebound board for football posts on recreation ground – to play equipment group

Refurb skateboard ramp

Community/Nature areas

Solar panels on complex – already installed

10.3 Permission to purchase plaque for memorial bench – It was agreed that the cost for the plaque will be covered by personal donations by councillors, not from the public purse. Cllr J O'Ware volunteered to organise this.

11. Correspondence

Norfolk Highways - Grit Bin Audit – broken or damaged Parish Council's responsibility to replace – Highways will fill the grit bins. Future grit bin requests – unable to provide at new locations due to funding pressures.

Public Space Protection Order – due to expire on 30<sup>th</sup> November – seeking to renew from 1<sup>st</sup> December, covers enclosed children's play areas, Hunstanton beach and promenade. There is no longer a lawful restriction to ban dogs from playing fields unless it's enclosed children's play area which is fenced (1.2mtrs), gated and consists of play equipment for children 5yrs and under.

Email received from resident to request the parish council look at installing electric vehicle chargers in the village hall car park. This will go to the Trust to discuss.  
Defibrillator fund open at the Borough Council.

## 12. Chairman's Report

On social media there has been some correspondence regarding the seat on the zip wire, and whilst I said it was down to dogs other people felt it was down to fair wear and tear, if you think that is ordinary wear and tear fair enough, they look like teeth marks to me. I cannot understand why people would get their dogs to bite on it, hang off it, strengthen their jaw? We have to buy a new one at £145 it is so, so wrong.

A person has been spotted allowing his dog to do this.

The suppliers have said it is a problem in other parishes, can it be impregnated with something to deter this? The weather will soon remove any chemical.

There are responsible dog owners, some aren't. If this is what some dog owners are doing I find it a worry, why would you want to train your dog to lock onto something?

Looking forward to the fair, which is coming next week, try their doughnuts, they are wonderful.

I have bought the zip wire seat in for you all to look at.

## 13. Further reports and items for the next meeting agenda – 14th November 2024

Bus stops – can we apply to upgrade the bus stops – to Open Spaces

T-sign in Ventura Close, is it down to Highways to keep this cut back? – Open Spaces

UK100 – Norfolk County Council represented by Leader and Cabinet Member responsible for Environment UK Network. Pleased to hear Cllr Storey had reservations using arable land for wind farms and solar panels, UK100 are pushing things like solar panels, but in the East of England they are looking to take 2792 acres arable land to put in solar panels, that's 2000 football pitches. Details are on the NCC website -

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/39028/UK100-Network-Partnership>

Equality and Inclusion page 9 of 65 – worrying comments – working towards a resilient and thriving Norwich outlined on our 2040 city vision, working to make the local economy to work for everyone led by Norwich Good Economy Commission, all this costs money and nobody knows anything about it, this is anti-democratic because it has all been put in place and who knows any thing about any of this?

Concern about the numbers of acres being transferred from growing food for us, to making electricity. The figures quoted are just for solar panels and not for pylons etc. can't roofs be used for solar panels, installed on new houses?

Police and Crime Commissioner, what does this cost and what does he do?

Bins outside flats are still outside - they are on private ground and not on the highway.

Chairman thanked everyone for coming and for their input.

14. To pass a resolution (under the Public Admission to Meetings Act 1960 to exclude members of the public and press for the following confidential items:

### 14.1 Staff Matters

Meeting ended: 21.50