

OXBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL**ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 14 MAY 2025: MINUTES**

Meeting opened at 1904.

Present: Cllrs: G. Allison, M. Cockerill, D. Hotchkin, S. Willies.
(Breckland Cllr: S. Hussey).
10 members of the public.

Open Forum

1. Election of Chair and Declaration of Acceptance of Office. **The Chairman, Cllr. Hotchkin proposed Cllr. Allison who accepted. Cllr. Cockerill proposed Cllr. Willies who accepted. Vote for Cllr. Willies: 2 in favour, 2 abstentions. Vote for Cllr. Allison: 2 in favour, 2 abstentions. Chairman used casting vote in favour of Cllr. Allison. ACCEPTED. Cllr. Allison signed the Acceptance of Office form.**
2. Election of Vice-Chair and Declaration of Acceptance of Office. **Cllr. Hotchkin proposed Cllr. Willies, seconded by Cllr. Cockerill: all in favour. ACCEPTED. Cllr. Willies signed the Acceptance of Office form.**
3. To accept the immediate resignation of David Hotchkin as an elected member of the Council. **APPROVED.**
4. To consider that David Hotchkin may act as interim Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. **APPROVED.**
5. To consider the co-option of Ms. Alison Vyse to be a member of the Council. **APPROVED. Cllr. Vyse signed the Acceptance of Office form.**
6. Apologies for absence. **None.**
7. Declaration of Interest. **None.**
8. Declarations of recording/social media use. **None.**
9. To approve the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held 15 May 2024. **APPROVED.**
10. Matters Arising. **None.**
11. **Accounts**
 - a. To receive, consider and approve Year End Accounts for y/e 31 March 2025.
 - b. To receive and review Internal Auditor report on 2024/2025 accounts.
 - c. To review and approve the 2024/2025: Section 1 Annual Return Governance Statement*
 - d. To review and approve the 2024/2025: Section 2 Accounting Statements*
 - e. To complete the Certificate of Exemption (page 3) and return a copy of it to the external auditor either by email or by post (not both) no later than 30 June 2025. **All the above: APPROVED.**
12. Appointment of Auditors (PKF Littlejohn LLP). **CONFIRMED.**

Signed:

Date:

13. Questions from the Public.

The question of training of the Parish Clerk was raised and for how long the interim Clerk will operate? Answer: 12 months, unpaid. The question of the recruitment of a new Councillor was raised. The negative balance in the projected budget prepared by Cllr. Allison was raised: What is the Council going to do about it? The Chairman mentioned that the cost of hedge cutting was being covered by voluntary work by parishioners and that increased hiring of the Village Green would also raise funds. It was suggested that grass cutting costs could rise by £700 next year: the Chairman mentioned a possible change of contractor. And also that meetings could take 1 and not 2 hours, reducing the hire fees for the Village Hall.

ORDINARY MEETING BUSINESS

Open Forum. **Nothing raised.**

1. Apologies for absence. **None.**
2. Declaration of Interests. **None.**
3. Declarations of recording/social media use. **None.**
4. To approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held 19 March 2025. **Approved.**
5. Matters arising. **Cllr. Willies raised the matter of the Village Green Booking Form: Clerk to draft a new one for approval. Cllr. Willies raised the matter of the beech tree inspection: Quotes already obtained will be distributed by the Clerk.**
6. Breckland Councillor's Report.
Cllr. Scott Hussey talked about the recent devolution meeting. The County Council still favours a single unitary authority, Breckland Council and all of the District Councils, with the exception of South Norfolk, still favour three. There will be another meeting tomorrow (15 May 2025). The main implication of devolution will be a substantial increase in Council Tax. A MotP asked whether the District Councils will be abolished? Cllr. Hussey said that it would probably only apply to Norfolk. With the resignation of Terry Jermy as a Councillor, the Reform Party has won another two seats. (One of them on the County Council). A meeting on the Cranswick mega-farm scheduled for 19 May has been postponed. The Reform Party is opposed to the use of more agricultural land being taken up by solar farms. A MotP brought up the question of why full fibre broadband is not available in Oxborough. [Actually it is available in parts of the parish, but not all, because of retention of copper landlines by some users.] Cllr. Hussey did not have further information. The possibility of Starlink use was mentioned by a MotP.
7. Norfolk County Councillor's Report. **Not present. None received.**
8. Planning matters. **None.**

Signed:

Date:

9. Correspondence received.

Correspondence received and made for meeting 14 May 2025 Oxborough Parish Council

a) Norfolk Police: see website. Email from PC 898 Gilluley (Community Engagement Officer) supplying a poster giving crime prevention advice and about allotment security.

b) NCC: see website.

1. Cllr Willies received confirmation from NCC Councillor Eagle that he is allocating some money to Oxborough for road safety, either signs or 30mph roundels painted on the road.

2. Norfolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan (NM&WLP) – Publication of Inspector's Report. The proposed adoption of the NM&WLP will be considered at a meeting of the Full Council on 20 May 2025. The report to Council will be available online upon publication of the agenda. On adoption, the NM&WLP will replace the three existing Norfolk minerals and waste development plan documents which covered the period to 2026.

c) Breckland Council: see website

1. Members support plans to create three unitary councils

2. Local Government Reorganisation – update (see website)

3. Gemma Manthorpe (Planning Policy Manager) emailed a Village checklist – request for information on services available in villages.

4. Breckland Council is reviewing its Local Plan. In December 2024 the Government published the revised NPPF alongside mandatory housing targets. For Breckland this increased the target from 625 dwellings per annum to 903. Given the significant increase in housing that is required by Government to be delivered a further call for sites is necessary in relation to sourcing additional housing land. Please use the relevant Form and additional note when submitting a site. This is available at the following link: <https://www.breckland.gov.uk/article/19942/Local-Plan-Full-Update-2024>. Sites should be submitted by 28 April 2025.

d) Email from Rob Lucas of RLS Computer Services Ltd: offer a fully managed SharePoint Intranet Site at no extra cost with our Comprehensive IT Support Package. This means your council can have: A professional, compliant.gov.uk website to enhance accessibility and credibility. Secure email hosting for all councillors, ensuring official communication is safe and reliable. Expert support from Kevin (Kevin Bacon, kevin.bacon@rlscomputers.co.uk) and our experienced team! Act before 28 March 2025 to secure this exclusive offer. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss how we can support your council's IT needs. Please feel free to reply to this email (info@rlscomputers.co.uk) or call 01553 776937.

e) Email response from Nurture Landscapes, concerning the damage to the trees on the village green following the cut on 17 March: "I'm sorry about the damage caused by our operatives. We will ensure this doesn't happen again. We will speak with our operatives and ask them not to get so close to the trees that they cause damage. I'm not really sure how we could compensate for this. Please feel free to reach out with suggestions".

Signed:

Date:

f) Cllr Hotchkin corresponded with Metcalfe Copeman & Pettefar LLP concerning the location of the Title Deeds to the burial ground extension (continuously leased to the National Trust for use as car parking): "After exhausting all avenues, I have not, unfortunately been able to locate any title deeds or files relating to the land you are requesting information on. If you discover any further information and I can assist, please let me know".

g) PKF Littlejohn LLP – deadline for approved AGAR and supporting documentation or the Certificate of Exemption (as appropriate) is Tuesday 1 July 2025.

h) Clerk asked villager Mike Craig to carry out the annual Internal Audit for the year ending 31 March 2025.

i) West Norfolk Community Transport letter from Natasha Hurley (Manager) promoting service (placed on website).

j) Clerk issued RFQ to tree inspectors in regard to the beech monolith inspection:

1. Dr. Stump (referred us to RH Tree Consultants – quote to follow on)

2. A.T. Coombes: £350 plus VAT (ground-based survey to the tree and complete a preliminary report)

3. Golden Tree Surgeons: £400 plus VAT (H&S survey)

4. Ravencroft Trees: £625 plus VAT (To attend site and carry out a ground level assessment of one tree in relation to its physiological and structural condition. To carry out resistograph testing of lower stem if deemed necessary. To provide observations and management recommendations. **Cllr. Willies pointed out that the Council has not had copies of these quotes. CLERK TO PURSUE.**

k) AGE Norfolk UK – request for donation.

l) 6 May 2025 – Norfolk County Council re: Local Government Reorganisation – Parish & Town Council engagement events, online MS Teams meeting, 6.30pm to 8.00pm, Tuesday 20 May 2025. **[This last item added later].**

10. Accounts.

a. To receive bank balance and reconciliation. (Prepared by Cllr. Allison).

b. To consider authorisation of payments and to sign cheques:

i. Norfolk ALC annual subscription £104.41.

ii. Nurture Landscapes Ltd. 2 cheque payments of £324.82, covering 4 months from January to April 2025.

iii. Community First Trading Ltd, (Zurich Insurance). Annual insurance premium renewal on 3 year contract: £283.55.

iv. Bank charges from 1 April 2025: Total = £10.00. (No action required).

v. Clerk's salary, final payment, part salary 1 - 19 April 2025, £104.33.

All the above APPROVED. [Note: the last item was approved after the agreed suspension of Standing Orders, moved by the Chairman. Item not on published Agenda]

c. To accept receipt of precept payment of £1,957.72 from Breckland Council. **ACCEPTED.**

Cllr. Willies asked why the Budget had not been put on the Agenda? This resulted in a brief discussion. [It may be adjusted at any time if suitable figures are proposed - Clerk's comment].

Signed:

Date:

11. Highways.

- a) Gooderstone - Upcoming Temporary Road Closure of Clarkes Lane to facilitate installation of washout in verge (My Ref: STRO12240)
- b) Anglian Water closures of Eastmoor Rd. 28 July – 1 August, Gooderstone Road. 11 August – 15 August. Disruption to water supply possible.

12. To consider that a mixed glass recycling/bottle bank should be placed near the bus shelter. (Subject to approval by Breckland Council and Norfolk County Council Highways). **NO DECISION. (Postponed). The proposal resulted in a general discussion (also involving input from the public). Cllr. Willies suggested that proceeds could be shared from the Village Hall bottle banks. MotP comments included the issue of noise and the environmental and safety question of broken glass and erosion around the site. The shipping of bottles from the pub to the existing banks on a rota system was discussed. Cllr. Vyse suggested a meeting with the Village Hall Committee and then Cllr. Willies volunteered to be involved in an informal discussion with them.**

- 13. To consider that warning notices about strong gate springs be placed on or beside both entrances to the Play Area on the Village Green. **APPROVED.**
- 14. To consider recognition of the sterling efforts and long-term service of our former Parish Clerk, Susan Hernandez, via a letter. **APPROVED, Chairman to draft the letter.**
- 15. To consider an appropriate gift to Susan Hernandez for her service. Contributions from Oxborough residents would be welcomed. **APPROVED. Cllr. Willies to arrange the collection.**
- 16. To agree that RoSPA be contacted regarding the annual inspection of the Play Equipment, due in mid-June. Approximate cost: £100.00. **APPROVED.**

Public participation

- 17. To receive information or suggested items for consideration at the next meeting.

The following topics were raised in a general discussion:

Whether the public are are permitted to speak in the middle of a meeting.

The question of a sole "bubble" for Parish Council contact via computer or mobile phone.

Possible Council bankruptcy was discussed... there was a suggestion from the Chairman that Oxborough could be merged with Gooderstone. [The Clerk commented that a Council may be bailed out by the Principal Council via a loan which is then recovered by an increase in precept]. Fundraising ideas were discussed to alleviate the Parish Council's financial situation: these included increased hiring of the Village Green, for example: Boot Camp exercises.

Signed:

Date:

What a Council may, or may not, do on a Village Green or with regard to fundraising, especially acceptance of donations, was discussed. The Chair said that the Council is just muddling through, but mentioned verge and hedge cutting as ways of saving money - a village working party was suggested.

National Trust re-wilding was raised with regard to the mowing of verges.

Meeting closed at 2140.

Oxborough PC Budget for 2025 - 2026, discounting bank balance.

Precept	£3915.42	Clerk's Salary	£1587.30
NT Lease	£200.00	Clerk's Expenses	£254.70
		Bank Charges	£60.00
		NALC Fee	£103.55
		Insurance	£283.62
		Nurture	£1948.80
		RoSPA Inspection	£98.40
		Poppy Appeal	£30.00
		St. John's Church	£175.00
		Village Hall Hire	£84.00
		Ewing - Accounts	£97.20
		Hedge Cutting	£600.00
		Training	Nil?
Income	£4115.42	Expenditure	£5322.57
+ VAT Refund	£268.10		
Debit Balance	-£939.05		
Prepared by G. Allison.			

Signed:

Date:

Oxborough PC Accounts as at: 31/3/25

Precept	£3559.48	Clerk's Salary	£1569.10
NT Lease	£200.00	Clerk's Expenses	£254.70
VAT Refund	£491.60	Bank Charges	£60.00
Received in error	£56.00	NALC Fee	£103.55
Hire of Green	£160.00	Insurance	£283.62
SAM 2 Sign Repair	£208.50	RoSPA Inspection	£98.40
		Poppy Appeal	£30.00
		St. John's Church	£175.00
		Ewing - Accounts	£97.20
		Hedge Cutting	£0.00
		Training	£0.00
		Nurture	£1260.00
		SAM 2 Sign Repair	£250.20
		Padlocks & Tape	£17.90
		Payment in error	£56.00
RECEIPTS	£4675.58		£4324.67
PAYMENTS	£4324.67		
	£350.91		
BANK BALANCE b/f	£2905.97		
	£3256.88		
Prepared by G. Allison.			

Signed:

Date:

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Oxborough Parish Council: Accounts y/e 31 March 2025				
RECEIPTS	2025	2024	PAYMENTS	2025
	£	£		£
Breckland Council Precept	3559.48	3358.00	Insurance	283.62
National Trust	200.00	200.00	St. John's Evangelist Church	175.00
Hire Village Green	160.00	260.00	Royal British Legion	30.00
VAT return	491.60	388.90	Clerk's salary	1569.10
Bishop & Miller (received in error)	56.00	0.00	Clerk's expenses	238.65
Norfolk County Council - SAM2 sign repair	208.50	0.00	Village Hall Hire/Zoom Meetings	69.00
			VAT	302.34
			Nurture Landscapes annual green maintenance	1050.00
			C.G.M hedge cutting	0.00
			Accountants	81.00
			TSB Bank charges	60.00
			RoSpa (annual inspection)	82.00
			Ngower- electric bills	0.00
			Norfolk Association of Local Councils - subs	103.55
			Oxborough Village Hall -reimburse funds received in error	56.00
			Padlocks & Barrier Tape for village green	14.91
			Breckland Council-Recharge for election	0.00
			Westotec - SAM2 sign service	208.50
Total Receipts	4675.58	4216.90	Total Payments	4324.67
				5406.44
Receipts & Payments Summary @ 31 March 2025				
		£		
Balance of accumulated funds as at 1 April 2024 B/F		2905.97		
		Add Receipts		
		4675.58		
		Less Payments		
		4324.67		
Balance as at 31 March 2025 C/F		3256.88		
S. Hernandez -Clerk.....	(Signature)		Chair: ...H.S...25.....	
Note 1. Auditors of the accounts are PKF Littlejohn LLP				
Note 2. Queries relating to the above accounts should be referred in the first instance to the Clerk at the following address:Swallows, Oxbor (07900 587 825).				

hernandezsusan@hotmail.com
M:07900 587 825

Mrs Susan Hernandez

Oxborough Parish Council

OPC Accounts Summary y/e 31 Mar 2025

Signed:

Date: