

WHINBURGH & WESTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Whinburgh and Westfield Parish Council on Tuesday 21st October 2025 at 7:30 PM in Whinburgh and Westfield Parish Pavilion, Whinburgh Playing Field, Shop Street, Whinburgh.

Present Councillors: Siân Carrel (Chair), Nick Anema, Richard Gundry, Jeremy Riches, Darren Godliman, Paul Blanch and Rebecca Wade (Clerk)

Also, present DC Paul Plummer and 1 member of the public

1. Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Robert Plummer.

2. Members declarations of interest for items on the agenda and to consider any requests for dispensations for Councillors with a Pecuniary Interest.

The Chair declared an interest in item 12.1 and item 14.

3. Public participation session

DC Paul Plummer informed the council that Flagship Housing had applied to redevelop the Thetford Abbey Estate, including the construction of new homes and the demolition of existing ones. The application was refused, but it is anticipated that Flagship will appeal the decision.

In response to recent reports suggesting that Breckland District Council had triggered the widespread solar farms locally by declaring a climate emergency in 2019, he stated this was inaccurate. The solar farms are linked to the infrastructure bringing power from offshore wind turbines in the North Sea, with Necton serving as a key junction point.

He raised concerns about the proposed installation of large electricity pylons running from Tilbury through Essex and Suffolk into Norfolk stopping at Necton to pick up power. He expressed concern about the long-term impact on the countryside and rural landscape.

Cllr Riches joined the meeting.

Cllr Blanch asked if anything was happening regarding the car parks in Dereham. DC Plummer advised that discussions are ongoing about transferring responsibility for the car parks to the Dereham Town Council. However, there is concern over the financial implications, as they would be responsible maintenance and associated costs. DC Plummer noted that by the time a decision is finalised the matter will be decided by the new Unitary Council. He added that if Dereham Town Council takes over control it would have the ability to set parking charges locally rather than leaving that decision to the Unitary Council.

4. Standing item: Play equipment inspection.

4.1 To consider the monthly play equipment inspection and consider any necessary repairs
Cllr Gundry reported that the hedge had been cut and looked good. All play equipment was in order. He noted that the previously loose leg of the swing was now stable, likely due to the recent rainfall. The installers had advised that the hot summer may have caused ground shrinkage around the concrete base, and the rain appears to have resolved the issue.

Cllr Gundry queried the grass cutting schedule, suggesting that the playing field may not have been cut since August. He also asked how the contractor is paid. Cllr Anema confirmed the contractor had experienced equipment issues, as reported by another customer. It was confirmed that the contractor is paid a fixed annual amount, which has remained unchanged for several years. The Clerk was asked to contact the grounds maintenance contractor to request a final winter cut and to arrange for invoicing after each cut going forward, to support the contractor's cash flow.

5. Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 16th September 2025.

The minutes of the meeting were unanimously approved without amendment and signed by the Chair as a correct record. Proposed by Cllr Anema and seconded by Cllr Godliman.

6. Items not on the agenda from previous meetings.

- The Clerk had experienced problems setting up the new email address, however, it is now working and will be used from next month onwards.
- Following communication with Norfolk County Council, the Countryside Access Officer has been in touch regarding Tollers Lane. The route will be assessed for vegetation clearance, waymarking needs, and the suitability of the Mid Norfolk Railway crossing. Due to significant overgrowth, clearance costs may be high. NCC will handle initial clearance; ongoing boundary maintenance will fall to adjacent landowners. If major clearance is needed, it must occur in autumn/winter (outside bird nesting season) and cannot be carried out this year due to lack of funding.

7. Correspondence received since the September meeting.

Norfolk ALC, Norfolk's New Flooding Hotline, Norfolk ALC – update on Devolution Bill, Breckland Business Bulletin, Transport Made Simple, Community Action Norfolk, CC Ed Connolly NCC briefing notes to October, Norwich Western Link Project update, Property Flood Resilience engagement, Regener8 Power Ltd, Breckland's Local Plan – regulation 18, Breckland Council Town and Parish - Engagement Sessions and Norfolk Police - Watton Area Neighbourhood meeting.

8. Simon Whiteley Memorial

Cllr Anema had spoken to Simon's family, and they would like a memorial plaque and a tree. He suggested the plaque be placed on the pavilion and he was uncertain what type of tree would be the most suitable for the playing field and churchyard. Various tree types, sizes and suppliers were discussed, and Cllr Anema agreed to investigate further.

It was **agreed** the plaque should be all weather. The Clerk was asked to research suitable options and pricing.

Simon's length of service was discussed, Cllr Gundry will look into this.

9. Rental or sale of the land lying to the south-west of Dereham Road, Garvestone, and land on the south-west side of Dereham, Whinburgh jointly owned by the Parish Council and Whinburgh Parochial Charity.

The Chair explained that the Clerk had written to the owners of the Punch Bowl. The Clerk had contacted Group News, the November issue deadline was missed, but a quarter page portrait advert is available for £17.50 per month. A combined advert for December and January is offered at £17.50 total.

The Clerk had spoken to the sign maker, who is ready to proceed once the wording is confirmed. The Chair referred to the Local Government Act 1972 chapter 70 and expressed uncertainty about the council's ability to sell the land. The Clerk has contacted Norfolk ALC for guidance. The County Officer is currently away and expected to return mid-November.

The Chair requested a valuation and associated costs but has not yet received a response.

Cllr Riches reported two potential renters for the land.

It was noted that the Parish owned piece of land is classified as amenity land. The land was originally transferred from Breckland District Council and was previously Highways Surveyor's land. Councillors discussed the origins of the charity land. Cllr Gundry agreed to contact a former trustee of the original charity for further information.

The Clerk requested clarification on whether the land is to be sold or rented. As no decision can be made until legal guidance is received, it was agreed to amend the advert wording to "Land available from January 2026" and to inform interested parties that the council is currently gauging interest. Proposed by Cllr Carrel, seconded by Cllr Anema, and all **agreed**.

10. Planning

10.1. To receive and consider any new planning applications

None

10.2. To note any planning decisions

PL/2025/0990/HOU - New balcony to the rear and internal alterations, including the conversion of the garage and the replacement of the conservatory roof, Gables Lodge Whinburgh Road, Westfield - **Granted with conditions**

PL/2025/1345/DCA - Discharge of Conditions 5 and 6 on planning permission PL/2025/0795/VAR, Home Farm Shop Street, Whinburgh - **Discharge of Condition**

PL/2025/0642/FMIN - Proposed new self-build detached dwelling with attached double garage incorporating paddock facilities - Lorient, Dereham Road, Westfield - **Refused**

10.3. Response to Park Farm renewable

The Chair reported that Marengo Communications, on behalf of Regener8 Power Ltd, had contacted the council requesting a meeting to respond to comments made regarding the proposed renewable energy hub at Park Farm, Shipdham. The purpose of the meeting would be to further discuss the proposals and better understand the council's position.

Following discussion, it was noted that Regener8 Power Ltd would also be meeting with Shipdham Parish Council. To avoid them coming out twice, it was agreed that two councillors from Whinburgh and Westfield Parish Council would attend the Shipdham meeting. The Clerk will respond to confirm the date and time of the Shipdham meeting. Once confirmed, the meeting will be advertised on the parish council website.

10.4. Other planning issues

Cllr Blanch reported that planning application PL/2025/0642/FMIN had been refused, with multiple reasons cited. He highlighted concerns raised by Highways, including the incorrect installation of a gateway and that loose stones had been used rather than tarmac or concrete, resulting in debris spilling onto the main road.

Cllr Blanch requested that the Clerk contact Breckland Planning to confirm whether they will act on the points raised by Highways. It was **agreed** that the Clerk would contact Breckland Planning.

11. Property Flood Resilience Questionnaire

The questionnaire was completed and will be returned by the Clerk to the Flood and Water Team at Norfolk County Council.

12. Finance

12.1 The following payments were unanimously approved for payment. Proposed by Cllr Godliman and seconded by Cllr Gundry (* already paid).

To pay	Detail (invoices available for viewing)	Total	VAT	Ex VAT
Everflow	Water supply – 22/9/25 to 21/12/25 *	£21.83	-	£21.83
Octopus Energy	Electricity *	£31.08	£1.48	£29.60
Spire Solicitors LLP	HM Land Registry Search Fees	£42.00	£7.00	£35.00
NPTS	Councillor training	£78.00	£13.00	£65.00
Clerk	October Wages and expenses	£409.04	£0.50	£408.54
HMRC	PAYE	£73.20	-	£73.20
Ace Fire Ltd	Alarm Service	£180.00	£30.00	£150.00
Ace Fire Ltd	Fire Extinguisher Service	£98.22	£16.37	£81.85

It was noted that the Clerk had entered the incorrect payee. The correct payee should be Spire Solicitors LLP.

Ace Fire Ltd submitted their invoice after the agenda had been published.

12.2. Receipts since the last meeting

Detail	Total
Precept	£5,170.04
Bank Interest	£50.15
Pavilion Hire	£16.00

12.3 Financial Officers report

Cllr Gundry reported all was in order.

12.4 New bank signature update

The Chair reported this is still in progress.

13. To review the current grounds maintenance contract, consider alternative providers, and agree hedge cutting arrangements along Shop Street

Following discussion, it was agreed to continue with the current ground's contractor. The hedge was cut the previous week at the same rate as the previous year.

14. Coltishall Agility Club pavilion chair hire

After a discussion it was **agreed** that the chairs will be hired out for £25. This is less than last year, as tables are not required this time. The Clerk to send an invoice.

15. Transport Made Simple Group community engagement regarding the Acquisition of Go East Anglia

The Chair reported that Transport Made Simple had contacted the council inviting comments or a meeting regarding current transport provision. Members noted that while bus services in the wider area were generally good, there is no direct provision in Whinburgh or Westfield, requiring residents to drive to access bus routes. It was **agreed** there was no need to comment.

16. General Parish issues (for information only)

Cllr Godliman had sent an email to the Clerk regarding the culvert at Loly Moor, including the What3Words location. The Clerk had not received it. Cllr Godliman will resend the email, and the Clerk will forward the details to the Highway Rangers.

17. Matters for consideration at the next meeting.

- Simon's Memorial
- Rental or sale of the land lying to the south-west of Dereham Road, Garvestone, and land on the south-west side of Dereham, Whinburgh jointly owned by the Parish Council and Whinburgh Parochial Charity

18. The next Parish Council meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 18th November 2025 at 7.30 p.m. in Whinburgh and Westfield Parish Pavilion.

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.51pm