

WHINBURGH & WESTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Whinburgh and Westfield Parish Council on Tuesday 16th September 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, Robert Plummer, Darren Godliman, Jeremy Riches, Paul Blanch and Rebecca Wade (Clerk)

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

1. Apologies for absence

There were none.

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

There were none.

Cllr Anema joined the meeting.

3. Public participation session

A resident wished to speak about item 12 on the agenda. He was concerned about the deteriorating condition of hedges and verges in the village particularly affecting visibility on Church Road. The Chair clarified the verge cutting is the responsibility of Norfolk County Council Highways, while individual landowners are responsible for maintaining their own hedges. Overgrown hedges affecting road visibility should be reported to highways.

The resident queried responsibility for an uncut hedge behind and to the side of his property. He also noted a number of years ago a wire fence set approximately one metre from his boundary had been placed there and this had been left to overgrow. The Chair explained the responsibility for this lies with the adjacent landowner. Cllr Anema explained that some agricultural schemes encourage farmers to delay hedge cutting until January/February to provide food for the birds during the winter.

Ownership of the adjacent land was uncertain due to the recent farm sale. Councillors advised the resident to consult the Land Registry for confirmation of ownership. It was noted that the land may have been submitted during the recent call for sites for possible development. The resident suggested a covenant may exist due to historic dwellings on the field.

Cllr Anema reported that there were overhanging oak and other tree branches along Dereham Road, Westfield between Lolly Moor and the Crossroads which had been broken due to a recent lorry having driven down there. The trees had not been trimmed to the appropriate height and were nearly hitting cars.

The Chair asked the Clerk to contact Highways to report additional complaints received from residents regarding health and safety concerns, specifically related to visibility issues caused by hedges adjoining the highway.

Cllr Anema informed the Council of a public consultation regarding the proposed development of 350 new homes at Dumpling Green, Dereham.

DC Paul Plummer reported ongoing developments regarding the proposed reorganisation of local government in Norfolk. Norfolk County Council would like a

single unitary authority, while District Council favour three. The reorganisation aims to reduce the total number of District and County Councillors, with County Councillors continuing to be part time. Parish councils are expected to take on increased responsibilities under the new structure. Final decisions, including the number of unitary authorities, will be made by central government. Cllr Plummer noted that many details remain uncertain, and several variables are still under consideration.

4. Standing item: Play equipment inspection.

4.1 Monthly play equipment inspection and any necessary repairs

It had been noted that the bottom climbing hold on the children's wall had come off. Cllr Anema had removed the remaining bolt for safety. Given its position at the base of the wall, it was agreed that a replacement was not necessary.

Cllr Anema had also resecured the gate located within the hedge, which is obscured by the hedgerow. The gate is now secure.

Cllr Godliman had inspected the nursery swing and reported that the left-hand leg is less firmly anchored than the others. The council discussed the installation method used by the contractors, including whether the legs were set in concrete or another material. It was agreed that the swing does not currently pose a safety risk.

The Clerk to contact NGF Play Ltd, the original installers, to request an inspection and any necessary work to ensure the swing is properly secure.

5. Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 12th August 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

- Highways have confirmed they will be repairing the culvert headwall at Lolly Moor and repairing the fencing on the Bridge in Westfield. The road will be temporarily closed for the duration of the works which is anticipated to be from 15th – 16th September 2025.
- The Clerk's email address will be changing from clerk.whinburghandwestfieldpc@gmail.com to clerk@whinburghandwestfield-pc.gov.uk from the 1st October

7. Correspondence received since the August meeting

Norfolk ALC, Breckland's – Environmental Initiative Grants, Breckland Planning Enforcement, Local Government Reorganisation – from Norfolk ALC and NCC, emails from residents, NCC Highways, Norfolk Community fund, Community Safety Officer – Free Bystander training, Community Action Norfolk, Norfolk Community Biodiversity Awards, Norfolk PTS, LGR Q&A session with NCC Leader, CC Ed Connolly's Parish Report, Empowering Communities, Norfolk and Suffolk Police, Breckland Business Bulletin, NCC LGR Update – Business Case for One Unitary and Breckland's Local Government Reorganisation proposal.

8. Memorial tree for Simon Whiteley

There was no further update. This was moved to the next agenda.

9. Repairs to the existing septic tank at Whinburgh Pavilion

It had been discovered that the septic tank at the Pavilion was, in fact, a holding tank with an estimated capacity of approximately 50 gallons. Councillors were unable to confirm when or if the tank had ever been emptied.

Councillors discussed the feasibility of installing a proper septic tank system and considered alternative waste management solutions. Given the pavilions in frequent use, it was agreed that the holding tank would be inspected every three months and emptied as necessary.

10. Footpath obstruction on Tollers Lane

A member of the public had contacted the Clerk to inform her that the Tollers Lane footpath was obstructed and appeared to pass through a private property. They had also submitted photographs.

Councillors discussed the route's location but remained uncertain exactly where it was. The Chair had visited Garvestone to try and locate the other end of the footpath but was unsuccessful in locating it. It was noted that although the path has existed since 1959, it had not appeared on any maps. The inspectorate has now confirmed that the route will be added to the definitive map as a restricted byway.

Due to the significant overgrowth along the route, the path is currently impassible. The Chair proposed contacting the Footpath Officer at Norfolk County Council (NCC) to request the landowners along the route be informed of their responsibility to clear the hedges and make the byway accessible. The issue of the mid Norfolk railway crossing was raised, and it was queried whether a formal crossing would be required.

It was **agreed**:

- The Clerk will contact NCC regarding the obstruction and ask that they contact and inform landowners of their responsibilities along the route.
- A copy of the correspondence will be sent to the Garvestone Clerk.
- The member of the public who raised the issue will be informed that the councillors contacted Norfolk County Council and advise that they may also contact Norfolk County Council directly.

11. 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 invited councillors to suggest any individuals who might be interested in renting the land. Councillors discussed whether the land should be sold or rented and noted that potential interest may come from neighbouring landowners. It was felt that any future rental agreement should be for a term longer than two years due to the current closure of environmental grants. Cllr Riches indicated he may know someone interested. Cllr Anema queried the status of the portion of land gifted by Breckland District Council. It was concluded that no decision regarding sale or rental could be made until expressions of interest were received and options explored.

The following was proposed by Cllr Godliman and seconded by Cllr Blanch and all agreed:

- The Clerk would place a notice in the Group News explaining the current Farm Business Tenancy will come to an end on 31st December 2025 and inviting expressions of interest from parties interested in renting or potentially purchasing the land.
- The Chair would seek professional advice from land agents.
- The Chair would obtain up to date plans for £14.99.

- Cllr Riches would make enquires with a local farmer.
- A sign would be placed on the side of the field.
- The Clerk would write directly to the occupiers of the Punchbowl informing them of the tenancies end date and asking if they would be interested in acquiring the land.

This Item will be added to the agenda for the next parish council meeting.

12. Concerns about hedge and verge cutting within the village.

This was discussed in the public session.

13. Events

13.1 Whinburgh and Westfield Dog and Steam event update – held on 16th August 2025

The Chair informed the council of the sad and unexpected passing of Mr Stephen Fuller, a regular attendee of parish council meetings. Mr Fuller had been an invaluable contributor to the Whinburgh and Westfield Dog and Steam event, assisting with the organising and setting up, He also helped with practical tasks such as cleaning out the shed. His willingness to help and his kind nature was greatly appreciated, and he will be deeply missed. The Chair expressed condolences on behalf of the Parish Council.

The event raised a total of £1,075.00, which was divided between the Churches of Whinburgh and Westfield, and PACT.

The Chair reported that the event was very well attended, with good weather contributing to a successful day. Councillors thanked the Chair for all her hard work in driving the organisation of the event.

The Chair suggested that it would be worthwhile to hold the event again, and it was agreed that the Council would revisit the matter in February to discuss and confirm dates for a future event.

14. Planning

14.1. To receive and consider any new planning applications

PL/2025/1345/DCA - Discharge of Condition(s) 5 & 6 on PP 3PL/2024/0549/F - Home Farm Shop Street, Whinburgh.

This application came in after the agenda was published and after a discussion it was agreed not to comment using the Clerk's Delegated Powers.

14.2. To note any planning decisions

None.

14.3. Other planning issues

The Chair provided an update regarding the mobile home situated at Sunset, Shop Street, a matter which was previously discussed at the last meeting. The Clerk had contacted Breckland District Council's planning enforcement team for clarification. In their response planning enforcement confirmed the caravan is being used solely as an additional bedroom and they are not living in it during the day. As such, they advised that this does not constitute a breach of planning regulations.

The Chair has since communicated this response to the neighbouring resident who initially raised the concern.

15. Finance

15.1. To Following payments were unanimously approved for payment. Proposed by Cllr Carrel and seconded by Cllr Blanch (* already paid)

To pay	Detail (invoices available for viewing)	Total	VAT	Ex VAT
Octopus Energy	Electricity (01/7/25 – 31/7/25) *	£25.88	£1.23	£24.65
Octopus Energy	Electricity (01/8/25 – 31/8/25) *	£36.93	£1.76	£35.17
Clerk	September Wages and expenses	£422.04	£1.03	£421.01
HMRC	PAYE	£73.40	-	£73.40
Clerk	Microsoft	£84.99	£14.16	£70.83
Clerk	Protectivity insurance for the Dog show	£88.69	-	£88.69

15.2. To note the following receipts since the last meeting

Detail	Total
None	-

16. To receive trigger alerts from Norfolk Constabulary

Norfolk Constabulary had reached out to various organisations asking if they would be willing to receive alerts regarding the growing threat of courier fraud. After a discussion all agreed they were happy to receive the alerts.

17. Sale of the Parish lawn mower

The Chair informed the parish council that it was Mr Fuller who had sadly passed away who had expressed interest in purchasing the parish lawnmower.

Members were asked if they were aware of anyone else who might be interested in acquiring the lawnmower. Councillors discussed its potential value noting that it was likely to be modest given the availability of second-hand lawn mowers in the area.

It was agreed that Councillors would inspect the lawnmower to determine whether it was in working order before any further discussions or decisions regarding a sale were made.

18. Policies

The following policies were reviewed and adopted by the council without amendment a) Privacy Notice b) IT Policy. Proposed by Cllr Anema and seconded by Cllr Carrel and unanimously agreed.

19. General Parish issues (for information only)

Cllr Plummer Informed the Parish Council that the lady who had been voluntarily maintaining the area known as Stegg's Lane footpath will no longer be able to continue this work after the current year. Cllr Anema clarified that the area in question

is not officially designated as a footpath. The Chair acknowledged the matter and noted it as a potential issue to be considered in the coming year.

20. Matters for consideration at the next meeting

- Simon Whitely 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

21. The next Parish Council meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 21st, October 2025 at 7.30 p.m. in Whinburgh and Westfield Parish Pavilion.

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.05pm