

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
held in Carbrooke Village Hall on 9 April 2024**

Present: Cllrs N Defew (Chair), J Borrett, K Jones, W Leport, D Page, S Willmott, S Yerby. In attendance: N Hartley (Parish Clerk) Cllr H Crane (Breckland Council). Eleven members of the public.

1 Welcome

Cllr Defew welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Minutes

The meeting confirmed and the Chair signed the minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2023.

3 Parish Affairs

A preferred site option for a new housing development was noted. A resident said that residents had not been made aware of this. Cllr Crane (Breckland Council) noted there had been consultation. She suggested she can arrange a meeting with the Planning Officer.

A resident said there was reference to community in the Village Hall report, but said people 'had been alienated.' She asked why there was no village fete. The Council was asked how many committees were needed to put on a fete.

It was noted there is no village magazine. Cllr Defew said a magazine would need an editor.

4 Parish Council Chair's Report

Firstly, welcome to our annual parish meeting. It's great to see so many of our volunteers here.

I want to start tonight by thanking all the volunteers we have across all of our village groups. Thank you for volunteering your time and the work you put in, which helps to ensure that we have community within our village.

I also want to thank my fellow parish councilors for their commitment and work over the past 12 months. As many of you here will know, this time last year we were a somewhat depleted council and had several vacancies. As you can see, we now have a full council and, importantly, have had a full council for most of this year. A complete parish council is better placed to make more rounded decisions and represent a wider section of parish views. This conveys confidence in regard to its function, when setting out it's stall for the coming 12 months.

I'm not going to thank each person by name; however, I must also publicly thank our Clerk, Nick. Nick works tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that we make decisions that are within the framework of the law. He helps to provide the structure we need, as a council, to function correctly, even when the council is faced with difficult decisions which are necessary and sometimes unpopular!

We are fortunate to have two village halls in our parish. As you can see, the old village hall is undergoing some repairs. The Hub too has undergone a year of transformation. Moving from concept to an established part of the community. I would like to place on record the council's appreciation to the hub committee for their efforts this year. It's not always been easy, but you have transformed the way this building operates in the community, and as a result, the hub now relies on much less funding from the parish council, however our support for your efforts remains firm.

We have also seen an increase in the grants awarded to all of our village organizations. As a parish council we are delighted that the communication regarding the availability of grants has improved, and we hope that the village groups will continue to approach the council in the coming year. We are here to support the community and your requests to the council are always very welcome.

I would like to highlight the grant we were able to make to the Heritage Group this year as this will enable the group to purchase the rights to the excellent 'Carbrooke through the Ages' film. This will ensure that Carbrooke's heritage will be part of the digital history of our village and will, therefore, be free for everyone to watch in future years.

Finally, one of the notable achievements of this year is the restoration of the village plough - which now sits proudly outside this village hall. Carefully restored by Chris Jenner and Tom Thurston to a very high standard, we are now all able to enjoy this agricultural link to our past. They say it takes a village to build a community and it definitely felt like it took a village to help restore and remount the plough!

5 County Councillor's Report (Claire Bowes)

Council agrees £528m budget

In February Councillors backed a budget that "delivers for Norfolk", in the face of major challenges facing local government.

Deputy Council leader, Councillor Andrew Jamieson, Cabinet member for finance, introduced the budget as a budget for the future, with an additional £60m for adult social services and £35m extra for children's services, and savings from transforming how the council operates.

He pledged to continue to lobby the next Government for multi-year settlements, fair funding and reform of adult social care funding.

County Council leader, Councillor Kay Mason Billig, said the council would continue to be ambitious for Norfolk having already achieved many successes against a tough economic backdrop.

Councillors accept £600 million devolution deal

County councillors have voted to accept a county deal devolution agreement with the Government, to transfer significant funding and powers to Norfolk.

Government funding will start transferring to Norfolk next summer if councillors vote this July to stage the first election for a leader in May 2025. The deal will mean that decisions can be taken in Norfolk, for Norfolk, potentially securing investment of more than £600m over 30 years. If councillors agree the in-principle deal, it will enable us to invest in areas such as transport, skills and job opportunities, housing and regeneration, tailored to the needs of local people.

A County Deal would mean:

- Having a Council Leader who is directly elected by the public, enabling Norfolk's voice to be heard by the Government
- Targeting funding and resources to Norfolk's own priorities
- Unlocking housing and employment sites
- Investing in the skills we need and attracting and retaining key businesses
- Opening the door to more – further powers and funding in future

Norfolk County Council provided extra support to households this winter

Earlier this year, Norfolk County Council announced it would receive further funding from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to run the Household Support Fund until 31 March 2024. The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in the Budget that this funding would be extended by a further six months.

The council has received £13.4m from central government and adding an additional £400,000 to make the total programme of support worth £13.8m. It is working closely with district, borough, and city councils, VCSE and public sector partners to identify and implement a range of support measures to meet the needs of vulnerable households.

Norfolk's roads and footpaths to be fixed as part of £4.51m funding

Thirty-four roads and 20 footpaths across the County will be repaired by Norfolk County Council during this coming year as part of Government funding.

Roads from Great Yarmouth to King's Lynn, from Hunstanton to Thetford and many in between. The entire County will receive reclamite spray or resurfacing along with footpath construction to ensure Norfolk's infrastructure can best help people to get to work, travel to

services and access Norfolk's natural and cultural assets through effective highways maintenance.

Twenty-seven brand new gritters joined Norfolk's fleet

Twenty-seven brand new gritters took to the roads for the first time in a £3,238,000 boost to the annual push to help keep Norfolk moving safely during the winter months.

Norfolk's fleet of 58 winter vehicles treat 2,200 miles of roads on each full 3-hour gritting run. All A and B-class roads and some C-class roads are treated with a focus on commuter and major bus routes and as far as is possible one route into all villages. The A11 and A47 are gritted by National Highways.

Norfolk flood protection took centre stage in Westminster

The threat posed by flooding and coastal erosion in Norfolk has been laid out starkly for MPs as Norfolk County Council has taken their case for change to the heart of Westminster.

The delegation from Norfolk, led by Norfolk County Council Leader Cllr Kay Mason Billig and the Chair of the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance (NSFA), Henry Cator, met with MPs, on the 71st anniversary of the 1953 North Sea Flood, to explain the risks Norfolk faces and how those risks could be addressed.

As demonstrated over this winter, our county faces regular risks of flooding, with Norfolk ranked tenth most at risk of surface water flooding out of 149 local authority areas. In addition, the county's position on the North Sea exposes it to tidal threats as well as significant coastal erosion: without action, it's estimated that in North Norfolk alone approximately 1,030 residential and commercial properties could be lost to erosion by 2100. That number could be up to 10,000 in all of Norfolk.

These risks threaten both Norfolk residents and the contribution Norfolk makes to the wider country, as home to 54% of the offshore wind generation capacity in the UK and a major producer of food.

In a presentation delivered in Portcullis House, Norfolk's delegation made the case for MPs to:

- Push for legislative permission to build reservoirs designed to capture excess water in times of flood, for use in times of drought
- Advocate for Property Flood Protection measures to be granted directly to the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for faster allocation for those who need it
- Reduce bureaucracy by granting greater autonomy in funding allocation for surface water flood mitigation schemes
- Combine enforcement and maintenance powers and responsibilities for LLFA's
- Support the creation of a dedicated Minister for the Coast

£1 million boost for Highway Parish Partnership Schemes

Schemes totalling over £1m will be distributed across Norfolk to deliver the wants and needs of local parishes and residents as part of the Highway Parish Partnership.

The Parish Partnership scheme began in September 2011, when Parish and Town Councils were invited to submit bids for local highway improvements, with the County Council funding up to 50% of bid costs. The key benefits of the scheme are that it:

- Delivers local priorities identified by local people.
- Draws in additional funding for small scale highway improvements, enabling us to collectively deliver more schemes.
- Gives local communities an opportunity to directly influence the improvements in their local area. The programme continues to be well received by Parish/Town Councils, Local Members, and communities. Information about the number of bids received through the scheme over the past twelve years demonstrates there is a good spread across Norfolk.

For information on current schemes and if you wish to apply for future schemes then please contact myself in the first instance. claire.bowes@norfolk.gov.uk. For further information please see <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/parishpartnerships>

More people 'choose the bus' in Norfolk after first year of bus service improvement plan

It's been just over a year since Norfolk County Council received £49.55m of funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) to improve bus services across the county. There have been huge numbers of improvements already made across the county, and the latest figures show that passenger numbers have increased throughout the year with the number of fare-paying passengers now exceeding pre-covid levels.

Passenger numbers across the UK fell dramatically during the covid-19 pandemic with an average drop across the UK of 50.3% but in many areas even more.

Latest figures for Norfolk show that overall bus passenger numbers have increased by 18% in the last year with the number of fare-paying passengers now at 107% compared to pre-pandemic baseline figures. Norfolk is bucking the trend as nationally bus usage figures are at between 89% to 98% of pre-pandemic levels*.

Concessionary pass holders, who have been the slowest to return to using the bus since the pandemic, are now at 83% of pre-pandemic levels and have increased by more than 12% since January this year.

Norfolk received the sixth highest allocation in the country and the funding consists of £30.9m of capital funding and £18.6m of revenue funding.

Approximately £12 million of the funding was allocated to providing new or expanded bus routes and increased service frequencies on key routes, including more evening and weekend services and this has been very much the focus of the spend in this first year of funding.

- A total of 31 enhancements have been made to services this year bringing more regular bus services to 93 parishes with a population of more than 306,000 people.
- There are now more evening services on key routes across 21 parishes in the county including to **Dereham, Watton**, Thorpe St Andrew and Horsford.
- 49 parishes have an improved Saturday service while 5 parishes are benefitting from improved Sunday services.

In addition to the service enhancements year one of delivering the bus service improvement plan for the county has also seen the following infrastructure improvements.

- The first Travel Norfolk Travel Hub opened in North Walsham providing improved waiting areas with real-time information and integration with walking and cycling facilities.
- A county-wide review of bus stops has started **with Watton bus stop being upgraded to our new gold standard.**
- 84 accessible bus stop boarding points have been delivered countywide.

24/7 free travel to all disabled bus pass holders in Norfolk

From 1 February 2024 all Norfolk residents who hold a disabled concessionary travel pass will be eligible for free bus travel 24 hours a day, seven days a week when travelling within the county.

The decision by the County Council, means that more than 14,500 people across the county who hold a concessionary bus pass due to disability, and their eligible companions, will now be able to travel on any bus at any time free of charge across Norfolk.

Offering free travel at all times is over and above the minimum requirement set by government, and is something that a local authority can choose to do but doesn't have to do. The change was recommended following an updated equality impact assessment of the scheme which concluded that it is now unfair to offer a discretionary enhancement to just one group of disabled people (i.e. those who are blind or visually impaired).

The recommendation agreed by the individual cabinet member was to 'extend the concessionary travel discretion of free travel at all times to all eligible disabled passholders and eligible companions, from 1 February 2024.'

The cost of providing this enhancement is estimated at £50,000 which will be funded by the Council's ring-fenced public transport budget provided by the Department for Transport.

Householders can have free DIY waste disposal for small projects

Norfolk residents have been able to dispose of small amounts of DIY waste at Norfolk's Recycling Centres free of charge from 31st December following changes made by Norfolk County Council.

The change applies to small-scale projects carried out by householders on their own home, allowing them to bring a maximum 100 litres (must fit into 2 x 50l bags) for free or one single item (maximum size of 200cm x 70cm x 75cm). Each household is allowed four free visits with DIY waste every four weeks. Anything beyond this will still be charged at normal rates.

The change in policy follows Government abolishing charges for the disposal of limited amounts and types of DIY waste at recycling centres across the UK.

Prior to 31st December, customers with DIY-type construction and demolition waste will continue to be directed to the 'Pay as you throw service' which is available at all centres.

Traders must continue to pay for DIY waste. For more information visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/DIYwaste

6 Breckland Councillor's Report (Helen Crane)

I am very pleased to bring you the annual report from Breckland Council as I continue to serve the villages of Saham Toney, Carbrooke, Bradenham, Scoulton and Ovington.

A few key achievements from your council are as follows:

We have funded £25,000 to plant 2,400 trees at Oxburgh Hall for a Woodland of Thanks to recognise sacrifices made during the Covid pandemic. The trees will also help with biodiversity and removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

To increase our tree canopy cover, we've secured, and have started to distribute, DEFRA funding of £26,400 for the planting of community orchards within our District.

To help reduce CO2 emissions, we have continued work to roll out electric vehicle charging points in our District and approved the installation of solar panels at Dereham Leisure Centre, saving 47,000 KG of CO2 per year.

We have agreed a New Green Tariff reducing our CO2 emissions for electric to zero and secured £530k in decarbonisation grants to reduce carbon emissions in our leisure facilities.

Replaced 1673 streetlights with energy efficient LED bulbs.

We are committed to reduce environmental crime and increased the maximum penalties for fly-tipping up to £1,000. There have been over 160 actions taken against fly tipping. Support for community litter picks continue and 30 groups have been supported to do this.

To enable composting, we now have over 25,818 residents subscribing to brown bins. This is nearly 40% of our households benefiting from the service, and together composting nearly 10,000 tonnes of garden waste each year.

We continue to offer a flexible, reliable, and cost-effective business waste collection and disposal service for Breckland, we've exceeded our customer growth target by 15%, now having more than 305 customers and £220k gross income.

To help reinvigorate our local market towns, we've launched our Love Your Market Town scheme, awarding £5k grants to support ideas and initiatives which will generate footfall and activity into local town centres in Breckland.

A new Business Support Scheme was launched for small businesses and community organisations. The funds help businesses diversify or grow, bring more customers to the area or to support social economic and local growth through innovation.

The Queen Mother's Garden in Dereham was revamped and is a beautiful place and was awarded the British Association of Landscape Industries Regeneration Scheme Award.

Working together with The Wayland Partnership with funding from Norfolk County Council we are forming plans to develop a Digital and Creative Media Centre in Watton.

We've completed the restoration of four of Swaffham's historic buildings with funding from the Heritage Action Zone

To provide individuals and families who are homeless with a safe and secure place to stay, we've purchased new temporary accommodation units within our District.

Acknowledging our exceptional care and dog warden services, we received the RSPCA Platinum Paw Prints award; the only Council in Norfolk to receive this accolade.

Ensuring residents have a say in how the land within Breckland should be used in the future, we've successfully adopted an update to the District's Local Plan and we continue to work on the new Local Plan.

We were nominated for a Norfolk Flourish Award, hosted by the Children and Young People's Strategic Alliance (CYPSA) acknowledging the impactful work in delivering mental health youth projects.

In recognition for supporting the health and well-being of residents, we won the Health and Social Care Award at the 2023 Local Government Chronicle Awards. The award recognised work by the council, NHS, charities and partners to tackle health inequalities in Breckland.

To support survivors of domestic abuse in the local community we have committed to continue to support and fund the Daisy Programme until 2026.

We continue to grow our Mindful District Programme by adding a third village and a new training partner and trained over 300 mental health champions.

Aimed at fostering well-being among young people in the district, we've begun to deliver a new youth mental health programme through the Breckland Mindful District Partnership.

Providing access to fresh and affordable food options for our community-the model of the food bus will change but will continue.

To continue to deliver services which support people who have experienced domestic abuse, declining mental health or financial hardship, we've invested £1.1M of council funding over the next 3 years.

To help local groups commemorate the upcoming 80th anniversary of D-Day, we've made a total of £25,000 available to celebrate and mark this historic event.

In addition to our annual contribution to Citizens Advice, we've strengthened our partnership by funding two Debt Advisors, further supporting their vital debt assistance services.

7 Village Hall Report

The following report was submitted by Ed Buscall, Chair of the Village Hall.

First of all, apologies for not being present but I have to be in London for work.

The first thing to say is it takes a village to run a village hall. The aim of the management committee is to turn the village hall into a thriving community space by improving facilities and offering the parish ways of coming together. However, we realise that we cannot do this without the help and support of the local community, and so I want to begin by thanking everyone on behalf of the committee who has helped contribute to the success of the hall over the past 12 months and it was great to see so many people at our AGM. I am aware that many have given up their time to support the hall and that there is not space to mention all. But a huge thank you to everyone. The hall is run by volunteers and its success is dependent on positive community involvement and people working together.

I am glad to say it's been a busy year for the hall. In terms of improvements, we have a new PA system and projector and screen with help from a parish council grant. Much of the hall electrics have been rewired to modernise and bring them up to safety standards. There have been lots of great events attracting many people thanks to our fantastic entertainment's committee. To give you an idea, the heritage film afternoon had over 80 attendees, three Quiz nights were sold out, the Coronation Tea and Drag Bingo had over 60 people, 2 race nights and a murder night had over 40 people. All the stalls at the Christmas Bazaar were sold out and was well attended.

Regular clubs have continued to play an important part of the hall's offer. Craft, dancing and yoga sessions can be found here regularly, but it would be great to have some more! The heritage centre has provided a way of the hall offering more to the school by providing classes with lessons on local history and it has been great to see more of the youngest generation here. The success of these sessions has also led to the school using the hall for art exhibitions, Nativity services and plays.

The weekly coffee morning and the bar on Fridays and alternate Sundays give the community the chance to come together and so are an important feature of Village Hall life. I would like to thank Lynsey and Ivan and their helpers for taking on the running of the coffee morning and to Alan and Angela for all their hard work behind the bar and keeping it well stocked and well run.

The management committee has spent time looking and revitalising its governance to make sure it can run smoothly and effectively. These have resulted in a set of policies that can be found on our website that should give confidence about the principles that guide the committee in its decision making.

Looking forward, there is much to be excited about. The scaffolding is up for the new roof. Supply chain issues are delaying the prompt start we were hoping for, but our builder says he is resolving these and work will start shortly on a project that is the result of months of fundraising. Once complete, the new roof will guarantee a long-term future for the building. Meanwhile, we have received a grant from the parish council for bar furniture and are currently looking at our options. Having recently upgraded our internet, we will soon be hiring out the meeting room having reorganised it and introduced new storage to the hall. Meanwhile, we have just received a grant from Breckland Council to organise a D-Day celebration in June – one of many great events that can be expected at the hall this year.

Thanks again to everyone who has helped over the past 12 months and given up their free time for nothing to support the hall, and I would particularly like to express my gratitude to the committee for all their hard work. Apologies to those not named but I can assure that all your work is really appreciated.

8 Millennium Green Trust Report

A copy of the report read by Jerry Darby, Chair of the Millennium Green Trust, follows below.

It has been another busy year on the Millennium Green albeit a very wet one compared to the previous years drought.

The trustees through proactive fund raising and grant applications have been able to achieve the following;

Purchase of a wood chipper which reduces the amount of burning on site and produces useful wood chip for pathways. This was due to a successful grant application from Breckland DC.

Planting of Queens Memorial and replanting Bob Buscall memorial trees which have established well.

Establishment of a wildlife trail with information boards funds coming from Tesco community fund.

The old notice board was replaced by a superior weatherproof board made in the village by Rob Mitchell. This has given us a platform to publicise events and display notices such as minutes of meetings.

Removed trees identified as dangerous from the parish tree survey, work professionally carried out by Alex Talbot local tree surgeon.

Fruit trees planted in the orchard replacing gaps where trees had previously died.

Primary school children helped with the project and funds from Breckland DC.

The trustees funded bunting around the green to celebrate the Kings coronation and created a site for the national picnic.

The annual pond maintenance was carried out by a number of volunteers in August reducing the population of invasive weed.

The trustees held a stall at the Christmas Bazaar selling personalised bird boxes and decorations adding valuable funds to our reserves.

A trustee who emptied the dog waste bins left the village and the trustees explored third party collections. These proved to be prohibitive with quotes up to £3k pa.

Other trustees and volunteers have formed a weekly poo bin club to tackle the problem at no cost to the green.

We are fortunate to have the help bi weekly from the Community payback scheme which helps with the heavy lifting on the green enabling the trustees to be more ambitious with projects.

We are grateful for the support of the Parish council and for the grants received this year towards our insurance, tree felling and the notice board.

We have regularly engaged with the school who hold twice weekly forest school on the green and we have again hosted the school sports.

We have improved our in house structures by finally achieving digital banking with Barclays even with our own card reader for contactless payments.

The Health and safety policy has been significantly improved by the appointment of Bright HR

We currently have 8 trustees with two new appointees and two resignations this year.

Going forward we have a Tesco funded project pending for a community garden area on the green with raised beds and we are exploring a Friends of the Green scheme to further engage with the community and raise additional funds.

9 Carbrooke PCC Report

A copy of the report read by Mark Ward, Treasurer to the PCC, follows below.

Main headline report : We are keeping going and the church is still standing!

We have been without a parish priest for several years but unlike many village churches in Norfolk, we have continued to offer weekly services, thanks to several members of our congregation who have become experienced in leading worship. Negotiations are taking place which we hope will now lead to the early appointment of a new rector for Carbrooke later this year. All in the village and beyond are welcome to join us on Sundays at 10.30am. No previous experience or any particular beliefs necessary.

We have hosted several visits from classes from the village school. Our church is an excellent resource to learn more about the history of the nation and of the village, and for learning more about the Christian faith.

In memory of Mr Gerald Relf, 1000 bulbs have been planted either side of the church path. Every spring the village can now enjoy a magnificent display of 21 varieties of daffodils, flowering from late January to early June.

We remain an important venue for village weddings and funerals.

Our weekly congregations are now usually below 10. The charitable giving of this small group is barely enough to cover our running expenses (insurance of the building alone is around £2,500). We now have little in savings and it is essential that we successfully secure grants. We have managed to restore and improve internal lighting in the church. A very urgent matter is how to deal with the rapid decline in the condition of the large west window (facing the road). Several panes of glass have already been lost and the resultant hole in the window is a great concern. We somehow have to raise about £30,000 for a proper repair, although cheaper options are available but still unaffordable. More generally we are told by ecclesiastical architects that the building will not survive without about £400,000 being spent. Regardless of their religious beliefs, this should be a concern to all in the village. This historically significant and beautiful building could well be lost.

We are very grateful to the parish council this past year for its decision to use its own contractor to cut the grass in the most visited areas of the churchyard. We are no longer in a position to pay for grass-cutting (some years it was costing us £3,000), and although leaving the older parts of the churchyard uncut provides a valuable wildlife haven, we do hope the parish council will be able to continue providing support so villagers will still be able to visit the graves of friends and loved ones.

10 Carbrooke Heritage Group Report

A copy of the report read by Angela Weatherell follows below.

The main activity we have been involved with during the past year has been the production of the Heritage film 'Carbrooke in the Past'. At first envisaged as a 3 minute taster to promote Carbrooke Heritage Centre, it grew into a 30 minute documentary style film of Carbrooke through history. It's production has caused a few headaches but the final outcome was a

fantastic showcase for Carbrooke. It was showed publicly on the 28th.November, in the village hall, with standing room only.

Later it was shown on 7th.December in the community centre to a packed audience. The Heritage Group would like to thank the Parish Council in providing a grant to buy the rights, and it is being placed on the Carbrooke Heritage website free to view or download. We plan another public showing later in the year, for anyone who missed the first viewing or who wish to see it again.

Our next project is to produce a series of Carbrooke Heritage Trail leaflets around the parish, with the intention of leading Heritage trail walks from time to time.

We are now trying to hold fortnightly Friday working meetings, in the hope that new members may join us, and work on aspects of history and Heritage that interest them.

We have also hosted the School in a number of their projects during the year. A year group at a time. These can be pretty hectic, as the children can be very enthusiastic. Subjects covered 'Agriculture' (particularly) in Carbrooke, 'World War 2', and we have been asked to do this again in November, 'The History of Carbrooke', and this has led to the school asking us to help them in an RE lesson in the church.

We are particularly pleased to have been able to assist the school and pass on our understanding of the subject of Carbrooke Heritage.

Various members have been doing their own private research and sharing it with us, and we will be helping with the DDay anniversary event, taking place in June in the Village Hall.