

**Minutes of a meeting of Carbrooke Parish Council
held in the Community Hub on 11 February 2025**

Councillors present: N Defew (Chair), J Borrett, K Jones, D Page, L Poole, G Redfern.

In attendance:- N Hartley (Parish Clerk), Cllr P Bate (Breckland Council), P Arrowsmith (Community Hub).

Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Leport, and Cllrs H Crane (Breckland Council) and Bowes (Norfolk County Council).

2 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Defew declared an interest when the Council reached item 19 below, as his brother's company was asked to produce a sign.

3 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2025. The Chair signed the minutes.

4 Matters Arising

None.

5 Report from Breckland and County Councillors

Copies of Cllr Bate, Crane and Bowes' reports are attached to the minutes.

6 Finance

6.1 The following payments were approved in accordance with the budget:-

N Hartley, clerk's salary, £796.68

HMRC, clerk's Paye & Hub manager's Paye (February), £439.80

Carbrooke Parish Council (Hub account) transfer of funds, £4,000

TT Jones Electrical Ltd, supply & fit LED at Trenchard Crescent, £420

Ed Buscall & Partners, clearing and planting the community orchard at Blenheim Grange, £360

N Defew, reimbursement for materials bought re the Village Hall car park fence, £408.82

6.2 The following payment was made from the Commuted Sum:-

Mansfield Fencing, removal of railings around open spaces at Blenheim Grange, £965

6.3 To note the following payment received:-

Carbrooke Parish Council (Hub account), payment for manager's Paye (February), £240.80

6.4 The meeting received a report of Actual to Budgeted expenditure

6.5 The Internal Control Officer's report was carried forward to the next meeting as Cllr Leport was not present.

6.6 The Hub's Internal Control Officer reported that all necessary checks had been carried out and everything was in order.

7 Appointment of Internal Auditor

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint SCS Accounting as the Council's Internal Auditor.

8 Internal Control Policy

The Council reviewed its Internal Control Policy. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the revised policy.

9 Hub's Internal Control Policy

The Council reviewed the Hub's Internal Control Policy. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the revised policy.

10 Hub's Cash Handling Policy

The Council reviewed the Hub's Cash Handling Policy. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the revised policy.

11 Risk Management Policy

The Council reviewed its Risk Management Policy. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the revised policy.

12 Hub's Risk Management Policy

The Council reviewed the Hub's Risk Management Policy. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the revised policy.

13 Standing Orders

The Council reviewed its Standing Orders. It was **RESOLVED** that no amendments were necessary.

14 Appointment of a new member to the Hub Committee

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the appointment of Janet White to the Hub Committee as Data Protection officer, Health and Safety officer and CCTV officer to replace Steve Arrowsmith, who has stepped down from the Committee.

15 Hub Manager's Report

A copy of the report is attached to the minutes.

16 Hub Finance Report

A copy of the report is attached to the minutes.

17 Flower bed Contractor at Blenheim Grange

The Council considered quotes for the appointment of a contractor to maintain the Open Space flower beds at Blenheim Grange. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Mrs Greenfingers.

18 Replanting flower bed on Washington Drive

The Council considered quotes to replant an area of Open Space flower bed on Washington Drive. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Mrs Greenfingers.

19 Signage for the Community Orchard at Blenheim Grange

It was **RESOLVED** to produce a sign acknowledging the role of the Parish Council and Breckland Council in the creation of the King's Coronation Orchard.

20 Proposal to clear/cut back trees on the Community Orchard site

The Council considered clearance of trees and branches overhanging gardens on the Community Orchard site. It was **RESOLVED** to obtain quotes.

21 Electric Charging Point in the Village Hall car park

The Council received a request from the Village Hall Committee to install an Electric Vehicle Charging Point in the Village Hall car park. It was **RESOLVED** to agree to this.

22 Village Hall Path

The Council considered revised quotes for the Village Hall path including an addition to the path. It was **RESOLVED** that members of the Council will hold an on-site meeting and consider the appointment of a contractor at the next meeting.

23 Maintenance of the churchyard War Memorial

The Council had been advised by the War Memorial Trust that the cracking towards the base of the shaft was most likely being caused by ferrous fixings within the stone that have corroded and expanded. The Trust advised that although filling the cracks was only likely to be temporary this would be the best approach initially as it would allow for the damage to be monitored and determine whether this was recent damage or whether it was historic and has therefore stabilised. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Bretts to carry out this work.

24 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Poole said the Council had received an acknowledgement from Breckland Council that the neighbourhood area for Carbrooke had been approved. Cllr Poole is putting together supporting documentation and the Clerk will apply for grants. Cllr Poole said that the Neighbourhood Plan will not be affected by the Local Government reorganisation.

25 Representatives' reports

Cllr Redfern reported the Hub's finances are in good order and that it is always a pleasure to attend such a pleasant and happy committee. He said the Hub is being well run, as the Council had hoped when it was set up.

Cllr Borrett reported that the Parochial Church Council had held its AGM. She said the PCC is hoping to form a new group for coffee mornings and afternoon teas. The church remains in need of extensive maintenance and urgent electrical work is required.

It was reported that the school had achieved Good rating in its recent Ofsted report.

26 Items for inclusion on the next agenda

VE Day event.

27 Next Meeting

The next meeting will be in the Community Hub at 7pm on March 11.

The meeting was closed at 7.50pm.

Signed Chair

Date

Carbrooke Parish Council Actual to Budgeted Expenditure

Category	Budgeted	Expenditure	Over/under expenditure	Notes
Running Costs				
Insurance	1,000	1,762.55	762.55	Increased premium due to Hub on being on a flood plain
Clerk's salary, paye & expenses	12,750	10,074.58		
Paye clerk & hub manager		1,869.06		
Payroll	100	36.00		
Office supplies	50	71.72		
Internal Audit	150	120.00		
External Audit	400	426.00		
Council training	400	312.00		
NALC subscription	400	184.85		
Microsoft/ McAfee subscriptions for Council laptop	150	149.97		
Website costs (Wix)	100			
Subscriptions (Info comm) and CAN	85	35.00		
Bright HR	-	235.26		
Blenheim Grange – open spaces				
Grass cutting	Commuted Sum	5,419.26		
Tree survey	Commuted Sum	858.00		
Tree maintenance	Commuted Sum	3,960.00		
Flower bed maintenance & weed killing	Commuted Sum	1,400.00		
Signs	Commuted Sum			
Fencing	Commuted Sum			
Paths	Commuted Sum	4,526.40		
Community orchard – trees	Grant received	528.75		

Blenheim Grange Play Area				
Play equipment repairs	5,215			
Play equipment safety report	200	156.00		
Safety surfacing	-			
Hub Play Area				
Transfer to Hub	13,000	7,000.00		
Play equipment repairs	-	85.00		
New litter bin	-	651.89		
Defibrillator		750.00		
Blenheim Grange Capital costs				
Dog waste/litter collection	2,000	1,174.92		
Remove flytips	700			
Benches	1,000			
Fencing, war memorials, signs, noticeboards, drop down locks	Inc above	643.60		
Village Hall car park				
Maintenance	1,500	805.16		
Grass cutting	400	471.24		
Noticeboards	300			
Plough/bench/village sign	Inc above	13.99		
Capital costs				
Defibrillators	200	108.00		
Broadmoor road bus shelter	600			
Bus shelters – Norwich Road	Inc above			
Street light charges Trenchard Crescent	100	123.58	23.58	Price rise
SAM2	200			
Dog/litter bins	500	701.74		
Asset repairs		1,260.00		
Grants & donations				
Grants	4,000	4,751.60		
Fete	3,000	300.00		Bus for Beacon lighting
RBL Poppy wreaths x 3	100	100.00		
Christmas tree and lights	400	443.00		
Parish Partnership Scheme		5,000.00		Monies carried forward

Transfer of Vat reclaimed for Hub to 31/3/24	-	650.38		
	£49,000	£57,159.40		

Bank reconciliation as at 5 February 2025

Barclays Current Account	£30,786.48		
Barclays Deposit Account	£20,543.57		
Lloyds Blenheim Grange	£ 8,777.38		
Lloyds Hub	£ 4,919.49		
Scottish Widows	£34,583.65		
Unity Trust	£90,872.24	£190,482.81	
Balance c/f	£188,085.07		
Add receipts	£ 59,557.14		
Less payments	£ 57,159.40	£190,482.81	

CLlr Crane's report (Breckland Council)

Devolution and LGR is going ahead at pace and Norfolk County Council members voted in favour. The County elections due to take place in May have now been postponed. I will continue to say this is not a good deal for Norfolk. Although now in the 'Priority Programme' there is no indication of what the 'Deal' looks like or what money will come through to Norfolk. There has been no consultation with District Councils or residents. My fear and opinion is that our rural wards will be forgotten when a 'super council of Norfolk and Suffolk are amalgamated, overseen by a Mayor. There is no doubt in my mind that council tax will rise as it has in other council areas where this has taken place. Breckland has the lowest council tax in the district (and country), has no debt and a lot of assets which I fear will be swept up and disposed of when District councils are done away with.

With regard to the above Breckland council has paused its work on car park charging. It will be for the new administration to make decisions on what happens moving forward. The consultation and work done so far will not have been wasted as the data will go forward. The council is however continuing to talk to Town Councils regarding them taking the car parks and having them under their control.

The Kings Coronation orchard planting went ahead on the 10th February. It was a glorious morning and the trees went in well in 2 hours! Thank you to the Parish Council for permitting this to go ahead on Parish council land. Thank you to the Community Hub volunteers and residents who helped on planting day and special thanks also to Ed Buscall for sending a man to help and Jerry Darbie from The Millennium Green. These things cannot happen without an enormous effort from volunteers. The community Hub will be keeping a close eye on the orchard and we will start watering as soon as it is necessary.

CLlr Bate's report (Breckland Council)

The State of Democracy in Breckland

The ruling party's recent comments have once again highlighted their belief in the strength of democracy in Breckland, while expressing skepticism about the effectiveness of a new unitary authority. Their well-reasoned arguments have been put forward with conviction, yet their impact might be as limited as past opposition efforts to parking charges.

Spending Plans Amid Uncertainty

One of the key topics addressed was the ruling party's spending plans in light of the potential dissolution of their authority. Despite the looming uncertainty, they assured that their financial strategies would proceed as if the end were not imminent. This steadfast approach aims to maintain stability and continuity, even in times of potential upheaval.

Challenges with New Planning Software

Questions arose regarding the performance of the newly implemented planning software. Many have found the software to be lacking in functionality, causing frustration among users. The ruling party responded by acknowledging the ongoing issues and assured that improvements were in

progress. They emphasized that the software was a work in progress and that gradual enhancements were being made.

Controversy Over Spending on Apps

The ruling party faced scrutiny over their expenditure on apps, which has been a point of contention due to the significant amount of money spent. This issue gained further attention when the council received an award from Private Eye for wasting money. In response to opposition questions, the ruling party dismissed them as cheap soundbites, deflecting criticism with a degree of dismissiveness.

Emphasis on Neighbourhood Plans

Both the ruling party and the opposition highlighted the importance of neighbourhood plans. These plans play a crucial role in local governance, allowing communities to have a say in their development and ensuring that local needs and aspirations are met. The emphasis on these plans underscores a shared commitment to grassroots involvement in the decision-making process.

CLlr Bowes' report (Norfolk County Council)

Lindon Court Closure

You will, I expect, be aware of the news that Norse Care has made the decision to close Linden Court care home in Watton by the end of April. Linden Court has served the Watton and Wayland community well for very many years and I understand the sadness and concern that many in the community are feeling at the news. However unfortunately the facilities offered at the home no longer meet residents growing and complex care needs and a substantial investment would be required of Norse to update and adapt the home with specialised mobility equipment needed. The home has 50 bedrooms, of which only 27 are occupied with five rooms decommissioned due to not being fit for purpose. Whilst the building has historically met the needs of its residents, the growing complexity of people's care means the rooms are too small for the equipment needed to deliver the care many people now require. Norse are working closely with residents and families to ensure everyone finds a new home to suit their needs and they have also pledged to give staff full and necessary support to transition to new employment.

The County Council owns the freehold of the Lindon Court site and the Leader has assured me that the Council will work to achieve a positive outcome, the vision being to see the current home replaced with a new assisted living facility for the elderly or such like. This is something I would be fully supportive of and will do my best not to see the site just surrendered for standard housing development.

Devolution and Local Government reform

Last week the Government announced that Norfolk would be one of its priority areas for devolution and local government reform. Ministers want to see a devolution deal covering Norfolk and Suffolk, with an elected mayor. They also want "two tier" areas like Norfolk - where responsibility for key services is split between county and district councils - to replace existing councils with unitary authorities. The Government has also put orders in place to postpone May's County Council election their reasoning being that doing so will allow more time for the complexity of setting up a mayoral

combined authority by 2026. At the special Full Council meeting on 9th January I was one of only 7 Councillors to vote against postponing the elections believing such a move to be an affront on democracy and also because I think it very likely that they will end up being postponed for longer than a year.

Norfolk Rural Business Awards. A call has gone out for nominations after the awards were officially announced at the Norfolk Farming Conference held at the Norfolk Showground today. . The awards were launched last year by Norfolk County Council in partnership with the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association and the winners were congratulated by HRH Prince Edward following the ceremony. Each of the nine categories will have a specialist judging panel who will follow up with those shortlisted before making their final decision. Winners will be announced at the Royal Norfolk Show in June.

The nine categories are:

- Best Rural Community Initiative (sponsored by Aviva Community Foundation)
- Best Farming Innovation Adopter (sponsored by Lovewell Blake)
- Best Food and Drink Producer (sponsored by Fountain Fresh Imports)
- Norfolk's Unsung Hero (sponsored by Poultec)
- Best Farming Champion (sponsored by CLG Norfolk)
- Best Emerging Talent (sponsored by PlantGrow)
- Best Rural Business (sponsored by New Anglia Growth Hub)
- Best Sustainable Land Use (sponsored by Birketts)
- Best Rural Tourism Attraction (sponsored by Thursford)

Campaign sees potentially dangerous batteries and chargers removed from sale

More than 1,800 potentially dangerous batteries and chargers were removed from sale recently thanks to a regional campaign by Trading Standards services from nine local authorities, which was led by Norfolk County Council. The work was carried out after fire and rescue services in the eastern region reported an increase in the number of fires involving lithium-ion batteries and battery chargers. East of England trading standards tested 22 items, primarily from online marketplaces. All failed to provide the correct information as required by law, with 13 also failing on safety grounds, including risk of electric shock, fire and explosion. People are advised to buy from reputable retailers and always use replacement parts and chargers that are recommended by the manufacturer and to only charge devices for the recommended amount of time and not while they are asleep or out of the house.

Claire Bowes
County Councillor, Watton Division
claire.bowes@norfolk.gov.uk
07789797937

Community Hub Report

Bookings Payable hours and Community Hours

	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Total Paid Hours	106	96	80	112 TBC	
Total Community Hours	30	28	20	16	

Play-park the gates from Blenheim Grange play park have been moved to the hub pending a decision to repair them or not.

Booked hours are looking promising for 2025 with two of our regular bookings increasing their hours. Abbotts, NHS, Meditation, Breaks Jam Club, Independence Dance Training, and the Bridge Club are all continuing their bookings. We have had interest from a number of groups wanting to use the building for a Pakeman Club, Baby Yoga, Baby Massage and Zumba dancing. I am in the process of trying to fit everyone into the Hub

Lighting and Heating improvements are on hold until March, the company were unable to purchase the equipment requires.

The defibrillator is due to be installed in 4th Feb further update next meeting.

Pam Arrowsmith

Treasurers Report Community Hub As of 01/02/2025

Produced by P Arrowsmith

Lloyds Business Account

Opening Balance on 01/01/24	£5466.35
Payments out	£3,457.16
Payments received.	£3,089.03
Closing Balance 31/01/24	£5,098.22
Predicted Income Feb 2024	£1120.00 (some groups have already Paid)
Predicted Out goings Feb2025	£2,751.14 Approx
	£450.00 Gas /electric £ 963.91 Salary £240.80 PAYE £68.00 Breckland Council Waste Disposal £104.00 Internet £28.13 Mobile phone £100.00 Boiler service

	£150.00 School Donation £250.00 Deposit returns £397.30 Expenses
--	--

£230 ringfenced with in bank account donation from the Kings Arms Public House

Expenses

P Arrowsmith

£98.07 cleaning products

£242.55. equipment for stay and play

£24.70 Storage bags and brush

£19.99 replacement cutlery

£11.99 replacement teaspoons

Total £396.50