

# Caston Parish Council

**CHAIRMAN: Mr Chris Cook    VICE CHAIRMAN: Mrs Mary Howell**

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CASTON PARISH COUNCIL MONDAY 2 JUNE 2025 AT CASTON VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30 PM**

Councillor's present:    Chris Cook, Mary Howell, Simon Spanyol, Graham Moss, Rob Trown

Also present:            Four members of the public.

1.     **Apologies for absence**  
None.
2.     **To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 May 2025.**  
The Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 May 2025 were approved, with one minor amendment, and signed by the Chairman, Chris Cook.

**The Chairman closed the Council Meeting to permit public discussion.**

3.     **Participation and questions from the public, session 1.**  
None.
4.     **Guest Speakers**  
P Cowen spoke about Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation.

Devolution – this will involve the election of one Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk combined and elections will take place in May 2026. There will be one strategic office. The Police & Crime Commission do not allow one body to look after Suffolk and Norfolk so there is likely to be one for each County.

Local Government Reorganisation ('LGR') – this will see the abolition of District Councils and County Councils in Norfolk. Unitary authorities will take over all details except those that will go to a Mayoral Office. A three unitary model is preferred by the District Council of Norwich, East (Great Yarmouth) and West (Kings Lynn). South Norfolk favour a two unitary model approach and the City favour three whilst the County Council are still undecided.

Breckland residents will pay more Council Tax as a result estimated to be an increase of £56 for a two unitary model and £20-£30 for a three unitary model. Whichever model is established, an increase is inevitable.

There has been no consultation with residents.

Somerset was the last unitary authority to be established. This has resulted with the unitary authority still running at a deficit after three years.

CHAIRMAN.....

DATED: .....

CLERK: Joanne Blackman, Daisy Barn, 42 Long Lane, Feltwell, Norfolk, IP26 4BJ

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Timeframe:

County Council elections 2026 (these were deferred for one year)

Mayoral election 2026

District Council elections 2027

In 2027 a Shadow Authority will be elected and there will be a year long transition.

Breckland District Council is likely to continue until 2028. There will be a dilution of duties over this period and there will be some projects that they will not be able to continue.

Sometime in September the Government will make a decision as to which format will be followed.

In the meantime, it is business as usual.

Local Plan – Breckland is obliged to deliver 903 houses year on year. This is a 40% increase on previous years. A Call for Sites was issued and has now closed. There will be incremental growth and the strategic sites takes a long while to come to fruition. It is a complex ask to deliver these numbers year on year.

The Planning Infrastructure Bill is going through Government at present.

The Local Authority will have no say in relation to Green Energy projects and there are many acres of land under threat in Norfolk. Decisions will be forced upon us and the District and Parish Councils will have no say.

- 7G. **APP/F2605/W/24/3351737 – Appeal on application number 3PL/2022/0368/F- GRISTON - Coughtrey Industrial Estates (Units 1 - 17) Church Road.**

Noise Abatement Notices have been served on Eastern Attachments. The Parish Council have received a copy from Griston.

The Notices go to December 2025 and they have until February 2026 to comply with them. We are currently still awaiting the Planning Inspectorate report. Breckland Council will always try to negotiate rather than go to Court. The challenge is that it is not a statutory responsibility of Breckland and is not chargeable should it prove necessary to proceed to Court. It is not however considered a soft approach.

**Cherry Tree Farm, Stow Bedon-** this application was due to be heard at Planning Committee but was delayed by one week following an influx of 1042 objections over one weekend. The relevance of each objection had to be checked. It is likely that the Applicant will Appeal however enforcement can continue until any appeal is heard.

Cll Howell clarified that the County Council were the only ones consulted re LGR and they chose not to talk to the Districts and acted in isolation. P Cowen confirmed this was the case despite them not being responsible for many of the services. The geographic in Norfolk does not work like it works for urban areas. Breckland Council has taken the lead and all districts are supporting the 3 unitary model with the exception of South Norfolk. Norwich as a City needs to expand and South Norfolk butts up to the City.

Caston has, on average, provided 3 houses per year (pro rata) over the last 7 years.

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Cllr Spanyol believes the figures to be disingenuous and misleading. P Cowen explained that the housing numbers which have already been agreed do not count towards the figures going forward whether they are built or not.

New figures are recorded at the planning stage going forward. Historic planning permissions and builds are not counted.

P Cowen further went on to explain that if we do not deliver the figures required by central Government, they will take over to ensure that they are.

Cllr Moss advised that he attended the recent Norfolk County Council meeting, and he felt the officers were playing the neutral card with regards to the unitary method preferred. P Cowen advised that the debts of the County Council will be split across the whole of Norfolk resulting in everyone having to pay for mistakes of others.

A member of the public asked what happens if we are to provide 900+ houses year on year over 17 years when Breckland Council is unlikely to exist. P Cowen advised that the successor authority takes on the responsibilities.

Cllr Spanyol stated that back in January, the new planning portal was being looked at, as a matter of urgency, to resolve its numerous problems. P Cowen advised that this is still ongoing.

The new portal does not provide us with as much information as we have been used to and we find it difficult to understand why, after 6 months, it is still not operating properly. P Cowen will ask S Suggitt to contact the Parish Council.

A question was asked that if this system is being used across the country, why is everyone not having the same problems? It makes residents uneasy. Cllr Spanyol asked that S Suggitt speak to those Councillors who have IT experience and explain the position.

5. **Speedwatch and SAM2 Report**

Cllr Spanyol reported the following:

Only two sessions were undertaken in May.

Having previously thought that perhaps driver behaviours were improving at the Stow Bedon Road 15 out of 103 were >35mph with a new record at 68mph.

Similarly at Mill House on The Street 26 out of 148 were speeding = 18% with one at 59 mph.

These checks were carried out at 2:30pm and 5pm which are times when SAM2 data suggests more people are speeding.

After concerns from the team, the radar gun was checked in line with the email instruction from Julie Bathgate at Norfolk Police and it was found to register the same speed as the gps in a car on all three passes.

Four sessions are planned in June.

6. **To record any Declarations of Interest and to consider any requests for Dispensations from Council Members.**

None.

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## 7. Planning Applications

- A. **PL/2025/0573/HOU** – Ambazac House, Northacre, Caston, NR17 1DG – Proposed two bay cart lodge, proposed single storey side extension, proposed single storey extension linking garage and house, proposed amends to rear single storey roof replacing hip roof with parapet and glazed balcony off first floor master bedroom. **Undecided.**
- B. **PL/2025/0444/PIP** – Land adjoining Fallowfield, Northacre, Caston, Attleborough, NR17 1DG – Permission in Principle for a phased development of 4-5 self build dwellings. **Application refused.**
- C. **PL/2025/0397/DCA** - The Street, Caston - Discharge of condition 12 on pp 3PL/2020/0262/O (allowed at appeal ref no APP/F2605/W/21/3268777). **Undecided.**
- D. **PL/2025/0376/FMIN** - Church Farm The Green, Caston, Attleborough, Norfolk, NR17 1DB - Erection of a stock shed to replace existing temporary structures. **Undecided.**
- E. **PL/2025/0121/FMIN** - School Lodge The Green, Caston, Attleborough, Norfolk, NR17 1DB - Erection of three bedroom dwelling. **Undecided.**
- F. **PL/2024/1193/FMAJ** – HM Prison Wayland, Griston, Thetford, Norfolk, IP25 6RL - Full Planning Application for demolition of existing structures and the construction of a four storey (T60) houseblock, new multi-faith/education building, new kitchen and minor extensions to and refurbishment of existing ancillary buildings, energy centre, new internal security fence, creation of an all-weather sports pitch within a secure perimeter fence together with new pedestrian footpath, relocation of horticultural polytunnels, car parking and associated landscaping. **Undecided - comments submitted.**
- G. **APP/F2605/W/24/3351737 – Appeal on application number 3PL/2022/0368/F-GRISTON** - Coughtrey Industrial Estates (Units 1 - 17) Church Road - The demolition of Units 1-6 (whole block Western boundary) and Units 7-13 (part of North Block), extensions to units 14 and 15 (large extension to North block), extension to unit 16 (small extension to South Block), external fascia changes, refurbishment to Unit 17. Change of use of whole site to mixed B2 and Class E (offices). The reconfiguration of parking and creation of a new loading and unloading area.

## 8. Finance – to approve and report the following expenditure.

- A. To approve salary payment including holiday allowance to the Clerk, Mrs Joanne Blackman, for the month of May 2025 in the sum of £263.47.
- B. To approve reimbursement payment to the Clerk, Mrs Joanne Blackman, for postage in the sum of £14.05 (internal audit).
- C. To approve payment to Roger Canwell for Internal Audit in the sum of £59.00.
- D. To approve payment to BT for broadband at the Village Hall in the sum of £30.38 (incl VAT) – paid by Direct Debit.

All payments were approved.

There were two additional items for payment:-

- E. To approve payment to A J Gallagher in the sum of £1,287.24 in respect of insurance renewal.
- F. To approve annual payment to the Information Commissioners Office in the sum of £47.00 (paid by Direct Debit).

Both payments were approved.

## 9. Matters to report.

- A. **Financial Balances**  
£15,523.70 Caston Parish Council  
£15,704.45 Highway Surveyors

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**B. Playground**

- **Deep Clean** – this is on hold pending the removal of the tree (see below).
- **Tree for removal** – the Clerk advised that she had someone coming to inspect and quote for removal of the tree. A recommendation had been made on Facebook and has been followed up. S Spanyol put forward Akers Tree Services and will supply the details to the Clerk.

**C. Village Planters and Planting Team**

K Farmbrough advised that the compost company is Plantgrow and Sarah Fletcher has the contact information. The Council was asked which planters were to be replaced first. K Farmbrough advised that the planters were Griston and also Northacre. It was agreed that the Church Lane planter should be removed.

There are currently 12 volunteers.

K Farmbrough advised that she wishes to step back as the co-ordinator for the planting team and has two possible replacements in mind. Cllr Howell asked whether the team require any additional volunteers and if so, a notice could be placed in the next edition of the Waylander.

K Farmbrough refused this request and confirmed that they have sufficient volunteers at present.

The Clerk will follow up re the compost and will notify the planting team when the new planters are in place.

**D. Co-option**

A further advert will be placed in the Waylander. Two Councillors are urgently required.

**E. Liaison with School**

Nothing to report.

**F. Mid Norfolk Flood Partnership**

Nothing to report.

**G. Local Government Reform and Devolution**

See above.

**10. To discuss, propose and vote on the following subjects:-**

- A. To adopt Receipts and Payments Schedule, Balance Sheet and Bank Reconciliation for Caston Parish Council for the financial year 2024/25.  
*The Receipts and Payments Schedule, Balance Sheet and Bank Reconciliation for Caston Parish Council for the financial year 2024/25 were duly adopted.*
- B. To adopt the Balance Sheet for Highway Surveyors for the financial year 2024/25.  
*The Balance Sheet for Highway Surveyors for the financial year 2024/25 was duly adopted.*
- C. To approve, sign and complete the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25.  
*The Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2024/25 was duly approved, signed and completed.*

**11. Correspondence**

None.

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12. **To agree the next meeting date: Monday 7 July 2025.**  
Agreed.

**The Chairman closed the Council Meeting to permit public discussion.**

13. **Participation and questions from the public – session 2.**  
None.

14. **Matters for future discussion to be noted**  
None.

Meeting closed at 8.50pm

Joanne Blackman  
Parish Clerk

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