

STOW BEDON AND BRECKLES PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Hannah Reed
Deer Cottage
21 Mere Road
Stow Bedon
Attleborough
Norfolk
NR17 1DA

Clerk: Jackie Preston
Pear Tree Cottage
Magpie Lane
Rockland St. Peter
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Minutes of Stow Bedon and Breckles Parish Council Meeting held on 14th April 2025 at Caston Village Hall.

Present: Councillors H Reed (Chair), L Pilkington, J White, C Allen, County Councillor Fabian Eagle, District Councillor Phil Cowen, J Preston (Parish Clerk) and Two Members of the Public.

1. To open the meeting and welcome those present.

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those present.

2. To receive and approve any apologies for absence.

None received.

3. To receive any declarations of pecuniary interest from members and consider requests for dispensations.

No declarations of interest were made.

4. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 10th March 2025.

The minutes were agreed by all present and signed by the Chair.

5. Matters arising from the minutes not included on the agenda.

There were none.

6. Public Participation.

There was extensive discussion regarding the pig unit, Cherry Tree Farm, Stow Bedon. Reference was made to a meeting that had been held on 20th March 2025 at Breckland Council's offices attended by Councillor Reed, Ann Cuthbert, Sarah Suggitt, Phil Cowen, Simon Wood (head of planning) and a lawyer for Breckland Council which did not prove beneficial. Breckland once again stated that the Environment Agency were satisfied that Cranswick Country Foods were operating within their permit and therefore no action was required from them. Simon Wood advised that the parish council would be entitled to speak at the upcoming Planning Committee Meeting (date yet to be confirmed) as would other groups or members of the public. They would be able to state their objections to 3PL/2021/0932/VAR Variation of Condition No2 on 3PL/2017/0878/F for the maximum length of time of three minutes. Discussion followed as to how to present the parish council's objections in such a limited amount of time which Councillor White agreed to do on behalf of Stow Bedon and Breckles Parish Council. Ann Cuthbert would also be speaking her objections at the Planning Committee Meeting and it was agreed to ensure that different points of objection were not duplicated in what each planned to say. There was further discussion regarding the information available for public view on the planning portal for 3PL/2021/0932/VAR a lot of which appeared to be out of date or even missing and therefore did not give a true account of the

different aspects of this planning application. All present agreed that it was impossible for a fair judgement to be made at the Planning Committee Meeting without all the correct and supportive information being available. It was suggested that the parish council submit a complaint about this and the Parish Clerk was asked to do this on their behalf. A possible date for the Planning Committee Meeting of May 13th 2025 was put forward by Simon Wood during the meeting on 20th March but this date has yet to be confirmed. The Chair requested that all members of the parish council show their support and attend the Planning Committee Meeting if at all possible.

7. Report of County Councillor Fabian Eagle.

Fabian Eagle gave a summary of the county's budget and the £42m worth of savings Breckland was being asked to fulfil. Finance had looked at the 4.9% increase in council tax, loss of certain grants, the shortfalls and the funds available in different departments and managed to end up with more money being available than was expected. It was agreed that some of this should go back into the community to benefit the majority of residents resulting in the following extra services: an additional hazardous waste collection service in the spring as well as the autumn, extending the urban weed kill along the roads, putting the last cut of the year back to a full cut including minor roads, adopting a dangerous junction cut in the middle of the year county wide and introducing a scheme to improve high streets where free professional advice will be available to help independent shops with visual placement and setting up and increase footfall. There has also been a decision to make use of Deer Signs countywide to reduce traffic speeds as already implemented in Stow Bedon and Breckles Parish Council jointly with Wretham Parish Council. Fabian advised that Highways have extra money available to reduce the problem of potholes and that he would like councils to advise him of the worst affected areas in their villages so that these can be focused on and repaired more permanently.

Report of District Councillor Phil Cowen.

Phil Cowen's report detailed the government's request for a 40% uplift in housing increasing the target for Breckland from 625 to 903 houses per year. The council is trying to find sites in communities that are appropriate for development and if this is not achievable the government will send in inspectors to tell the council where the houses are to be built. A call for sites had gone out last month to prospective landowners and developers for sites where a minimum of five houses could be built, but these sites would need to be available straight away for construction to begin. Breckland is inviting parish councils to 'round table discussions' during May to help find suitable or more appropriate sites that could be developed within their community and involve them with the process. Phil Cowen made it clear that the council has no choice but to comply with this government directive and is going to find it incredibly challenging to meet the demanded target.

Report of Chairman.

Councillor Reed did not have anything further to report.

Parish Clerk including any correspondence not previously circulated.

The Parish Clerk advised that following changes to the Asset Register and subsequently the insurance cover the annual insurance premium had reduced from £695.67 to £675.22 and had been paid. Matthew Harrington from Lovewell Blake had enquired whether the parish council had appointed the new councillors yet so that progress could be made on the Stow Bedon Fuel Allotment Charity Investment portfolio and the clerk had advised him that this process was still ongoing. The clerk asked for confirmation that everyone present had received notification of the extra dates for Parish Council Meetings as they were now being held every month instead of bi-monthly. She also advised the Chair that due to her recent extra workload she would like to claim payment for additional hours worked which was agreed by all present.

8. To receive and discuss any planning applications.

PL/2025/0277/DCA Plot 5, Mere Farm, Stow Bedon Road. Discharge of Conditions 3, 4, 8 & 9 on 3PL/2023/1166/F. (application granted on appeal reference: APP/F2605/W/24/3348723).

It was agreed that the Contamination Assessment (Condition 4) on this application is insufficient and a concern was raised about how professionally asbestos had been removed from the site. Also, contrary to information on the portal, the plot can be seen from two roads, the B1111 and Sandy Lane. The Parish Clerk was requested to submit an objection to this application.

PL/2025/0239/VAR Plot 5, Mere Farm, Stow Bedon Road. Variation of Cond., 2 on 3PL/2023/1166/F. This application makes changes to the appearance of the building which was agreed.

PL/2025/0221/FMIN Plot 6, Mere Farm, Stow Bedon Road. Erection of new dwelling and garage. There was discussion about different issues creating concern with this application. It was decided to put this on the agenda for the next meeting as there was time available for further discussion.

PL/2025/0410/PAQ The Arkon, Flybarn Farm, Brays Lane. Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: Change of Use of Buildings on Agricultural Units and former Agricultural Buildings to 2 no 2 bed Dwellinghouses (Class C3).

There was complete objection to this application. It was agreed that the building, similar in appearance to a nissan hut, is a completely inappropriate building in that location for that use. The Parish Clerk was requested to submit an objection to this application stating same.

9. Breckland Planning information request for review of the Local Plan.

The clerk advised that she had received a request sent on behalf of the Planning Policy Team for information about the villages of Stow Bedon and Breckles for use in carrying out a full review of the Local Plan. The request required completion of a checklist of questions about the make-up of the villages including population, services, transport, employment, natural environment and village character. The clerk circulated copies of the checklist to all present for comment and collated the required information.

10. Review progress with the Pig Unit, Cherry Tree Farm.

This was fully discussed at Item 6.

11. Parish Councillor vacancies.

To date there is one prospective applicant who is considering becoming a councillor to whom Councillor Allen and Councillor White have spoken. They have been invited to the next meeting on 12th May 2025. The clerk confirmed that an advert has been placed in the next issue of The Waylander and it is hoped that there will be further interest so that the second vacancy will be filled soon.

12. Unity Trust mandate changes.

The Parish Clerk confirmed that the required changes had been made to the Unity Trust bank mandate. Councillor Reed had logged onto the system to be able to authorise payments, but Councillor Allen had yet to do the same.

13. Stow Bedon Village Hall Fund.

The clerk had been contacted by Jonathan Layfield, project manager of a proposed venture between Stow Bedon and Breckles Community Group and St Botolph's Church Stow Bedon to develop the church building as a community centre for Stow Bedon and Breckles. There is a fundraising plan in place for this project and it is hoped that The Stow Bedon Village Hall Fund may be able to assist with this. It was agreed that more information was required and suggested that representatives from the group be invited to the next Parish Council meeting on 12th May 2025 so that there could be further discussion. Councillor Allen was asked if he could arrange this which he said he would do.

14. To present the financial statement and approve any expenditure.

The clerk presented the statement of finances to date.

Balance Unity Trust Current Account 8 April 2025 **£7,133.81**

Invoices due for payment

Parish Clerk salary March 2025	<u>£296.62</u>	
	£296.62	£6,837.19

Balance Unity Trust Saver Account 8 April 2025

£ 0.00

The clerk raised the issue that a savings account had been opened with Unity Trust at the same time as the current account but to date had not been used. It was agreed that a transfer of funds should be made to take advantage of any available interest. The clerk was requested to set up a transfer of £5k from the current account to the savings account.

15. Any other relevant matters not included on this agenda.

Councillor White reminded all present that a new Chairman will need to be elected at the next meeting on 12th May 2025 and councillors exchanged views with no decision made. The current Chair Councillor Reed advised that she would take on the role of Vice Chair but did not want to continue in the role of Chair for a third year.

16. To receive items for the next agenda.

As previously mentioned at Item 8, the planning application for Plot 6, Mere Farm, Stow Bedon Road will be on the agenda.

17. To confirm the date of the next meeting as Monday 12th May 2025.

The next Parish Council Meeting will take place on Monday 12th May 2025.

SignedChairman Date.....

Proposed dates of future meetings:

12th May 2025, 9th June 2025, 14th July 2025, 8th September 2025, 13th October 2025,
10th November 2025, 12th January 2026, 9th February 2026, 9th March 2026, 13th April 2026 and
11th May 2026.