

## STOW BEDON AND BRECKLES PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Jonathan White  
Church Cottage  
Breckles  
Attleborough  
NR17 1EW

Clerk: Jackie Preston  
Pear Tree Cottage  
Magpie Lane  
Rockland St. Peter  
Attleborough  
NR17 1UU

### **Minutes of Stow Bedon and Breckles Parish Council Annual General Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at Caston Village Hall.**

**Present:** Councillors J White (Chair), H Reed, L Pilkington, C Allen, J Bush, J Preston (Parish Clerk) and One Member of the Public.

**1. To welcome those present and to elect a Chairman.**

Councillor White, having been elected Chairman, welcomed those present and thanked Councillor Reed on behalf of everyone for her work as Chairman over the last two years which was much appreciated.

**2. To appoint a Vice Chairman.**

Councillor Reed was appointed Vice Chairman.

**3. Acceptance of Office Forms to be signed as necessary.**

Acceptance of Office Forms were duly signed.

**4. To receive and approve apologies for absence.**

Apologies for absence were received from District Councillor Phil Cowen.

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

No declarations of interest were made.

**6. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025.**

The minutes were available and agreed but in error were not signed.

**7. Matters arising from the minutes not included in this agenda.**

The Chair raised the following matters:

**Item 6:** Mention of out of date and missing information on the breckland planning portal not giving an accurate representation of the Cherry Tree Farm planning application to be discussed at the upcoming Planning Committee Meeting. The Parish Clerk, having been requested at the last meeting to send a complaint to Simon Wood about this, confirmed that had been done but no reply had been received. The Chair advised that he had forwarded a complaint to Simon Wood about missing information to which Mr. Wood had replied that there was 'nothing missing'. The Chair had then forwarded a second complaint disputing this and outlined the difficulty in making a representation at the now postponed Planning Committee Meeting without correct information available to which Mr. Wood had not replied. The Chair advised that the Planning Committee Meeting had been postponed to Monday 19<sup>th</sup> May presumably to make all required information available.

**Item 7:** In the Parish Clerk's Report she mentioned a delay with paperwork being completed regarding the Stow Bedon Fuel Allotment Charity which is not included in this agenda but has been discussed in

the preceding Annual Parish Meeting this evening. A request has been made for this to appear on the agenda for the next parish council meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

**Item 8:** An objection was recommended to be submitted to the planning application at Flybarn Farm. The clerk confirmed that this had been done and a copy of the representation had been circulated to everyone for their information.

#### **8. New Parish Councillor.**

The Chair invited Judi Bush to join the meeting thanking her for volunteering to take up the role of Parish Councillor and the required paperwork was passed to her for completion.

#### **9. Public Participation (30 minutes).**

There was no public participation.

#### **10. Report of County Councillor Fabian Eagle.**

County Councillor Fabian Eagle was not present and no report had been received.

##### **Report of District Councillor Phil Cowen.**

District Councillor Phil Cowen was not present but had forwarded a report that had been circulated to everyone by email. The report covered Local Government reorganisation and Planning and Housing where there are concerns for residents in Breckland about a mandatory housing delivery of 903 year on year representing an uplift of circa 40%. Also concern of powers to debate applications at a local level being restricted and/or curtailed and national infrastructure projects (solar and wind farms) being removed from local decision making. The work on preventing homelessness and managing those in temporary accommodation has seen a reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation to 115 and a reduction of the numbers in nightly paid accommodation from 54 to 50 since the previous update. The availability of community support was detailed including 133 successful referrals to the Household Support Fund ensuring vital financial assistance reached those in need.

##### **Report of Chairman.**

The Chair did not have anything further to report.

##### **Parish Clerk including any correspondence not previously circulated.**

The clerk advised that she had been informed by the clerk of Wretham Parish Council that the deer road sign was not functioning as it required a new charger. The clerk was requested to order a new charger and two new batteries from Westcotec Ltd, the company that supplied the deer sign in December 2020 for dual use by Stow Bedon and Breckles and Wretham Parish Councils. Wretham Parish Council already had a supply of three batteries and it was agreed to share use of the charger and share management of the deer sign between each parish by alternating every six months. The clerk advised that payment for these supplies had previously been offered from Fabian Eagle's Members Budget and that she would contact him to confirm that this was still possible.

The clerk also advised that a complaint had been made from a resident in Lower Stow Bedon to the parish council's website regarding the fly tipping of garden spoil on the road's verge. This had been reported by the clerk to Highways Department for their investigation and their assessment was that the verge is not damaged, the spoil is not causing a hazard to highway users and therefore no action is required. The clerk was requested to forward the report to the resident for their information.

#### **11. Proposed community centre venture between Stow Bedon and Breckles Community Group and St. Botolph's Church.**

Mr Richard Gibby, Chairman of the Community Group and Treasurer of the PCC, attending the meeting on his own, apologised for the absence of Mr Jonathan Layfield and Reverend Vanessa Layfield who had been unavoidably called away elsewhere. Mr Gibby explained that the PCC was providing an initial £11,500 for improvements to the church that would legally allow it to be used as a space for holding events. These include installing toilets, a kitchenette and storage facility, creation of an emergency exit through the vestry and adequate outside parking and lighting. However, a lot more money will be required and although it was the intention to apply for grants from the big grant providers, in order to

obtain grant money it was necessary to prove financial commitment from the community, hence the approach to the Village Hall Fund through the parish council. Councillor Pilkington advised that the parish council had in the past attempted to hold its parish council meetings in the church but these had proved unsuccessful due to bad acoustics and echo sounds that badly affected the ability to hold meetings there. It was agreed this issue should be investigated and discussion followed questioning whether there was enough demand for use of the church as a community centre to justify the expenditure. It was also agreed that whilst the church would remain in use as a church any money raised from events, exhibitions or gatherings held for the community should go back into the community. Mr Gibby advised that by September/October 2025 the venture should be at the final planning and costings stage when the total amount of finance required would be known. The chair suggested that a bid be submitted to the parish council at this time for the sum required from the Village Hall Fund for this venture via the Parish Clerk by letter which would be discussed and minuted at the following parish council meeting.

## **12. To receive and discuss any planning applications.**

**PL/2025/0221/FMIN Plot 6, Mere Farm, Stow Bedon Road.** Erection of new dwelling and garage.

Having discussed this application at the last meeting, Councillor White had prepared a text to object to this application citing that this plot was so close to a protected site,- the County Wildlife Site surrounding The Mere, that building another large house here would have a detrimental effect upon the fauna and flora on that site both during building and thereafter. He requested the clerk to insert a paragraph into the text regarding contravention of the Breckland Local Plan (2023) – Policy HOU 05 prior to submitting it on the planning portal. Councillor White also advised that he would write to Norfolk Wildlife Trust to draw their attention to this application.

## **13. Review progress with the Pig Unit, Cherry Tree Farm.**

The Chair advised that the Planning Committee Meeting regarding the pig unit at Cherry Tree Farm had been postponed to Monday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025 when two different planning applications will be discussed. He had already prepared the parish council's objection to 3PL/2021/0932/VAR Variation of Condition No2 on 3PL/2017/0878/F to present at the meeting which was read to everyone for their comment. The second planning application being considered: 3PL/2021/0931/F is for retrospective permission to extend the unit and would therefore allow a further objection not exceeding three minutes in speaking time to be made by the parish council. The Chair advised that he would look further into this application to prepare a second objection text which he would then circulate to everyone for their approval. There was discussion that extension of the unit at Cherry Tree Farm was now more of a concern since the planning application for a similar but larger unit at Methwold had been refused. The Chair asked everyone at the meeting if they would be attending the Planning Committee Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025 to show their support.

## **14. Unity Trust Mandate.**

This item did not require further discussion.

## **15. To present the financial statement and approve any expenditure.**

The clerk presented the statement of finances to date.

**Balance Unity Trust Current Account 4 May 2025    £1,784.19**

### Invoices due for payment

Parish clerk salary April 2025	£296.62	
The Waylander Councillor Advert	<u>£ 23.00</u>	
	<b>£319.62</b>	<b>£1,464.57</b>

**Balance Unity Trust Saver Account 4 May 2025    £5,000.00**

The clerk confirmed that a balance of £5000.00 had been transferred to the saver account as requested.

**16. Remaining Councillor Vacancy.**

There had been no responses to the advertisement placed in The Waylander and it was agreed that councillors should approach potential local candidates in person to enquire if they would like to apply. The clerk was asked to produce a flyer advertising the post that could be handed out at the upcoming village fete on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2025. She confirmed this would be done and displayed at the next meeting.

**17. Any other relevant matters not included on this agenda.**

The Chair enquired about the preparation of the annual accounts and the clerk advised that she had almost completed these. It was her intention to get them audited and brought to the next meeting so that they could be agreed and signed along with completion and signature of the AGAR Form.

The Chair also raised the issue of the complaint made to highways regarding the lack of working cats eyes on the B1111. He advised that the white lines in the centre of the road had been repainted and that the replacement of the cats eyes is scheduled to be done in their programme of work.

The clerk advised everyone that she had replaced the pads in the defibrillator unit because she had known they were approaching their expiry date. Whilst doing this it became apparent that the battery was very low in power and also needed replacing. She had ordered a replacement battery straight away from Community Heartbeat Trust and within two days the replacement battery was put into the unit so that it is fully functional again. The reporter that had been doing the regular defibrillator checks was having IT problems submitting the reports so the clerk advised everyone at the meeting that she had volunteered to take this over as she was regularly visiting Mere Road to put items on the parish council notice board next to the telephone box where the defibrillator is sited.

**18. To receive items for the next agenda.**

Items already forwarded to include signing of the Parish Council Meeting Minutes dated 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

**19. To confirm the date of the next meeting as Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2025.**

The next Parish Council Meeting will take place on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

Signed .....Chairman      Date.....

Dates of future meetings:

9<sup>th</sup> June 2025, 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025, 8<sup>th</sup> Sept 2025, 13<sup>th</sup> Oct 2025, 10<sup>th</sup> Nov 2025, 12<sup>th</sup> Jan 2026, 9<sup>th</sup> Feb 2026, 9<sup>th</sup> Mar 2026, 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026 and 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026.