

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 Meeting held at 7.30 pm on 13th October 2025 in Caston Village Hall.

Present: Councillors: H Reed (Vice Chair), L Pilkington, C Allen, J Morfoot, J Bush and J Preston (Parish Clerk) and 2 members of the public.

1. To open the meeting and welcome those present.

The Vice Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those present.

2. To receive and approve any apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from District Councillor P Cowen and Chairman J White.

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 8th September 2025.

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

5. Matters arising from the minutes not included in this agenda.

There were none.

6. Public Participation (30 minutes).

Ann Cuthbert began by expressing concern about the proximity of what is being proposed at Brookside Farm poultry unit and Cherry Tree Farm where there are 7,000 pigs and the opportunity of cross infection of swine flu and avian flu as well as concern as to how the removal of asbestos was carried out. Councillor Reed at this point referred to the Chairman's report regarding both sites in which he had referred to the buildings/operations on Cherry Tree Farm pig unit not matching their Environment Agency Operators' Permit. His report also stated that the parish council had not been informed that a permit consultation was taking place for Brookside Farm poultry unit about which he had complained to the Environment Agency and a response from the EA had subsequently been received stating that they acknowledged Stow Bedon and Breckles Parish Council's concern that they were not directly informed of the consultation process. They stated that they had adhered to their standard consultation procedures, which included publishing the notice on GOV.UK through the Citizen Space portal'. The response also stated that the Environment Agency will not be reopening the consultation but will consider the parish council's response to the application despite falling outside the consultation timeframes and the application is still being reviewed. Councillor Pilkington advised that he had complained independently to the Environment Agency about their consultation process questioning why neighbours to the site that

had both complained about ongoing nuisance and had consulted with them previously about this site had not been informed. In his Chairman's report, Councillor White had advised that he had written to both the Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency about asbestos removal at Brookside Farm and a response had been received from the latter stating that after reviewing their records they could confirm that the EA did not receive any reports of illegal waste disposal at this site in March 2025 or at any time prior to that. The opinion of everyone present at the meeting was that this response was totally inadequate and that the EA should be investigating the issue and finding out how the asbestos was disposed of. All agreed that this matter should be taken further. There was lengthy discussion about all issues and the replies received with the unanimous agreement that direct action should be taken. Comment was made that the present situation with Brookside Farm should be brought to a head quickly which was not the parish council's approach at this stage with Cherry Tree Farm which has resulted in this installation operating in breach of planning conditions for four years. In the Chairman's report, Councillor White had advised that he had written to MP George Freeman requesting that he too objected to the application for an increased Operators' Permit at Brookside Farm to which a positive reply had been received stating that Mr Freeman will contact the EA on the parish council's behalf. The Chairman's report also advised that he had contacted the lead journalist at the EDP highlighting key points that could be used if an article were to appear in the press.

Decisions: It was agreed that,

a). The parish council should submit formal complaints to the Environment Agency and Breckland Council regarding all the issues already raised emphasising the links between Brookside Farm and Cherry Tree Farm.

7. Report of County Councillor Fabian Eagle.

Councillor Eagle had not forwarded a report.

Report of District Councillor Phil Cowen.

Phil Cowen's report advised that regarding devolution, government will press ahead with elections for a Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk in May 2026 provided that both Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils vote in favour. To date Suffolk has voted 'yes' to the proposal, Norfolk CC has yet to vote. This would see a Mayoral combined authority with strategic responsibility for planning, infrastructure and more in the two county areas. Regarding local government reorganisation, the three unitary model proposed by Breckland in partnership with Kings Lynn, Great Yarmouth, Norwich City, North Norfolk and Broadland is focussed very much on place awareness and knowledge of local issues and challenges and a more representative balance of population to elected member numbers, factors that our survey showed resonated most with those who responded, and we had a substantially larger response from the public than others. With regard to the Local Plan, after much frustration following the mandatory housing figures presented to Breckland, we have prepared an amended proposition that will be taken to a cabinet meeting, scheduled for 20th October, for discussion prior to the final version being debated at full council. If approved, this will then be sent on to the minister/planning inspectorate to proceed through the formal phases of analysis, consultation and investigation.

Report of the Chairman

The Chairman had forwarded a report covering many of the items on the agenda, all aspects of which are minuted within those items apart from a comment that the public participation sessions at our parish council meetings have increased to 30 minutes duration when they used to be 20 minutes (not including participation from our Ward and County Councillors) questioning why this has changed?

Parish Clerk including any correspondence not previously circulated.

The Parish Clerk referred to Councillor Bush who had completed the training courses held on line by NPTS (Norfolk Parish Training & Support) who in turn commented that she had found them very interesting and helpful.

8. New email management compliance requirement.

The Parish Clerk advised that starting from 2025/26 financial year there will be a new Assertion Box (Box 10) on the Annual Governance Statement. To enable a council to complete this Box with a 'yes' answer,

it will need to comply with requirements regarding email management, websites and have an IT policy in place. Having attended a recent NPTS networking session the clerk advised that Stow Bedon and Breckles Parish Council is required to have a council owned email address.

Decisions: It was agreed that,

a). The Parish Clerk will begin the process of obtaining a new email address that will replace the current email address and will keep all councillors informed.

9. Village Hall Fund: Barclays Bank mandate change.

The Parish Clerk confirmed that she now has a fully completed Barclays Bank Mandate Change Form which can be sent to Barclays Bank once the Stow Bedon and Breckles Parish Council website has been updated.

Decisions: It was agreed that,

a). The clerk will send the Mandate Change Form to Barclays Bank as soon as possible.

10. Update website.

The clerk advised that Councillor Bush's details and photograph had yet to be added to the parish council's website along with a few alterations previously requested by the Chair to bring the site up to date.

Decisions: It was agreed that,

a). Councillor Pilkington will assist with bringing the website up to date.

11. To receive and discuss any planning applications.

Notification of Appeal: APP/F2605/W/25/3373253 – Mere Farm, Stow Bedon. Erection of new dwelling and garage (plot 6). There was continued objection to this application. Notification of appeal had only just been received and there was agreement to look further into the details of the this so that a new representation can be forwarded by 14th November 2025. Councillor Pilkington commented that the support of the owners of neighbouring plots would be beneficial and the more objections received would have more impact. Councillor Bush suggested the parish council could 'leaflet' the local community advising what is proposed to encourage more response. It was agreed that this would be in the interest of the parish council and the community.

Decisions: It was agreed that,

a). Councillor Bush will design and distribute information leaflets to the local community.

b). A new further written representation will be agreed at the next meeting on 10th November 2025.

c). The clerk will submit the representation to the Planning Inspectorate by 14th November 2025.

12. Amber (2 Sisters) Brookside Farm Poultry Unit.

This item was discussed and is minuted at Item Number 6.

13. Update pig unit, Cherry Tree Farm.

This item was discussed and is minuted at Item Number 6.

14. Tree and bush destruction – Breckles Moor.

Councillor Reed read the section of the Chairman's report relating to this which advised that Councillor White had made a complaint to Simon Wood that our last 6 emails (and his 2/3 reminders) to Richard Fisher (Tree Enforcement Officer at Breckland) had been ignored. Simon Wood had responded passing this complaint to Mr Fisher's line manager and a response has subsequently been received from Mr Fisher. After apologising for his delay in responding, Mr Fisher advised that the removed hedgerow stood in front of a recently cleared drainage ditch and under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997, Paragraph 6(f), the removal of a hedgerow is permitted without the need for prior notification where it is carried out 'for the purpose of carrying out work required for the drainage of land or the prevention of flooding', so the works undertaken fell within this exemption. Also, with regard to the removal of the trees, none were located within a conservation area and none were subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO)

and as such there was no formal requirement for consent and the landowner was entitled to remove them at their discretion.

Decisions: It was agreed that,

a). For any future incidents such as this, the parish council should immediately put in an Enforcement Request and if wildlife has been affected, report it to the Police Wildlife Crime Unit.

15. Road safety and speeding issues.

The parish clerk advised that she had taken the SAMS2 equipment requiring servicing and updating back to the manufacturer in Dereham. This work had been done and the sign was now back in Lower Stow Bedon having been kindly collected by Mrs Blake who was charging the equipment so that it can be set up working again in the next few days. Vice Chairman Reed mentioned that the deer road sign did not appear to be operational. Councillor Pilkington advised that this is because the battery needed changing which he would attend to as well as move the sign to a different location.

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

The clerk presented the statement of finances to date.

Balance Unity Trust Current Account 8 October 2025 £ 3,576.73

Payments waiting authorisation

Parish clerk salary August 2025	£296.62
Community Heartbeat Trust	£198.00
Breckles Church grass cutting	<u>£150.00</u>
	£644.62

Invoices now due for payment

Parish clerk salary September 2025	£353.80
Parish clerk expenses Jul-Sep '25	<u>£ 56.88</u>
	£410.68

Awaiting invoice from Westcotec (SAMS2 road sign)

Resulting balance will be: £ 2,521.43

Balance Unity Trust Saver Account 8 October 2025 £ 5,051.57 (£28.49 int accrued 30/09/25)

17. Remaining councillor vacancy.

As advised in the Chairman's Report, Helen Maxwell is attending this evening's meeting as a member of the public with a view to becoming a Councillor in November.

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

Councillor Allen advised that at the last speed watch meeting it had been suggested that requesting the parish council to erect white picket fencing at the end of Lower Stow Bedon village may help to reduce the speed of through traffic. It was agreed to put this on the next agenda.

Councillor Allen also advised that due to his impending house move, this would be the last parish council meeting that he would be able to attend.

19. To receive items for the next agenda.

Items received:

- Invitation for comments regarding the Formal Regulation 18 consultation stage of the Local Plan which will run for 6 weeks from 31st October subject to Cabinet approval.
- Erection of white picket fencing in Lower Stow Bedon.
- Extra pig housing frameworks being erected on Mr Garrod's farm.
- Organisation of a litter pick in February.

20. To confirm the date of the next meeting as Monday 10th November 2025.

The next Parish Council Meeting will take place on Monday 10th November 2025.

SignedChairman Date.....

Future meeting dates:

10th Nov 2025, 12th January 2026, 9th February 2026, 9th March 2026, 13th April 2026 & 11th May 2026.

DRAFT