

Draft Minutes of an Emneth Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 25th March 2025 at 6.30pm in the Committee Room at Emneth Central Hall

Parish Councillors present: Councillor Pearson, Councillor Howard, Councillor Purchase, Councillor Curtis, Councillor Wiles, Councillor Tingley, Councillor Finnis, Councillor McCourt, Councillor Kok, Councillor Fry and Councillor Groves (Chairman). Also present: Kate Bennett (Parish Clerk), Borough Councillor Crofts and three members of the public

Apologies: Councillor Burgess-Lee, County Councillor Dawson

Minutes (draft)

1 Welcome

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

2 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies had been received as listed above and the reasons for such approved.

3 Members' Declarations of Interests in items on the agenda and any dispensations required considered

- a) Councillor Tingley declared an interest at Item 10a) of this month's agenda: Planning application 25/00438/O.
- b) Councillor Finnis declared an interest at item 10a) of this month's agenda: Planning application 25/00392/CU.

4 Open Forum for Public Participation (fifteen minutes only)

- a) A resident reported an issue with an overgrown hedge at Hollycroft Road. For the purpose of the Minutes, since the meeting, Councillor Wiles has offered to visit the property to request the hedge is cut back.
- b) A resident requested further clarification on the modifications by the Borough Council to the Local Plan and the impact this might have on the local area. Borough Councillor Crofts agreed to provide a report at the next meeting.

One member of the public left the meeting.

5 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th February 2025

- a) It was resolved with all in favour to approve the Minutes of last month's meeting and these were signed and initialled as a true record of the meeting by the Chairman.
- b) Councillor Fry passed comment that on the occasions that a councillor feels they need to abstain from voting on a motion, he would prefer to see them using their opportunity to vote by voting 'against' the motion rather than just abstaining. For the purpose of the Minutes it should be noted that a councillor has no statutory obligation to vote and may abstain if they so wish.

6 Clerk to provide an update on any matters not included on this month's agenda

- a) A commemorative flag for VE Day has been purchased.
- b) The locks to the noticeboard in the Hall car park have been refurbished.
- c) Councillor Finnis to call Unity Trust Bank to become an authorized signatory.
- d) A tree report for the towpath will be carried out April 2025.

7 Finance

- a) It was resolved with all in favour to approve the March 2025 Payments List as presented. Councillors Howard and Purchase to authorize on the Unity Trust website after the meeting.
- b) Income received since last meeting: £0.00.
- c) The increase in dog waste bin emptying charges from the Borough Council for 2025 was noted: an increase to £4.225 + Vat per bin per empty from £2.35.
- d) Councillors McCourt & Kok considered the bank statements for internal audit purposes.

8 To receive a report from Norfolk County Council

- Councillor Dawson was not present to provide a report but several emails over the course of the month pertaining to County Council issues had been received and circulated.

9 To receive a report from the Borough Council

- A briefing session on Norfolk & Suffolk Devolution was hosted on Monday 17th March 2025 and a further session for local councillors is planned for Tuesday 1st April 2025.
- The Local Plan was approved on 20th February 2025 and now needs to go to Cabinet and then the Main Council for approval on 27th March 2025.
- The Planning Reform working paper is available on the Borough's website. The intention of this is to speed up the whole of the planning process which is currently quite onerous.
- The Planning Department at the Borough Council is very short staffed.

10 Planning

- a) To consider any planning applications since last meeting:
 - Planning application 25/00438/O self-build dwellings East of Meadowgate Lane, Emneth: plans were not available for viewing as the application has been made invalid due to insufficient evidence.
 - Planning application 25/00392/CU change of use of domestic building to hair salon at Lane Cottage, 44 Church Road, Emneth: application withdrawn.
- b) To note any planning decisions and/or appeal notifications since last meeting:
 - Planning application 25/00204/F 39 Ladys Drove, Emneth single storey extension: permitted.

Not all decisions on planning applications for the Parish are resolved upon at a monthly meeting; some are considered during the course of the month and resolved upon online. Details of all planning applications considered by Emneth Parish Council can be viewed on the Borough Council's planning portal by visiting <https://online.west-norfolk.gov.uk/online-applications/> and referencing the relevant *planning application number* or a *key word* into the *Search bar*.

11 Parish Matters

- a) It was resolved to appoint Robin Goreham as Internal Auditor for the financial year ending 31st March 2025.
- b) The concrete pad at the bus shelter at Gaultree Square measures 4.7m x 1.95m; including the grassed area we could increase this to 9m x 2.6m. Clerk to arrange a site meeting to consider designs for a larger shelter at this location. It was resolved to apply to the Parish Partnership Scheme (Norfolk County Council) and the Community Infrastructure Levy fund (Borough Council) for the funding for this new shelter once a quote has been received and agreed upon.
- c) Councillor Tingley to confirm the size of the concrete base required for a bench to be installed to the lefthand side of the bus shelter on Gaultree Square (this will be the same as the concrete pad by the village sign near the church). It had been previously resolved to purchase the Lowther bench from Glasdon at a cost of £631.77 + Vat and to apply to the Borough Council's Community Infrastructure Levy fund for this in July/August 2025.
- d) It was resolved to approve signage relating to dog fouling at the towpath. Clerk to investigate quotes.
- e) It was resolved to have a Finance Meeting on 14th April 2025 at 10am in the Committee Room at Central Hall to look at areas of the budget where savings might be able to be made.
- f) A Temporary Events Notice had been received from Emneth Academy for a function on the school field on 30th June 2025: noted.
- g) Westcotec has agreed to refund £1,200.00 for the solar lighting unit at the bus shelter on the A1101 adjacent to Morrisons Supermarket which has never worked despite it being replaced only last month.

12 To discuss Playing Field issues

- a) Resurfacing works to the car park are imminent. The plainings from here can be used for repairs to the track at Grays Lane agricultural holdings.
- b) Wisbech Town are now training at the playing fields twice per week.

- c) Works to repair the vandalism to the play tower are imminent.
- d) Nurture Landscapes have now submitted their 2024 grass cutting invoices for payment: £5,501.93 + Vat (8% increase to next year's charges).
- e) It would not be feasible to reduce the amount of football pitches being cut this season as all of the pitches are now being used.

A member of the public left the meeting.

13 Cemetery Issues

- a) The final section of church wall is expected to be repaired soon with the remaining coping stones purchased from Taylors Reclaims.

14 Agricultural Holdings Issues

- a) Repairs to the track on Parish Council-owned land at Grays Lane are still planned. The plainings from the car park at the playing field could possibly be used when repair works are carried out here. Councillor Purchase advised of some hoggin that could be made available to us free of charge if transport can be arranged; Councillor Burgess-Lee to progress.
- b) One of the tenants at Grays Lane has given notice for two acres of land. The Clerk, Councillor Burgess-Lee & Councillor Tingley have visited to mark out the boundaries for the two plots – A20 & A23. These need to be re-let as of October 2025.

15 To discuss Central Hall issues

- a) The Chairman of Central Hall Committee provided an update from the Hall including the need for a new floor and new lighting for the car park (funding applications are actively being sourced). A new power socket has been installed on the outside of the building.

16 To discuss Norfolk County Council issues including highways

- a) It was noted that the conifer hedging at Elmside is still in need of cutting back.
- b) It was resolved to approve in principle the proposal for the Parish Council to take on the grass cutting of the verges within the 30mph zones of the Parish. Clerk to progress.
- c) Residents are reminded to report pot holes directly on the Norfolk County Council website by following the links to *Roads and Transport*, then *Roads*, then *Report a highways problem*.

17 To note any communications from the Police since last meeting

- a) The Community Engagement Officer for Emneth is P Gilluley paula.gilluley@norfolk.police.uk
- b) Residents are encouraged to report anti-social behaviour issues to the Police by dialling 101 or emailing sntdownhammarket@norfolk.police.uk

18 To note general correspondence received since last meeting

- a) A resident had requested for the SAM2 camera to be sited along Hollycroft Road; Councillor Finnis agreed to progress this although it was noted that he is having issues with the unit's battery.

A member of the public left the meeting.

19 If required to consider excluding the public and press under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 due to the confidential nature of the items being discussed

- a) The Clerk had spoken to Maxey Grounds again for further clarification on the suggested new land rent price as outlined in their Red Book Valuation of 2024 and the detail of the conversation was shared. In the absence of Councillor Burgess-Lee this item needs further discussion next month.

20 Items for the next meeting agenda

- To consider a quote for a new bus shelter at Gaultree Square
- To discuss advertising the two acres of agricultural land at Grays Lane – A20 & A23
- To discuss repairs to the track at Grays Lane agricultural holdings
- To discuss agricultural holdings rent for land at Hungate Road from October 2025
- Borough Councillor Crofts to provide an update on the Local Plan

21 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 29th April 2025 at 6.30pm at Emneth Central Hall. This will be the Annual Parish Meeting; a meeting for the residents of the Parish to meet with their local councillors and to discuss any matters of local interest.

Meeting closed at 8pm

Chairman's signature