

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

Apologies: Councillor Purchase, Councillor Burgess-Lee, Harry Humphrey, County Councillor Dawson

Minutes (draft)

1 Welcome

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone and reported the recent resignation of Mr. Lloyd Groves from the Parish Council. Thanks to be recorded to Lloyd for his contribution to the Parish during his tenure as a local councillor.

2 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were noted as above and the reasons for such approved.

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

No declarations of interest were given for any item on this month's agenda and no dispensations had been requested prior to the meeting.

4 Open Forum for Public Participation (fifteen minutes only)

- a) Several residents were present to voice their concerns over the 60mph speed limit for the old Outwell Road and 'the short gap' located between this road and the A1101 which was apparently originally installed for the use of tractors but is now allegedly no longer used for this reason. Vehicles' satellite navigation systems direct road users through this 'gap' which is neither sign posted to alert road users of its existence nor white lines in existence. Local residents were requesting support in a) having 'the gap' closed and b) reducing the 60mph speed limit as the road is also used by school children walking to and from the school bus.
- b) Another resident present wished to address his concerns over the lack of a footpath from Fendyke Road/Hollycroft Road up towards the old Outwell Road (know locally as Bird's Corner). For the purpose of the Minutes it can be recorded that the installation of a footpath/trod (informal footway) was investigated in 2021/22 alongside requests for footpaths at Church Road and Hollycroft Road from Fendyke Road towards the school. Initial meetings with Norfolk County Council highlighted that a) a footfall count/survey would ultimately need to be carried out and b) favoured locations are usually those serving village services i.e. schools, bus stops, shops etc. These types of installations can be funded 50/50 between a Parish and Norfolk County Council but are very expensive; the last quote being in the region of £40-60,000.00. Without increasing the annual parish precept this type of provision is unattainable for Emneth Parish Council with their annual precept to financially serve the whole parish of Emneth currently set at £45,000.00 for the 2026/27 financial year.

5 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 26th August 2025

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.

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

- a) The specification for a new bus shelter at Scarfield Lane cannot be decided upon until the Clerk has received information from Norfolk County Council relating to the location and size of the new stop. Funding applications at Norfolk County Council for bus shelters closes 31st October 2025; 80% funded by Norfolk County Council and 20% Parish.
- b) The Clerk will order a new noticeboard for Gaultree Square.
- c) A tree survey for all trees on agricultural holdings land owned by the Parish Council will be carried out in October 2025.
- d) Once photographs of the newly created access at Grays Lane have been received, the Clerk will report this to Norfolk County Council Highways for further investigation.

- e) Westcotec has been advised of the faulty SAM2 camera and are willing to offer support to fix it; Councillor Finnis to action.
- f) The damaged dog waste bin at Central Hall has been reported to the Borough Council who have offered to fix it.

7 To discuss Playing Field Matters

- a) Cousins of Emneth has kindly agreed to provide new fencing at the playing field car park and will also grind out the tree stumps in the same location in October 2025.
- b) The old bus shelter from Gaultree Square will be installed at the playing field in due course.
- c) Grounds maintenance works to be carried out by Tawny Owl Services will commence October 2025 and will include the cutting back of the top and outside edges of the hedge surrounding the bowling green, to cut back the overgrowth by the kitchen window of the new pavilion, cut back the overgrown shrubs/trees by the side door to the new pavilion and cut back the brambles away from the health and safety sign in the border adjacent to the skate park.
(Alex Lane left the meeting).

8 Finance

- a) It was resolved with all in favour to approve the September 2025 Payments List as presented. Councillors Howard and Fry to authorize on the Unity Trust website after the meeting.
- b) Income received since last meeting to be recorded at £23,350.00 (£22,500.00 balance of annual precept from the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk and £850.00 cemetery income).
- c) It was resolved to approve expenditure of £460.00 + Vat to Tawny Oil Services for winter clearance works to both entrance/exit points at the old canal towpath.
- d) A quote of £1,100.00 + Vat was recorded for works to the overgrown conifers at the top of Elmside near to the junction of Gaultree Square. It was resolved to pass this quote on to the land owner to request urgent works to these trees that are overhanging the highway and are a health and safety issue to pedestrians and road users. Councillor Wiles also agreed to visit the resident to discuss.
- e) It was resolved to approve expenditure of £650.00 + Vat to cut back the brambles and hedging along the whole length of the Elmside footpath and to strim and mow the cut-through area between The Wroe and the footpath.
- f) It was resolved to approve expenditure of £30.00 to purchase a wreath for the war memorial.
- g) It was resolved to approve expenditure of £52.00 for the Clerk to remotely attend a) this year's Norfolk Parish Training & Support's Autumn Seminar (which will include information relating to the new Assertion 10 for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return next year) and b) Budget training.
- h) Councillor McCourt and Councillor Kok considered the bank statements for internal audit purposes.

9 To receive a report from Norfolk County Council

- a) Information has been requested from the Parish Council and its' residents surrounding the use of bus services in the Parish to help with the future planning of the service. A request has been put on the Parish Council's Facebook page requesting residents with any comments to contact the Clerk so she can share with Norfolk County Council.

10 To receive a report from the Borough Council

- a) There will be changes to the application process to the Community Infrastructure Levy fund; the next stage of funding is expected to be opening for applications in March 2026.
- b) The Borough Council has voted for a three unitary council approach in the *Local Government Reorganization* review requested by Central Government; a formal decision will be made in March 2026. This is the first local government review in fifty years.
- c) A property at Ladys Drove which is, once again, in a very poor state of repair is currently being addressed.

11 Planning

- a) To consider any planning applications since last meeting:
 - Planning application 25/01481/F Outbuilding at Farndale, 10 Outwell Road, Emneth; it was resolved to support this application.

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 and referencing the relevant *planning application number* or a *key word* into the *Search bar*.

- b) To note any planning decisions and/or appeal notifications since last meeting:
 - Planning application 25/00730/F Proposed new single storey dwelling at Pal-Mar, Chapel Lane, Emneth; this application has been approved by the Local Planning Authority.

12 Parish Matters

- a) A tent with some possessions, appearing to be abandoned on the towpath, have been removed and are being stored in a safe place for 28 days and will then be disposed of.
- b) Councillors Tingley, Howard and Finnis offered to create a Working Party Group to discuss future projects for the Parish.
- c) It was resolved to adopt an IT Policy for the Parish as presented at this meeting and will be published on the Parish Council's website www.emnethparishcouncil.gov.uk
- d) The Parish Council will be holding a brief service at the war memorial on Sunday 9th November 2025 at 10.45am; all welcome.
(Borough Councillor Crofts left the meeting).
- e) A discussion ensued surrounding the idea of contracting the services of a handyman to assist with ad hoc Parish duties perhaps shared with neighbouring parishes who also require similar help from time to time. It was agreed that this was potentially a good idea; Clerk to investigate further.
- f) It was resolved to schedule a Finance Working Group meeting for October to consider 2026/27 Budget figures; Clerk to action.
- g) Thanks to be recorded to Councillors Purchase, McCourt and Tingley for arranging for the cutting back of the overgrowth at St. Edmund's Drive.

13 Cemetery Issues

- a) The need for more burial land in the Parish was discussed further. For the purpose of the Minutes it can be recorded that some land at Hungate Road, surveyed and tested in 2018 by Cemetery Development Services of Bedford, was deemed to be unsuitable for burials due to the height of the water table at this location and it being in Flood Zone 3. Further Parish Council-owned land at Ladys Drove is also in Flood Zone 3 so also unlikely to be deemed acceptable by the Environment Agency for burial land. Another parcel of land, adjacent to the current cemetery, was deemed as suitable in 2018, but is not currently for sale so other avenues need to be explored. The only other parcel of Council-owned land in the Parish is at Grays Lane (3.92 hectares) which is not in a flood zone but is currently rented out as agricultural holding land but, in the future, could be investigated as a possible site suitable for burials.

Cemetery Development Services of Bedford had provided some initial costings for a suggested *Tier 2 Environment Agency Ground Water Risk Assessment* at Grays Lane which was in the region of £6,000.00 + Vat to include a one day investigation and the production of a detailed ground water risk assessment. No further action to be taken at this time but the Cemetery Working Group to continue to investigate the possibilities available to the Parish to enable them to provide further burial land for the residents of Emneth.

- b) It was resolved for the Clerk to arrange a date to carry out a) a topple test of the memorials in the cemetery and b) to address the condition of some of the hedges.

14 Agricultural Holdings Issues

- a) The Forestry Commission carried out a survey of some *spruce* trees on land at Lady's Drove on 31st July 2025 over concerns of evidence of *Ips typographus beetles* on site. It was found that most of the material is either too healthy or too degraded for bark beetle colonisation and confirmed that there is no requirement to carry out any works on site at the present time but it was recommended that the situation be monitored in case the condition of the trees deteriorate. The Clerk has since spoken with the tenant who planted the spruce trees who has agreed to monitor the situation also.
- b) It was resolved to approve expenditure of £6,000.00 + Vat to carry out repairs to the track at Grays Lane agricultural holdings.

- c) It was resolved to approve expenditure of £175.00 + Vat per hour (up to a maximum of three hours) for professional advice from Maxey Grounds on the validity of the current agricultural holdings tenancy agreements; Clerk to action.

15 To discuss Central Hall issues

- a) A Lottery grant has been awarded for a new floor to the main hall area.
b) Due to the kind donation from a resident a new floor is also being provided for the kitchen.

16 To discuss Norfolk County Council issues including highways

- a) The matter relating to reducing the speed limit on the old Outwell Road from 60mph to 40mph and closing the gap between the old and new road was discussed again. Councillors agreed to follow up the matter with County Councillor Dawson as to whether or not it would be possible to close the gap between the two roads. This gap forms part of the highway so further investigation will need to be made directly with Norfolk County Council. The overgrowth of hedges and shrubs at this location will be cut back as a matter of urgency.
b) 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 next Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel meeting for the Downham, Watlington and Terrington areas is due to take place on Monday 13th October 2025.
b) The Community Engagement Officer for Emneth is Maddison Cage.
c) 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) Email correspondence relating to the fly tipping of grass cuttings from a residential property onto an adjacent verge was noted; Clerk to action.
b) Correspondence received relating to suspected Japanese Knotweed growing from a private property on Gaultree Square onto a public footpath had been investigated; no further action required as only dock leaves could be found at the suggested location.
c) A complaint from a resident was recorded relating to the overgrown cut-through from The Wroe to the Elmside footpath, land which is owned by the Parish Council; Clerk to action.

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) A new signed tenancy agreement from a tenant at Hungate Road is still awaited.
b) A new signed tenancy agreement from a tenant at Grays Lane is still awaited.

20 Items for the next meeting agenda

- To choose a bus shelter design for Scarfield Lane (closing date for funding 31st October 2025)
- Tenancy of land at Hungate Road Holdings
- Tenancy of land at Grays Lane Holdings
- To consider 2026/27 budget figures
- To note two casual vacancies
- To consider Quarter 2 Progress Against Budget figures
- To receive details of a recent topple test carried out at the cemetery

21 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 28th October 2025 at 6.30pm at Emneth Central Hall.

Meeting closed at 8.00pm

Chairman's signature