

Draft Minutes of an Emneth Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 31st March 2026 at 6.30pm in the Committee Room at Emneth Central Hall

Parish Councillors present: Councillor Curtis, Councillor Wiles, Councillor McCourt, Councillor Purchase, Councillor Sennett, Councillor Tingley, Councillor Finnis, Councillor Ingram, Councillor Kok, Councillor Cullen and Councillor Fry (Chairman). Also present: Kate Bennett (Parish Clerk), County Councillor Dawson and three members of the public. **Apologies:** Councillor Howard, Borough Councillor Crofts

Minutes (draft)

1 Welcome

1.1 The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

2 To receive apologies for absence

2.1 Apologies were received as above and the reasons for such approved.

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

no report.

4 Open Forum for Public Participation (fifteen minutes only)

4.1 A resident was present to report the poor road surface along Hungate Road, concerns with the speed limit here taking into consideration the number of joggers, cyclists, dog walkers and children that use the road and to also comment that it is not gritted by Norfolk County Council in the winter months. All points were discussed and it was agreed for the Clerk to contact the Police to request a speed camera visit at some point. When the Parish Council's SAM2 camera is back from its service, to site it along Hungate Road for a period of time and to contact Norfolk County Council to enquire about resurfacing works and the feasibility of reducing the speed limit here. For the purpose of the Minutes it can be recorded that Norfolk County Council only grits main commuter and major bus routes and one route into each village where possible.

4.2 A resident was present again to discuss parking and traffic issues in the village, particularly between the areas of Hollycroft Close and Hungate Road. A more detailed proposal from the resident had been circulated prior to this month's meeting for councillors' consideration covering issues such as a suggested *Child Free Zone* in the Parish, a reduction in the speed limit, the repainting of white lines, the repainting of the yellow zig zags outside the School and more. It was agreed to have this report as one of the main topics for discussion at the Parish's Annual Assembly on 28th April 2026; to invite residents to attend and offer their thoughts/ comments on these proposals also.

5 To approve the Minutes from the Ordinary Meeting of 24th February 2026

5.1 It was resolved, with all in favour, to approve the Minutes of the last meeting and these were signed and initialled as a true record of the meeting by the Chairman.

Two members of public left the meeting.

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

6.1 Thanks to be recorded to Councillor McCourt for repairing the dog waste bin at Scarfield Lane.

6.2 A new led lamp has been fitted to one of the street lights at the top of Hollycroft Close.

6.3 The Clerk has been in touch with both the School and the Nursery regarding pavement parking at Hollycroft Close and both have agreed to include an item in their next newsletters to parents.

6.4 The Clerk is still awaiting further detailed instructions from Norfolk County Council to progress with the Parish taking over the verge cutting within the 30mph zones in the village this year.

6.5 The first treatment to the giant hogweed along the old canal towpath has been carried out this month.

6.6 The Clerk is still awaiting a response from the Church Warden regarding maintenance to the church clock.

6.7 Thanks to be recorded to Councillor Curtis for taking the SAM2 camera to West Dereham for its service.

6.8 Provision of a new bus shelter for Scarfield Lane is in progress. Funds have now been received from Norfolk County Council and the order has been finalised with the preferred supplier.

6.9 The tree survey for all agricultural holdings land will be carried out as soon as the weather improves.

7 To discuss Playing Field Matters

7.1 General update from the Chairman of the Playing Field Committee

7.1.1 Thanks to be recorded to Borough Councillor Crofts and Borough Councillor Humphrey for their donation of £500.00 each which contributed to the decorating of the new pavilion.

7.1.2 Minor vandalism to the see-saw has taken place, the seat has been ripped off and swastika symbols drawn all over the park.

7.1.3 The Chairman plans to apply to the Community Infrastructure Levy fund for some funding.

7.1.4 The new grass cutting contractors have now started and are cutting every other week this year (not weekly).

7.2 To discuss the two acres of land at the front of the playing field ear-marked for future development

7.2.1 Councillors McCourt and Tingley had measured up and suggest there could be space for potentially up to ten building plots (leaving a 9m margin for access to the neighbouring dykes for annual maintenance). It was resolved to discuss this further at the 28th April 2026 meeting.

8 Finance

8.1 It was resolved with all in favour to approve the March 2026 Payments List as presented.

Councillors Purchase and Fry to authorize on the Unity Trust website after the meeting.

8.2 Income received since last meeting to be recorded at:

- £480.00 cemetery fees
- £7,989.60 Norfolk County Council (£6,989.60 funding for new bus shelter at Scarfield Lane and £1,000.00 donation for new bench at the Church).

8.3 The provision of a planter for Gaultree Square was discussed again. It was resolved to defer this to the next meeting to give councillors longer to decide exactly what sort of planter is required ie. Size, material, cost.

8.4 It was resolved to approve expenditure of £445.00 + Vat for the cutting back of the hedge in the churchyard opposite the church.

8.5 It was noted that a temporary surcharge on fuel¹ from Veolia (waste collection contractor) will be added to invoices from 1st April 2026.

8.6 Councillors Sennett and Wiles viewed the bank statements for internal audit purposes.

9 To receive a report from Norfolk County Council

9.1 Councillor Dawson provided an update on improved powers for pavement parking.

9.2 Moving forward it has been confirmed that Local Government Reorganisation will comprise of three unitary authorities for Norfolk; an East Norfolk Council, a West Norfolk Council and a Greater Norwich Council.

9.3 The Norfolk Community Fund has provided funding for a Christmas Lights event in Emneth for 2026 to be organized by Emneth Central Hall Committee.

10 To discuss Norfolk County Council Highways issues

10.1 Councillor Wiles reported his concern over a tree at Hawthorn Road/The Wroe; Clerk to investigate.

10.2 Councillor Curtis reported an issue with the surface of Church Road close to the Raceys Close junction. Clerk to investigate.

10.3 Councillor Dawson offered to speak with the owners of the Premier Store regarding the putting out of cones outside the shop to aid with their deliveries.

11 To receive a report from the Borough Council

11.1 It was noted that Parish Councils no longer have the right to have a local planning application referred to the *sifting panel*. Parish Councils will still be consulted in the usual way and their opinions considered but under the new planning regulations the power to have an application referred to the Planning Committee will no longer be possible.

¹ Due to the instability in the Middle East region directly affecting global oil markets

12 Planning

12.1 To consider any planning applications since last meeting:

12.1.1 Planning application 26/005376/F Variation of Condition 2 and 12 of planning permission 25/01812/F for a proposed agriculturally tied self build dwelling at Land West of Midfarrow Farm, Walsoken Road, Emneth; it was resolved to *support* this application.

12.2 To note any planning decisions and/or appeal notifications since last meeting: no report.

12.3 It was noted that the *Call for Sites* consultation with the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk has been extended to 1st May 2026. This extension has been made to ensure that all interested parties have sufficient time to submit potential development sites for consideration and inclusion in the Local Plan as allocations. The Call for Sites invites landowners, agents, parish councils, developers, and community representatives to put forward parcels of land that may be suitable for a range of uses. These include housing, employment, community facilities, and forms of green infrastructure such as public open space and wildlife habitats. Submissions are welcomed regardless of whether a site has been promoted in previous plan-making stages.

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.

13 Parish Matters

13.1 It was resolved to adopt an *accessibility statement* for the Parish Council's website as presented at the meeting.

13.2 It was resolved to approve the final draft of a Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan for the Parish. Clerk to submit to the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

13.3 It was noted that a couple of members of the Playing Field Committee had met to measure up potential building plots available at the front of the playing field and two members of the Cemetery Committee had met at the cemetery to install some bird boxes and remove the final Christmas wreaths left on some graves.

13.4 It was resolved to approve expenditure of £1,080.50 + Vat to have repairs carried out to the speed awareness message camera.

13.5 It was resolved to discuss the feasibility of creating a Community Speedwatch Team for the Parish at the Annual Parish Assembly on 28th April 2026.

13.6 It was noted that 2,000 crocus bulbs have been donated from Fenland District Council for the old canal towpath, to be planted by volunteers.

14 Cemetery Issues

14.1 Nothing further to report this month other than that Councillor Howard had previously confirmed that she is in the process of seeking some pre-application advice regarding a possible development on her land adjacent to the cemetery which, if successful, would result in her being agreeable to selling the piece of land the Parish Council was interested in some years ago directly behind the current cemetery. It was resolved to remove this item from the agenda and to investigate other potential sites.

14.2 Following recent further Cemetery Management Training, the Clerk highlighted an area of concern that, as the burial authority for the Parish, needs addressing, sooner rather than later, by the Parish Council; a topple test is required to be carried out in both of the *closed churchyards*. A quote had been sourced from Cemetery Development Services of £1,237.00 + Vat (this type of testing is required every five years only). They will carry out a comprehensive survey of all of the memorials in the cemetery and both closed churchyards (circa 250 memorials), highlighting all high, medium and/or low risk memorials supported by photographs and videos and will physically flag each memorial requiring attention with a yellow marker. The Clerk requested that this expenditure be

approved to ensure that the Council remains compliant with their responsibilities to ensure the churchyards and cemetery are a safe environment for all visitors, staff and contractors alike. It was resolved to defer this item to the next meeting for further discussion to allow Councillor Finnis the month of April to carry out a survey himself.

15 Agricultural Holdings Issues

15.1 One signed contract detailing the new land rent price effective from October 2025 still remains outstanding to be returned to the Parish Council.

16 To discuss Central Hall issues

16.1 All the plumbing issues have now been dealt with.

16.2 The Hall needs a new roof; queries surrounding whether or not planning permission may be required for this are currently being investigated.

17 To note any communications from the Police since last meeting

17.1 The Community Engagement Officer for Emneth is Maddison Cage.

17.2 Residents are encouraged to report anti-social behaviour issues to the Police by dialling 101 or emailing.

18 To note general correspondence received since last meeting; no report.

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:

19.1 It was noted that the National Living Wage increases on 1st April 2026 from £12.21 per hour to £12.71.

20 Items for the next meeting agendas – Annual Parish Assembly and April Ordinary Meeting

- To note any progress with a topple test in both closed churchyards
- To discuss Community Speedwatch in the Parish
- To discuss a resident's proposals regarding road safety in the Parish
- To discuss the two acres of land at the playing field ear-marked for development
- To discuss any progress with the revised tenancy for agricultural holdings land at Hungate Road (Clerk)
- To resolve on expenditure for a planter for Gaultree Square (Councillor Finnis)
- To further discuss the Christmas lights / tree project for 2026 (Councillor Finnis / Sennett)
- To further discuss the annual maintenance costs/arrangements for the church clock (Clerk)
- Apologies from Councillor Ingram

21 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 28th April 2026 at 6.30pm at Emneth Central Hall.

Meeting closed at 7.50pm

Chairman's signature