

SPARHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Sparham Parish Council, held on Tuesday 9th September 2025 at 7.30pm in the Old School Room, Sparham.

Present: Cllr Adam Pryke (Chair)
Cllr Leona McConnell (Vice Chair)
Cllr David Chapman
Cllr David Sayer
Cllr David Gerrie
Cllr Charles Sayer
Cllr Nigel Fielding

Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Cllr McConnell will be arriving later.

2. To receive any declarations of interest.

There were none received.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13th May 2025.

Cllr Pryke proposed that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting, this was seconded by Cllr Gerrie and unanimously agreed by Council. The Chairman duly signed the minutes.

4. County & District Councillor Reports.

C/Cllr Borrett had submitted a written report; no issues were highlighted by Council.

5. Meeting open for public participation.

There were no members of the public present.

6. Planning issues.

a) Applications for consideration.

There were no applications for consideration but Council agreed to make enquiries as to whether planning permission was required at a property currently undergoing works on Whitwell Road.

b) Decisions to note.

Council noted the following applications have been approved.

- PL/2025/0504/HOU – Hillcrest, Church Lane - Replacement and Installation of Air Water Pump to the rear of the property.
- PL/2025/0476/FMIN – Field Barn Farm, Lime Kiln Road - Proposed Change of use of part of horse livery stables to kennels and exercise area for keeping of up to 30 No working dogs.

Council noted that no decision has yet been made on the following applications.

- PL/2025/0943/FMIN – 9 Church Farm Lane - erection of wooden stable block consisting of three stables, a tack room and open hay store on a concrete pad for housing our own horses.
- PL/2025/1078/LB 1 Church Farm Barns, Well Lane – to replace all the windows (EXCEPT the Velux windows set into the roof) with new windows.

c) To receive an update regarding the Local Plan.

Council noted the response submitted to the recent call for sites, which did not support either of the two sites put forward.

Cllr David Sayer said it was disappointing that Council did not feel able to support more development in the village as Reepham School was under pressure from falling numbers. It was agreed that Norfolk needs more affordable housing but the infrastructure is not in place in Sparham to accommodate this.

At this point in the meeting, Cllr McConnell arrived.

7. Highway & Footpath issues.

a) To receive an update speeding issues on A1067 and the need for a lower speed limit, including the request to extend the current 50mph to Bawdeswell.

Council noted that the request to extend the 50mph limit to Bawdeswell has been refused.

b) To receive an update to the request for an additional bus stop at Sparham Hill.

Council noted that work is ongoing by County Council in respect of this matter to see if a bus stop is feasible.

c) To receive an update re programmed works to enlarge the current stop on the A1067 (westbound).

Council were pleased to note this work had been completed and the larger bus stop is now a safer place for anyone waiting for a bus.

d) To receive an update to the request for a 30mph speed limit within the village and/or additional signage.

Cllr Pryke proposed that, as it was extremely unlikely a 30mph speed limit would be installed due to a lack of funding, an application be submitted to the Parish Partnership Scheme for 50/50 funding for 'Please drive carefully' signage on Church Lane, Well Lane and Whitwell Road. This was seconded by Cllr David Sayer and unanimously agreed by Council. It was also agreed to approach RWE for funding due to the ongoing disruption in the village caused by their site. County Cllr Bill Borrett will be asked to support the scheme and assist with funding from his Members' Fund.

e) To receive an update regarding parking issues on The Street.

Council noted the refusal by Highways to install double yellow lines, which was the only available option, but agreed the parking issue had now been highlighted in the event of any planning application for the site at the top of The Street.

f) To receive an update regarding the flooding issues arising from water draining onto the highway from the field adjacent to the bus shelter.

Cllr David Sayer had not been contacted by County Cllr Bill Borrett and the C/Cllr will be asked once again to make contact to resolve this issue.

g) To receive an update regarding any issues reported to Highways and to report any new highway issues.

Council noted that the potholes on Well Lane have been repaired. There were no new issues reported.

h) To consider any projects for funding under the Parish Partnership Scheme.

This item had been dealt with at item 7d. above.

8. The Village Green

a) To receive a report regarding land registration of the Village Green.

There was no update in respect of this matter.

b) To consider an application for free orchard trees to plant on the area of uneven, wet ground.

Cllr McConnell reported that the wildflower areas have been cut and for next year the two areas near the driveway and close to the Old School Room will be used for the wildflowers. The area near the wall is too fertile for wildflowers to thrive.

In respect of orchard trees, there are no grants currently available. Cllr David Sayer said he was against the planting of fruit trees as they would obscure the view to the church and they do require a large amount of maintenance. This matter will be considered when any tree grants become available.

c) To receive an update on restoration works to the wall.

Council agreed the wall was looking much better after the recent works but the Chairman advised that the entire wall needs repointing and the gap eventually filled too. Council agreed to continue to set aside a reserve for the project.

d) To consider appointing an officer to deal with parking request risk assessments.

Cllr Fielding volunteered to deal with all parking requests and parking signage had been purchased.

The annual request from residents for a bonfire on the Green had been received and Cllr Fielding advised that a risk assessment should be carried out beforehand and a copy of the public liability insurance requested. Cllr Fielding volunteered to liaise with the residents.

9. To receive a maintenance report and an update regarding alternative uses for the Phone Box.

The Chairman advised that the exterior of the box needs a coat of paint and will obtain a quote for the works.

In respect of alternative uses, seed swap/gardening, community greenhouse, community library were all put forward as suggestions and it was agreed that options should be considered before the next meeting when a decision can be made. It was noted that the current recycling was not as useful as it had once been.

10. To receive an update regarding the Permissive Pathway agreement.

Council noted that two gates are in need of repair and the landowner will deal.

Cllr Charles Sayer said that options for public access may be available under the countryside stewardship schemes in the future but there was no certainty at the present time.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Charles Sayer for the excellent facility for the village.

11. To receive an update regarding any action in respect of the general appearance of the Village.

The Chairman reported that the grass contractor is now cutting additional areas and the church had re-gravelled the driveway. The large yew trees to the front of the church required cutting back as they hung well over into the road but this is for the PCC to deal with.

12. To receive a report re the annual asset inspection and consider any recommendations.

The Clerk had carried out an inspection of Council assets and all was in good order other than the Phone Box, which had been dealt with at item 9 above. It was agreed to also obtain a quote to re-stain the notice board.

Assets within the Old School Room are maintained by the Committee.

13. Finance & Governance Matters

a) To receive a financial report for the year ending 31st March 2026.

The financial report (attached) was noted. It was noted that the Open Spaces spend was higher than budget due to the weed sprays required for the wall restoration.

b) To consider the appointment of an Internal Auditor for the year ending 31st March 2026.

Cllr McConnell proposed the appointment of Mrs Dann, at a cost of £40.00, to carry out the internal audit for the year ending 31st March 2026, this was seconded by Cllr Chapman and unanimously agreed by Council.

c) To consider approval of the following policy documents:

- Asset Register
- Financial Regulations
- Standing Orders
- Safeguarding Policy
- Risk Assessment and Management Policy
- Equality Policy
- Co-option Policy
- IT Policy (new)

Cllr Pryke proposed approval of the policy documents as listed above, this was seconded by Cllr McConnell and unanimously agreed by Council.

d) To authorise financial payments as set out below and note any receipts.

Cllr Pryke proposed approval of the following payments, this was seconded by Cllr McConnell and unanimously agreed by Council. The receipts were noted.

PAYMENTS

P3A	ICO – Data Protection	£47.00 (DD)
P7	Wall Repairs – Materials	£500.00
P8	Wall Repairs – Week 1	£1,000.00
P9	Clerk (Salary & Allowance) June	£136.30 (SO)
P9	HMRC PAYE	£31.60
P10	Wall Repairs – Week 2	£875.00
P11	Strimming – Wall/ Bus Shelter	£120.00

P12	Wall Repairs – Week 3	£800.00
P13	Bus Shelter Clean	£18.00
P14	Wall Repairs – Week 4	£325.00
P15	Clerk (Salary & Allowance) July	£136.30
P15	HMRC PAYE	£31.60
P16	Grass Contractor – May	£95.00
P17	Grass Contractor – June	£95.00
P18	Parking Signage – Village Green	£35.96
P19	Clerk (Salary & Allowance) August	£136.30 (SO)
P19	HMRC PAYE	£31.60
P20	Grass Contractor (July)	£95.00
P21	Clerk (Salary & Allowance) September - includes Pay Award arrears back-dated to 01/04/2025.	£160.58 (SO)
P21	HMRC PAYE	£37.60
P22	Grass Contractor (August)	£105.00
<u>RECEIPTS</u>		
	Bank Interest (May)	£28.97
R2	HMRC VAT refund 2024/25	£17.00

14. Correspondence for circulation

- CPRE Norfolk Anti Mega Solar Alliance – Cllr David Sayer proposed that Council join the Alliance, this was seconded by Cllr Pryke and unanimously agreed by Council.
- Local Government Reorganisation – Council noted the ongoing move to unitary authorities.

15. To receive any new items for the next agenda.

Council requested that both the District and County Cllrs be asked to attend the next meeting as it had been some time since they had visited, despite being invited to attend every meeting.

16. To note the next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 11th November 2025, at 7.30pm in the Old School Room.

The date of the next meeting was noted and the Chair then closed the meeting at 8.29pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

SPARHAM PARISH COUNCIL - YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2026
FINANCIAL REPORT - SEPTEMBER 2025

BUDGET UPDATE	Actual	Budget	To date	%
	2024/25	2025/26		
PAYMENTS*				Paid
Admin	1,080	1,343	890	66%
Salary	1,864	1,877	978	52%
Open Spaces	750	630	715	113%
Permissive Pathway	160	160	-	0%
Bus Shelter/BT Box	85	200	18	9%
Donations	781	781	-	0%
Wall Repairs	1,770	1,770	3,500	198%
Defibrillator	-	50	-	0%
TOTAL	6,490	6,811	6,101	90%
RECEIPTS				Received
Precept	7,000	7,000	3,500	50%
Bank Interest	158	-	29	
TOTAL	7,158	7,000	3,529	50%
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	668	189	- 2,572	

Balance as at 01.04.2025	8445.61
Less Payments @ 30.07.2025	5428.73
Plus Receipts @ 30.07.2025	3545.97
TOTAL	6,562.85
Balance as at 30.07.2025	
Current Account	2,021.02
Business Account	4,541.83
TOTAL	6,562.85
less outstanding payments	0.00
	6,562.85
Defibrillator	50.00
Wall Repairs*	-
GENERAL RESERVE	6,512.85

*included 2025/26 budget (£1,770) & additional £1,000.
Current year repairs over budget by £30.20.