

SPARHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Sparham Parish Council held on Tuesday 10th September 2024 at 7.30pm, in the Old School Room, Sparham.

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

D/Cllr Gordon Bambridge
One Member of the Public
Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies received from Cllr David Gerrie were approved.

2. To receive any declarations of interest.

There were none received.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14th May 2024.

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

4. To consider the co-option of a new member to fill the one Council vacancy.

Council noted that there was interest from a local resident, however, they did not meet the criteria until 2025.

5. County & District Councillor Reports.

D/Cllr Bambridge updated Council on the following matters:

The Boundary Commission are reviewing ward boundaries in Breckland and there are likely to be changes. Breckland has requested an increase of two additional councillors.

Breckland are proposing to introduce car parking charges across the car parks in the district, with one car park in each town having a period of free parking. The budget will be in deficit in the coming years and this would help prevent a cut in other services.

The Breckland Local Plan will need review as the new Government are making increases to the number of houses required to be built each year. In response to a question, the D/Cllr confirmed that the 'New Town' is not currently viable due to infrastructure and environmental issues. However, the base at Swanton Morley will be sold in the coming years and could accommodate up to 6,000 new houses.

Breckland needs better designed, smaller homes for local people, those starting out on the housing ladder and for those downsizing. An exception scheme is available to villages to build small developments for local people in-perpetuity.

All social housing was sold to Flagship and is now managed by them, however, in recent years Breckland has purchased approx. 120 homes for emergency use. There are currently over 1,600 on the housing waiting list, with approx. 200 of those in urgent need.

In response to a query, the D/Cllr said he would support a 30mph speed limit through the village.

The A47 dualling is going ahead but the Western Link decision is currently on hold.

The Chairman thanked D/Cllr Bambridge for attending and updating Council and the D/Cllr then left the meeting.

6. Meeting open for public participation.

The member of the public said he had reported a large pothole on Whitwell Road but there were more and these will be reported. He noted that the recent top dressing on the Reepham Road had been quickly washed away in heavy rain.

7. Planning issues.

a) Applications for consideration.

- 3PL/2024/0638/HOU – 1 Sparham Hill - install replica tiled roof extension to the side of the property – Council raised no issues and the dark skies policy comments will be submitted.

b) Decisions to note.

Council noted the following two applications have been approved:

- 3PL/2024/0360/HOU – 3 Church Farm Barns, Well Lane - placement of Traditional Shepherd's Hut in Garden to provide occasional additional Sleeping Accommodation (Personal Use).
- 3PL/2024/0387/HOU – 2 Sparham Hill - single storey rear extension.

c) To receive an update re the Breckland Local Plan and consider any action.

This matter had been dealt with at item 5 above.

d) To note the Parish Partnership Scheme and to consider any projects for 50/50 grant funding.

This matter will be considered at item 8.

8. Highway & Footpath issues.

a) To receive an update speeding issues on A1067 and the need for a lower speed limit.

The Chairman updated Council on a meeting that he and Cllr McConnell had attended with the Highways Engineer. They had been informed that there will be no reduction in the speed limit on the A1067 as it did not meet the criteria; there had not been enough accidents.

However, improved markings, white lines, SLOWs etc, had been installed and an overgrown exit cleared.

Council agreed to keep pressure on the police to record data and will also look at remedial options such as Village Gates and speed signs. Cllr Pryke proposed an application to the Parish Partnership Scheme for 50/50 funding for Village Gates at both ends of the village on the A1067, this was seconded by Cllr McConnell and unanimously agreed by Council.

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

There was no update in respect of this matter.

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

There was no update in respect of this matter.

d) To receive an update to the request for a 30mph speed limit within the village.

Highways have agreed the need for a 30mph speed limit in the village, however, funding will be an issue. An application for funding can be submitted in the 2025/26 year but local funds will also be required. It was hoped that C/Cllr Borrett may be able to assist.

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

Council noted the following updates:

- Damaged Whitwell Road sign – reported to Breckland.
- Potholes on Church Lane – reported to Highways and programmed for repair.
- Fly-tipping on Church Lane – reported to Breckland and cleared.
- The water streaming down the A1067 from a land drain has been confirmed as the landowners responsibility and a letter will be sent once ownership has been confirmed.

9. The Village Green

a) To receive an update regarding the wildflower project.

Cllr McConnell said it had been another good year for the wildflowers, although the area was still too fertile, particularly with all the rain this year. She suggested moving parts of the area to the top and bottom ends of the Green to keep it away from the wall

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and this was agreed. The area will be strimmed and the cuttings removed. Yellow rattle was suggested as being a good plant to introduce.

b) To receive an update regarding planting a Queen Elizabeth II Memorial Orchard.
Council agreed they were not yet in a position to take this forward.

c) To receive an update regarding repairs to a section of the wall.

The Chairman reported on the good progress being made to the wall. The ivy had been completely stripped off revealing a lot of previous cement repairs which had allowed in water resulting in bulging walls. The wall is now being repaired using the correct lime mortar.

Council agreed to obtain a quote to spray the ivy twice yearly so it did not come back again and cause any further damage.

Cllr McConnell will investigate any grant funding available.

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

This item was remitted to the next meeting.

11. To consider the adequacy of the current bus shelter cleaning regime.

Council agreed to have the vegetation behind the bus shelter cleared which would allow greater access for the window cleaner.

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

Cllr Sayer reported that there was nothing from Government regarding public access but he was happy to continue with the agreement, as at present. The Chairman thanked Cllr Sayer for providing this valuable green space for the village.

There is currently an issue with dog mess and evidence must be obtained to allow the Dog Warden to deal. The dog mess is a threat to cattle, who will be moved onto the field for winter grazing.

13. Finance & Governance Matters

a) To receive a financial report for the year ending 31st March 2025.

The financial report (attached) was noted.

b) To appoint an internal auditor for the year ending 31st March 2025.

Cllr McConnell proposed the appointment of Mrs Dann as Internal Auditor for the fee of £40, this was seconded by Cllr Pryke and unanimously agreed by Council.

c) To review the following policy documents.

In respect of the Asset Register, Council agreed that the Village Green wall should be identified as a separate asset and a further valuation of the Old School Room should be made.

Cllr Pryke then proposed approval of the following documents, this was seconded by Cllr Sayer and unanimously agreed by Council.

- Financial Regulations
- Risk Assessment & Management Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Asset Register (as amended above)
- Code of Conduct
- Retention & Disposal Policy
- Publication Scheme
- Information & Data Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedure

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 receipt was noted.

PAYMENTS

P6A	ICO Subscription (Data Protection)	£35.00 (DD)
P9	Clerk (Salary & Allowance) June	£129.04 (SO)
P9	HMRC PAYE	£29.80
P11	Clerk (Salary & Allowance) July	£129.04 (SO)
P11	HMRC PAYE	£29.80
P13	Bus Shelter Cleaning	£18.00
P14	Clerk (Salary & Allowance) August	£129.04 (SO)
P14	HMRC PAYE	£29.80
P10	Grass Cutting – Village Green (May)	£90.00
P12	Grass Cutting – Village Green (June)	£90.00
P16	Wall Repairs – Materials	£355.00
P17	Wall Repairs – Stage 1	£600.00
P18	Wall Repairs – Stage 1	£1,000.00
P18A	Wall Repairs – Materials & Stage 1	£653.20
P15	Grass Cutting – Village Green (July)	£90.00
P19	Clerk (Salary & Allowance) September	£129.04 (SO)
P19	HMRC PAYE	£29.80
P20	Clerk Expenses	£19.00
P21	Grass Cutting – Village Green (August)	£90.00
P22	SLCC Membership	£16.92

RECEIPTS

Bank Interest	£45.84
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