

MINUTES OF THE GARVESTONE, REYMERSTON and THUXTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 17th NOVEMBER 2025 AT 7:00PM

Councillors Present: Trevor Fox, Edward Stanford, James Smerdon (Chair), Graham Smith and Amanda Ward.

Members of the Public Present: 10

Clerk: Samantha Bromley

1. Apologies.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr L. Sandford (alternative commitment).

2. Minutes.

The Parish Council meeting dated Monday 27th October 2025 was agreed as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3. Declaration of Interest.

- 3.1. No pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests, on any subject on the agenda, were declared.
- 3.2. No dispensation requests were received.

4. To receive updates on matters not elsewhere on the agenda.

- 4.1. There were no further updates to provide regarding the escaped pigs incidents.
- 4.2. An update was given on the replacement tree for the Remembrance Garden: the liquid amber tree lost over winter will be replaced once a working group has been formed to carry out some TLC in the area and confirm it is ready for replanting.

5. Correspondence.

- 5.1. NCC: PFR engagement pack and questionnaire. Noted.
- 5.2. County Councillor: Information. Noted and on website.
- 5.3. NCC: Norfolk County Council's Budget Consultation 2026-27. Noted.
- 5.4. Breckland Council: Breckland Local Plan: Regulation 18 Consultation. Noted. – Clerk to add to website.
- 5.5. Resident: Fw: Airbnb's Best of British Fund. Noted.

6. Public Participation and Reports.

- 6.1. County Cllr Edward Connolly was not present.
- 6.2. District Cllrs Paul Claussen was not present. District Cllr Paul Plummer was present, no report
- 6.3. Sergeant Peter Fuller attended the meeting to provide an update on the recent arson incidents in the parish. He reported that officers continue to gather evidence and conduct enquiries. A suspect had been arrested and interviewed on two occasions. On both occasions the individual denied involvement and was released on police bail. Sergeant Fuller explained that while the community may feel confident about who is responsible, the police must be able to present evidence that meets the legal threshold required by the courts. A property search and forensic examination have been carried out, and the suspect remains on bail with conditions. Officers are monitoring compliance with these conditions through both uniformed and plain-clothed patrols, including unmarked units in the village. There is a significant amount of circumstantial evidence, including CCTV placing an individual in the vicinity around the relevant times, and the police are working to strengthen the evidential case. Residents were encouraged to provide any information

they may have, either directly to officers or via the parish council to forward on. Sergeant Fuller emphasised that residents may not always see visible policing because covert work is taking place in an effort to catch the offender in the act. He added that the pattern of incidents suggests they often occur around dawn or dusk. Several residents shared additional concerns, including observations made on public transport and in nearby villages where the individual has reportedly been seen. Residents also noted that information previously passed to the fire service had not been followed up, and the police agreed to investigate this. Sergeant Fuller asked that any concerns regarding bail compliance — such as very early-morning or late-evening sightings — be reported to the team. He acknowledged that the policing team is currently under considerable pressure, although an additional officer will be joining shortly. Finally, he reiterated that if anyone witnesses a fire being set, they should call 999 immediately, as this will ensure the nearest available unit is dispatched without delay. The police are currently reviewing all gathered evidence, statements and interviews and arranging the material into chronological order to ensure nothing has been missed. Residents can contact the Safer Neighbourhood Team at: sntbreckland@norfolk.police.uk. The Chair thanked the police for their work and encouraged residents to remain vigilant and report any suspicions promptly.

6.4. Open forum for members of the public:

- 6.4.1. A resident raised concerns about vehicle speeds when entering and leaving the village. He noted that he had spoken informally with Highways, who advised that any request to review or extend the 30mph limit must be submitted through the Parish Council. Mr Barker highlighted that, as the road layout near his property is similar to other areas already within the 30mph zone – with housing on one side only – he believes an extension is justified. He expressed particular concern for children walking to school, as they must cross the road and walk facing oncoming traffic due to the absence of a footpath. He asked whether the Parish Council could seek clarification from the Highways Officer on whether pursuing a speed limit extension would be viable. This will be added to the later agenda for further consideration once contact had been made with highways.
- 6.4.2. A resident addressed the Council to express his objection to the Council's previous decision not to offer a goodwill gesture relating to the removal of the former telephone box. He outlined his view of the events leading up to the removal, including his understanding of whether the telephone box had been disconnected, the checks he carried out at the time and his belief that further information should have been made available to him prior to the purchase. He also expressed concerns about aspects of the process and the handling of the matter, and asked the Council to reconsider its position. The Council noted his comments. The Chair clarified the Council's Standing Orders in relation to the six-month rule, explaining that a decision of the Council cannot be revisited within six months unless a special motion is submitted in writing and signed by at least four councillors. It was noted that, should such a request be received, the matter could then be brought back to a future meeting.
- 6.4.3. A resident commented, in relation to agenda item 8.5, that some dog owners appear to treat agricultural fields as parks, allowing dogs to run freely and foul in open spaces. It was noted that even where public footpaths cross fields, dogs must be kept under proper control and owners remain responsible for clearing up after them. The Chair added that posters created by the school had previously helped to improve the situation, but a new approach may now be needed as issues appear to be increasing again.

- 6.4.4. A resident raised concern that the defibrillator cabinet remains unlocked, meaning the first aid kit is accessible to anyone. – Clerk to confirm the device's registration details and ensure the cabinet is operating as intended.
- 6.4.5. A resident queried the reference to planning application PL/2025/1637/TCA listed as "The Street, Garvestone," noting that the application appears to relate to Reymerston. It was clarified that the Clerk copies the wording directly from the consultation letter when preparing the agenda.
- 6.4.6. A resident suggested installing a dummy camera near the defibrillator cabinet to deter misuse of the first aid kit.

7. Septic Tank Scheme

It was noted that the National Rivers Consortium was contacted regarding arranging a public information session for the septic tank upgrade scheme and they were provided with Village Hall availability up to the end of February. A further update has been received confirming that, due to Norfolk Environmental Credits slowing work in the South Norfolk area, no additional village meetings are being scheduled at present. They have advised that the Council should make contact again in late February for a progress update.

8. Open Spaces.

- 8.1. It was reported that the faulty 30mph sign previously located at the top of Town Lane had been replaced with a flashing 20mph sign. As the 20mph limit will remain in place, the intention is to reposition the sign so it faces Town Lane and provides clearer warning to approaching drivers.
- 8.2. An update on the incidents of suspected arson within the village was provided by the police under item 6.3. The officer advised residents to remain vigilant and to report any suspicious behaviour. Any incident believed to be a crime in progress, or about to occur, should be reported immediately via 999.
- 8.3. A resident, who is a skilled craftsman, has agreed to attempt repairing the noticeboard free of charge, with only the cost of materials covered by the Parish. The Council agreed to keep this matter on the agenda for future updates.
- 8.4. It was noted that four possible dates have been submitted to East Anglian Air Ambulance for the free defibrillator training session. Once a date is confirmed, arrangements will be made and those who have expressed interest will be notified. The Council emphasised the importance of attending the training to ensure confidence in using the defibrillator during an emergency.
- 8.5. The Council discussed concerns about dog fouling and dogs being off lead in the village, including incidents on Town Lane and in local fields. It was agreed to review relevant bylaws, remind residents to keep dogs without reliable recall on a lead, improve signage and share guidance via community news channels.
- 8.6. The Council received an update from the Footpath Officer regarding Toller's Lane. Initial clearance at the start of the lane in May was followed by further sessions in November, during which volunteers cleared approximately 0.3 miles of the first section, making it accessible for walking. Robin, the former Footpath Officer, has also cleared a section at the Whinburgh end, allowing limited access along 0.27 miles up to the railway line, with some additional work still needed. The remaining 0.7 miles to join the lane at Brakefield Green, Garvestone, may require further clearance. The Footpath Officer will contact Norfolk County Council's Countryside Access Officer to explore possible assistance, which combined with volunteer efforts, could help establish a fully accessible circular walk around Garvestone and Whinburgh.
- 8.7. The Council received an update regarding the Playground Project, to renovate the playground outside of the Garvestone & Thuxton Village Hall. Three companies have

been contacted to provide quotes and designs. Meetings with the companies will be arranged in conjunction with the Administrator of the Village Hall Committee to progress the project.

9. Planning Matters.

- 9.1. To consider consultee response to applications received from Breckland District Council:
 - 9.1.1. PL/2025/1581/CLOPUD - Rectory Barn Tinkers Lane, Reymerston, Garvestone – Replace existing timber double glazed windows and doors with aluminium clad timber windows - certificate of lawfulness - proposed use. NO OBJECTION.
 - 9.1.2. PL/2025/1637/TCA - The Street Garvestone. NR9 4AG - T1-maple. Remove to around a 7ft pole. Tree looks to be in decline and is too close to the house. NO OBJECTION.
 - 9.1.3. APP/F2605/C/25/3374438 - Field next to North Green Farm, Reymerston. Appeal. Noted – appeal points raised, no additional comments to add to previous objection.
- 9.2. To consider consultee response to any other applications received from Breckland District Council after the publication of the agenda:
(<http://planning.breckland.gov.uk/OcellaWeb/planningSearch>).
- 9.3. To receive notifications of decisions made by Breckland District Council: None.

10. Financial & Governance Matters.

- 10.1. To RESOLVE to AGREE the following payment: graham trevor

Payee	Description	Method	Net	VAT	Gross
Staffing	Salary/HMRC/Pension/WFHA	BACS	£682.25	£0.00	£682.25
Tesco	Mobile	DD	£8.80	£2.20	£11.00
Dennis & Sons	Hedge Cutting	BACS	£225.00	£45.00	£270.00
Mr. G. Lake	Grass Cutting	BACS	£500.00	£0.00	£500.00
Direct365online Ltd	Defibrillator Pads	BACS	£66.20	£13.24	£79.44
Footpath Officer	Fuel contribution towards a bush cutter used during the volunteer footpath clearance	BACS	£5.00	£0.00	£5.00

11. Administration.

The Council reviewed the current Risk Assessment for Parish Council events and volunteer activities. It was agreed to update the numbering of pages and to bring the Risk Assessment back for further review in a few months. For litter-pick activities, it was noted that volunteers already cover higher-speed roads (up to 60 mph) and should continue to wear appropriate high-visibility clothing. A common-sense approach should be applied to ensure volunteers do not stand in the road during activities.

12. Items for the next meeting.

- 12.1. NCC: PFR engagement pack and questionnaire.
- 12.2. To receive an update on the Reymerston Village Hall.

13. Next meeting of the council.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Council will be held on Monday 15th December 2025 at 7:00pm in the Garvestone & Thuxton Village Hall.

To pass a resolution under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude members of the press and public for the following confidential items.

14. Staffing.

The Council discussed the applicant for the temporary maternity cover role of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. It was agreed that the Clerk would arrange an informal interview with the Chair and one other Councillor.