

**MINUTES OF THE GARVESTONE, REYMERSTON and  
THUXTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON MONDAY 27<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2025 AT 7:00PM**

Councillors Present: Trevor Fox, Edward Stanford, James Smerdon (Chair) and Amanda Ward.  
Members of the Public Present: 8  
Clerk: Samantha Bromley

**1. Co-option.**

The Council considered an application for co-option and RESOLVED to AGREE to appoint Mr Trevor Fox. Proposed Cllr J. Smerdon, seconded Cllr A. Ward.

**2. Apologies.**

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

**3. Minutes.**

The Parish Council meeting dated Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025 was agreed as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

**4. Declaration of Interest.**

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

**5. To receive updates on matters not elsewhere on the agenda.**

- 5.1. The meeting received an update on the escaped pigs and it was noted that there have been no further incidents reported.
- 5.2. MP Dennis & Sons have completed the annual hedge cutting around the Queen Elizabeth II Field and the pathway leading to it.

**6. Correspondence.**

- 6.1. The Countryside Charity: Your latest update on our countryside. Noted.
- 6.2. Planning Enforcement: Enforcement Letter - ENF/063/25 - Farm Buildings 601902 306699 North Green, Reymerston. - The Chair noted that, rather than proceeding to appeal, the applicant has been submitting a series of slightly modified planning applications. The case has now reached the stage where it will be referred to the planning panel for consideration.
- 6.3. Resident: Speeding in Garvestone. - The Chair noted the resident's correspondence and reported that the Speedwatch team is currently operating several times a month. An application is being made for a SAM3 device under the 50/50 scheme, which will record data and identify peak speeding times to assist the Speedwatch team in planning their sessions more effectively
- 6.4. Resident: Enforcement Acknowledgement - ENF/224/25 - Wyvern Farm Mattishall Road, Garvestone. - The Chair reported that the applicant has six months to appeal and may continue operating during this period; no appeal has been submitted to date. It was further noted that part of the front drive has been tarmacked and a public footpath sign has reportedly been removed. The Footpath Officer has been asked to investigate this matter.
- 6.5. Whinburgh & Westfield Parish Council: Obstruction and Accessibility Concerns - Norfolk County Council (Whinburgh, Yaxham and Garvestone) Modification Order 2023. Noted.

- 6.6. Resident: Tree felling on the Lings, Reymerton. Noted.
- 6.7. County Councillor: Information. Noted and added to website.
- 6.8. Resident: Wyvern Farm. Noted.
- 6.9. NCC: PFR engagement pack and questionnaire. Noted.
- 6.10. CPRE Norfolk: Welcome to CPRE Norfolk PARISH COUNCIL. Noted.

## **7. Public Participation and Reports.**

- 7.1. County Cllr Edward Connolly was not present.
- 7.2. District Cllr Paul Plummer reported ongoing concerns regarding the right of way between Garvestone and Whinburgh, noting that Norfolk County Council currently has no funding available for clearance work, though it may be scheduled for late next year. There was concern that the transition to a unitary authority could affect funding availability. Cllr Plummer also advised that Breckland District Council is seeking to transfer ownership of some car parks to local councils due to concerns that a future unitary authority may introduce parking charges. He further noted issues relating to solar and wind farm developments around the Swaffham area, where developers have identified potential opportunities to connect to existing grid infrastructure.
- 7.3. The police were not present.
- 7.4. Open forum for members of the public (maximum of 3 minutes per person).
  - 7.4.1. A resident raised concern regarding the footpath at Tollers Lane which crosses the railway, noting that during a recent inspection the route of the path was unclear. It was also mentioned that vegetation clearance is currently taking place along the railway, and users are advised to take care as branches and debris may be present on the usual walking route.
  - 7.4.2. An update on the Tollers Lane footpath, noting that Robin, the former Footpath Officer, has walked the entire route and believes the clearance work required may be less than Norfolk County Council's assessment. One section of the route does not appear to have a clear landowner, raising questions about future maintenance responsibility. It was reported that much of the initial clearance could be completed using hand tools and it was suggested that the Dereham Walkers group may be willing to assist. It was suggested for the Clerk to contact Whinburgh Parish Council to explore a joint local effort to clear some of the path. It was noted that any tree felling must be carried out safely and in compliance with regulations, particularly where ditches require bridging, which may ultimately need to be undertaken by Norfolk County Council due to liability considerations.
  - 7.4.3. Continuing discussion on local footpaths, it was suggested that regular walkers could help maintain accessibility by carrying a pair of secateurs and trimming back overhanging vegetation as they walk. This ongoing light maintenance would help prevent paths from becoming overgrown. It was noted that Skippers Footpath and Little Low Footpath, from Tanners Green to beyond the village sign, are currently in a good condition and form a popular circuit for dog walkers. A larger issue was identified along Little Low, where the section of lane beside the ditch frequently becomes muddy and difficult to pass.
  - 7.4.4. A question was raised regarding whether landowners are legally required to maintain public rights of way (PROWs) crossing their land. The Chair confirmed that they are.
  - 7.4.5. A resident reported that their tow hitch had been stolen from The Lings. When reported, Police advised that thieves often cut or remove hitch locks and the surrounding assembly to attach the caravan to their own vehicle. Residents are advised to remain vigilant. - Clerk to share a reminder on the Council's website

- 7.4.6. A member of the public noted that, as a deaf community member, he sometimes find it difficult to hear councillors during meetings. The Council acknowledged this and encouraged councillors to speak up to assist with audibility.
- 7.4.7. It was reported that a piece of land on the Garvestone– Whinborough border, currently owned by a charity, may be sold or let in January. The Council noted the information for awareness.
- 7.4.8. A member of the public highlighted that regular use of footpaths helps keep them clear and accessible, preventing overgrowth and reducing the need for large-scale clearance efforts.

#### **8. Reymerston Phone Box.**

The Chair read the Council's legal statement regarding the Reymerston Telephone Box and the associated invoice issued by NPower following its sale. The statement confirmed that the telephone box was sold by sealed bid with the clear understanding that the buyer would be responsible for organising its removal. Legal advice received confirmed that responsibility for the removal rested entirely with the buyer, that the method of removal demonstrated potential negligence on their part, and that the Council had no prior knowledge of whether the electrical supply was live and therefore could not reasonably have provided that information. On this basis, the Council was advised that it is not liable for the NPower invoice or any related costs arising from the incident. Following discussion, a vote was taken and it was RESOLVED to AGREED not to offer a goodwill gesture of financial contribution to the buyer. Proposed Cllr J. Smerdon, seconded Cllr A. Ward.

#### **9. Open Spaces.**

- 9.1. An update on the installation of an additional flashing 20mph sign on Town Lane was received. It was noted that there are currently two 20mph speed limits next to each other, replacing the previous 30mph limit. The Council is awaiting feedback from Highways regarding the installation. Suggestions were made to consider repositioning the sign, altering its orientation and switching it back to a 30mph sign.
- 9.2. The Council RESOLVED to AGREE to purchase a replacement tree, costing up to £60.00, for the Remembrance Garden. Proposed Cllr T. Fox, seconded Cllr E. Sandford.
- 9.3. The Council discussed the recent incidents of suspected arson within the village. Cllr Fox reported being affected approximately two weeks ago when, around 5:30am, his treehouse, wooden fence, and hedge were set on fire. The fire was managed until the fire brigade arrived, and the individual responsible was subsequently arrested and released on bail due to insufficient evidence. Forensic analysis indicated the use of an accelerant, confirming the fire as an act of criminal damage. The Council noted that there have been at least 13 fires of varying severity in the village. Advice received from the Police emphasized vigilance, reporting any suspicious activity, and that residents should take note of fires being set in preparation for subsequent ignition. The Chair confirmed he is willing to act as a point of contact for residents. – Clerk to raise awareness on the Council's Facebook page and website, asking residents to report planned bonfires in advance to avoid confusion and to notify the Council of any suspicious activity.

*The Chair paused the Standing Orders to allow for a member of the public to speak on this matter.*

*A resident reported that, during a routine visit to the Parish Church, candles and matches were found out on the altar, ready for use. Given the ongoing deliberate fire incidents in the village, all church users and visitors should be kindly reminded to ensure that candles, matches and any other potential fire hazards are securely stored when not in use.*

- 9.4. The Chair reported that he had spoken to a local labourer regarding the noticeboard. The labourer had inspected the board and advised that repairing the back may be sufficient. Alternatively, he offered to construct a new noticeboard, charging only for the materials. The Council noted the options for consideration.
- 9.5. The Chair explained that the current location of the 30mph speed limit is based on established criteria, which require housing on both sides of the road. As this criterion is not currently met, it is unlikely that the speed limit can be extended. The Chair will make further enquiries with Highways regarding any potential changes to the criteria.

#### 10. Planning Matters.

- 10.1. To consider consultee response to applications received from Breckland District Council: None.
- 10.2. To consider consultee response to any other applications received from Breckland District Council after the publication of the agenda: None.  
(<http://planning.breckland.gov.uk/OcellaWeb/planningSearch>).
- 10.3. To receive notifications of decisions made by Breckland District Council: None.

#### 11. Financial & Governance Matters.

- 11.1. It was RESOLVED to AGREE the following payment, proposed Cllr A. Ward, seconded Cllr T. Fox.

| 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  |
| Viking   | Office Supplies – ink & paper   | BACS   | £50.84  | £10.17 | £61.01  |
| Clerk    | Reimbursement – Poppy Wreath x2 | BACS   | £37.07  | £7.41  | £44.48  |

#### 12. Administration.

- 12.1. To review and update the Council's Risk Assessment for Parish Council Events and Volunteer Activities. DEFERRED.
- 12.2. The Council discussed the usefulness of including 'Members Matters' as a standing item on future agendas and AGREED that it should be removed.

#### 13. Members Matters.

None.

#### 14. Items for the next meeting.

- 14.1. Update on the septic tank scheme.
- 14.2. NCC: PFR engagement pack and questionnaire.

#### 15. Next meeting of the council.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Council will be held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 7:00pm in the Garvestone & Thuxton Village Hall.

**It was RESOLVED to AGREE, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, to exclude members of the press and public for the following confidential items.**

#### 16. Staffing.

It was noted that the Parish Council has received expressions of interest in the Temporary Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (maternity cover) position.