

THARSTON AND HAPTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held at
The Community Building, Holly Lane, Hapton
On Wednesday 16th April 2025 at 7.00pm.

In Attendance: **Mr N Potter (chair)**
Mr T Ward
MR V Blake
Mr G Bleach
Mrs J Goodall Browne
Mrs Jeanette Allen after item 4
Mr A Arber (clerk)

2 members of the public plus County Councillor Alison Thomas

1. **Public Participation**— County and District Council reports can also be received during this time. (10 minutes maximum).

Alison Thomas gave the following report

County Council gave the following view on Local government review from 6 councils looking at 3 unitary and SNDC looking at a 2 unitary with NCC looking at either a 2 or 1 unitary with a decision due in late September.

The annual monetary benefit is 1 unitary £29 million, 2 unitary is £23 million and 3 unitary being a £19 million being the monetary split.

It is felt that all the services would need to split and the costs for all the different unitary councils is quite substantial

There are many points on this that Alison brought up and they are worrying, and costs are very different in all aspects moving forward with the scheme.

A decision will be made by the minister of local government in late December

It is known that the directly elected mayor will be elected next June, and the local elections may again be postponed in June with local councillors putting them forward for this council depending on the make-up agreed.

Long Stratton Bypass is progressing well and no road closures proposed at present.

They are doing lots of work on the church lane roundabout and services. If the council has anyway of celebrating the bypass being open, can we let Alison know asap though the clerk.

The A140 is causing issues and send any comments should you need to the clerk.

10 fire fighter went to Ukraine to deliver fire engines which is great.

Kim Carsok sent the following report

- **Budget 24/25** - This year has seen a modest, below-inflation rise in SNC Council Tax of £5 on a band D household per year (10p per week). We have achieved a balanced budget despite inflationary pressures on increasing staff wages, National Insurance contributions, cost of utilities etc.

- **Capital Programme** - Our ambitious programme of capital projects continues at pace, with plans and works going on across the district. These include leisure projects in Diss and Framingham Earl, a new roundabout near Hethel Engineering Centre, the Long Stratton Bypass and more. A Play Area refurbishment budget has also been added to the programme.

- **The Climate Change, Environment and Biodiversity Delivery Plan** was endorsed by

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Cabinet on 14th April. The document serves to ensure the Council is meeting statutory biodiversity duties under the Environment Act, setting out the actions that it will take to meet new legal requirements in line with government commitments to halt species decline by 2030 and promote nature recovery. It also sets out actions that go beyond these obligations, reflecting the Council's broader environmental aspirations. This includes provision of grants for environmental projects, increasing biodiversity on council-

owned land and more. We hope that parish and town councils will join us on this journey, together improving the environment in South Norfolk.

● **New Town expression of interest:** SNC submitted an expression of interest towards the government's call for new towns. We have done this on the basis that if South Norfolk were selected for a New Town, the houses there would not be over and above the housing allocation already assigned. This would allow us to protect our rural towns and villages from having ever more houses added to them, and would ensure the new town is built with infrastructure at the same time, so as not to put pressure on existing resources.

● **Affordable Homes:** South Norfolk Council's commitment to providing high-quality, affordable homes has delivered outstanding results, significantly exceeding annual targets and laying strong foundations for continued success. A total of 333 affordable homes were completed in the 2024/25 financial year, nearly double the target of 169.

● **Nature Conservation Fund:** The council's new Nature Conservation Fund has already had six expressions of interest for the £10,000 grants. Funding will be used towards projects tackling carbon emissions, biodiversity benefit and public accessibility to green space.

2. Apologies – To consider accepting apologies for absence.

D Daniels sent his apologies due to work-all agreed to accept

3. Co-option – To consider the co-option of a new councillor

Jeanette Allen introduced herself to the council and detailed the reasons she would like to join the Parish Council, after a short discussion Jeanette was welcomed to the council by the chair and invited to take her seat at the meeting.

4. Co-option – To receive the acceptance of office and register of interest forms from the new councillor

The acceptance of office form was signed by Jeanette and witnessed by the clerk

5. Minutes – To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on the 19th of March

These were agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed by the chair

Proposed Nick Potter Seconded Tim Ward

6. Declarations of interests – To receive any declarations of personal or prejudicial interest from members on any item to be discussed.

Tim Ward for a payment in item 7

7. Planning

- Planning applications

2024/3816 Location: Land East of High Road Ashwellthorpe Norfolk

Proposal: Series of 13 ponds designed to intercept surface water flows and designed to be part of work to create off-site biodiversity units

Application Type: Full Planning Permission

This application had already been discussed by the council and the only extra comment was around the traffic management plan for the installation of the ponds

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2025/1035 Location: Stone House Norwich Road Hapton Norfolk NR15 1RZ

Proposal: Two bay cart lodge with flooring above one bay for storage

Application Type: Householder

This application was discussed, and it was agreed to support the application.

- To discuss the Planned Open Space Land in Long Stratton
No report
- To discuss Planning Applications and any received after the agenda is posted
None

8. Governance –

The clerk commented that he had to undertake to write a privacy policy for the year end process and this was done in the time allowed and is on the parish website.

9. Finance –

- To note receipts in April
- Cabin Hire receipts £30.00
- Vat Refund £232.98

To approving the following invoices for payment February

- To approve Payments to Parish Clerk Alan Arber for March salary and expenses £847.86
- To approve payment for Clerks pension for March £285.60
- To approve payment to Handyman for salary and expenses March £399.17
- To approve payment to NPTS for annual subscription £375.68
- To approve payment to HMRC for tax and Ni £719.44
- To approve payment to Tim Ward for Camera Solar Panel £13.69
- To approve monthly payment for Wi-Fi in the cabin £55.20
- To approve payment to Wensum print for the newsletter £400.00
- To approve payment to ICO for annual subscription £47.00
- To approve payment to Viking for stationery £119.50
- To approve payment to Sonya Blythe for Internal Audit £120.00
- To approve payment to 3 mobile for Direct debit for security sim cards £76.18
- To approve Monthly bank charges £6.00
- To approve Monthly credit card, charge £3.00
- Payments on credit card
Cat Litter £47.48
Laptop software upgrade £104.99
Ink Jungle for Printer Ink £11.99
- To receive the financial position of the council

The council started April with a balance of £11,980.40 including the receipts of £262.98 and after today's payments of £3632.78 we have a balance of £8347.62 and a vat reclaim of £77.51 to be claimed. We will also receive our first precept payment of £18783.79 in April

7.1. To receive and agree section 1 of the AGAR annual governance statements

The clerk took the meeting through the Section 1 of the AGAR detailing all the statements and all councillors agreed these were correct and the agar was duly signed by the chair and witnessed by the clerk

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Proposed Nick Potter Seconded Victor Blake

7.2. To agree and receive section 2 of the AGAR accounting statements

The clerk took the meeting through the Section 2 of the AGAR detailing all the statements and all councillors agreed these were correct and the agar was duly signed by the chair and witnessed by the clerk

Proposed Tim Ward Seconded Jenna Goodall Browne

7.3. To receive the internal auditors report for year end 2024-2025

The clerk took the meeting through the Internal Auditors report detailing all the statements and all councillors agreed these were correct and the Internal audit report was duly accepted by all councillors

Proposed Nick Potter Seconded Victor Blake

7.4. To receive the year end bank balance

The council finished with a balance of £11,717.42 which was well down on the recent years due to the projects they had undertaken.

7.5. To receive the updated asset register

The clerk had updated this for the year end to add the new play items, benches and garden onto the asset register so they show on the upcoming Insurance schedule and are included on the costings

8. **Highways** – to receive any updates regarding highways and footpaths.

- Highway issues
Skid Sign in Hapton has fallen down and handyman Simon Delaney will put this back up.

9. **To receive an update on the following current issues and to consider any necessary actions:**

- Tree warden's Report

No report

- Footpath Issues

No report

- Maintenance and Handyman's report

The clerk gave all the councillors the handyman's new report form so they could see what has been done where and what hours worked and actual costs.

To discuss the upgrade of the cabin batteries and solar panels

The chair looked at this with Graham Bleach to get water to the top of the field the pump runs well in good weather the pump only runs for a certain amount of time. The generator was okay, but the question was raised on whether to run a new generator or new solar system. It was agreed we should upgrade the batteries and solar at a cost of £1000 roughly. It was proposed that we go with this option asap.

A new generator including petrol costs would exceed the £100 budget

Proposed Tim Ward Seconded Graham Bleach

10. **To receive an update on the Hapton Community Project**

- New Disabled Friendly compostable toilet and to discuss the plans to install ourselves and costings

The clerk has looked at this and it was felt it was out of our range so we will look at doing this ourselves with a grant via pride in place and the clerk will hold meetings with on this with district councillor Kim Carsok asap.

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The chair would produce a detailed drawing and costing for the clerk to use after he has looked at what we need for the building. The clerk was also requested to research the details needed for the disabled access and wheelchair turning circle.

It was agreed that security needs to be upped, and locks put on the cupboards moving forward

11. To discuss the latest Pylons information

The clerk has received nothing on this since the last meeting, but it is noted that they are doing ground surveys for owl and bats. No information has been sent to the clerk

12. To note our comments to East Pye solar

The clerk has received nothing on this since the last meeting

13. To discuss the Norfolk Homes land and what next steps are

Awaiting further information

14. To discuss Parish Projects

- V E Day celebration and grant

The clerk reported that he had submitted the grant with the correct date on for the event and SNDC have agreed that we are eligible for the £300. He has also enrolled us in the VE/VJ day website along with Tim Ward and himself have access to all the information on their including posters template, Quiz and answers which should help with the day. Simon Delaney has confirmed that he will arrange the military vehicles but needs £50 for fuel etc. It was proposed this was acceptable

Proposed Nick Potter Seconded Tim Ward

Other 50's vehicles will be attending, talk to the police on them bringing a car and Hapton school have been involved to do a painting competition.

Other events will be added as booked and if anyone wishes to have a stand or bring something to the event, they are welcome. I would propose we charge each stand individually but an ice cream van would be good.

- Newsletter

All done and been delivered so thanks to everyone. The next issue is early July unless we can get a June edition out early to aid with the VE/VJ day celebrations promotion. This would be tight as we would have a very quick turnaround to get it to the printer by late May at the latest.

- Sam Machine

Due to year end the clerk has been unable to download this but will asap

- Tharston Phone box

Location and date to be installed needs sorting asap

The phone box needs renovating, and Graham has no responsibility on its movement or storage of the phone box

- Parish Councillors/Clerk training/Personal development

The clerk has attended both NPTS spring seminar and SLCC Norfolk AGM with both being excellent events. He has also attended the Devolution seminar with David Daniels at SNDC.

The clerk has almost finished the article to go in the National Clerk magazine in July edition

Training for new councillor Jeanette Allen arranged for Wednesday 14th May

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- New Defibrillator and Defib Training dates to be fixed.
The date for this to be held at Wacton should be known in early May
- Surveyors Land in Low Tharston
No report on this
- Hapton Phone Box
Still being very well used and a great addition to the village
- Neighbourhood watch
Nothing to report
- Meeting House Field and CCTV Issues
The new camera solar panel has been installed by Tim ward and the cameras are working well and have caught a small amount of issues but no serious vandalism since the last incident
- Parish Orchard at Old Village Hall site Tharston
Handyman Simon Delaney has installed the tap at the orchards which should help with watering moving forward.
The chair will speak to Olly on the exact parts of grass that need cutting.
- Dog mess in the Parish
This is still an issue, but nothing has been reported to the clerk for him to take up

14. To discuss Green Initiatives moving forward including recycling and actions on the biodiversity policy

Tim Ward has written an excellent Habitat management plan for the council with help from David Daniels son and asked if the council will adopt this

Proposed Nick Potter Seconded Jenna Goodall Browne

Now the buses have been revamped with Simmons doing lots of local routes and to look at them to run a local village bus. Clerk to contact Simmons.

• Green recycling of blister packs and razors

Will be looked at once the precept monies are in due to costs of the boxes and we will order these asap

15. Public Participation (10 minutes)

For any Parishioners to comment on any items that have been discussed during the meeting only

16. To receive items for the next agenda.

Poster VE/VJ event

Grants for toilet for Community Action Fund

Next Meeting Weds 14th May 2025