

Methwold Parish Council Meeting
Thursday 14th August 2025 at 7.0pm
21 Room, St George's Hall Complex, Methwold

Parish Councillors Present: Cllr M French (Chairman), Cllr T Grassick, Cllr J O'Ware, Cllr Senior, Cllr Thomas, Cllr Minkler, Cllr Riches
Cllr Storey – Norfolk County Council joined the meeting later
Parish Clerk: R Buckle
Members of the public: 8

1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting, especially as this is the first meeting at the new earlier time as agreed at the last meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies from Cllr Rodriguez, Cllr Horton were received and accepted.

3. Declarations of Interest

(In accordance with S31 of the Localism Act 2011) and requests for dispensations – None.

4. Approval of minutes

Cllr Grassick proposed to approve the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 10th July 2025 as a true record of the meeting, seconded by Cllr Minkler – Approved, the Chairman signed the minutes. Cllr Riches abstained as not present at the last meeting.

5. Matters Arising

Matters arising from the Minutes not included on the agenda but for information only – Commonwealth War Graves signs in the Cemetery have been installed.

6. Open Forum for Public Participation

An opportunity to hear from members of the public, Borough, and County Councillor.

Is there any update on the situation with The Old Chapel? Highways are aware that the No Parking sign has been removed, police have been made aware and are making enquiries. Cllr Ryves and Cllr Storey are in discussions with the Borough Council.

Pedestrian path from Brook Lane to the Icen Academy is overgrown and needs attention, the cycle path is clear. A mechanical scraper was used last year but didn't do the whole path.

Road was resurfaced from True Hill to the bus stop in Brookville, the path has been swept to remove the road chippings but was not done well and the pavement and verge are still in need of clearing.

The village gates in Brookville are very close to the new entrance to the new poultry unit entrance, should these be moved? On the Chairmans list for Highways.

7. Reports

7.1 Update from the Open Spaces Working Party and to consider the recommendations made at the meeting on 24th July 2025 to include:

Churchyard wall – walk round of the wall to be arranged with the Church Warden to decide next steps.

Cllr Minkler proposed to cease pursuing the bus stop/shelter project for the foreseeable future, Cllr Grassick seconded – Approved – Cllr Senior abstained.

Response received from Freebridge to report that 23 Hythe Road, garden is overgrown, with a pest problem – operatives have attended to try and clear the garden but due to the amount of work required additional support from an external contractor is required. Freebridge is looking at the best way to manage and address the issues at this property.

The parish council have been informed on an accident on the recreation ground, this has been passed to the councils insurers.

8. Finance

8.1 Accounts Update – Bank Reconciliation

Opening balance on Spreadsheet 1st April 2025	£ 4,962.24
Add Receipts	£ 63,832.29
Less Payments	£ 55,514.78
Balance on 30th July 2025	£ 13,279.75

Bank Account Totals

Current Account total on 30th July 2025	£13,279.75
Tracker Account total on 30th July 2025	£30,618.20
Saver Account (CIL & S 106) total on 30th July 2025	£60,082.66
Emergency Reserve Fund 30th July 2025	£25,945.65
Total	£129,926.26

The remaining half of the Precept is due in September.

8.2 For Approval of payments – Income & Invoice List

Npower have sent the January invoice to be paid, they are waiting for information from UK Powernetworks to change the rates now the lights have been changed to LED's. The funds are in the budget to cover these costs. Dog bin emptying is now being done every fortnight, and a refund has been received.

Cllr Thomas proposed approval of payments, Cllr Riches seconded the motion – APPROVED.

Cllr Storey arrived and apologised for being late.

The Chairman proposed to return to item 6 Open Forum to allow those arriving late this evening to speak.

Cllr Storey – The Borough Council and Norfolk County Council continue to work on the Local Government Reorganisation. The first recent public consultation 17th February to 13th April obtained 3100 responses, of these 2966 were from members of the public and 149 from organisations. It is disappointing that so few have responded, it is extremely important that the people of Norfolk have their say, it is hoped the government will listen to the people.

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/67898/Local-government-reorganisation> or https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/news/article/1880/joint_statement_on_local_government_reorganisation_-_10_june_2025

Norfolk County Council are in favour of having 1 single unitary authority. The Borough Council are in favour of 2 or 3 unitary councils.

There will be a full Norfolk County Council meeting on 16th September before submitting their proposal to the government on the 26th September.

Norfolk Community Fund – each NCC member allocated £5k for community projects within the parishes -

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/70197/Norfolk-Community-Fund> explains the details and who can apply.

There is a NCC Members allowance of £11k to spend on small Highways projects, not all of this is allocated yet.

Parish Partnership Scheme – 50/50 with the parish council for

At the July meeting a motion was made that too much land is being taken up with solar farms and pylons, the power generated may not be for Norfolk, extremely disappointing.

Very important that the public have their say

Chairman attended a briefing at the Town Hall in Kings basically three options are to be put forward 1) from NCC all of Norfolk as a Unitary authority, 2) One district proposes dividing into two but unsure how this would work and 3) six district councils preferred option divide county into three Unitary Authorities - Greater Norwich, eastern based in Great Yarmouth and western area based in Kings Lynn. All options to go to central government who will decide. With the funding that Cllr Storey has can white lining be done in the parish? Lack of road markings are causing confusion and could lead to accidents.

Speeding through the village was also brought up as an issue.

List of all highways items to be sent to Cllr Storey and Highways, these have already been flagged up to Highways.

Cllr Minkler gave an update on the data recorded. We are waiting for the roundels, road markings and signs which have been promised by Highways since last April and still haven't got.

There is definitely a problem with speed going out of the village along Hythe Road, the SAMs2 until has been placed there for three days, the speed of traffic is captured half a mile away from the sign so well inside the speed limit through the village. There are houses on both sides of this road with the green area where children might play, top speed recorded 60mph on 12th August at 2.10pm, 300 vehicles a day are over the limit and every hour of the day speeds of between 50 – 60 mph are recorded. This is the worse piece of road for speeding we have in the village. 60% of vehicles are travelling at 36mph and above.

The parish council continue to press the need for roundels, white lines and signage, Cllr Storey was asked to escalate to safety unit and highways departments.

Cllr Storey stated that Highways use funding as a reason for not delivering the requested safety measures.

Another meeting will be arranged with Highways, parish, and Borough councillors.

9.Planning

9.1To receive planning decisions

25/00720/F SELF BUILD - Demolition of No 12's garage for the erection of a self-build bungalow 12 The Avenue Brookville Thetford Norfolk IP26 4RF. Application Permitted 4 July 2025, Committee Decision.
FUL/2021/0013 Feltwell: Warren Energy Anaerobic Digestion Plant, Methwold Farm, Methwold, IP26 4DU: Part Retrospective Application – to retain bund, post and wire fence, and use of existing hardstanding/track for access/egress to the liquid digestate storage tank; proposed partial use of southern access road (to and from the B1112 Lodge Road): Warren Energy Ltd – Application Refused – Norfolk County Council

FUL/2021/0011 Methwold: Methwold Farm, Methwold IP26 4DU: Non-compliance with condition 1 (approved plans), 2 (maximum tonnage of feedstock), and 3 (feedstock source) of permission reference C/2/2017/2003: Warren Energy Ltd – Application Refused – Norfolk County Council

9.2 To receive planning applications

25/00133/TREECA Red House 1 Hythe Road Methwold Thetford Norfolk IP26 4PP Pruning of two Holly Trees. Removal of growth sprouting from trunk on tree 1 (see plan). Removal of growth sprouting from trunk and removal of lower branches, some of which overhang the public footpath on tree 2 (see plan).

9.3 To consider planning applications received after the agenda was published.

25/01281/F To install 2 additional Liquid Nitrogen storage tanks. These additional tanks are required to support our continued growth at the site at Marlow Foods Quorn Foods Brandon Road Methwold Thetford Norfolk – NO OBSERVATIONS.

10. Items received for the agenda

10.1 SAMs2 Update – see Item 6

11. Chairmans Report - none

12. Correspondence

Methwold Footpath No.9 has been part Deleted and Methwold Footpath No.9a has been Added to the Definitive Map. The Definitive Statement now reads as follows-Footpath No. 9 (Footpath No. 7 to Methwold Footpath No. 6). Starts from Footpath No. 7 and runs north eastwards over Hall Farm pasture to join the western end of Footpath No. 6.

Footpath No. 9a (Footpath No. 10 to Thornham Road) Commences from grid reference TL 7301 9484 (Methwold FP10) and runs in a south easterly direction for approximately 50 metres at a width of 2 metres to grid reference TL 7305 9483. The path then continues at its historic width in a northeast direction along the western boundary of the recreation ground to join the northern eastern end of Footpath No. 10 and the western end of Footpath No. 11 at the northern corner of the ground. The path then continues northwards between Laburnham House and Lower Green Cottages to enter Lower Green and then continues across for approximately 20 yards by a gravel path then skirts the boundary wall of Hillocks to join the Thornham Road south of the old smithy.

Primary School – parking around the school.

Email from the Constituency Case Worker attended the recent traffic meeting, asking for an update on the items Highways are costing to meet parish partnership deadlines.

Second briefing session on Local Government Reform in Norfolk meeting – Wednesday September 10th at 5pm in person or online.

Dead badger reported to Borough Council for collection.

Norfolk Community Biodiversity Awards – www.norfolkbiodiversity.org

Police following up on the missing sign from the bus stop.

Countryside Access Officer has been asked about establishing a footpath around the proposed solar farm and has advised - Public use of a perimeter track that commenced subsequent to the solar farm being set up will not have established a claimable "right" which requires 20+ years of use.

If it is over 20 years use the Parish could submit a claim with evidence forms from users, and NCC would look at all the evidence and decide whether a right had been established. There is information on the NCC website about this process which can be found here <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/rightsofway>

If the path doesn't qualify based on established use, the Parish can only appeal to the applicant and Planning Authority through a formal response to the planning application. There is no formal process other than making a request in your planning response and hope that the applicant agrees to it.

A permissive footpath is entirely up to the landowner and the right to use can be withdrawn at any time.

Cllr Riches stated that it is not thought that the land has been walked for long enough to request a but a permissive footpath around the edge of the new solar farm from White House Drove to the corner of Brook Lane would be fantastic. The planning application has been called in and the Chairman has asked to talk at the planning meeting on the 6th October. This will be discussed further at Open Spaces in September.

13. Further reports and items for the next meeting agenda – 11th September 2025

Large Anglian Water tankers are going to and from the water treatment plant in Eldens Lane approximately every 6 hours 24 hours a day, the parish council agreed that a Freedom of Information Request will be made to find out what the intention is going forwards, how long Anglian Water expect these vehicle movements to go on for, a timescale and mitigation for damage caused to the houses along this road.

White Road trees protruding into the road and lorries are going up onto the opposite verge to avoid them, this is breaking down the verge, Highways have been made aware of this and have inspected, trees have been marked up for removal, but this was a year ago, Clerk to chase.

14. To pass a resolution (under the Public Admission to Meetings Act 1960 to exclude members of the public and press for the following confidential items: Council informed of the recent Local Government Services pay agreement which has been agreed and backdated to April 2025.

Meeting ended at 8.20pm