

**Methwold Annual Parish Council Meeting**  
**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 6.00pm**  
**21 Room, St George's Hall Complex, Methwold**

Present

Councillors: Cllr M French (Chairman), Cllr A Grassick, Cllr B Horton, Cllr F Riches, Cllr T Thomas, Cllr J O'Ware, Cllr. R Minkler

16 members of the public

Clerk

1. The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting, which it was agreed at last months, meeting would start earlier to allow those who wish to attend the VE80 day events this evening.

2. Cllr Riches proposed Cllr French as Chairman, Cllr O'Ware seconded the motion – APPROVED, Cllr French accepted. Cllr French thanked the parish council for their support, 'they really are a great bunch of councillors to work with, thank you'.

3. Cllr French proposed Cllr. Grassick as Vice Chairman, Cllr O'Ware seconded the motion – APPROVED, Cllr Grassick accepted the position.

4. The parish council accepted apologies for absence from Cllr Senior, Cllr Rodriguez, Borough Cllr Ryves and Cllr Storey.

5. To receive Declarations of Interest from Members or to note Dispensations where applicable – None.

6. Cllr Minkler proposed to accept the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2025 as an accurate record of the meeting, Cllr Horton seconded the motion – APPROVED, Cllr Thomas abstained as not present in April.

7. Open Forum for public participation

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

The Duchy of Lancaster Primary School Headteacher – Damon Finney and members of staff attended the meeting to explain the safety issues children are experiencing when arriving and leaving the primary school and to ask for improvements can be made to improve the children's safety, some of the children's own views were read out.

There is a blind corner from Old Feltwell Road, no safe crossing for the children, limited signage, the school are taking action to make sure the children are safe when arriving and leaving the school and more needs to be done to improve children's safety. Mr Finney is hoping to work with the parish council and Norfolk County Council to see what can be done. Cones are placed outside the school where there is no pavement or kerb, staff are in attendance in the morning and afternoon, safety barriers are being used and the designated school gate is no longer used, the double gate is used instead. Parents do not park opposite the school, to improve visibility.

Improved signage, encouraging traffic to slow down, reduce speed to 20mph, having a dedicated path outside the school and continuing a no parking/limited parking across the school to keep visibility as good as it could be.

Understand this would come at a great cost and would take time to implement measures to make a safer environment for the children. The school is willing to work with authorities to achieve a safer environment. There is a petition, there are currently 91 signatures, but this can only be supported by Methwold residents and local people to sign to improve the area outside the school. Thank you for your time.

Chairman replied that parish council have addressed this over the years, it is the gift of Norfolk Highways to make these improvements, a reduction in the speed limit would need to be enforced. There is a perception that part of the problem is speed, some time ago the SAMs2 unit was located outside the school. Highways have put 30mph roundels in the road, the parish council will do another SAMs survey to see whether this has made any difference. Suggestion that Methwold Parish Council arrange a meeting with Parish Council, Highways, Road Safety Team, Police, school, we have done this before many years ago, to discuss what can be done. Clerk will organise this meeting.

Cllr Minkler explained that the SAMs 2 unit had been outside the school registering traffic in both directions in May 2024 before the 30mph roundels were written on the road, with the unit facing towards Methwold Hythe recorded 586 vehicles per day, average speed was 12mph, average speeder 33mph = 8% over the speed limit.

Unit facing High Street 1388 vehicles per day, average speed 11mph, average speeder 32mph = 6% over the speed limit. Cllr Minkler took some photos of the traffic parked outside the school at 3.06pm today, vehicles parked illegally, picking up from school, no one parking outside the school. The wig wag flashing signs were not turned on, these have to be turned on manually and this used to be done by the caretaker/crossing patrol person, these would flag up that the school is round the corner. It may be that they can be turned on remotely, but this would be the responsibility of the school.

The SAMs sign will be sited outside the school to obtain some up-to-date stats.

Facebook post – coming out of Globe Street turning right is difficult, could a mirror be installed here, even 30mph is too fast through the village, can the speed be reduced, more wig wags around the village.

Cllr Minkler runs Community Speedwatch, and stated it is very difficult to slow people down.

Mr Finney is going to contact parents to ask them to park legally and safely, but he is limited in what he can do.

Data shown cars are not even reaching 20mph outside the school, on average they are going slower.

Highways are due to add more slow signs and paint 30mph roundals on the roads in the village.

The road in Downham Market past the school is 20mph, can this be implemented in the village? Can there be double yellow lines, the Chairman pointed out these are de-criminalised and are now enforced by the Borough Council.

Parents are allowed to use the hall car park when picking up and dropping off. If people park on the blind bend it pushes traffic out into the road closer to the school.

The parish council will try to convene a meeting with Highways, Police, County Councillor & Borough Councillor, schools to discuss the situation and try to come up with answers.

Curious, why for 5-6 years nearly been hit when coming from the High Street past the pub, there are cars parked in the bus stop, why has this been allowed to go on for so many years, this causes a major problem coming from auction towards the school past the pub. Chairman – we are pursuing this, an FOI request has been written to Highways and Borough Council, it doesn't solve the problem yet.

8. To agree the appointment of councillors to the following committees or groups.

8.1 Planning Committee – Cllr French, Cllr Grassick, Cllr Riches, Cllr Minkler

8.2 Finance Committee – Cllr French, Cllr Grassick, Cllr Horton, Cllr Thomas, Cllr Minkler, Cllr Riches

8.3 HR Committee – Cllr French, Cllr Minkler, Cllr Riches, Cllr Thomas

8.4 GDPR/Data Protection – Cllr French, Cllr Grassick, Cllr Minkler

8.5 Policies & Procedures – Cllr Rodriguez

8.6 Cemetery Superintendent – Cllr Riches

8.7 Footpaths – Cllr. Rodriguez, Cllr Thomas, Cllr Riches

8.8 SAMs Unit – Cllr Minkler

8.9 Grants Group – Cllr O'Ware, Cllr Rodriguez

8.10 The Batchcroft Trust representatives – Cllr Horton, Cllr Thomas, Cllr Rodriguez

8.11 Open Spaces – Cllr French, Cllr Riches, Cllr Grassick, Cllr. O'Ware, Cllr. Minkler, Cllr Senior

9. Reports - Update and Report from the Open Spaces Working Party to consider the recommendations made at the Open Spaces Working Group on 28th April 2024, to include:

Request from Cranswick Objection Group to use recreation ground for a community BBQ was approved by full council with the caveat that a risk assessment is completed, and the event has public liability insurance. More of a thank you, everybody worked hard, will give an opportunity to engage with local farmers who produce good home farmed produce and there are other alternatives as well, to give people the opportunity to see other choices and make decisions for themselves.

Request to approve £300 to purchase a lockable noticeboard for recreation ground car park proposed by Cllr O'Ware, Cllr Riches seconded the motion, - Approved.

Bus stop – a sign will be installed outside the Wesleyan Chapel.

Bus shelters – Grant is available to install bus shelters. The bus stop outside the Wesleyan Chapel will be investigated as a possible site for a bus stop. Open Spaces to investigate all potential sites around the parish but they may not be allowed in the conservation area of the parish.

## 10. Finance

### 10.1 Accounts Update

Current Account total on 29th April 2025	£ 47,208.89
Tracker Account total on 29th April 2025	£ 30,516.83
Saver Account total on 29th April 2025 (CIL/Section 106 & Donations)	£ 59,887.27
Emergency Reserve Fund 29th April 2025	£ 25,859.75
Total	£163,472.74

The first payment of the Precept £47,204.05 has been received the second half is expected later in the year.

### 10.2 Approval of payments – Income & Invoice List

Dog Waste invoice not paid last month – agreement to pay this month after reply received from Borough Council.

## 11. Planning

### 11.1 To receive planning decisions.

24/02190/F Land Between 12 And 16 The Avenue Brookville Norfolk - Variation of Conditions 1 and 4 of Planning Permission 24/00302/F: Replacement of existing bungalow with chalet dwelling and detached garage/annexe.

Application Permitted 8 April 2025 Committee Decision

25/00296/F Holme Brink Farm 22 Thornham Road Methwold THETFORD Norfolk IP26 4PH - Householder: single storey extension on side of existing two storey dwelling Application Permitted 10 April 2025

Delegated Decision

### 11.2 To receive planning applications.

25/00720/F SELF BUILD: 12 The Avenue Brookville Thetford Norfolk IP26 4RF Erection of a single self-build dwelling on land adjacent to 12 The Avenue, Brookville. The proposal includes the demolition of an existing garage, subdivision of the residential plot, and formation of a new vehicular access for the host property – Objection gross overdevelopment, access to power sub-station. The drop kerb and tree inspection has already been done.

25/00070/TREECA Red House 1 Hythe Road Methwold - Removal of Holly Tree which is sandwiched between the wall and other plants. The Holly Tree is too close to the chalk wall, it's removal will provide other plants with more space and allow for easier maintenance of the wall.

### 11.3 To consider planning applications received after the agenda was published – None.

## 12. Items received for the agenda

12.1 Cllr Minkler gave a report and update from the SAMs – sign is located on Hythe Road facing towards the Hythe, it's been here for 20 days. It flashes so many times the battery only lasts 17 days! 60% of traffic is travelling above the speed limit, average speed of a speeder is 36mph, 771 vehicles per day at the weekend and 698 during the week. 3 vehicles doing 80mph but at times not in the day.

Sign is now outside the Academy but will be moved to outside the primary school.

Roadworks Brookville - B1112 doesn't look like much has been done yet.

Community Speed Watch has been out once or twice a week.

12.2 Cllr Grassick gave a presentation for additional improvements on the recreation ground, Cllr Grassick has spoken to users of the recreation ground to find out what they would like to see.

Quotes for the basketball area with an adult and junior net on the recreation ground, and on the old slab having a table tennis table and possibly a rebound board. A presentation was shown to the meeting.

Six companies were asked to quote, five quotes were received and discussed.

Cllr Minkler proposed the council accept quote from ESP Play whose quote included removing the skateboard ramp, it was not viable for the parish council to remove it themselves.

The standard of the table tennis table is higher than the others who quoted, types of surfaces and colours were discussed. Thank you to Cllr Grassick for obtaining the quotes and for thoroughly investigating the options. The costs will be paid for from the Section 106 funds from the Church View development. Cllr Minkler thanked Cllr Grassick and stated he felt confident that Cllr Grassick has done the best he could to check every supplier and work out what's best for the parish, Cllr Minkler proposed the quote from ESP is accepted, Cllr Riches seconded, a discussion regarding colour of the base, blue was preferred.

A member of the public was allowed to speak and explained they ran 19 playgrounds, and the darker colours shrink, the wetpour is the longer lasting surface, cranberry and blue are known for lasting longer.

The council agreed to go with the quote from ESP, wetpour surface, Cranberry - Cllr Grassick to contact the supplier to find out the colours. Chairman thanked the resident for their advice.

Mr Finney offered to allow representatives from the parish council to speak to the school children to find out their opinion on the recreation ground.

13. Correspondence - Planning Parish update session – circulated to parish councillors

Information regarding training, this is in the budget and benefits the parish.

In addition to the bus stop there doesn't ever appear to have been a hoarding licence, if there had been it would be up to the developer to keep renewing it. A new FOI request will be submitted.

There is no record of The Old Chapel, another FOI request will be sent to the Borough Council using the name Wesleyan Chapel.

14. Further reports and items for the next meeting agenda – June 12th 2025

Path between Trent VC and Ventra Close still not been fixed, will chase Highways again.

Can we have a sign at the start of Ventura Close, do not follow SAT NAV, large vehicles are still turning up here. This has already been asked for and it is thought it had been installed last year.

15. 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: None

Meeting closed at: 19.30pm