

**Methwold Parish Council Meeting of the Parish Council**  
**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7.30pm**  
**21 Room, St George's Hall Complex, Methwold**

Present

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

Cllr. M Storey, Cllr. T Ryves

12 members of the public

Clerk

1. Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Mr R Tilson was co-opted onto the parish council, Declaration of Acceptance of Office was signed and Cllr. Tilson took his seat on the parish council.

There is still one vacancy on the parish council.

3. Open Forum for Public Participation

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

Cllr M Storey – the damaged barb wire boundary fence along the side of Rectory Field has been removed.

It is uncertain who owns the broken metal fence and gates, these have been in place for a very long time. Does anyone know the history of this fence?

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Storey for removing the barb wire.

On February 20<sup>th</sup> Norfolk County Council met to set the Budget for 2024/25 which was agreed at £528 million, to balance 2024/25.

There is a requirement to find savings of £41.5 million to balance the budget for 2024/25, and there is a chance to have your say on the NCC savings proposals.

Three of the items which are being looked at are:-

Streetlighting – to switch off some in areas where safe and appropriate to do so.

Norfolk Records Office – introduce pre bookings

Recycling Centres – to reduce opening hours

These and other cost saving proposals will be going out to public consultation

From 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 all Norfolk residents who hold a disabled travel pass will be eligible for free bus travel 24/7 if travelling within the county.

Norfolk County Council & Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association have joined together to launch New Norfolk Rural Business Awards, launched 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 – to recognise the essential nature of the huge importance of Norfolk rural communities and business to the region, businesses can be nominated, if you know of a small business these can be put forward, there are 9 categories.

Norfolk Families to gain more support –starting April 2024, NCC have awarded a 1 year contract to deliver a new volunteer peer support service to Homestart Norfolk as part of a family home programme.

Weather – Threat proposed by flooding and coastal erosion in Norfolk has been taken to Westminster, representatives from NCC and the head of the Strategic Alliance met with MPs on the 71<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the 1953 North Sea flood to explain risks Norfolk face and how these can be addressed going forward. It is hoped this will be debated in the House of Commons in the autumn.

All information can be found on the NCC website <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/>

Cllr. Storey is available to be contacted to discuss any issue.

Cllr. Ryves – Welcome to Cllr. Tilson and the Clerk who has returned.

Borough Council Budget – the council are seeking to increase all by 10% and reduce costs by 5%. Small increase in domestic rates by Borough Council. Congratulations to this parish council for the very small increase in the Preceptpc for our parish.

Cranswick planning application – there will be a re-submission of papers but as yet the timescale is unknown. The application will be going out for 28 day consultation again once the updated plans are available.

The Cranswick Objection Group are to hold a meeting in Northwold Social Club.

I have supported the parish council when involved in difficult legal situations, parish councils have to pay their own legal fees, this is a burden.

Moving forward the Borough Council will employ a full time employee who will be dedicated to parish council matters, this will be for matters between parish councillors and the public.

To provide assistance to parish councils, Cllr. Ryves will send a copy of this to the parish council.

The Community Speedwatch Co-ordinator in Brookville gave an update of the statistics for Brookville.

Since the CSW group restarted in May 2023. Between May 2023 and December 2023 the group have undertaken 89.5 hours of monitoring over 67 sessions, this is 8.38 sessions per month on average and is the highest CSW group in Norfolk.

During this time 682 vehicles have been reported, 600 have received a 1<sup>st</sup> warning letter, 49 received 2<sup>nd</sup> warning letter for exceeding speed in Brookville or another area in Norfolk. No further action was taken on the remainder.

Since January 2024 Brookville Community Speed Watch (CSW) have been monitoring as before and there are now regular visits from the Police. Police are monitoring more often and are employing someone to collate the stats and the top 10 will receive visits. 60mph zones are also being monitored. CSW believe they have slowed the traffic. There are now 7 volunteers in Brookville and 3 volunteers are required per session.

If anyone wishes to set up a group in Methwold or Methwold Hythe the co-ordinator is willing to train any volunteers, supply the equipment and collate the statistics. Training volunteers to use the equipment takes an hour.

There are already some existing locations in the villages, in Methwold - Stoke Road layby, on verge by Methwold sign in front of bench. Hythe Road on path opposite Herbert Drive, Feltwell Road by bench and noticeboard in Methwold Hythe. These sites can be revisited if there are volunteers willing to run sessions in Methwold and Methwold Hythe.

Chairman thanked the co-ordinator.

Is the CIL funding being used for the equipment on the recreation ground? The Chairman explained that the Precept will not be used for this purpose, the Section 106 funding is for improvements and facilities on the recreation ground.

Lightbulb at the end of the building -Trust business

3 members of the public left the meeting.

4. The parish council accepted apologies for absence from Cllr K Rodriguez, Cllr D Younge.

5. Declarations of Interest (In accordance with S31 of the Localism Act 2011) and requests for dispensations - None

6. Cllr. J Rodwell proposed to accept the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 8th February 2024 as an accurate record of this meeting, Cllr. B Horton seconded the motion. APPROVED with 2 abstentions

7. Matters arising from the Minutes not included on the agenda but for information only - None

## 8. Finance

### 8.1 Accounts Update – Bank Reconciliation

Current Account total on 28th February 2024	£ 4,938.52
Tracker Account total on 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	£ 29,958.59
Saver Account total on 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2024 (Grants & Donations)	£ 68,907.99
Emergency Reserve Fund 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	£ 25,386.71
Total	£142,189.06

8.2 Cllr. B Horton proposed to approve the payments, Cllr. T Thomas seconded the motion.  
APPROVED

8.3 Cllr. J O'Ware proposed to approve the purchase of a replacement laptop, case and 3 year support package cost £779.07, Cllr. R Scott seconded the motion - APPROVED

8.4 Cllr. A Grassick proposed to approve the purchase of Scribe Accounts software, Cllr. F Riches seconded the motion - APPROVED

8.5 Cllr. B Horton proposed to approve Quote A to appoint Internal Auditor for 2023/24, Cllr. A Grassick seconded the motion - APPROVED

## 9. Update from Open Spaces meeting held on Thursday 29th February 2024 and recommendation To approve:

9.1 Cllr. J O'Ware proposed to approve purchase of outdoor gym equipment supplied by Sunshine Gym, 8 pieces of equipment supplied and fitted at a cost of £10,674.00 to be paid for by the Section 106 funds, Cllr J Rodwell seconded the motion - APPROVED

9.2 Cllr. B Horton proposed to purchase 2 recycled plastic benches, agreed these will be the same as the new bench purchased in 2023 for Methwold Hythe to include bases as replacement for the Peggy Wallace bench and an additional bench in memorial of Cllr. Scott on recreation ground, cost including delivery £1472.00 to be paid for by the Section 106 funds, Cllr, J Rodwell seconded the motion – APPROVED

The plaque on the Peggy Wallace bench will be fixed on the new bench and Cllr. R Scott offered to provide a plaque for the new bench.

9.3 Cllr. F Riches proposed to approve the purchase and installation of replacement recycled plastic picnic benches on the recreation ground, 3 x standard 2m long picnic benches and 1 x 2m wheelchair access picnic bench in brown, cost for 4 benches including delivery £1979.00 to be paid for by the Section 106 funds, Cllr. B Horton seconded - APPROVED

### Open Spaces update:

An additional bench/seat in Brookville to be sited on the wide verge along Main Road was discussed at Open Spaces, this will be an agenda item at a meeting later in the year, a licence will be required from Highways.

Update required to main signs on gate at recreation ground.

Noticeboards for all three villages – funds have been reserved for this project, which will be on the April agenda.

RAF War Memorial – quotes and drivers details have been sent to the insurers

SAMs2 post to be replaced on Hythe Road – Highways

Ventura Close – cul de sac sign – Highways

Cemetery path needs to be regravelled

Headstones – quotes to be obtained for quinquennial checks to be carried out.

Iron railings in Cemetery

Cemetery bench – quote to refurbish

Churchyard Wall Working Group – next steps – now the wall is cleared Structural Engineer quotes required to complete a full report on the wall to progress.

## 10. Planning

### 10.1 To receive planning decisions

23/01409/F Residential Development Crown Street Methwold THETFORD Norfolk - VARIATION OF CONDITION 2 OF PLANNING PERMISSION 15/01683/FM: Construction of 30 dwellings and associated infrastructure on vacant field Application Permitted

14 February 2024 Delegated Decision

24/00156/F Potsford Cottage Northwold Road Methwold Thetford Norfolk IP26 4PF - Proposed installation of freestanding solar panel array Application Withdrawn

February 2024 Withdrawn Application

22/00785/NMA\_1 The Fallows 28A Old Feltwell Road Methwold Thetford Norfolk IP26 4PW - NON MATERIAL AMENDMENT TO APPLICATION 22/00785/F: Conversion of existing garage and single storey rear extension to dwelling. Application Refused

28 February 2024 Delegated Decision

24/00101/F Lavender Cottage 38 Old Severalls Road Methwold Hythe Thetford Norfolk IP26 4QR - Single storey rear extension Application Permitted 28 February 2024

Delegated Decision

### 10.2 To receive planning applications -

24/00019/TREECA Two apple trees both on my land one front of house and one to the rear simply need a winter prune to keep them healthy and stop them blocking light to the neighbours property at the front and over hanging their garden to the rear . This doesn't require a hard prune at all.

Cloughs Farm 7 Hythe Road Methwold Thetford Norfolk IP26 4PP – NO OBSERVATIONS

24/00302/F Variation of Conditions 2, 4 and 5 of Planning Permission 23/00914/F: Replacement of existing bungalow with chalet dwelling and detached garage/annexe Land Between 12 And 16 The Avenue Brookville Thetford Norfolk IP26 4RF – NO OBSERVATIONS

## 11. To consider planning applications received after the agenda was published - None

## 12. Items received for the agenda

12.1 Cllr. A Grassick gave an update on the Biodiversity Policy and action plan. There is a government template which will be used for the Methwold Biodiversity Plan which is in the draft stage and will be circulated to the council, to be included on the April agenda.

It is hoped that the village will be involved with this project.

12.2 Cllr. M French gave an update from todays meeting with Highways Chief Engineer – Old Chapel screen and scaffold – ongoing

Primary school traffic calming – Highways have made a visit to the site and observed parents parking on the road and pavements, there are already wig wags marked on the road outside the school, including signage and flashing lights which someone from the school has to turn on and off at the start and end of the school day.

Speed humps have been discussed but these are thought to be unsuitable as they are noisy, cause vibration and can cause maintenance issues.

Build outs on the road giving priority to oncoming traffic can be noisy and are unsuitable for the road due to the width of the road and size of some of the vehicles which have to use the road.

Part time temporary 20mph flashing signs could be a Parish Partnership Scheme project for 2025/26, Cllr Storey has offered £2,000 of funding to this project, the parish council would need to add £2,000 and the Borough Council match fund to purchase 2 signs. However, these are not enforceable without a Traffic Order which costs approximately £10-£12,000.

Road markings - ordered and ongoing due to change of contractor

30mph roundalls on the road outside primary school – ordered and ongoing due to change of contractor.

Missing SAMs2 post on Hythe Road – Highways to follow up with developer.

Pavement around the corner at Cock Corner – cost given by Highways for this is approx. £11,000 to be included in the budget for 2025/26 as a parish partnership scheme. Applications open from June to December 2024 with decisions made on funding by the Borough Council in March 2025 for installation during 2025/26 – to Open Spaces.

20 mph signs on Hythe View are part of the planning application, all new estates have 20mph restrictions, there is no traffic order.

12.3 Date for Annual Parish Meeting to be held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30pm in the 21 Room, this is not a parish council meeting, the parish council host the meeting.

12.4 Councillor Vacancies – currently we have 1 vacancy for co-option. The Borough Council have been recently informed of another vacancy, this is currently waiting for the deadline to expire and the parish council will then be able to advertise as a casual vacancy.

The Chairman thanked Cllr S Liddle for all the hard work he has put into the parish council especially for his work behind the scenes.

A volunteer is required to manage the regular movement and installation of the SAMs2 unit around the parish and downloading and sharing of data, this does not have to be a councillor, if anyone is interested, please contact the Clerk.

### 13. Correspondence

Traffic Restriction Order WTRO4733 – Wereham with alternative route through Methwold 25<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> March

Chairman received email from resident who wanted to know why Methwold was not included in an article in the local paper about a proposed £1m county/parish councils spend on village road safety improvements.

What bids for road safety work did Methwold make for inclusion in this or later tranches, what action the council took to promote its bids and the reasons given for their rejection?

The Chairman explained that Methwold Parish Council, has for a long time been subject to serial vexatious complaints regarding its actions. All of these accusations were proved to be groundless, and MPC completely vindicated.

However, all these complaints had to be dealt with, taking time and resources away from MPC's core role and duties. They also resulted in the Parish Clerk being on long term sick leave.

That is the reason that MPC were unable to bid for any match funding for road safety schemes in the most recent tranche.

We do have a number of schemes that we are planning to submit in the next round. I would be interested if you have any suggestions.

### 14. Further reports and items for the next meeting agenda – 11th April 2024

Brookville bench

Biodiversity Policy and Action Plan

A request has been received from the Cranswick Objection Group to have the use of St George's Hall free of charge to hold a public meeting, the Chairman replied and his reply was posted on social media by a member of the group, – it was always the parish councils intention once the planning application has been re-submitted and received as part of the consultation process, that the parish council will hold a public meeting where Bidwells and Cranswick can put their proposal to the public and be involved in a question and answer session. This will not be a meeting about factory farming or ethics.

Bidwells and Crown Foods attended a parish council meeting in October 2021, this meeting was advertised on noticeboards and the pc website, only 4 members of the public attended.

UK 100 – the parish council were not given the opportunity to discuss or vote on this, how much is it going to cost? Cllr. Storey stated that there will be more discussion at NCC to find out more

information, this is a new idea and there will be meetings to try and ascertain costs and to get it right for Norfolk, at present costs are unknown, Cllr Storey will keep the council updated. Does NCC have any officers for equality, diversity and inclusion? Cllr. Storey asked for this to be put in an email for him to respond.

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.

15.1 Staff Matters

15.2 Legal Matters

Meeting ended 9.10pm