

**Methwold Parish Council Meeting**  
**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at 7.30pm**  
**21 Room, St George's Hall Complex, Methwold**

Parish Councillors Present: Cllr M French (Chairman), Cllr T Grassick, Cllr F Riches, Cllr J O'Ware, Cllr A Senior  
Parish Clerk: R Buckle  
District Councillor: Cllr M Storey  
Borough Councillor: Cllr T Ryves  
Members of the public: 13

1. The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.
2. Apologies for absence from Cllr Thomas, Cllr Rodriguez, Cllr Horton and Cllr Minkler (added 10.07.2025) were received and accepted.
3. Declarations of Interest (In accordance with S31 of the Localism Act 2011) and requests for dispensations - None
4. Cllr Riches proposed to approve the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 8th May 2025, signed by the Chairman.
5. Matters arising from the Minutes not included on the agenda but for information only, a member of the public asked for an explanation as to Item 7 final paragraph, an explanation was given, also a spelling mistake in item 12.2.
6. Open Forum for Public Participation

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

Cllr Storey – Devolution/Local Government Reorganisation is ongoing, the final submission to the Government who are running the process is due on 26<sup>th</sup> September, all information is available on the NCC website

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/67898/Local-government-reorganisation>

Cllr Storey reiterated that there is still confusion as to how this will be decided, and it is important for residents to have their voices heard.

New fund for Norfolk County Council Members where they can allocate £1k for a community project

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/43298/Grants-and-funding> This is an opportunity to put forward ideas.

There is also the Members fund, this is £11k for each NCC member to spend on small highways improvements across all the Members ward.

Highways have approved 3 verge cuts this year, last year it was 2 and 2 weed spraying instead of 1. The verge cut has just started.

County Hall Budget – <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/67239/Council-Delivers-Balanced-Budget-call-for-cost-saving-local-government-reform#:~:text=Key%20facts%20and%20figures%20from%20Norfolk%20County%20Council%20Budget&text=Net%20Budget%3A%20The%20Council%20has,fund%20the%20services%20we%20provide.&text=Budget%20growth%20of%20over%20%C2%A3,in%20Adult%20and%20Children's%20Services.>

[reform#:~:text=Key%20facts%20and%20figures%20from%20Norfolk%20County%20Council%20Budget&text=Net%20Budget%3A%20The%20Council%20has,fund%20the%20services%20we%20provide.&text=Budget%20growth%20of%20over%20%C2%A3,in%20Adult%20and%20Children's%20Services.](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/67239/Council-Delivers-Balanced-Budget-call-for-cost-saving-local-government-reform#:~:text=Key%20facts%20and%20figures%20from%20Norfolk%20County%20Council%20Budget&text=Net%20Budget%3A%20The%20Council%20has,fund%20the%20services%20we%20provide.&text=Budget%20growth%20of%20over%20%C2%A3,in%20Adult%20and%20Children's%20Services.)

Chairman asked Cllr Storey do you honestly believe that anything the residents of Norfolk put in the comments will make any difference to what the government do to reorganise local government? All we can do is try hardest to make sure the voice of Norfolk is heard in the corridors of power.

Cllr Ryves-explained the 3 proposals for local Government Reorganisation – 1 single unitary authority is the one submitted, are we happy with this or would we prefer one run UA to be run out of Kings Lynn, there are many uncertainties.

Norfolk and Suffolk will be under 1 mayoral authority with an annual budget of £7m spread across all areas.

The presentation of the solar panel farm in Brookville, I am hoping for a level of community benefit to come from this application if it is successful, scout hut or church wall?

There is concern that the guildhall project has funding issues.

Planning - The number of houses stated will be impossible to be reached.

Chairman – If you have views on devolution – make sure they are heard.

Resident asked for clarification in last months minutes - item 7 – a resident lived in Globe Street for 5/6 years and stated that when turning right in the car onto High Street she had almost been hit by traffic several times, the visibility at the junction is not good.

Are the public going to be allowed to contribute to the pre planning discussion on the proposed solar park? Item 10a & b will be opened to the public, Chairman said yes it will be open for everyone.

FOI – Highways, there is no hoarding licence at The Old Wesleyan Chapel, it is up to the developer to renew it.

FOI to the Borough Council has been resubmitted with the correct address.

CEO Borough Council – was made aware of situation at the Old Chapel.

No parking signs at the bus stops, this has been reported to Highways. Hope Borough and County Councillors will do something about it. Cllr Storey stated they have been trying for some time.

Devolution-information transfer- does that mean there will be even higher bills? The public were asked to make comments, but most still don't know what the options are, or how they will affect us, there are no plans available, without plans no one can realistically make decisions, Cllr Ryves offered to post the proposal on Facebook.

Norfolk County Council and the Borough Council should publish the proposals on their websites.

Why should we support a mayor, they are just a government puppet at great cost to the public.

Is there anything in place to cover the cost to maintain the play area on the recreation ground? Yes, we are holding back funds from the S106 funds for maintenance.

Has there been any Section 106 money from the estate behind Herbert Drive? No.

Streets were supposed to be swept a month ago it's been a long time since they were done, is there anyway councillors can get this done? Reported that last time they sprayed water on the road, and it made the road muddy, a complete waste of time. Clerk to follow up.

Devolution – unknown what happens to parish councils and councillors, as reported before in Hereford parish councils have more responsibility. Resident commented that given the number of parish councils in the country unsure there would be any change, who would take any interest in the day-to-day operation at this level.

What are the rules for Methwold Cemetery regarding movement of floral tributes and how do you define ornaments, cemetery rules state floral tributes to be removed after 2 weeks, the parish council try to keep the cemetery tidy.

Brookville straight main road recently been resurfaced, the verges and paths have a lot of loose chippings, it is very uncomfortable and dangerous to walk on, County Councillor asked to raise with the head of Highways but stated there are to be 3 sweeps, does this mean the path as well as the road, this is urgent.

Resident passed an application form for Warren Energy to parish council, have missed this years deadline for the grant application.

## 7. Reports

7.1 Update and Report from the Open Spaces Working Party to consider the recommendations made at the Open Spaces Working Group on 22nd May 2025 to include:

a. Cllr Grassick proposed to approve an additional £1670.00 for wetpour bases on recreation ground under the metal seating area, Cllr Riches seconded the motion, APPROVED.

## 8. Finance

a. Accounts Update – Bank Reconciliation

Opening balance on Spreadsheet 1st April 2025	£4,962.24
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Add Receipts	£58,990.08
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Less Payments	£17,516.78
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Balance on 30th May 2025	£46,435.54
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Half of the Precept has been received to date.

b. Cllr Grassick proposed approval of payments, Cllr O'Ware seconded the motion - APPROVED

c. Update and Report from Finance Committee meeting to consider the recommendations made at the Finance meeting held on Tuesday 10th June 2025 to include:

d. Cllr Grassick proposed approval of the Internal Auditor's report and consider recommendations, Cllr Riches seconded the motion - APPROVED

e. Cllr Grassick proposed approval of the 2024-25 Annual Governance Statement, Cllr Senior seconded the motion - APPROVED – Chairman and Clerk signed document.

f. Cllr O'Ware proposed approval of the 2024-25 Accounting Statement, Cllr Senior seconded the motion - APPROVED – Chairman and RFO signed document.

g. Cllr Riches proposed to approve allocation of CIL funding, Cllr Grassick seconded the motion – APPROVED

h. Cllr O'Ware proposed approval of the Annual CIL Report 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, Cllr Riches seconded the motion – APPROVED.

i. Cllr Grassick proposed to approve payment of Support Grant to Methwold Hall Complex Charitable Trust, Cllr Riches seconded the motion – APPROVED.

j. Cllr O'Ware proposed to approve payment for repair to St George's Hall floor and soakaway, Cllr Senior seconded the motion – APPROVED.

k. Cllr Grassick proposed to accept the quote to set up and change to gov.uk emails and website, Cllr Riches seconded the motion – APPROVED.

## 9. Planning

### 9.1 To receive planning decisions

Methwold house 1 Hythe Road removal of holly tree – delegated decision – Approved.

25/00096/TREECA The flint wall running in front of 11 Cloughs Farm IP26 4PP and 1A Ventura Close IP26 4QQ needs major repair and rebuilding as is clearly shown in the photos. As well as age of the wall, the 3 no. trees are the major cause of the damage to the wall, again as can be seen in the photos. In order to repair and rebuild the flint wall we need to remove the 3 no./ trees shown in the photos and on the sketch plan Tree Application - No objection

29 May 2025 Delegated Decision

### 9.2 To receive planning applications:

25/00741/F Two storey extension to dwelling. at The Swan Annexe Stoke Road Brookville THETFORD Norfolk IP26 4QZ – NO OBSERVATIONS.

### 9.3 To consider planning applications received after the agenda was published -

## 10. Items received for the agenda

a. Green Lane Solar Park – Chairman opened the meeting up to the public for this pre-application discussion, the application has not been submitted yet. Few questions had been answered at the public exhibition by those hosting the event - what happens to the panels at the end of use? Is solar the way forwards, why are they putting solar on farmland? What happens to the soil underneath the panels, where does the runoff from panels go? What happens if China decides to turn off the panels? How/where will the panels be produced, in China using green energy or fossil fuels, what about the carbon footprint and pollution? Concerns good agricultural land being wasted, put panels on roofs, warehouses etc. maybe low-grade land but still can produce crops. Believed that the money to fund panels is from Octopus energy, there may be a community benefit sum, but the details will not be known until the application plans are submitted. Feel development will go ahead, no farmer in the parish of Methwold will benefit, land owned by someone outside of the parish.

If this solar farm is approved, it would be important to try to secure some funds for the benefit of the community.

The parish council will be looking at the route of obtaining a benefit for the community.

When the first solar farm was approved there was a suggestion that the parish council accepted funds and took a bribe, this was not the case, the grant received was for solar panels to be placed on a community building, this is what happened, the panels are on the Old Social Club, the parish council is merely a consultee and does not make the decision. It was felt that this is a done deal, but the Chairman suggests that residents make their views known on the planning portal when the application is submitted.

b. Feedback from meeting to discuss traffic outside primary school held on 5<sup>th</sup> June, in attendance were representative of the police, Highways, head teacher from the primary school, Borough and NCC Councillors, five parish councillors and a representative for Terry Jermy MP. Group observed the children coming out after school, this took approximately 5 minutes, despite presence of police there were still people pulling up and parking irresponsibly, police moved some on. Highways suggested a scheme - pavement, barriers and build out estimated cost £30-35k but Highways can't pay for this, flashing orange wigwag lights are a good way to let drivers know the school is there and when children may be crossing the roads but they are not working at the moment because the key is lost, reported as flashing this week so may have found the key. The SAMs2 unit has been used to monitor the traffic and there is not a speeding issue. PC have been looking into flashing school 20mph flashing signs, these are not enforceable but may make drivers aware there is a school there and slow people down. A resident reported that this has been a problem for a very long time, there used to be a walking bus from St George's car park. PC asked why the double gates at school are being opened and barriers put up to stop children running into the road rather than using the pedestrian side gate which filters the children who should be coming out one at a time with a parent. The responsibility lies with the school and the parents, is all this proposed work probably funded by residents a good use of money, PC preferred option is the flashing lights as a first step. Parents collect children, school hand responsibility over to parents who take the children out of the school, once outside the gate they are the responsibility of the parents. The group will meet again to discuss options further once the design and costs are known from Highways.

c. Update from January's meeting with Leader and CEO of BCKLWN was read out.

Cranswick planning application was denied, they have 6 months to appeal – September 2025

## 11. Correspondence – Flowers being eaten from wreaths in the Cemetery, think it's deer.

Cranswick Objection Group –sponsorship now not available, therefore the BBQ will be postponed until funds are available to make the community event truly enjoyable.

Switch over to smart meters for some economy 7 – notices on noticeboards.

Transport East Travel and Transport behaviour survey available on the parish council website.

Dog waste bin stickers – Borough Council do not do these anymore; any issues of dog fouling have to be reported to Borough Council Environment Crime Officer on the Borough Council website

12. Further reports and items for the next meeting agenda – July 10th 2025

Discuss start time for parish council meetings to 7pm.

13.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: 21.25pm