

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF BAWDESWELL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 2nd APRIL 2026 AT BAWDESWELL VILLAGE HALL STARTING AT 7.00PM.

Present: D. Shannon (Acting Chair), R. Hannent, M. Bailey and C. Good.

J. Boxall – Parish Clerk, County Cllr B. Borrett & District Councillor G. Bambridge

Members of the public – 1

1. To receive and note apologies for absence.

No apologies for absence were received.

Breckland advised that the period during which electors might request an election to fill the casual vacancy on the Council has now elapsed, no requests were received. The Council may now proceed to fill the vacancy by co-option to take place as soon as practicable. The Clerk would advertise the vacancy in the Reeves Tale with closing date for applications 23rd May (co-option at June meeting)

2. To record declarations of interest from members in any item to be discussed

Declarations of interest were received from Cllr Shannon and Cllr Good on matters relating to the Breckland Local Plan

3. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 5th February 2026

It was unanimously **AGREED** to approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 5th March 2026, as a true and accurate record as proposed by Cllr Good, seconded by Cllr Hannent. Minutes were duly signed.

4. To adjourn the meeting to allow members of the public to speak on agenda items

Thanks were extended to the Parish Council for their continuing good work.

5. To receive reports from District Councillor, County Councillor & Police. To receive report from Village Hall & Primary School

An email report received from the County Councillor was circulated electronically. District Cllr Bambridge circulated an annual report ahead of the meeting and gave a brief update on district matters. It was confirmed that the proposed Cattle market would no longer be located in North Tuddenham and has now been proposed for Honingham. Highways have received many complaints regarding works on A47 and the impact this is having on local roads. The Western link has been approved by the Government. There was no update regarding Breckland Local Plan but Breckland is still open to receiving comments, residents were encouraged to respond.

Cllr Good gave an update on matters at the Village Hall. The Trustees have agreed to display a photograph of John Mallen in reception where he used to stand. The Trustees have agreed to commission the roofing company to start work within next 4 weeks to repair the roof windows on south side of the hall.

**6. To receive update on matters arising from previous minutes for information only – BT phone box
Mower container has been painted and stones have been created, painted and positioned on village green**

BT responded to the Council's request to refurbish the phone box confirming that as the kiosk was only repainted 3 years ago it would not be considered for repainting again for at least another 2yrs. The Clerk highlighted the Council's concerns regarding the proposed removal of the handset and was advised that Breckland Planning is not aware of any consultation. This was reported to BT along with the Council's concerns, an email was received from BT evidencing that Breckland Planning had been informed of the proposal.

It was unanimously agreed to return to agenda item 5 as County Council B. Borrett was now in attendance. He gave an update on the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), confirming that the County Council elections would be held on May 7th 2026. Elections would take place for the new unitary authority on May 2027 following which the new unitary authority would run parallel with Breckland and Norfolk County Council until 31st March 2028 when Breckland Council will close. It was acknowledged that Breckland Council tax will increase with no improvement in services due to the reorganisation. There will be disruption to services. County Cllr Borrett confirmed that the Mayorship has been postponed until 2028 as focus is on the LGR, but was still in the list of reforms the government wants to deliver.

7. Play equipment – To receive update approve further action

The Clerk drafted a piece for the Reeves Tale which has just been published. It was agreed that further discussion regarding dogs would be deferred until the next agenda to give time for dog owners to respond. The dog warden service confirmed that they are *'unfortunately no longer contracted to deal with dog fouling enforcement on their behalf. Because of this, the most appropriate route would be to report the issue directly to Breckland Council's Environmental Services team, who are responsible for dog fouling enforcement in the district. They may be able to look at options such as targeted patrols, From a general perspective, the measures you already have in place (Signage, bins and providing bags) are exactly the right steps and it sounds like the Parish Council has already been proactive in trying to address the issue. additional signage, or other enforcement measures where appropriate.'*

Breckland District Council subsequently responded - *If the parish council owns the recreation ground, it is entitled, as landowner, to set conditions for its use. This can include prohibiting dogs altogether or requiring that they are kept on leads. The council may also ask individuals to leave the land if they fail to comply with these conditions. However, such requirements amount to a civil condition of entry only. In the absence of additional legal powers, the parish council would not be able to issue fines or pursue*

prosecution for non-compliance.’ (This could only happen with a Public Space Protection Order) ‘In practice, clear and prominent signage, supported by appropriate engagement, is often sufficient to secure a good level of compliance. Where issues relate specifically to dog fouling, we may be able to assist with enforcement. This would, however, depend on the availability of appropriate evidence, and we would be reliant on the parish council to help identify and report instances where individuals fail to clear up after their dogs.

It was agreed to publish the advice from Breckland in the Reeves Tale. Feedback was received from one resident, suggesting the fencing off of the children’s play area and the formation of a ‘dogs only’ area on the recreation ground. Concern was expressed that this would penalise the general public for the sake of dog owners and wasn’t a viable option.

Cllr Shannon confirmed that the mower team had been putting yellow flags in the ground when dog mess was discovered and noted the mess was subsequently being removed and this would be continued.

Cllr Shannon proposed that the Clerk respond to the resident, thanking them for comments received, accepting that fencing off the children’s play area was an option but was subject to cost (highlight the cost), limiting space on the recreation ground is not an option. It was noted that Common Lane is a popular dog walking track but recently material was dumped including broken glass and pottery which had deterred some dog walkers. The Clerk was asked to contact the land owner regarding the dumped material in light of the dog walkers and pedestrians. This was seconded by Cllr Hannent and **AGREED** unanimously

Reeves Tale piece to stress that the Parish Council were hoping that dog owners would come together and put forward a solution.

8. Trees Village Hall - To approve purchase of replacement tree for village hall and consider further action regarding ash trees near basketball court.

It was reported that one of the three dead ash trees fell down in the high winds onto the basketball court. Thanks were extended to a kind parishioner, who cleared the debris and left the court clear. Concern was expressed about the remaining trees.

It was acknowledged that the trees needed to be removed but it was unclear who owns the trees as they are on the boundary.

It was unanimously **AGREED** that the Clerk should consult with the farmer to determine responsibility, highlighting the health and safety risk as proposed by Cllr Shannon, seconded by Cllr Good.

Cllr Shannon reported that the tree John Mallen planted in the BBQ area has broken off at ground level. Following discussion, it was unanimously **AGREED** to purchase another tree in memory of John Mallen as proposed by Cllr Good, seconded by Cllr Bailey. Costs of a 6ft native tree to be sought. It was acknowledged that the tree would need a surround for protection. The other tree in the area also needs a replacement surround as the wood was now rotten.

9. Adams Pit & Bawdeswell Heath – To receive update / approve further action to ensure future management of Trust is separate to Parish Council – financial & meetings.

Cllr Shannon confirmed that there was no update from Bawdeswell Heath Trustees and no volunteers had yet come forward to join the team.

It was reported that there had been several sightings of a water vole at Adams Pit. This was encouraging but would mean that this could have implications for future maintenance of Adams Pit as Water Voles are a protected species.

The Clerk highlighted that Adams Pit and a small area of Bawdeswell Heath come under the Allotment to Former Highways Surveyors Trust / Charity of which Bawdeswell Parish Council is the trustee

Although confident that the audit trail has been clear and there has not been any conflict of interest or financial concerns, the question now asked by the external auditor throw up several questions in relation to the accounting process and the need for the Trustees (the Parish Council) to have clearer separation between their role as Trustees and their role as Parish Councillors.

The Clerk has emailed Norfolk ALC who in turn have asked their legal team to advise on the best way forward given that the roles are closely linked.

It was unanimously **AGREED** that the Parish Council would manage the trust separately from the Parish Council, allocating an annual grant from the precept to the Trust (2026/27 £500 Adams Pit, £200 Bawdeswell Heath insurance) and hold separate meetings (at the end of Parish Council meetings) to discuss Trust matters as proposed by Cllr Good, seconded by Cllr Bailey.

It was unanimously **AGREED** that the Parish Council will keep the Jubilee Garden under the ownership of the Parish Council. (contrary to minutes 2012 /2013 which suggested this land was to be signed over to the Allotment to Former Highways Surveyors Trust) as proposed by Cllr Good, seconded by Cllr Hannent.

10. Breckland Local Plan – To receive update

There was no further update but Breckland were still open for comments and parishioners were encouraged to submit their views.

11. Local Government Reorganisation – To receive update

It was confirmed that the Government has confirmed its decision on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Norfolk. They have opted to replace current arrangements with three new unitary authorities, West, East and Greater Norwich. The following timeline was given; Later this year – The Government will set out the legislation to enact this 'minded to' decision, this will include details of interim governance

May 2027 – Shadow elections take place for the new unitary councils.

31st March 2028 – Breckland Council will close.

1st April 2028 - The new unitary council 'goes live' and takes over from predecessors.

12. Highway matters – To receive update

The Clerk reported that the issue regarding flooding on the section of Norwich Road close to the Garden Centre and the alleyway into Chaucer Close has been raised with Highways in the first instance. Residents have also been encouraged to report the flooding to Norfolk County Council with photos so that the issue can be investigated and further action can be taken. Clerk to remind residents to report all highways matters including pot holes, road signage and flooding. Cllr Shannon to send the outstanding highway issues to County Cllr Borrett for further action.

13. Planning

(a) To consider planning applications received

No new planning applications were received.

(b) To receive decisions from Breckland District Council

No decisions were received from Breckland District Council

(c) To consider any late planning applications

No late planning applications were received.

14. Finance

a) To receive income / expenditure budget figures to 31st March 2026 for consideration and bank reconciliation

The balance of the Community account as at 31st March 2026 was confirmed as £17737.03, Business Money Manager (Earmarked reserves) was £43897.44. End of year budget figures were circulated to Council for consideration.

b) To approve payments made, to be made and approve late payments as necessary

All payments made and to be made as per schedule of payments were **AGREED** as proposed by Cllr Hannent, seconded by Cllr Bailey. The list of payments and receipts was signed by the one signatory left. It was acknowledged that due to matters outside the Parish Council's control / foresight, there would be an increase in street lighting electricity and fuel costs for the mower but there were general reserves to cover this.

PAYMENTS				
9th March 2026	Graham Williamson - Repair to dog bin village green			21.00
9th March 2026	Mr David Shannon - refund Village Green posts			147.40
9th March 2026	Bawdeswell Village Hall-February Hall hire			27.20
17th March 2026	Mr David Shannon - Refund materials football container			165.52
18th March 2026	Playdale - seats roto bounce & air rider			1,568.18
18th March 2026	Ben Burgess - Mower service			753.96
28th March 2026	Transfer earmarked reserves repayment ER reserves			2,483.34
31st March 2026	Transfer earmarked reserves - play area			2,147.70
31st March 2026	Transfer earmarked reserves - defibrillator			135.00
31st March 2026	Mrs Jo Boxall - March salary & exps			575.72
31st March 2026	HMRC NI March			22.31
RECEIPTS				
28 th March 2026	Business Money Manager interest		39.29	
TRANSFERS BETWEEN A/Cs				
30 th March 2026	Transfer from earmarked reserves - driveway extension Village Hall		707.05	
30 th March 2026	Transfer from earmarked reserves - grounds maintenance - Bluebell Rise		920.91	
30 th March 2026	Transfer to earmarked reserves – repayment money for mower			2483.34
30 th March 2026	Transfer to earmarked reserves -Defibrillator			135.00

30 th March 2026	Transfer to earmarked reserves - Play area		2147.70
30 th March 2026	Transfer to earmarked reserves – Trees		2000.00
FUTURE PAYMENTS	Bawdeswell Village Hall hire		27.20
	Clerk salary April & exps TBC		605.75 G
	HMRC Employers NI TBC		26.81
	Graham Williamson – Grounds Maintenance March		376.35

c) To review / approve reserves policy following end of financial year

It was unanimously **AGREED** to approve and adopt the revised reserves policy as proposed by Cllr Good, seconded by Cllr Hannent.

15. Correspondence

All correspondence was circulated electronically. A resident reported the water vole sighting at Adams Pit (to be added to the agenda for the Trustee meeting) and a dog owner sent comments for future management of the recreation ground.

16. To receive items for information and receive items for the next agenda

Future agenda items to include Approval of AGAR – end of year accounts, review of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and insurance provision., ash trees and dogs on recreation ground.

17. To approve the date of the Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Parish Council Meeting as Thursday 7th May 2026

It was agreed that both meetings would be held on Thursday 7th May with the Annual Parish Meeting held at 6.45pm and the Annual Parish Council Meeting being held at 7pm. Trustee meeting to follow the Parish Council meeting.

18. To close the meeting

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 20.15pm