



Saxlingham Nethergate Parish Council Meeting Minutes

Monday 12 January 2026, Saxlingham Nethergate Village Hall, 7.30pm

Present: Elsje Stocker (Chair) Julie King (Clerk)
Paul Bowen from item 3
Chris Clements
Mark Fisher MVO
Mike Haslam
Harry Leeder from item 5b
Zoe Yarham

Members of the public: six including John Cook, District Councillor and Alison Thomas, County Councillor

These minutes are draft until approved at the next meeting.

- 1 Apologies
Apologies from Jackie Lee-Smith & Liz Utting were noted.
- 2 Declaration of Interest for Items on the Agenda and Dispensations for Councillors with a Pecuniary Interest
None.

- 3 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 8 December 2025
These were agreed as a true record of proceedings.

Paul Bowen joined the meeting.

- 4 Public Open Forum

John Cook:

- The Local Government Reorganisation consultation had ended, a decision was expected around 26 March, there was a good chance that the County Council and District Council elections may be deferred.
- South Norfolk Council had reviewed its Investigatory Powers, covert filming etc, to check that they were in line with requirements
- South Norfolk Council would introduce a Supplementary Planning Document outlining mitigation measures for green energy projects.

- John had secured £600 of grant funding, from South Norfolk Council, for the school cabin

Members of the public were interested to hear about East Pye Solar and in particular were looking for guidance with responding to the land interest questionnaires.

Alison Thomas:

- It was still not clear whether the County Council elections would go ahead in May, this was a Central Government decision, the County Council hadn't asked for a delay, the Leader's view was that they should go ahead.
- Central Government had asked about the capacity and workload required for Local Government Reorganisation.
- The election of the Directly Elected Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk had been delayed until May 2028. Devolution would still be going ahead but with significantly less than would have been awarded to the Major. Norfolk Fire and Rescue had been due to transfer to the Major in 2027 but this was now not going to be the case.
- The interim finance settlement had been published on 17 December; rurality funding had been removed. It was anticipated that the full 4.99% increase would be applied to the Norfolk County Council budget. 2% would be required to fund the interest for the loan taken out to bridge the shortfall in funding for Special Educational Needs. If a decision wasn't soon made to centrally fund, then it would put the County Council into an unsustainable financial position.
- Parish Partnership decisions would be made shortly.
- Alison had attended the opening of an assisted and supported living development in South Wootton.

5 Responding to and Working with Other Bodies

a Planning

- i Planning Decisions taken by South Norfolk Council
Outbuilding South of Robin Hill, Cargate Lane

Withdrawn

- ii Planning Enforcement and Planning Appeals
Nothing to report.

iii East Pye Solar

East Pye Solar (EPS) had obtained a gate 2 grid connection from the National Energy System Operator (NESO) but only a gate 1 grid connection for the scheme battery. Questions were asked regarding the viability of the scheme without a grid connection for the batteries and whether EPS could proceed to submit an application for a Development Consent Order for a scheme that did not include the batteries that were an integral part of the scheme that had just been consulted on.

Responses to the Land Interest Questionnaires were discussed, **it was agreed to publish the Parish Council's responses on the website and via Village Voice.**

1. Additional Phase 2 Consultation

A draft response had been circulated; a re-consultation indicated that East Pye Solar had failed to consult correctly and the response questioned whether they had therefore complied with the law. **It was agreed to send the response as circulated.**

2. Engaging with the Press

John Cook had emailed the EDP but hadn't received a response, he would chase. Elsie Stocker had spoken with the BBC who were interested in an article regarding the War Memorial and the movement of the Abnormal Indivisible Loads (AILs), she was also to appear on the Politics Show.

3. Supporting Block East Pye Solar (BEPS) with their Fundraising

BEPS had now been set up as a formal organisation and the governance documents had been circulated. BEPS' 'Go Fund Me' page had been published via Village Voice and it was agreed to put a link on the Parish Council's website and to publicise in Contact.

4. Legal Advice Available to BEPS and whether and when Additional Advice may be Required

BEPS were working with a solicitor, Mike Haslam had list of barristers and, once requirements were clear, quotes would be obtained.

5. Harnessing the Skills and Resources Available within the Community & Who Will Lead from the Parish Council

It was noted that BEPS had a group of researches, questions were asked about whether Saxlingham Nethergate Parish Council were in a position to assist. Elsie Stocker and some Saxlingham Nethergate residents would be attending a BEPS meeting on Wednesday.

b Consultations

i South Norfolk Council's Consultation on the Adoption of Sex Establishment Legislation and Policy

Harry Leader joined the meeting.

This was noted; **it was agreed not to respond.**

9b Budget and Precept

It was noted that the expected level of General Reserves at the end of 2025/26 was £8,100. The Reserve Policy noted that the suggested level of General Reserves should be £12,000 with an aim of £9,500 by the end of 2025/26. However, it was anticipated that the £1,600 loan to the Village Hall would be repaid in 2026.

The budget was considered line by line. Consideration was given to budgeting for the production of a neighbourhood plan, a noticeboard for West End and the valuation of the War Memorial but there were insufficient funds to progress these.

The following were agreed:

- **Not to progress clearing of the silt from the ditch and to release the £666 held for that purpose**
- **To move councillors over to gov.uk email addresses, to update the Parish Council laptop to Microsoft 365 and not to renew the separate antivirus protection**
- **To budget £250 for a Parish Council newsletter and £50 for postcards to point new residents to a welcome pack on the Parish Council website**
- **To budget £500 for work that might be required fighting East Pye Solar**
- **To budget £200 for an information board on the Old Bridge, Saxlingham Thorpe**
- **To increase the contractual hours for the clerk from 28 to 29.5 hours per month, with a further budgeted 1.5 hours per month overtime if needed for communications**
- **To increase General Reserves by a further £1,500, hopefully bringing it to around £11,000 by the end of 2026/27**

Chris Clements and Paul Bowen left the meeting

It was agreed to set the precept at £18,225, an increase of 9.42% or £5.03 for a Band D property which took it to £58.42 for the year.

- c Highway Issues
 - i Footpaths
Nothing to report.
 - ii Speeding and SAM 2
Nothing to report.
 - iii Community Speedwatch
No further volunteers had come forward it was agreed not to continue to pursue this at this time.
 - iv Child Safety at School Drop-off and Pick-up
The Highway Engineer had looked at the width of the pavement on Church Hill, there was some verge encroachment at the top end near the school, and some very minor encroachment along the length, the footway would be sided out to maximize the available width. Whilst the footway was narrow in places, less than 1m adjacent to Church Hill Cottage, this had been checked with the Highway Boundary Team and there was no encroachment.
 - v War Memorial Bollards
Work was awaited.

vi School Wig-way Sign
Work was awaited.

vii Bus Shelter Saxlingham Thorpe
Further discussions had taken place with Highways and a site meeting was anticipated.

d Flooding
i Ditch Along The Street – Working with Agencies
Nothing to report

e Poor Mobile Signal
Work was ongoing.

6 Asset Management

a Allotments
Nothing to report.

b Play Area
The rota for the weekly inspections for 2026 had been drawn up and circulated. Those responsible were reminded that it was a requirement of the Parish Council insurance that these checks were completed weekly.

7 Management of the Parish Council

a Community Emergency Plan
It was agreed to bring the management of the Community Emergency Plan back ‘in-house’. Elsje Stocker and Zoe Yarham were to meet with South Norfolk Council’s Emergency Planner. **It was agreed to thank Bryn Austin for the work he had done over many years.**

b Task List
Items on the list had already been covered.

8 Projects

a Seating and Information Boards on the Old Bridge
Nothing to report.

9 Finance

a Third Quarter Accounts
The accounts summary had been circulated and **was agreed.** Mark Fisher had inspected the accounts and found them to be in order.

b The following payments made since the last meeting were noted:

Unity Trust Bank	Bank charges	£6.00
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c The following were approved for payment:

Julie King	December salary, overtime & expenses	£1,051.63
Norfolk Pension Fund	Pension contribution	£291.67

Saxlingham Memorial Hall	Hall hire	£247.00
SLCC	Membership	£116.00

- d The following receipts since the last meeting were noted:
Sale of A Good Place to Call Home £5.00

10 Village Organisations

- a Village Hall
The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated.
- b Playing Field
The Playing Field continued to work with the Bowls Club to find an alternative use for the bowls green from April.

11 Items for Next Month's Agenda

Review of the Parish Council website.

12 Date of Next Meeting

Monday 9 February 2026.

The meeting closed at 9.34pm

Chair's Signature..... Date.....