



Saxlingham Nethergate Parish Council Meeting Minutes

Monday 8 December 2025, Saxlingham Nethergate Village Hall, 7.30pm

Present: Elsje Stocker (Chair) Julie King (Clerk)
Paul Bowen
Chris Clements
Mark Fisher MVO
Mike Haslam
Harry Leeder
Liz Utting
Zoe Yarham

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

These minutes are draft until approved at the next meeting.

Prior to the meeting the Chair-elect of the Village Hall Committee outlined the plans that the Charity had for the refurbishment of the hall and bringing it back into a position of financial stability. The full report would be available in February but the plans included repainting throughout, refurbishing the kitchen to a standard that could be used by a community café, a new boiler and the installation of technology; these would be financed through grants. They were also working to ensure that the hall was well used as well as arranging fundraising events.

The Charity was grateful for the loan provided by the Parish Council and was aiming to make an initial repayment by the end of the first quarter and full repayment by the end of second quarter.

The Chair and a councillor from Newton Flotman Parish Council had attended to outline plans for the Old Bridge which was on the border of Newton Flotman and Saxlingham Nethergate. The process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan had identified a wish to smarten up the bridge and provide seating, planters and information boards, most of which would be on the Newton Flotman side. The suggestion was that one board, which could contain information about the history of the bridge and the Mill, be positioned on Saxlingham Nethergate's side. Permissions would be required and the project needed costing, Newton Flotman Parish Council would work on the project and Elsje Stocker volunteered to provide the link with Saxlingham Nethergate parish Council.

Other items were discussed including the difficulty of accessing the A140 north of Long Stratton.

1 Apologies

Apologies from Jackie Lee-Smith 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 24 November 2025
These were agreed as a true record of proceedings.

4 Public Open Forum

John Cook spoke about:

- His thanks for the new volunteers who were breathing a new lease of life into the Village Hall, he'd been pleased to help them secure a 'start up' grant of £300
- Another £300 'start up' grant for the Brownies and Guides
- A Neighbourhood Plan grant that would provide up to £50,000 on a first come first served basis
- Domestic food waste bins that would be mandatory by May 2026
- He had written to Norfolk County Council regarding footpath signage, a reply was awaited
- He had written to Highways regarding East Pye Solar's proposed vehicle movements
- The public meeting regarding East Pye Solar, he was pleased that it had been so well attended and had contacted the EDP who were looking to do an article which would hopefully raise the profile of the village's objection
- He would be writing to Ben Goldsborough MP with regard to East Pye Solar.

The Headteacher of Saxlingham Primary School attended the meeting along with a member of staff to explain the school's grant application. They were seeking funding towards a summer room-type building to provide a space to help children with mental health and behaviour problems. The project had benefited from a local donor as well as some ringfenced capital funds, and the school was waiting to see if they would be allocated some SEND funding. They were committed to the project and would be grateful for any support that could be given.

Alison Thomas spoke about:

- The bollards for the War Memorial and the school wig-wag signs both of which were to be fully funded from her Local Members' Fund
- The Mayoral election which had been delayed from May 2026 until May 2028
- The suggestion that the County Council elections were likely to go ahead in 2026
- Local Government Reorganisation that would now potentially take place before the establishment of the directly elected Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk
- The County Council budget proposals which were online and open to public consultation
- The meeting that she'd arranged with officers at Norfolk County Council regarding the East Pye Solar proposals. She explained that whilst the County Council would be opposing the scheme, they were right to put forward suggestions regarding acceptable vehicle movements schemes

Members of the public raised the following:

- Interested to hear about East Pye Solar
- It was noted that someone was forming dams on Wash Lane, it wasn't thought to be the official work that was to be undertaken by Norfolk County Council but none the less was assisting with slowing down flood water.

The following item was moved forward

9d Grant to the School to Provide a Summer Room-type Building

It was noted that whilst the school had an active Friends group, their funds were currently being directed in other ways to assist the school but that parents had offered practical help with the project.

It was agreed to wait until the school had heard back regarding the possible SEND funding and then look at assisting them with any funding shortage.

5 Responding to and Working with Other Bodies

a Planning

- i 2025/2856, Montys (Finest Curry) Ltd, Ipswich Road, Saxlingham Thorpe – Replacement of all existing timber first floor, front and rear windows with new UPVC windows. These comprise of four sash windows to the front elevation and four casement windows to the rear.

It was agreed to support the application.

- ii Planning Decisions taken by South Norfolk Council
Orchard View Barn, Church Hill Tree work Approved with conditions

- iii Planning Enforcement and Planning Appeals
Nothing to report.

- iv East Pye Solar

It was noted that the National Energy Systems Operator (NESO) would not be allocating any more grid connections for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) until after 2035 and without this the solar part would be undeliverable, a detailed announcement was expected the following Monday.

Mark Fisher left the meeting

Whilst in the main it was agreed to halt any further action until more was known, **it was agreed to go ahead with an interview with the BBC later in the week highlighting the potential compulsory purchase of land around the War Memorial and the difficulties residents, who were seeking to sell their homes, were facing.**

Mark Fisher rejoined the meeting

Further correspondence had been received from Dalcour Maclaren (acting on behalf of East Pye Solar) regarding unregistered land in the vicinity of the War Memorial, asking

the Parish Council to confirm whether or not they had any interest in the land. **It was agreed that the map provided still did not give sufficient information and until a survey plan could be provided, the Parish Council was not in a position to either confirm or deny ownership.**

b Consultations

- i The Government's statutory consultation on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) for Norfolk

The three options were considered. **It was agreed to support the single unitary proposal.**

- ii Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk Council's Joint draft supplementary Planning Documents Consultation

These were noted; **it was agreed not to respond.**

- iii Norfolk County Council's Budget Consultation

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

c Highway Issues

- i Footpaths

Work to report missing signage was in progress.

- ii Speeding and SAM 2

Nothing to report.

- iii Community Speedwatch

No further volunteers had come forward; **it was agreed to put out one final request for volunteers in the New Year.**

- iv Child Safety at School Drop-off and Pick-up

Harry Leeder was still to draft a letter to Highways regarding the extension of the zig-zag (no waiting) zone. It was noted that the Headteacher had sent a note to parents regarding considerate parking which had had a short-term effect.

Following further correspondence with a concerned resident, **it was agreed to ask the Highway Engineer to look at the width of the pavement on Church Hill.**

- v War Memorial Bollards

Highways had agreed to install two bollards, which would be financed from Alison Thomas' 'Local Members' Fund', to be positioned as previously agreed.

It was noted that the posts that supported the footpath map were rotting and it had been suggested that when they were replaced that the map be positioned closer to the corner encouraging motorists to stay away from the verge.

vi School Wig-way Sign

This project would also now be fully funded from Alison Thomas' 'Local Members' Fund' meaning that works would be undertaken soon as could be arranged with Westcotec.

vii Bus Shelter Saxlingham Thorpe

This was being discussed with Highways, there was a possibility that this could be funded from central government funding.

d Flooding

i Ditch Along The Street – Working with Agencies

Harry Leeder had attended a multi-agency meeting including representatives from the Environment Agency, Norfolk County Council and the Norfolk Wildlife Trust. They had discussed the project to install leaky dams on Wash Lane, this had been delayed whilst a new supplier for the specialised wood was sought and Redwings, as landowner, had agreed to the future maintenance. It was hoped that annual funding could be secured for maintenance of the ditch that ran along The Street and Norfolk County Council were looking at working with other landowners to slow the flow of flood water up stream.

There was a discussion regarding the money put aside for community action to clear the ditch adjacent to The Street, Harry Leeder would speak with interested parties and a decision would be taken at the next meeting.

e Poor Mobile Signal

Zoe Yarham had written to the Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology and Norfolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation, whilst both had responded neither accepted any responsibility. Discussion included the possibility of a local solution including WiSpire which Zoe was investigating.

6 Asset Management

a Allotments

Harry Leeder left the meeting.

A quote had been obtained for replacing the pedestrian gate posts, some fence repairs and the clearing of plot 16b, these would be fed into the budget to be considered in January.

b Play Area

Harry Leeder rejoined the meeting.

It was noted that there were moles active again in the area behind the new swings, **it was agreed to monitor the situation.**

7 Management of the Parish Council

a Communication Strategy

This had been considered further and a draft plan had been circulated. The following were discussed:

- Website – continue with WIX, all councillors to review and provide feedback, **it was agreed to give Mark Fisher access to editing the website**

- Email – Update all council email addresses to .GOV domains by March 2026 at a cost of £260/yr
- Instagram – to explore launching a Parish Council Instagram account by May 2026
- WhatsApp – use for emergencies only
- Newsletter – publish bi-annually (May and November) at a cost of £450 for the first year – initially launched in hard copy with the option for residents to sign up to receive electronically
- Welcome Pack/document online – produce online content and postcards for new residents at a cost of £50

Mike Haslam left the meeting.

- Face to face – Organise two Parish Council ‘surgeries’ per year the first in February launching a community questionnaire to be collated in April with a Mission Statement/Aims and Objectives to be agreed in May to feed into the newsletter.
- Draft Communications/Engagement Policy in June 2026 and assess the need for additional notice boards
- To increase the clerk’s hours by 1.5hours per month to cover additional workload at a cost of £395/yr

b Village Hall Trustee

The secretary of the Village Hall Committee was looking to rewrite the constitution reducing the number of trustees appointed by the Parish Council from three to two, therefore there was no requirement to appoint a replacement for Ray Small.

c Meeting Dates for 2026

It was agreed that meetings would continue to be held on the second Monday of each month; there would be no meeting in August. The Annual Parish Meeting would be held prior to the April meeting.

d Play Area Checks 2026

Mike Haslam, Harry Leeder, Zoe Yarham and Jackie Lee-Smith agreed to carry out the weekly checks in 2026, a rota would be circulated.

e Community Emergency Plan

Mike Haslam rejoined the meeting.

Consideration was given to appointing a Deputy Emergency Coordinator and a resident had put their name forward. There was confusion as to whether there was already a deputy. Concern was expressed that the plan required updating and **it was agreed that Harry Leeder would meet with the Emergency Coordinator to discuss a way forward.**

- f Membership of Community Action Norfolk
It was agreed to transfer the Parish Council's membership to the Village Hall Committee for the remainder of the year.

- g Task List
Items on the list had already been covered.

8 Finance

- a Budget and Precept
 - i Draft Budget
This was deferred to January.
- 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	November salary	£472.31
Julie King	Kaspersky Internet Security	£72.99
Norfolk Pension Fund	Pension contribution	£139.95
HMRC	Tax & NI	£37.26
- d The following receipts since the last meeting were noted:
None.

9 Village Organisations

- a Village Hall
Councillors had received an update from the Chair-elect prior to the meeting.
- b Playing Field
The AGM had been held on Tuesday 25 November, Elsje Stocker had attended on behalf of the Parish Council.

The Bowls Club had indicated that they would not be continuing at the Playing Field and consideration was given to the termination of the lease – the Parish Council were named on the lease as Custodian Trustee. Consideration was given to obtaining legal advice regarding the termination but **it was agreed that as all parties were in agreement this was not necessary.**

- c Quiz & Chips – 7 February
The Parish Council had been invited to submit a team but several members were already on other teams.

10 Items for Next Month's Agenda

None.

11 Date of Next Meeting
Monday 12 January 2025.

12 Exclusion of the Public

It was agreed, under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, to exclude the public due to the confidential nature of the item to be discussed.

13 Clerks' Hours

It was agreed:

- **to pay the clerk an additional 34 hours worked in excess of contractual hours, to be paid before the end of the financial year**
- **to consider paying any hours worked in excess of contractual hours prior to the year-end each year**
- **to consider adding three hours per month (1.5 to cover additional workload and 1.5 hours for additional communication requirements) when the budget was decided the following month.**

The meeting closed at 10.24pm

Chair's Signature.....

Date.....