

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD FOR BEETLEY & EAST BILNEY IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY 2nd April 2026 AT 7.30 P.M.

Present

Councillor R. Richmond (Chair)
Councillor M. MacArthur.
Councillor P. Minchin.
Councillor P. Lawton.
Councillor J. Billings.
Councillor D. Howard.

1 member of the Public.

In Attendance A. Leigh. Clerk
R. Wade RFO

The Chairman informed the meeting of the resignation from Parish Councillor Lucy Sarll. Due to work commitments Lucy has had to resign as she was spreading herself thinly in all directions. The Chairman stated that Lucy had been a great help whilst she was on the Parish Council and wished her well for the future.

1. **To Consider apologies for absence.** District Councillor Roger Atterwell.
2. **To receive Declarations of Interest.** None.
3. **To sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 5th March 2026.**
It was proposed by Councillor Minchin and seconded by Councillor Howard that the minutes were true and accurate, all were in agreement.
4. **Finance.**
 - 4.1. **Budgets as circulated.** It was proposed by Councillor Richmond and seconded by Councillor MacArthur that the budgets as circulated were in order, all were in agreement.
 - 4.2. **Balances and cheques for authorisation as circulated.** Anglotech d/d £81, Malcolm MacArthur purchase of hose reel for the use in the Pavilion £30.00, BCCS payment to drivers £31.20, Clerk salary (March) £518.58, RFO salary (March) £ 313.00, HMRC (March) £162.80, Unity bank service charge £7.00, EON d/d £22.74. It was proposed by Councillor Lawton and seconded by Councillor Minchin that these payments were correct. All were in agreement. the online payments this month will be approved by Councillor Richmond and Councillor Lawton.
 - 4.3. **NPTS Annual subscription to be agreed.** Councillor MacArthur proposed, Councillor Minchin seconded that the Annual subscription is paid. All were in agreement.
 - 4.4. **Financial Reserves.** The RFO read out the report concerning the financial reserves all Councillors agreed that these were adequate.
5. **Breckland Draft Local Plan.** Councillor Billings (the Parish Council Planning portfolio holder) Stated that nothing will happen for a while but for this item to remain on future agendas.
6. **Reports from County and District Councillors. Public Participation.**
 - 6.1. **To receive reports from County and District Councillors.** Reports had been received from the County Councillor and District Councillor Roger Atterwill advising that the Government had made a decision on the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). They have opted to replace the current arrangements with three new unitary authorities, West Norfolk, East Norfolk and Greater Norwich. Beetley, East Bilney and Old Beetley will be in the West Norfolk authority. the May County Council elections will still take place this year and the new Unitary councils will commence on 1st April 2028 and the old District Councils and Norfolk County Council will close on 31st March 2028. These reports the Clerk had circulate to all Councillors.
 - 6.2. **Public comments.** None.

7. Matters for report.

7.1. Speed Watch. No report had been received. But Councillor Howard reported that the Speedwatch team was carrying out a session yesterday in the school car park entrance.

7.2. Shed on Village Hall Playing field. The Clerk reported that a Parishioner had contacted her concerning the shed on the Playing field. There was some activity going on and the Parishioner had contacted the Police. The Police asked her to contact the Parish Council regarding this. The Clerk contacted a member of the Village Hall and Playing Field management Committee who investigated the shed. The outcome was that the window which is missing will be boarded so that there is no way to get into the shed. The Clerk had informed the Parishioner of this action. The window has now been boarded and the Parishioner was very thankful for this. Councillor MacArthur was concerned that there may be an injury sustained if any of the contents of the shed should fall on children should they find a way of getting in. The Clerk was asked to contact the Village Hall and Playing Field Management committee to pass on the concern and request that the contents are removed. Should this be a costly process the Parish Council could assist with the costs.

7.3. Cutting back of Oak tree branches- playing field St. Mary's School Beetley. The Clerk had been contacted by one of the School Governors regarding the cutting back of some oak tree branches which overhung the school playing field asking for permission from the Parish Council to carry out this work during the Easter Holiday. The Clerk asked that the Breckland Tree Officer was contacted regarding this work as the trees are Oak, he had responded and gave permission. therefore, the work will be carried out during the Easter holiday by Mr Abram who owns the trees.

8. Highways.

8.1. Clerk to give feedback on ongoing Highway problems. The Clerk informed the meeting that the potholes which Councillor Richmond had reported on Church Road East Bilney were still outstanding. Councillor Lawton stated that the potholes on the bend just past Hall Farm, on the left which he had reported were still outstanding and the rotting signpost on the Elmham/High House road crossroads which he had also reported, Highways had informed him that no action would be taken as it was not bad enough. The long Potholes going into Old Beetley along Hall Road just passed Dols Hole Cottage had been repaired. The potholes on Sorrel Lane which Councillor MacArthur had reported were still outstanding but he had been notified by Highways that they had been inspected and any repairs would be prioritised depending on the severity which may take approximately 6 weeks the inspection date was 03/02/26. He went on to say that the Sorrell Lane pothole had been repaired and the mud issue he had reported had been dealt with but the Foot Path sign which had been damaged is still waiting permanent repair and the Church Road pothole Highways had stated was not bad enough for repair. The Hall Road problem was programmed for repair the inspection date for that was 30/01/26.

8.2. To note any new problems within the Parish. A member of the public informed the meeting that there was a bad pothole on Rawhall Lane next to Woad Farm Barn and there were several potholes along Bittering Street. The Clerk would report these. The Clerk stated that Gressenhall Road Beetley had at least 7 bad potholes and she would also report those to Highways.

8.3. To receive a report from all Councillors on the footpaths. Councillor MacArthur informed the meeting that N.C.C. had informed him that a stile could not be installed on footpath 10 were horses had been ridden along. The landowner is responsible for the repair of any damage the footpath incurs. He had erected temporary signs stating no horses to use the footpath and suggested more permanent signs could be installed. Councillor MacArthur will contact the land owner to discuss this. All of his other footpaths were satisfactory. Councillor Lawton stated that footpaths 2 and 3 along the edge of the field are difficult to walk as the field had been ploughed, he then added that Footpaths 1 and 4 are good.

The other Councillors stated that all other Footpaths 5/6/7/14/15/16/17 and 18 are satisfactory.

9. Planning.

Applications.

9.1. PL/2026/0317/HOU Oak Lodge 47 Elmham Road Beetley. Proposed conversion of roof space to provide additional residential accommodation. A discussion was held, Councillor Billings proposed and Councillor Minchin seconded that this planning application is objected to due to the density and the scale of the extension and the loss of privacy by the surrounding dwellings. All were in agreement. The Clerk would enter the decision on the Breckland Planning portal.

Decisions made by Breckland Council.

9.2. PL/2026/0114/HOU 7 Fakenham Road Beetley. Proposed single storey rear extension, Double garage and front entrance porch. **APPROVED**

9.3. PL/2026/0191/HOU The Old Post Office Old Beetley. Proposed infill of covered area, new porch, fenestration changes and internal alterations. **APPROVED.**

9.4. PL/2026/0205/HOU 19 Beech Road Beetley. Proposed rear extension following demolition of conservatory. **APPROVED**

9.5. Planning enforcement reference ID 785 Waterside Old Beetley. Councillor Billings reported that he had contacted Breckland planning enforcement regarding works which are currently being carried out at Waterside Old Beetley and are in breach of the planning refusal and had also been dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate when an appeal had been made.

10. Beetley River Meadows.

10.1. Monthly play equipment inspections. Due to the resignation of Lucy Sarll, Councillor Howard and Councillor Minchin agreed to carry out the monthly inspections. Councillor Billings offered to attend the first inspection to explain the requirements. Councillor Howard and Councillor Minchin are happy to attend a training course on play equipment inspections which Councillor Billings had attended. The Clerk would contact CAN to enquire if a course was planned in the near future.

10.2. RoSPA report update. – Green tube slide. It was agreed that this would be monitored until the next RoSPA inspection is carried out in June as it was not a high rating and would be acted on should it be necessary when the 2026 RoSPA report is received.

10.3. Grass cutting contract. The first cut of the year had been carried out on the 1st April together with some viewing stations cut in the bank for the Pre-School Duck Race. At the next visit on the 15th April the viewing stations will be cleared again if necessary. Councillor Richmond stated he was concerned about the rise of fuel costs at present and requested that the Clerk contact the grass cutting contractor to offer assistance with the price increase as the machinery used required a considerable amount of fuel. All were in agreement with this.

11. Parish Council Matters.

11.1. Inspections :- Pavilion : Defibrillator. Councillor MacArthur reported that the new hose pipe and fittings which Beetley United football club had requested was now in the Pavilion for their use. (The Clerk had informed them of this.) The door lock was loose and he had repaired it. There was no further evidence of any water getting in since Jake Luck had repaired the downpipe. The Defibrillator had been checked by Councillor MacArthur and was in good working order.

11.2. East Bilney Noticeboard. Councillor MacArthur informed the meeting that he had now completed the varnishing of this Noticeboard. Councillor Howard stated that the lock on this noticeboard and the lock on the Beech Road Noticeboard were difficult to unlock. Councillor MacArthur would look at them to see if they could be lubricated to work better or if replacement locks were required.

11.3. Breckland Local List for discussion. Councillor Billings informed the meeting that this related to the documents which were required when submitting a planning application. He did not see anything controversial in it therefore nothing to object to.

11.4. Community Asset Transfer for discussion. This was discussed and all Councillors agreed that Beetley Parish Council should not accept the offer from Breckland Council of taking on the maintenance etc., of the pieces of land which Breckland Council owned in Beetley. Councillor Richmond proposed and Councillor Lawton seconded this resolution. The Clerk would inform Breckland Council of this decision.

11.5. Beetley Common update. The Clerk informed the meeting that pictures (received from Aaron Brown NWT Officer) of the work which his volunteer group had carried involving the stripping off as much of the organic layer to help the seed bank regenerate had been circulated to all Councillors. A meeting will take place with Aaron Brown the NWT Officer and the Clerk on Wednesday 24th June at 10 a.m. at the Common and hopefully as many Councillors as possible would also attend. The Clerk will remind the Councillors of this meeting nearer the time.

12. **Matters for next meeting (not for discussion).** Councillor Billings requested that the shed on the Village Hall playing field is included on the May agenda.
13. **To confirm the next meeting of Beetley Parish Council will be held on Thursday 14th May 2026 7.30 p.m. this will be the Annual Parish meeting and the Annual Parish Council meeting will follow. These are one week later than normal. They will be held at Beetley and East Bilney Village Hall High House Road Beetley.**

The meeting closed at 20.46.

Signed as a true and accurate record.....

Robert Richmond

Date signed.....

14th May 2026