

Shouldham Parish Council

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Shouldham Parish Council held on
Monday 20th March 2025 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.**

Present:

Parish Councillors: Nigel Walsh (Chair), Keith Matthews, Pallavi Devulapalli, Sarah Sheldon, Geoff Hipperson, John Carman, and Claire Atterbury.

Proper Officer/RFO: Mike Inder.

Apologies: C. Cllr Jim Moriarty.

In attendance:

Public: None.

33/25 **Introduction and apologies for absence:** Cllr Walsh opened the meeting and apologies were accepted.

34/25 **Declarations of interest:** None.

35/25 **Public forum:** A resident queried item 44/25 and expressed concern about removing hedges; the saplings and suckers concerned were clarified as damaging the fence and obstructing the fence as well as not being the established hedge and trees that are on the boundary of the Rhubarb field. The legislation regarding not cutting hedges during the bird nesting season was clarified as not applicable where PRow is obstructed, or the growth is causing a highways obstruction or damage to property. Concerns regarding traffic management and PRow access during the development on the Rhubarb field was also expressed, the Chair explained that the planning consent came with conditions that would be monitored and reported to the Planning Enforcement Officer if they are not followed.

36/25 **Consideration of planning applications, decisions and appeals:**

a. Applications:

i. [25/00385/O](#) |Outline Application: Proposed Self Build Dwellings|Philmar 44 Westgate Street: Council decision was to unanimously to object: Material matters cited by Cllrs included:

- Outside of the development Boundary.
- Unsustainable (employment, schools, public transport, shops and amenities)
- Water Management (Sewerage capacity and surface water management)
- Traffic and access for emergency vehicles and lack of pavement on Westgate St.
- Development allocations in the Local Plan already exceeded (by 5 homes)
- Loss of open greenspace in the centre of the village.

Cllr Carman expressed a concern that the current anomaly in housing stock delivery between the BC and Govt is cited in the Planning application as a reason to permit the development, this has been broadly accepted that the stats used to calculate the delivery by central govt was flawed and the BC has already had an appeal refused on those ground. However, it was proposed by Cllr Carman, seconded by Cllr Atterbury, and agreed to ask Borough Cllr Devulapalli to call in the application to the Planning Committee if the Planning Office was minded to approve it.

ii. No late notice applications.

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- b. Decisions: None.
- c. Planning Appeals and Enforcement updates:
 - i. [23/00296/UNOPDE](#) | Alleged Unauthorised Operational Development | Labyrinth 9 Westgate Street Shouldham King's Lynn Norfolk PE33 0BN. Appeal [APP/V2635/C/23/3333470](#) in progress, No event date arranged.

37/25 **To agree the minutes of the previous meeting:** The draft minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 17th Feb 2025 were posted and circulated ahead of the meeting. Cllr Matthews proposed the minutes as a true reflection of the meeting, seconded by Cllr Atterbury and accepted.

38/25 **To consider Co-option to fill the Casual Vacancy.** No applications received; Cllrs encouraged to recruit.

39/25 **Borough and County Council members' reports:** County and Borough Cllr Moriarity provided a report by email that was circulated to Cllrs in advance. The report included update on the Devolution consultation and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), how the various Councils' debt would be dealt with through the LGR process, The County Council budget key facts and is attached for info at Annex A.
A Borough Council report was provided by Cllr Devulapalli giving further insight into the Devolution Bill and LGA re-organisation. A new Garden Wildlife competition was also notified, and she asked for the Council to support its publicity.

40/25 **Financial Matters:**

- a. Payments at Annex B: Proposed by Cllr Carman, seconded by Cllr Sheldon and approved.
- b. Accounts internal monitoring: Cllr Sheldon conducted a reconciliation sample check.
- c. Cllr Hipperson proposed a switch of energy supplier at end of fixed term period to the Scottish Power 37 mth fixed term, seconded by Cllr Carman and agreed.
- d. Bank Mandate amendment update: the Clerk has provided the partly pre-filled forms for the PC and KGV accounts. The PC one can be returned to the Clerk and the KGV one is to be circulated to the Cllrs' whose details and signatures are required, then returned to the Clerk.
- e. The Members Allowance update was provided and Cllr Devulapalli proposed to adopt the BC independent report's recommendations, seconded by Cllr Hipperson and agreed. The Council will need to determine the approach to administration if claimed in the future.

41/25 **Clerk's report and correspondence requiring further consideration:**

- a. Report on Vandalism of Playing Field public toilets CoSHH locker. The Clerk has repaired the locker and reported the theft of some paper towels and a couple of bottles of bleach. Spare keys for the Football Club and cleaner have been sourced to lock the toilets should the vandalism, theft and abuse of the facilities be repeated, until then they will continue to be monitored.
- b. Council Laptop and MS365 subscription: The clerk explained the need for a replacement as the current one's performance and support is no longer fit for purpose. An options report was provided, and it was proposed to purchase the new Acer with a 3 yr extended guarantee and auto renewing MS365 Apps for Business package supplied by RLS Computer Services.

42/25 **Flooding & Sewage:**

- a. Cllr Walsh reported on the outcome and actions of the Feb meeting.

- 43/25 **Beacon:** Cllr Walsh reported that the Ents Ctte and SCE were in discussions and that he had been in touch with the BC and other authorities for relevant permissions. The location is still to be agreed and siting the beacon for the VE80 Day event was suggested to be held on the field adjacent to the Church, this would be outside of the PC's responsibilities and the Shouldham Ents would be responsible for the insurance and risk assessment and management.
- 44/25 **To receive reports from Clerk and Cllrs for on-going matters:**
- b. To consider quotes for removal of self-set trees on Lamsons Lane. Cllr Walsh reported that he was still chasing for quotes.
 - c. To receive an update on permissions for the planting of the heritage oak tree from the PCC/Diocese. Cllr Atterbury reported that the process for gaining permission was painfully slow without a Church Warden in place.
 - d. Telephone kiosk adoption: Nothing to report.
- 45/25 **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group update:** The Steering Group provided a report that the process was nearing the public consultation phase, and that grant had been spent in full to fund the work since Oct 24. A vote of thanks for the good work was given.
- 46/25 **Highways, Traffic & Parking:**
- a. Posts on the Green: Project complete. Cllr Hipperson was authorised to submit an invoice for the expenses incurred for the use of the farm manpower and machinery. A vote of thanks was given to those involved in the installation. Cllr Walsh, having monitored the green at School Run times reported that the posts were doing the job intended in discouraging dangerous and anti-social parking, although there would inevitably be the occasional issue, but the Council has no jurisdiction to act on those matters identified.
 - b. SAM2: nothing significant to report, analysis on the website.
- 47/25 **Play Park and KGV Playing Field:**
- a. The Clerk reported the warranty work on the roundabout by Wicksteed is complete. He also reported that he is finding it difficult to obtain quotes for the servicing of the zip slide, further research to find a compliant solution at a reasonable cost is on-going.
- 48/25 **Local Government Reorganisation:** To determine a collective Council devolution consultation response. After debating it was agreed to use the report provided by the Clerk and for Cllr Devulapalli to add or amend using her more informed Borough Cllr information.
- 49/25 **Proposal to hold an Act of Remembrance on the Green around the 11 Nov.** Cllr Atterbury reported that she was working on the detail with Cllr Sheldon and provided and insight on the intent. Deferred awaiting developed proposal.
- 50/25 To receive Cllr reports for items arising after the publishing of the agenda and to receive items for the agenda for the next Parish Council meeting.
- a. Play Equipment Inspection quotes.
 - b. April and May meeting dates to be rescheduled to conflict with the Easter weekend and Cllr availability for the Annual Meeting and election of Chair.
- 51/25 Cllr Carman proposed to resolve to move to exclude the public and press in accordance with the Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960, seconded by Cllr Atterbury.
- 52/25 **Staffing:** The interview panel cllrs gave their recommendations and the successful candidate for appointment as clerk/RFO was agreed, Cllr Walsh will contact the candidates to inform them accordingly.

53/25 Meeting closed at 9.30pm .

Chair

Date

Prepared by
Mike Inder, Parish Council Clerk & RFO

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Annex A

Devolution consultation

The 'devo deal' for Norfolk will create a new directly elected Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk – technically known as a 'Mayoral Combined Authority'. What that means is that we all get to vote on who the Mayor will be and their work will be shared by appointed representatives from the 'top tier councils' in Norfolk and Suffolk. For now those top tier authorities are Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils. If LGR goes ahead they will be the new unitary councils.

The Mayor will have powers over various strategic issues like transport planning and the allocation of housing that are currently with the government.

You can read more and have your say on the plans through this link:

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/38871/Norfolk-devolution-and-local-government-reform-updates>

Local Government Reorganisation

Alongside the devolution deal there is an expectation from the government that Norfolk and Suffolk will come up with a new structure for local government. This will replace existing County and District Councils with a single tier of councils across the area.

The government says it expects the new councils to have a population of at least 500,000 people. Since the population of Norfolk is just under 1 million and Suffolk is about 700,000, that would mean two (or at most three) councils. Norfolk County Council favours two councils – one for Norfolk and one for Suffolk.

The District Councils across Norfolk are working together to come up with an alternative plan. Norwich (and the Labour Party) are hoping they can persuade the government to accept councils with less than 500,000 population so that a Norwich (or Greater Norwich) council can be made a Unitary council. Initial proposals have to be with the government by 31 March. Final proposals have to be with the government by September.

The Deputy Prime Minister has said in Parliament that the County Council elections (originally to be this May) will be postponed for one year. However, she also said the reason for scrapping the elections was to avoid the expense of holding elections for councils that will cease to exist. Problem is, no one expects the government to be ready to hold elections for the new councils within a year so either they will have to extend the term of County Councillors by two years or they will have to hold elections for a council that will cease to exist 12 months later.

So, anyway, things will be a little bit clearer by 21st March and a little bit more clear by September. My hope is that things move quickly and that we have a unitary council for our area that is smaller than Norfolk County Council so that we can all feel that the issues we care about are dealt with by a council that recognises who we are and where we live. I also hope the councillors that are elected have the idea and ambition to create councils that work really well for local people.

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Debt

It's unfortunate that media stories circulated that LGR would land North Norfolk residents with a share of the County Council's debt. The question has been asked about this in the County Council's Scrutiny Committee and the official in charge of the budget confirmed my assumption: that the debt is rather like mortgage debt, not credit card debt. So, although it is a lot of money it is backed by assets which will transfer to the new councils along with the debt.

The County Council's budget

The County Council continues to have to save large amounts of money from its budget in part because of growing demand for services and cuts to government funding. At the 'Scrutiny Committee' where we examined the budget, I asked what success the council had had in making savings in the past (as against just being bailed out by the government which happens most years). It was asked what they are going to do about needing to save hundreds of millions of £ in the next five years too. We didn't get answers to either question but will keep asking. For information, the key points from the council's budget are:

Key facts and figures from Norfolk County Council Budget

- Gross budget: Norfolk County Council has a gross expenditure budget of £2.2 billion (£1.7 billion excluding schools).
 - We spend over £700 million in Adult Social Care, £367m in Children's Services (non-schools), £283m in Infrastructure, £44m in Communities and Environment and £46m in Fire.
- Net Budget: The council has a net budget for 2025-26 of £572m. This is the amount we raise in council tax to fund the services we provide.
- Budget growth: The 2025-26 budget provides growth of £121m, including
 - £31m of inflationary pressures
 - £35m Legislative pressures (including increase in National Living Wage) and the cost of increased Employers National Insurance
 - £15m demand and demographic pressures
 - Budget growth of over £25m to fund recurrent 2024-25 overspends in Adult and Children's Services.
- Funding and savings: At the same time as £121m cost pressures, funding has only increased by £32m. Government has abolished Rural Services Delivery Grant and diverted funding from rural areas to metropolitan areas. To balance the position, the 2025-26 budget includes savings of £45m.
- Council tax: For 2025-26, an increase of 4.99%, including an increase of 3% for general council tax, and 2% for the Adult Social Care precept.
 - A Band D household will pay £1,755.63 per year, or approximately £34 a week, for county council services in 2025-26.

Norfolk County Council 2025-26 council tax bands:

A - £1,170.42

B - £1,365.49

C - £1,560.56

D - £1,755.63

E - £2,145.77

F - £2,535.91

G - £2,926.05

H - £3,511.26

Additional hazardous waste days at Norfolk's recycling centres

The county council's agreed budget includes money to hold an extra series of household hazardous waste events.

The events will take place at seven recycling centres this spring and are in addition to the usual events which take place in the autumn.

Customers must use the [recycling centre booking system](#) to attend the free of charge events, which will be held throughout April and May 2025. Bookings are expected to open a week before each event.

The spring hazardous waste events will be held on:

4 and 5 April at King's Lynn

A list of what can be disposed of at the hazardous waste days can be found [here](#).

Annex B

Payment Authorisation

Date	PAYEE NAME	DETAILS	REF NO	CHEQUE NO / BACS	GROSS AMOUNT
01/03/2025	British Gas	Pavilion Electricity 10361287	133	DD	44.33
06/03/2025	Pozitive Energy	The Green 40496720257479666 Feb	134	DD	18.83
18/03/2025	HMRC	PAYE mth 12	135	BACS	81.00
28/03/2025	M Inder	Salary Mar	136	BACS	324.08
10/03/2025	M Inder	Allowance and Expenses Mar	137	BACS	94.60
10/03/2025	Tamar Telecommunications	Virtual Telephone 4146276	138	DD	6.94
31/01/2025	Brightaway Cleaning Co Ltd	Toilet Cleaning Nov 0006	139	BACS	153.60
12/03/2025	CCPlanning	NHP Planning consultancy INV-0707	140	BACS	4,230.00
13/03/2025	CCPlanning	NHP Planning consultancy INV-0726	141	BACS	420.00

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