

Minutes of Bradenham Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 10th February 2026 in the Village Hall at 7.30pm

Teresa Frost, Steven Parker, Michael Bell, Neil Fegan James Ruppert and Vicky Hunter-Lines with the Clerk Dee Ruppert. Helen Crane (District Councillor) plus 2 Residents.

APOLOGIES – Ed Connolly (County Councillor) and Peter Bates (District Councillor)

The minutes of the last meeting were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any interest in the following items on the agenda. Steve Parker and James Ruppert are a part of the High Grove Opposition Group.

Dispensation is granted to all Parish Councillors in order to discuss the Precept and other financial matters.

Helen Crane – District Councillor

At the Cabinet meeting on 15 December, members set out their priorities for devolution. Long-term investment, improved strategic planning, and stronger local accountability for residents and businesses were highlighted as key priorities within the devolution process.

The election of a Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk has been postponed until 2028. Despite this, local government reorganisation will still be implemented across Norfolk, whether this results in one, two, or three unitary councils.

Bin collections may be delayed due to adverse weather conditions and staff illness. If your bin has not been collected on your usual day, please leave it out and it will be collected as soon as possible. Residents can sign up for service alerts on the Breckland Council website to receive the latest updates for their area.

Council Tax and Budget-At cabinet on 11th January the Council tax was set for Breckland Council, an increase of £4.95 per year for a band D property. This means that a band D property will pay £124 total per year. Some 70% residents are in lower bands and will therefore pay less. Breckland remains the lowest Council tax area in England. The draft Budget was announced, which is balanced with no loss of service.

A new food waste collection service will be implemented in mid-2026 as part of a Government-led initiative on recycling. Further information about the service will be made available as we get nearer to the starting date, and residents will receive food waste caddies and bins ahead of the service starting. This service will be phased in by area.

Car Parks-The process for handing over some car parks to the Town Councils has begun, enabling car parking to remain in local control after LGR. Swaffham having previously not wanted the car-parks has recently decided to look to take on 2 in the town. The process is complicated and had various options, each town having to demonstrate the social and economic need as set out in legislation for handing something over at nil cost.

Small sites in towns and villages are also being offered at nil cost before local government reorganisation takes place.

Teresa read out the report from Peter Bate - District Councillor

During the meeting on the 22nd January there was less to talk about, and I think it will diminish further as we get closer to Breckland's demise. A question was asked about the removal of Breckland bridge from the agenda and why it had to be bailed out to the tune of half a million pounds. The ruling party blamed the government and the imposition of LGR. They were very defiant that they had made all the right decisions. Defiance seems to be the attitude when they are backed into a corner.

A question was asked about street wardens in Dereham as there are none at present. Dereham town council are not prepared to work in partnership with Breckland to achieve this was the reply. Street wardens seem to work well in Thetford.

It was suggested that a letter should be written to the government expressing the opinion that we do not want local elections postponed. The letter had already been written but not shared with the council.

PUBLIC SESSION- No questions were asked

MATTERS ARISING

Parish Council Vacancy

Clerk informed the PC that only one resident applied for the vacancy did not qualify because of existing regulations. According to Breckland's rules, you are not required to have lived at the same address for the whole of the 12 months before the day on which you are nominated, but you must have lived in the same parish area, or within three miles of it, during the whole of those 12 months.

RWE - Update and RWE Meeting

The meeting to be held in March between the PC and RWE has now been cancelled. RWE can confirm that High Grove Solar has received confirmation of a 'Gate 2 Phase 2' offer from NESO. This means that High Grove will be offered a connection date between 2031 and 2035. The precise connection date will be confirmed by NESO later this year.

Opposition Group Update

Steve Parker – Good news that the National Grid is not confirming that any connection will be made to the proposed development and that may not even occur until 2031 to 2035. Overall, installing the solar factory on farmland is a very bad decision by the government.

We are still planning to have a meeting for the village so that Paul and Tracy can explain what living near to a solar factory is really like. We are looking at March/April 2026.

Picnic Bench in Playarea

James Ruppert – I have looked at the bench and what myself and Steve will need is a product similar to Timbabuild repair resin. Costs between £35 to £50. Not sure how much we will need to purchase. Hoping to do this in April, weather permitting. It was agreed that this would be cheaper than replacing the picnic table at present.

Assertion 10 + gov.uk email address and Policies

Clerk reported – The course was conducted via Zoom and explained that due to new Audit rules, we need to demonstrate compliance for both internal and external audit requirements. The core requirements are Email management compliance, Website accessibility standards FOI and transparency duties, Data protection responsibilities and IT policy requirements

The auditor may check to see that we are complying

It was important that the Clerk should have a gov.uk email. The clerk has already applied for this via Parish Online and this is a free email address. The new email will be clerk@bradenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk The Parish Councillors do not legally require one at present. If we need to do this there will be a cost for each address and an annual fee.

New policies were emailed to all the PC and it was agreed to upload these to the parish website. Review of Standing Order, Code of Conduct – Teresa reported, I have reviewed the policies and will send these to the clerk to look through and then they will be sent to all PC members for approval

CORRESPONDENCE

Coffee Truck

On green car park (near Cricket Club)– Joe Sandell a resident was present at the meeting and asked if this would be possible at weekends. 'I already have all the certification required plus license to trade. More than happy to bring along my own bin'. PC chairman Teresa will speak to the cricket club, who already provide their own refreshments. It would be good to work around the other groups in the village.

No final decision was given.

Community Land Transfer

Due to local government reorganisation, Breckland District Council is reviewing their land assets. They are asking all PCs if they would like to take ownership of land within their parish boundaries. All PCs were sent the email plus a map of the land. Teresa informed the PC that the land at present is mowed occasionally by Tufts as a goodwill gesture. The households that back onto the land use it so that they can park at the back of their homes. It is a fairly thin piece of land. The PC decided they would not be interested in taking ownership.

Zurich Insurance

Renewal – 9th February 2026. This year £1311.65 increase of £20.72 – Approved by the PC via email. Needed to be paid before 10th February 26

Tree Cutting on Green

Clerked arrange for two quotes. The PC agreed to hiring The Norfolk Arborist Ashill Cost £2088.00. Work will take two days 14th & 15th April.

Village Hall – Pot holes on Carpark – Email received from Village Hall. The carpark is the responsibility of the Parish Council. There are several holes that are a potential hazard to vehicle and pedestrians. The PC agreed that this should be repaired and Teresa will give the Clerk a few contacts to ring for quotes.

Breckland Mindful Village Project

This is a part of Brecklands Communities Programme and is a community led approach to mental health. The criteria for becoming a mindful village includes a minimum of two trained community champions. We have already had one resident Carolyn Brown, volunteer for the position. Carolyn is a retired mental health nurse. Vicky Hunter-Lines also agreed to volunteer. The Clerk will contact Carolyn and also let Vicky have her email.

Ed Connolly - County Council

Ed resigned as our councillor on 28th Jan 2026. He felt that resigning would then trigger a by-election to enable democracy and he will not be standing.

The Clerk emailed Ed and thanked him for all his hard work over the years and the help he has given the Village, Parish Council and the Clerk. We wish him all the best.

Bus Shelter

Richardson Trucks- Wayne spoken to Teresa regarding installing a bus shelter on the green after seeing several children waiting for the school bus in the rain. Wayne said if the PC supplied the structure he would have it installed at no cost. The PC decide to not go ahead with this. We would have to get planning, insurance etc. Also we do not have any bus shelters in the village and if we installed one would we then have requests for other areas in the village.

PLANNING

APPLICATION :-

Demolition of existing outbuildings and erection of new double garage with workshop and store, with annex accommodation above (Ancillary) and external staircase, by J Grey-1 Ivy Cottage, Hale Road - **NO OBJECTION**

Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for a Proposed Use or Development Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) Proposed Single Storey Extension to Rear by Miss G Saunders 41 Church St-**NO OBJECTION**

Proposed General purposed building(Hay/Straw/Machinery) Phase Two Wyrley Farm Swan Lane Shipdham by Mr & Mrs Rowlings - **NO OBJECTION - agreed at the meeting**

APPROVAL :- None

APPEAL:- Proposed New agricultural Barn by J & A Fish & Smith Corner Cottage West End

FINANCE:-

Opening Balance Lloyds Account - £11462.47

Expenditure

CPRE-Monthly Membership-Nov	5.00
NPTC – Audit Course – Clerk	43.20
Clerks Wages	236.12
PAYE	21.00
CPRE-Monthly Membership-Dec	5.00
Zurich Insurance +Playarea inspection	1311.65
CPRE-Monthly Membership-Jan	5.00

£ 1626.97

Income

Cricket Club Fee 350.00

£ 350.00

Balance £ 10185.50

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Steve Parker is very disappointed that the County elections will not be going ahead and he felt that we should write to the government to express that our democracy was being taken from us. He drafted a letter and if approved we could send. Teresa Frost abstained from the vote due to her position at Norfolk County Council. The rest of the PC did not like the tone of the letter. James Ruppert agreed to rewrite. It was agreed this would be best.

NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 12th May 2026

Meeting Ended – 9.22pm