

RYBURGH

Parish Council

MINUTES

24th June 2026

RYBURGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

Present:- Cllr. Chris Weston, Cllr. Chris Buxton, Cllr. Glenn McCarthy, Cllr. Rebecca Kelly, Cllr Emily Gould.

Phil Chapman (Clerk)

2 members of the public.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

A member of the public asked about progress with the notice board for the end of the village. It was noted that contact details had been passed on for collection of the board, but the councillor dealing with the matter was not present.

A member of the public raised concern about hedges and vegetation growing over pavements, including near Ebenezer Cottage and along the Manor House stretch. It was noted that landowners and householders are responsible for cutting back vegetation which obstructs the highway or pavement. Councillors noted that overgrown hedges were becoming a practical obstruction in some locations. It was agreed that a polite first approach should be taken. Chair would conduct a village walk-round of the discussed areas and polite letters to properties where vegetation is obstructing pavements or visibility.

COUNCILLORS REPORTS

- a) Cllr Victoria Holliday attended and spoke to her circulated report (attached below). Key points included the Crisis Resilience Service, social tariff broadband support, Anglian Water support for people with medical conditions, the new dental school at UEA, NHS 111 urgent dental appointments, summer reading and holiday activities, SEND reform, recycling matters and possible grant opportunities. Councillors raised concern that some holiday activity schemes appear to be limited to children from households receiving benefits, while some working families may also struggle. Cllr Holliday agreed to make enquiries. Cllr Holliday to seek further information on holiday activity eligibility, battery guidance, fridge-freezer recycling and possible grant opportunities.

Highways matters were also discussed. It was noted that Cllr Terry Mack has been leading on highways matters for the Council and would be the most appropriate councillor to meet the Highways Officer if available.

- b) It was noted that a written report from District Cllr Mike Hankins had been received and circulated.
- c) Norfolk Constabulary did not attend and no specific Police report was received.

At 20.15 the Parish Council Meeting started.

PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Cllr Terry Mack had sent his apologies to the clerk which were noted.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

None.

3. MINUTES.

The minutes for the meeting of 13th May, 2026, were considered and **accepted** as a true record of the business conducted at the meeting and signed by the chairman. The Annual Parish Meeting minutes were also briefly checked for practical purposes. It was noted that formal approval of those minutes will take place at the next Annual Parish Meeting but the councillors were happy that they were accurate.

4. MATTERS ARISING

None, all relevant matters appear elsewhere on the agenda.

GOVERNANCE

5. VACANCIES

The Council considered councillor vacancies. It was noted that a recruitment poster had been prepared and was ready to be circulated/displayed. It was agreed that vacancy publicity should proceed.

6. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2025/26.

- 6.1. The Clerk/RFO reported that the internal audit had been completed and that the Council had passed. It was noted that the only substantive recommendation/comment related to councillor and clerk training. The Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26 was **received** and noted.
- 6.2. The Council considered whether to certify itself as exempt from a limited assurance review for 2025/26, the Council's gross income and gross expenditure both being below £25,000. It was **resolved** to approve the Certificate of Exemption 2025/26 and to authorise the Chairman and Clerk/RFO to sign it.
- 6.3. The Council considered Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2025/26. It was **resolved** to approve Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 and to authorise the Chairman and Clerk to sign it.
- 6.4. The Council considered Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2025/26, previously signed by the RFO. It was **resolved** to approve Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2025/26 and to authorise the Chairman to sign it.
- 6.5. It was noted that the year-end bank reconciliation as at 31st March 2026 had previously been approved at the April meeting. It was **resolved** to approve the year-end bank reconciliation for publication with the AGAR documents.
- 6.6. The Council considered the explanation of variances. It was noted that the main variance related to the increase in precept, which had been agreed during the year to rebuild reserves and place the Council on a more sustainable footing. It was **resolved** to approve the explanation of variances for publication.
- 6.7. The Council considered the asset register figure for inclusion in Section 2, Box 9 of the Accounting Statements. It was noted that the figure had increased by £1 due to the accounting treatment of the phone box, which is recorded at original cost rather than

current value. It was **resolved** to approve the asset register figure for inclusion in Section 2, Box 9.

6.8. The arrangements for the exercise of public rights were noted and **approved**. It was noted that the period would start on Friday 26th June, finish on Thursday 6th August and include the required number of working days in July.

6.9. It was **resolved** to authorise the Clerk/RFO to submit the Certificate of Exemption to PKF Littlejohn and to publish the required AGAR documents on the Council website.

7. TRAINING

The Council discussed councillor and clerk training, following the internal auditor's comment. Councillors discussed possible group training, although it was noted that this would require a clear subject and sufficient attendance. It was explained that local council responsibilities differ from private business or employment responsibilities, as councillors act for the public and within a statutory framework. It was **agreed** that the Clerk should identify suitable courses and bring forward recommendations. Possible priorities included data protection/privacy, finance controls, chairmanship for relevant councillors, and training on understanding the role of the Clerk.

PROJECT UPDATES.

8. YOUTH CLUB

The Council reviewed the youth club project following the final publicity and the deadline for expressions of interest and volunteers. It was noted that publicity had appeared in the local publication and on Facebook, but that there had been no meaningful response and no volunteers had come forward. Councillors expressed disappointment but accepted that the project could not proceed without volunteers. It was **resolved** that the youth club project would not proceed. It was further **resolved** that the National Lottery funding would be returned and that Crisp would be asked whether its funding could be repurposed for a similar community, youth or family activity purpose.

9. TROD PATH / BRIDGE ROAD FOOTPATH.

The Clerk reported that the project had not progressed as expected. The Council had authorised the traffic management work in April. The traffic management provider had required an account to be set up, but when chased appeared to have not actually set up the account. It was noted that the provider now appeared to require the account process to be completed again, apparently as a credit account, and that the Clerk had written to clarify the current position and what was needed to move the matter forward. The Council noted the continuing frustration caused by the formal traffic management and highways process, and the risk that the project could become tight against the extension deadline. It was also noted that contractor costs may change if the delay continues. The Council noted the update. No further formal resolution was made.

10. GRASS CUTTING

Councillors were satisfied with the current grass cutting and maintenance of village areas. It was noted that growth had been limited because of dry weather. A separate point was

raised that the metal village sign needs repainting. This was considered suitable for a volunteer to deal with using appropriate paint and was not treated as a paid contract item. No further grass cutting action was agreed.

11. COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH.

The Council received an update on Community Speed Watch. It was noted that the scheme still did not have sufficient volunteers to operate fully. Cllr Emily Gould confirmed willingness to volunteer and it was noted that Cllr Terry Mack had also indicated willingness. The Council noted that if the scheme is to progress during 2026 it would be preferable to organise it before the end of summer, as darker evenings make Speed Watch less practical. It was agreed to continue attempts to recruit volunteers.

OTHER BUSINESS

12. PLANNING.

- 12.1. Reference: **NP/26/1247**, Alternative Reference: **PP-14751471**. Highfield Farm, Highfield Lane, Great Ryburgh, Fakenham, Norfolk, NR21 7AL. Prior Notification of erection of steel portal framed general purpose agricultural building. The Council considered the application and noted that it related to an agricultural building at Highfield Farm. No concerns were raised. It was **agreed** that no comment would be submitted.
- 12.2. Reference: **PF/26/1161**, Alternative Reference: **PP-12616835**. Building B, Ryburgh House Farm, 63 Fakenham Road, Great Ryburgh, Fakenham, Norfolk, NR21 7AW. Change of use of land and agricultural buildings to mixed use of agriculture and storage and maintenance of drilling equipment, retrospective. The Council considered the application. It was noted that the use appeared to be connected to an existing farming/drilling equipment business and that councillors were not aware of local noise or traffic issues. It was **agreed** that no objection would be submitted.
- 12.3. None

13. HIGHWAYS.

The Council discussed ongoing highways issues. It was noted that individual issues should continue to be reported through the online system, but that a consolidated list should also be raised with the Highways Officer. Concerns discussed included failed or incomplete road repairs, missing white lines around the shop/Station Road area, two sunken fire hydrant covers near the shop, and flooding/drainage problems where cleaning had not resolved the issue. It was noted that the sunken hydrant covers were important because they relate to fire water infrastructure and may be struck by heavy vehicles. It was agreed that highways concerns should be consolidated and raised with the Highways Officer.

14. PARISH PLAN / NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN.

The Council considered whether the existing Parish Plan / Neighbourhood Plan documents should be reviewed. It was noted that the documents are now dated and may not fully reflect current language, future needs or the village's current planning context. Councillors discussed the difference between a simple review and a more substantial review involving possible growth locations or land allocation. It was noted that a substantial review would

require a formal process, expertise, funding and community involvement. The Council **agreed** that a review may be desirable in principle, but that a major rewrite is not currently realistic without understanding the options and implications. Clerk to prepare a brief note on the possible levels/routes of neighbourhood plan review and the implications of each when time permits.

15. CLERKS REPORT.

The Clerk reported on the Freedom of Information response from the Charity Commission concerning the fuel allotments. It was noted that the response was limited and did not appear to include all documents known to exist. The Clerk did not recommend escalating the matter or challenging the Charity Commission further at this stage, as this could take significant time and would likely not produce useful information. It was agreed that the more practical approach was to continue correspondence with both fuel allotments to clarify trustee appointments, governance and benefit to the village. It was noted that letters had been sent to both fuel allotments seeking further information. Clerk to continue correspondence with both fuel allotments and bring matters back to Council when responses are received.

FINANCE

16. FINANCE.

- 16.1. Finance Controls. The bank reconciliation was received and having been checked by the chair and Cllr Kelly was duly signed.
- 16.2. Payments made since the last meeting were **noted**, and included in the finance pack available online.
- 16.3. New Payments for approval
 - 16.3.1. NNDC – Waste Bins: £780.00.
 - 16.3.2. Norfolk ALC – Webhosting: £69.48.
 - 16.3.3. Robin Goreham – Internal Audit: £70.00.

The NNDC waste bin charge was discussed. It was noted that the village has a high number of bins for a small parish, but that this contributes to the village being clean and well-kept. The internal audit invoice was considered. The Council discussed whether to continue with the same internal auditor. It was noted that changing auditor periodically is good practice but not mandatory, and that the current auditor is cost-effective and proportionate for a small council. It was resolved to approve the listed payments.

- 16.4. Regular pre-approved payments.
 - 16.4.1. The NPower position was discussed. The Council had previously reviewed options and was moving towards a 36-month contract. It was noted that there had been difficulty completing the contract and that the supplier contact was away until 29th June. The Council **resolved** that, provided any revised price movement is modest, the Clerk/RFO should complete the contract rather than delay further.
 - 16.4.2. The Clerk's wages were noted. It was also noted that one payment had fallen off the banking system because it had not been authorised in time, and that there may be an issue with authorisation notifications not reaching authorisers consistently. The Clerk reported that PAYE payments to HMRC would be processed quarterly by

Norfolk ALC. It was noted that this should reduce administration and help ensure HMRC deadlines are met.

16.4.3. The insurance renewal was discussed. The renewal figure was noted as approximately £529.33. It was noted that the Clerk had tried to obtain alternatives or reduce the price, but that the parish council insurance market is limited. The renewal was considered reasonable given the public liability cover.

16.4.4. Hall hire payments were noted, including £45 for the May meeting and £162 for the remainder of the year, already authorised previously but to be set up for payment.

17. SAVINGS ACCOUNT.

The Clerk reported that the new savings account had been set up and was fully operational. Money had been transferred into it. ***It was noted that internal transfers between Council accounts do not require separate authorisation in the same way as external payments, because the funds remain within the Council's accounts.*** The Clerk reported that the account had been tested. Although described as a 32-day notice account, transfer timing is closer to 34 days because the day of instruction and the day of completion are not counted. It was noted that an immediate/no-notice transfer would cost approximately £9.78 on the test amount. A transfer of £4,000 had been scheduled back from savings to the current account to cover expected expenditure. It was noted that large upcoming payments, especially the trod path/Bridge Road footpath, may require cashflow planning.

18. GRANT APPLICATIONS.

The Council considered a grant application from the Memorial Hall for £500 towards a building survey. It was noted that the purpose of the survey was to identify what work is needed, support future grant applications, and provide evidence/specification for contractors. It was also noted that the overall survey cost was significantly higher than the grant requested, meaning the Memorial Hall would also be contributing its own funds. The Clerk reported that the Memorial Hall had followed the Council's grant application process and supplied the required supporting information, including bank statements and budget information. It was noted that the Memorial Hall is a central community building used by the village and by the Council. It was **resolved** to approve a grant of £500 to the Memorial Hall towards the building survey.

19. CORRESPONDENCE.

The Clerk reported routine correspondence, including general circulars and correspondence relating to coffins/history/archaeology. Fuel allotment correspondence was also noted. Letters had been sent to both fuel allotments seeking information. It was noted that Great Ryburgh Fuel Allotment had been informed that, on the current information, the Council was not in a position to support its proposal until it explained more clearly what was proposed, how it would benefit the village, and how it met the original purpose of the allotment. The Council noted the need to clarify who the trustees are for Little Ryburgh Fuel Allotment and whether the Council is the appointing body. Parish Online was briefly mentioned. It was noted that the provider had offered a 90-day trial and the Clerk had asked whether the Chair could be set up directly, potentially refreshing the trial period.

20. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDAS.

Likely items for the next agenda include: Trod Path / Bridge Road Footpath, Fuel Allotments, Parish Online, Highways follow-up, usual projects.

Meeting Closed at 20.45