

ASHWELLTHORPE AND FUNDENHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held Tuesday 16th December 2025 7:30pm
at Thorpe Hall, Ashwellthorpe

Present: S Allen (Chair)

J Ives (JI)

S Tyree (ST)

H Edwards (HE)

R Burridge (RB)

C Eastwood (CE)

District Cllr B McClenning

T Higlett Clerk

1) To consider apologies for absence

R Morris – unable to attend. Council accepted apologies

County Councillor C Rowett and District Councillor I Spratt also sent apologies.

2) Declarations of interest for items on the Agenda and Dispensations for Councillors with a Pecuniary Interest.

RB stated interest in items 6a and 8c

3) Public Open Forum

a) No public in attendance

b) Report from District Councillor available on parish council website. Cllr McClenning advised council that the mayoral elections will not take place in May 2026. The government has made the decision to defer until 2028. Elections which were due to take place in 2025 will now take place in May 2026.

c) Report from County Councillor available on parish council website

4) To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 18th November 2025.

ST advised members he was not in agreement with the minutes. Concerns that the appendices titled Council Discussion paper 6c: Traffic calming measures were not attached to the draft minutes. Clerk advised they were available on the parish council website with the draft minutes. These had not been sent to members with draft minutes. ST had also rewritten agenda item 6b and 7c, however minutes are for decisions only, they are not a verbatim record of the meeting. On page 2 ST asked if the minutes could be amended to reflect that the clerk would forward the grant application form to ST for submission and completion on behalf of the parish council.

The minutes of today's meeting (December 16th) will record the following.

That the minutes of the 18th November 2025 meeting be accepted as a true and correct record with the following amendment:

Page 2 under 'Finance To consider projects for 2026/27 and precept' include the following;

Clerk advised she would forward the relevant grant application form for completion and submission by ST to Norfolk County Council PPSchemes.

Moved: S Tyree – Seconded: S Allen - Carried

5) To receive a report on matters arising from previous Minutes.

a) Update on Trustees for Thorpe Hall

JI advised that I Spratt is now on the board of trustees. Two other people have also joined. They are also advertising for additional trustees as currently there are not eight trustees. The caretaker is very proactive with lots of ideas for fundraising and very keen for community involvement in social events.

ST advised the website is still displaying inaccurate information. This includes advising parish councillors as trustees who are no longer councillors or trustees.

ST also advised that the tennis courts fencing is also falling away from the fixing posts and needs to be refixed. Fencing is falling away from the courts and not onto them.

b) Application for Local Highways Improvements grant

ST advised that due to work required by NCC Highways and other teams at NCC, he had been granted an extension in time to allow for their work to be completed prior to submission and had submitted by the extended date following receipt of the necessary information from NCC. ST has corresponded with the Safety Committee representative to gather further information on proposed traffic calming. Options considered included a pedestrian crossing arrangement and build-outs. This option was deemed too expensive for the Parish Council to afford in the 2026/27 financial year. For a favoured single chicane, if successful in obtaining a grant, Council would need to contribute £9,300.00 which was reduced from £10,375.00. Members agreed at a previous meeting of the parish council that a chicane will be the first phase of three in implementing a traffic calming build out to one of the five potential locations on the Street and New Road. Council will need to agree the preferred location from the 5 options proposed at the meeting (diagram provided from NCC). Council will discuss the location of first traffic calming measure with interested parties.

ST thanked organisations within the village for their support which were documented within the grant application.

CE advised members that there were concerns around whether the Street should take priority over other hazardous speeding situations in the parish, viz. New Road and Church Lane. High speeds were recorded during the "speedwatch" exercise on New Road from motorists entering the Ashwellthorpe village 30 mph limit zone. Church Lane connects the main road (B1113 Turnpike) to Fundenhall village, and is derestricted i.e. speed limit is 60 mph. There are no footpaths and yet there is foot traffic by school children from the village walking to and from the main road in poor light. ST advised that this could be addressed at another time when grant funding is available. There has been concerns with New Road in the past, in particular the speed of vehicles. Whipps Lane and Church Lane known as quiet lanes, areas of concern for people living in Fundenhall. Consensus was that The Street has more volume of traffic than New Road.

ST advised he witnessed an incident on the Street recently, where a vehicle drove into the back of a parked vehicle. This happened quite early in the morning.

6) Responding to and working with other bodies.

a) Tasway Solar Farm

Council in receipt of an email from Tasway Solar Farm advising they had been awarded a Gate 1 offer. This means when capacity becomes available in the region, they would be eligible to accept a full grid connection offer. Their project team will now be reviewing next steps for the Tasway programme and how this outcome will affect them. Members felt that this was contradicting what was originally stated as they were to connect to the National grid.

Members will have to wait for correspondence for planning. Cllr McClenning advised that the Local MP is taking a keen interest.

7) Finance

- a) To note councils current financial standing.

Community account balance £10,032.29

- b) Payments.

T Higlett – December Salary £313.50

HMRC – period 9 £76.00

Omache Gardens - £357.50

Autela Payroll - £87.00

St Nicholas Church Fundenhall £250.00

All Saints Church, Ashwellthorpe - £250.00

TT Jones Electrical - £54.41

These were all agreed

- c) To agree on budget for 2026/27

Council unanimously agreed to include within projects the sum of £7900.00 towards highways improvements. The council will need to meet its obligations and this would see an increase on last year's budget by £12892.00. The increase will give council a working balance and a contingency for unexpected costs throughout the year. Council also discussed future requirements for asset depreciation and proposed this to be addressed when council have appointed a new clerk.

All in favour of approving budget for 2026/27.

- d) To agree the precept for 2026/27

Council discussed financial commitments to the year-end which currently stand at £8654.00. This includes Community Infrastructure Levy of £1448.10 and balance of 'Go For It' grant of £90.47. Members spoke of their concerns around the increase in precept for 2026/27. The council's feelings is the planned highways improvements, and the opportunity for funding on safety measures should be implemented. While any increase in precept can raise concerns among residents these improvements have been considered essential.

With unforeseen expenditure council agreed to set the precept at £31682.00. This would see a band D charge of £85.40.

- e) Appointment of Auditor for 2025/26

R Goreham has confirmed he will be available to carry out parish council's audit.

8) Asset management

- a) Pond maintenance

JL advised that she had met with Omache Gardens to discuss clearing the vegetation within the pond. They will need to establish the depth and what equipment will be required. This will happen early part of 2026.

- b) War memorial

The Chair and JL both stated they had contacted contractors with a view to carrying out an assessment on the state of the memorial but to date no response.

- c) Wildlife survey on Parish owned land.

Council had expected member of public to be in attendance to speak to council regarding this. Council proposed including on next agenda.

9) Date of next meeting- 20th January 2026 at Thorpe Hall

This was the clerks last meeting. Members thanked her for the work she had done for them whilst in their employment. Council to date had not received any applications for the role of clerk. Going forward council may have to source a locum clerk until someone is appointed.

Meeting closed at 21:30.