Pre-Meeting Business: None

Public Participation: a) A parishioner asked if bin lorries were assessing 'phone coverage capacity and, if this is so, how will the District Council use the data. Mr. Bambridge said that he was unaware of this particular news but a certain amount of money had been previously allocated (about £950K) with an aim of improving services. The mast in North Elmham is a 02 mast and the experience of parishioners, in general, was that it is of very little use to the mobile 'phone users of other companies.

b) Dr. Peter Wade-Martins stressed that he was attending as the church Fabric Officer and not as a member of the Parochial Church Council. The Parish Council had previously challenged the grounds for closure (minutes 5th March, 2025, item 312) but Dr. Wade-Martins gave his views on the various matters raised involving headstones, walls and trees. He suggested that a further meeting should be held between the Parish Council and the Parochial Church Council.

NORTH ELMHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the

MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

held in the Pavilion at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday 2nd April, 2025

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321 Those Councillors Present Were:

Mr. P. Grainger (Chairman), Mr. M. Phillips (Vice Chairman), Miss A. Ferris, Mr. T. Fitzalan Howard, Mr. B. Gee, Mr. F. Gillespie, Mrs. A. Keeble, Mr. N. Markwell, Mr. M. Rayner, Mr. C. Smith and Mr. J. Sowinski.

Also in Attendance: Mr. K. Webb (Clerk), Mr. G. Bambridge (District Councillor) and two parishioners.

322 Apologies for absence:

None

323 To Receive Declarations of Interest:

The Chairman reminded the meeting that, should the occasion arise, interests should be declared by Councillors as soon as this was realised, and the interest should be minuted.

324 Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday, 5th March, 2025:

Resolved to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record. Agreed by all, (proposed by Mr. Phillips and seconded by Mrs. Keeble).

UPDATED INFORMATION AND MATTERS ARISING

325 Land Management Matters (item 297)

(a) Village Green It is planned for the piece of equipment known as the camel to be returned to the Play Area. It probably requires a concrete pad and it will need to be established that any arrangement satisfies Health and Safety rules. Quotations are to be obtained for any necessary work. Mr. Rayner had noticed that grass is coming through the safe areas which were laid about a year ago. The grass has recently been cut on both the Village Green and the Play Area. It has been noted that this grounds maintenance work is of a good standard. Mr. Gee reported that some young children appear to be building a den.

(b) Cathedral Ruins Nothing to report.

(c) Cathedral Meadows Nothing to report.

(d) Broom Green The state of the pond is to be monitored.

(e) Millennium Wood (and Jubilee Wood) Mr. Sowinski reported that the gate into the wood is broken. Five more trees have been cut down and he is shortly to meet with the contractor regarding replacement fencing. There is a small fence in front of the bigger fence. There is a problem with deer tending to jump over it and getting stuck between the two. It was agreed to remove the small fence. In addition, the squares making up the fence are rather large and there have been occasions where deer have caught their heads in the fence.

(f) Bridleway on disused railway line and other railway linked matters Nothing to report.

(g) Prince William Wood Mr. Markwell reported that a dead tree, (approximately 50 feet high), had fallen against another tree. A contractor is to examine this and recommend the best course of action. In addition, all other trees are to be looked at.

(h) Church Meadow Nothing to report.

326 Allotments (item 298)

Mr. Phillips said that there are a number of potholes and there is the intention of levelling the surface.

327 Street Lights (item 299)

Nothing to report.

328 Highway Matters (item 300)

There has been no further news regarding the temporary bus stop near the County School Station junction. As previously reported, the Parish Partnership road safety application for £15,668 has been successful (Parish Council/Norfolk County Council 50% contribution each). There appears to be a dispute regarding a road sign on the Station Road development and the ownership of the land on which it is planned to be placed. It is believed that the District Council may well be dealing with this matter.

329 Pavilion and Playing Field (item 301)

A window in the pavilion has been smashed. A new piece of polycarbonate has been purchased and is to be fitted. Breckland Council have expressed a desire to take on the contract for the trade waste bin. It was agreed by all to retain the current arrangement with Biffa as the costs indicated by both the service providers are very similar. The wage rate of the pavilion cleaner is to be increased from £11.44 to £12.21 per hour in accordance with statutory requirements. The volunteers are to repaint the bus shelter, using anti-graffiti paint. The cost, including the ceiling, will be in the region of £305 (including VAT). Proposed by Mr. Phillips and seconded by Mr. Smith. All in favour.
The flint wall, built in the 1840's, at the top of the Playing Field has been vandalised. A month ago, a small hole appeared. This has now grown to an opening measuring some four feet by four feet. It is estimated that the cost to repair the damage will be in the region of £3K to £4K. It is suggested that some Heras fencing should be erected on the Parish Council land in front of it. A distance of some twenty metres would be needed at a cost of £724 plus VAT. It was also suggested that the possibility of CCTV cameras being installed in the tennis courts area should be investigated. Mr. Smith proposed that the Heras fencing should be installed to assist in securing the area and maintaining the safety of any parishioners finding themselves in this part of the Playing Field, and to explore the possibility of providing CCTV cameras. Seconded by Miss Ferris. All in favour except Mr. Fitzalan Howard who abstained. The Chairman is to ask officials of the Tennis Club if they would like to consider a joint approach with cameras.

330 Eastgate Centre (item 302)

Nothing to report.

331 Brookside Development update (item 303)

Tom Binks of Orchard Homes has sent an e-mail advising that the car park and Eon electric meter will be handed over in the near future. The contract for signing should be available in a few days. Orchard Homes has concern that there are no fences either side of the bridge over the stream. The school wants the bridge to be opened as soon as possible. Therefore, a quotation for a basic post and rail fence, covering two metres either side of the bridge, will be obtained. A parishioner has again queried the position regarding trees in the Millennium Wood next to the property. It is acknowledged, and advice will be given, that there is a right to trim or cut any overhanging branches from adjoining land, but only up to the property boundary. The agreement to place a dog waste bin in the new car park will also be confirmed.

332 Risk Management – considerations and updates (item 304)

Nothing to report.

333 Overview of Parish Council financial situation (item 305)

Nothing to report.

334 Defibrillators (item 306)

Nothing to report.

335 Local Plan update (item 307)

Nothing to report.

336 North Elmham Living Sustainably (NELS) Group (item 309)

All members had read the report with interest. It was generally agreed that some benefit may be forthcoming if a slightly more concentrated focus on the aims of the paper could be demonstrated. Mr. Fitzalan Howard is to liaise with the author.

337 New Village Hall (item 311)

An architect valuer visited and viewed the buildings. He stated that the fabric of the pavilion is basically sound. The Eastgate Centre and Memorial Hall are candidates for commercial development. The next meeting of the committee is to take place on 28th April. Mr. Sowinski is to arrange dates for visits to be made to other halls previously detailed.

338 The future of the churchyard (item 312)

Please refer to Public Participation above (page 1, item b).
Mr. Rayner felt that paragraph 5 of the Ministry of Justice guidance notes, relating to the closure of part of a churchyard, had not been properly addressed. It will be necessary to seek the view of Breckland Council before progress can be made.

339 Parish waste bins (item 313)

Please refer to item 331.

340 North Elmham Football Club facilities

The Chairman of the Football Club, Stuart Darbyshire, said that the preferred method of providing improved facilities, should promotion to a higher league, (the Anglian Combination), be achieved, is to extend the building. It is estimated that this will cost about £20K and grants up to £15K are apparently available. The original floor plans are needed and the Chairman has given these to Mr. Darbyshire who will take a copy and return the originals. From a cost perspective, it is better to retain the existing space and not extend. There is, however, a desire from the Football Club to extend outwards with the aim of funding the project themselves. The Parish Council may be approached, at some stage, for assistance although the majority of the funding will come from grants.

341 North Elmham Living Sustainably (NELS) – Biodiversity and Sustainability Action Plan

Please refer to item 336 above.

342 Roles for Parish Council members

It was agreed to carry this matter forward to the next meeting.

343 Reports from District and County Councillors

Notice to all parishes in Upper Wensum Ward from Gordon Bambridge, District Councillor.

Please note that from 1st April 2025 for an unspecified time I will not be able to attend meetings on the evening of the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

I recognise that this may cause an amount of concern to parishes who have arranged meetings on those dates and apologise for this. I am happy to discuss with you solutions,

More generally:-

As a busy district councillor who has to juggle around 18/20 councillor related evening meetings during most months it is always difficult to fit everything in. This is of course alongside the several Breckland meetings - in addition I also usually attend every Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny and Planning meeting at Breckland, plus others where matters regarding villages in this ward are discussed and I represent the district on internal drainage matters including flooding which adds a few more to the list. There also tends to be several informal briefings which crop up, often at short notice.

In addition to these I do take training seriously, and this is particularly right in this age of fluid government rulings regarding what sort of local government we will have in the near future, and changes in planning law for example, both of which have taken several meetings in just this year so far, and all have to be read up on.

To rectify all this I am always willing to meet with parish clerks, chairmen or councillors informally at either Breckland or within your parishes to discuss matters relating to Breckland. As an alternative I am happy to meet by telephone or conduct email conversations or share a TEAMS or ZOOM conversation.

I also regularly, as do most other councillors, meet with members of the public to discuss personal matters regarding district authority which means I am in many parishes each week and it is in only in the very smallest parish that I am not on your patch at least once a month.

Can I ask that as parish clerk you ensure that every parish councillor in your parish(s) and any other interested people within your area get a copy of this notice,

Many thanks
Gordon Bambridge

Mr. Bambridge stressed the dangers presented by the very important matter of floating pennywort which is present in the Broom Green pond. It is a highly invasive plant which is a real problem for waterways. Help is available from the Drainage Board. It is recommended that dead trees are left and not removed, unless they represent a risk to safety.

344 Accounts for Payment and Schedule of Income

a) Resolved to approve the following Accounts for payment:-

23/3/25	Biffa (wheelie bin service from 22/2/25 to 28/3/25) - (d/d)	£79.80
18/3/25	E-on Next (pavilion from 1/2/25 to 28/2/25) – (d/d)	£162.76
18/3/25	Drax (street lights electricity – 1/2/25 to 28/2/25)	£214.62
2/4/25	D. Tyson (pavilion cleaning for March)	£171.60
2/4/25	Mandrake (payroll services – March, 2025)	£27.72
2/4/25	K. Webb (Clerk's pay for March)	£872.76
2/4/25	HMRC (Tax and N.I. on Clerk's pay)	£264.15
2/4/25	T. T. Jones Electrical (street light maintenance – Apr to June)	£115.00
2/4/25	J. Sowinski (Amari, Norwich – polycarbonate for pavilion)	£193.63
2/4/25	J. Sowinski (Ben Burgess – chain part)	£25.80

b) Schedule of Income:-

19/3/25	Pavilion takings	£30.00
24/3/25	North Elmham Football Club – hire of facilities	£75.00

Balances (at 31/3/25):- Current a/c - £62,468.65, Business Premium a/c - £46,730.36 (Cambridge Building Society - £82,483.96)

(Expenditure approved by all members)

345 To Consider Planning Applications and Determinations:-

a) Applications

i) Oakridge, 26 Eastgate Street – PL/2025/0347/HOU – replacement single storey rear extension - (no comments).

b) Determinations

None

Mr. Rayner had followed up two possible breaches. The situations, both at the bottom end of Eastgate Street, will continue to be monitored.

346 Correspondence

1) Note from Matthew Bernard, Communications Manager, Breckland Council regarding plans to create three unitary councils.
2) Note from Bill Borrett, County and District Councillor, regarding Norfolk's response to Local Government reorganisation.
3) Confirmation from Norfolk County Council of the granting of an award of £7,834.26 (total project cost £15,668,51) under the Parish Partnership Scheme to facilitate the introduction of additional road safety measures.
4) Norfolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan (NM&WLP) – Publication of Inspector's Report.
5) Call for Sites 2025 from the Breckland Planning Policy Team.
6) Request from Gemma Manthorpe, Breckland Planning Policy Manager, for village checklist to be checked and completed. (Completed by Mr. Phillips and to be returned, confirming accuracy).
7) Brochure and price list from Proludic Play Equipment.

347 Any Other Matters (for information only)

None

348 Agenda items for next meeting:

a) Roles for Parish Council members.

349 Next Meeting:

Wednesday, 7th May, 2025 at 7.30 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.47 p.m.

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Chairman Date