

Scarning Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2025 at Scarning Village Hall

Councillors Present: S Bunn (Chair) T Abel, M Blackburn, F Bradford, M Eveling, C Hewson, N Parsons, M Steward. **In attendance:** N Hartley (Parish Clerk), Cllr L Turner (Breckland Council), six members of the public.

Public Participation

A member of the public noted that the hedge had been cut between Black Horse Close and Hill Rise. She asked if the hedge would be cut from Hill Rise onwards. The Council noted that it paid for cutting the Black Horse Close to Hill Rise hedge due to a particular set of circumstances, and that it was up to landowners to cut their hedges.

The Council was asked when new noticeboards would be made. It was noted the Council is aiming to replace all its noticeboards in the autumn. In the meantime, it was agreed to remove the noticeboard at New Inn Lane, as it is leaning toward the road.

It was noted that the hedge at the start of Draytonhall Lane toward Welden Road may need to be cut. The Council will contact the housing consortium.

A member of the public said he was raising funds to help toward new play equipment at Blackthorn Drive. Cllr Bradford said the Council had appointed a contractor to provide new equipment and that the Council needed to apply for grants. She said the cost of the equipment is around £110,000. The Parish Council has allocated £16,000 toward the project. The Council noted the uncertainty about who will own the land after the proposed changes to the local authority.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Manning, and from Cllrs P Hewett (Breckland Council) and W Richmond (Norfolk County Council).

2 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Hewson declared an interest in any matter relating to Scarning Playing Field Committee.

3 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2025. The Chair signed the minutes.

4 Matters Arising

Cllr Blackburn corrected the statement from Norfolk County Council who said that 'not many people use the footpath from Black Horse Close.' She said the footpath was used by a large number of people. The Council will correct this with Norfolk County Council.

5 May Minutes

The Council considered a request from a resident for an amendment to the May minutes about the use of the proposed High Grove solar farm land. It was **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the resident's view.

6 Report from District Councillor

A copy of Cllr Turner's report is attached to the minutes.

7 Planning

7.1 The Council considered the following applications and made decisions as follows:-

Podmore Lane Arch Farm Podmore Lane

PL/2025/0554/OMIN

Two 4 bedroom houses and associated access drive

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council objected to the application for the following reasons:-

Overdevelopment of the site.

The Parish Council would prefer to see two smaller affordable properties on the site in line with the recommendations it made regarding the Local Plan.

The Parish Council would support an application more suitable for starter homes.

The Parish Council noted that the application states the amount of traffic will be reduced as there will no longer be car sales on the site. The Council noted that car sales had ceased over ten years ago.

The proposed properties are out of keeping with other properties on Podmore Lane.

Berm House Dereham Road

PL/2025/0632/FMIN

Conversion and extension of existing outbuilding/garage to form dwelling and erection of new garage

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council had no objection to the application.

8 Breckland Council's response to the proposed solar farms in Breckland

The Council noted that Breckland Council had made the following decision:-

Members of Breckland Council have voted in favour of undertaking a raft of activities which aim to protect rural communities, the environment and the landscape from vast solar projects, while acknowledging that there is a place for proportionate solar power schemes.

At the meeting of Full Council today (10 July), a Motion was put forward by Cllr Fabian Eagle, Ward Member for Ashill, and seconded by Cllr Lynda Turner, Ward Member for Shipdham with Scarning. The 'Save our Countryside' Motion secured cross-party support, passing with unanimous vote.

Speaking after the meeting, Cllr Eagle commented: "While we recognise the importance of renewable energy production and the role solar farms play in this, we cannot allow our district and its villages to

end up inside the UK's biggest power station by area and for the district's name to become associated with power production rather than as a beautiful geographical area.

"We're not against solar farms in general, but we must make sure their locations are strategically considered and supported by local people, they don't threaten essential farmland, and Norfolk doesn't end up picking up the energy tab for the rest of the country."

The vote means Breckland Council will oppose large-scale solar farm developments in Breckland that lack local support, threaten farmland and wildlife, or which fail to provide a local benefit.

Breckland's Members agreed to reaffirm support for local MPs George Freeman and Terry Jermy and Norfolk County Council's similar position on solar farms and, alongside other Norfolk authorities, to call for a more strategic and locally accountable approach to renewable energy development.

The Council will also write to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero to try to ensure planning decisions around solar farms and renewable energy are made locally not in London and take into account the views of local people.

Breckland is further calling for a review of energy distribution and infrastructure policy to ensure the district and county's role in energy production for the UK puts it in line for further investment and protection is put in place for the environment and Norfolk's landscapes.

9 Parish Council's submission re the Call for Sites

The Parish Council had appointed a Working Party regarding the Call for Sites. The Working Party made the following submission on behalf of the Parish Council. The Working Party comprised Cllrs Manning (Parish Council Vice Chair) Parsons and Eveling

General discussion was had on the Local Plan's merits, needs and how to inform and engage with residents of Scarning. Noted that Breckland DC intends to open a public consultation soon.

The Working Party focussed on the six questions from the recent Parish council round table event at Breckland DC

1. Which proposed sites are most suitable?

We are of the firm view that small sites should be welcomed and are needed. Large sites, namely S W Dereham, would bring huge pressure on infrastructure and services which are already stretched. Such development is likely to be unpopular with residents and users of the area e.g. Mid Norfolk Cycleway, joggers, walkers and dog owners. In addition, there is a severe lack of support services such as doctors, dentists and school places within the wider town area and this would need addressing.

2. What size houses does the village need?

We felt the most important housing need was for small starter homes of 2-3 bedrooms, for younger people especially. This should take a priority over large "executive" houses.

3. Are there community facilities that could benefit from S106 money? (This is where developers agree to provide such facilities).

On S106 money we felt that would depend upon the size of the development. SW Dereham with 1400 new homes would require major infrastructure such as schooling, GP, public transport and especially major improvements to the dangerous A47/Draytonhall intersection. We believe this is vital as it will be the first single carriageway junction after a 25-mile dual carriageway. If large areas of countryside are lost then appropriate public park and woodland should be included for children, walkers, joggers, cyclists and dogs who would lose the use of the current country lanes.

For smaller developments provision of pedestrian and cycleways e.g. Scarning Church to Scarning School to provide safe healthy travel.

4. Would the Parish Council take on extra open spaces?

Scarning PC would be happy to take on any such new facilities, subject to the appropriate funding for maintenance.

5. Could any site offer improvements to public rights of way?

Other than the footpath/cycleway above a footbridge and cycleway over the A47 at Draytonhall is urgently needed.

6. What benefits could development bring to the village?

The main benefits of any development should be to provide starter homes, safe leisure areas for residents, and adequate infrastructure and services. All without ruining what most would see as a peaceful and nice place to live.

10 Finance

10.1 The Council approved the following payments to be made in accordance with the Budget:-

N Hartley, clerk's salary, £1,000 (Standing Order)

Information Commissioner, annual subscription, £52 (Direct Debit)

N Hartley, reimbursement of Council laptop Microsoft subscription, £84.99

N Hartley, reimbursement of expenses, £174.60

N Hartley, reimbursement of office expenses, £116.22

Logic Red Website Design, website domain fee, £25

SCS Accounting, fee for internal audit, £120

Norfolk County Council, legal fees in respect of sale of Daffy Green land, £100.98

KW Services, grass cutting, £375

10.2 The Council received a report of Actual to Budgeted expenditure

11 Installation of Speed Gates

The Council had not heard back from Norfolk County Council. It was **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council will ask Norfolk County Council to supply designs and locations for the speed gates within the next three weeks to enable the Parish Council to discuss these at its August meeting.

12 Car Park (Shipdham Lane)

The Village Hall Trust asked the Parish Council four questions regarding the proposed visibility splay. In response, the Parish Council confirmed that it had ringfenced £10,200 toward the project and this was still available. With regard to the other questions, the Parish Council noted this is the Trust's project and that it should seek quotes and take responsibility for this phase of the project.

13 Repairs to the Zip Wire on Shipdham Lane Playing Field

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint NGF Play Ltd to carry out the repairs.

14 Beacon

The Council considered an email from a resident regarding the proposal to move the Beacon to Shipdham Lane Playing Field. It was **RESOLVED** to leave the Beacon where it is.

15 Trees on Shipdham Lane Playing Field

Cllr Hewson said that a number of trees on the Playing Field had suffered in the recent heat. It was **RESOLVED** to request another Tree Survey to cover the trees on the Playing Field and Council maintained trees around the parish.

16 Update on the sale of the former Highway Surveyors land at Daffy Green

The Parish Council's solicitors provided the following report:-

At present there is nothing that we can do as we are relying on both the buyers and sellers solicitors to progress the transaction. I will ask for the latest update from Sprake & Kinglsey however it will be for the conveyancing solicitors to get this over the line. The Seller's solicitors are still waiting for the Buyer's Solicitors to revert to them.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Parsons will speak with the solicitors.

17 Parish Council Communications

The Council discussed how it can best communicate with residents. It was suggested that the Council can add items of interest to its meeting notifications and make improvements to its website. It was suggested the Council could put an A board outside the Village Hall advertising the meeting a few days before meetings. It was **RESOLVED** that the Council will contact the school to send its agenda to accompany the school newsletter.

18 Items for the next agenda

The Council's communications with the public.

An update on grants for new play equipment at Blackthorn Drive.

19 Next Parish Council Meeting

The next meeting will be in the Village Hall on August 18 at 7pm.

The meeting was closed at 8.55pm.

Signed Chair

Date

Breckland Council Report (Cllr L Turner)

Breckland Council's chairman for this year is Cllr Samantha Taylor. Following her appointment, Councillor Taylor announced the two charities that she will fundraise for during her term. Nelson's Journey, which supports children and young people in Norfolk who have experienced the death of a loved one, and Chapel Green School in Old Buckenham, a school for children with special needs.

The Vice-Chairman is Cllr Nigel Wilkin.

Local Plan – consultation continues with parishes following the call for sites, and the Government's new targets for housing provision. This will directly impact the number of houses imposed in Breckland and where they will be.

Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation – services will change and affect every resident. Please do respond to the survey at **futurenorfolk.com** where residents can have their say.

Solar farms – work continues with all parishes affected to achieve constructive mitigation for those sites whose future will be decided by the Secretary of State. The planning application for a solar farm and battery storage site at Park Farm, Birds Corner, Shipdham, has been validated by Breckland Council and will be discussed at the July Shipdham Parish Council meeting. The application has been called in by Cllrs Hewett and Turner, so that a fair hearing can be held (this has since been confirmed) Council unanimously passed a motion on 10th July to Save our Countryside – a plea to Government to enable a equitable balance between the need for renewable energy and the landscape, history and beauty of Breckland and Norfolk, together with the impact on tourism, business and agriculture. The EDP published the full article on 1th July – should you wish to read it.

Commercial Food Waste Collection – a much bigger uptake of this service than expected – which is good news.

Domestic Food Waste Collection – will be mandatory from April 2026, - further details to follow.

Emergency Housing – another 15 temporary housing units have been purchased by Breckland Council with a grant from the Government, releasing budgetary impact on having to provide emergency accommodation from the commercial sector

The Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner, Sarah Taylor, attended the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, and is keen to hear from you all. You can sign up to her newsletter opccn@norfolk.police.uk or ring 01953 424455

Paul and Lynda always happy to take questions via email.