

HEMPNALL PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 18 February 2025 at 7:00pm in The Mill

Present

Chairman Mr David Hook, Mr Phil Bates, Mrs Joan Cann, Mr Richard Delf, Mr Mike Turner, Mr Peter Workman and the Clerk Mr Ian Nelson.

Members of the public present

Mr Richard Moss, Mrs Mandy Moss, Mr Peter Rogers, Mr Fred Mallett.

Apologies

Apologies were received from County Council Alison Thomas, District Councillor Michael Hooton, Mr Hamish Rose and Mr Robert Elliott.

Declaration of interests

Mr Hook declared a non-financial interest in the East Pye Solar Project as he is a trustee of CPRE Norfolk.

Minutes of the previous meeting

Mr Delf proposed, Mr Bates seconded, and it was unanimously agreed the minutes of the meeting on 21 January 2025 be approved.

Public Participation

Comments were made

County Councillor Update

Mrs Thomas has sent the following report:

"I have asked Gary (NCC Highways) to look at the proposals for improving signage etc in Hempnall as I have some residual member budget which can hopefully be put to use.

As I'm sure you are aware it is proposed that County elections will be postponed until 2026 but until the orders confirming this are agreed in parliament it will be business as usual. Regardless of the outcome I will continue to serve the residents of Hempnall as I have done for the last 16 years until such time that an election is called."

She also made comments re the new town matter below.

District Councillor Update

Mr Hooton made comments re the new town matter below.

Planning Applications

New applications since the last meeting:

2025/0149 - Mr Michael Watts, Land to The West of Alburgh Road Hempnall - Outline planning permission for 5no single storey dwellings and access road with all matters reserved

Comments from the public were made about the already high traffic levels on Alburgh Road, particularly since the granting of permission to expand the Strawberry farm and how much of the traffic was speeding and eroding the edges of the road. They felt it was not a safe road to have more entrances for housing and would be especially dangerous if young families were to live there. A pavement was needed for pedestrian safety and traffic calming measures. Comment was also made about the very poor water supply and water drainage experienced by the existing properties so further development would make this worse.

Mr Hook proposed, Mrs Cann seconded, and it was unanimously agreed that the application be rejected for the following reasons:

- 1) The site is outside settlement Limit of village - HPC has a policy to exclude development outside Settlement Limit (formerly the Development Boundary)
- 2) The site is In Open Countryside therefore contrary to GNLP, SNC and NPPF policies
- 3) This site was put forward for inclusion in the South Norfolk Village Clusters plan (which forms part of the GNLP Housing Target) and was rejected on solid planning grounds - the reasons why development should not be permitted on this site still apply in their entirety

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4) It would increase vehicle movements along a stretch of road that is already overused as access by HGVs to the Strawberry Industrial complex

The Clerk to also ask District Councillor Hooton to support the parish council's view.

It was also pointed out that the area in which the site is situated suffers from poor drainage and water pressure and the road lacks a pavement.

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Applications approved since the last meeting:

2025/0262 - E C Drummond (Agriculture) Ltd, Poultry Farm Road Green Hempnall – Non-Material Amendment of description of development to- Demolition of 8 No. existing poultry sheds and erection of up to 6 No. replacement poultry sheds, together with control rooms, feed bins, concrete apron, dirty water tanks and drainage attenuation pond.

Applications withdrawn since the last meeting:

There were none.

Applications refused since the last meeting:

There were none.

Applications outside the parish boundary since the last meeting

European Trade Centre Hempnall Road Morningthorpe – The Clerk had asked Mr Hooton for an update, and he had responded that he had liaised with the enforcement officer at SNC who was following up several potential breaches of historic planning consents. The Clerk to monitor.

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Proposals for a new town in South Norfolk of 10,000 houses.

Mr Hook explained that our local MP, Ben Goldsborough, and the leader of SNC, Dan Elmer, have proposed the above. The town would be twice the size of Diss. This will be in addition to any new housing allocated for South Norfolk in the current GNLP. Neither District Councillor Hooton nor County Councillor Thomas were aware of this prior to its announcement, so it appears this was done without the consultation of or support of the local district and county councils. It was suggested that the most likely area for such a new town would be to the west of the A140 to take advantage of railway links.

Mr Hook proposed, Mr Delf seconded, and it was agreed unanimously that Mr Hook and the Clerk write to Ben Goldsborough and Dan Elmer in the strongest possible terms to oppose yet more urbanisation of the valuable countryside. The district and county councillors will also be asked not to support the proposed new town proposal.

DH/IN

East Pye Solar Project

Mr Bates reported that 15 parish councils attended a meeting in the Mill organised by BEPS. The Statutory consultation process is likely to start in quarter 3 of 2025. There is a petition page on the BEPS website (<https://www.blockeastpyesolar.co.uk/home/petition>) which BEPS is urging residents to complete as evidence suitable for presentation to the Planning Inspectorate of the level of local objection to the proposed scheme. BEPS will be holding community events for education about the scheme and fund-raising events in the near future.

Mr Hook and the Clerk had responded to EN0110014 East Pye Solar - EIA Scoping Notification and Consultation.

Long Statton Town Council had written giving support to Hempnall's position. The Clerk had responded.

Land use framework consultation

Mr Hook explained that the government is consulting about its suggestion that up to 9% of all the farmland in England is converted to other uses such as solar / wind power, housing,

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woodland or rewilding. It seems to be leaving the decision as to how the land is used to the landowners and developers rather than having a strategic plan for the country's needs.

Mr Delf proposed, Mr Bates seconded, and it was agreed unanimously that Mr Hook and the Clerk respond by the deadline of 25 April 2025 to point out that this is not a proper national plan for land use it is a means by which a significant amount of farmland will be taken out of production. A proper plan would take in to account the importance of protecting those areas, which in an increasingly densely populated country, remain rural, attractive and relatively tranquil. Such places are important for the health and well being of the nation – for visitors and residents alike. This kind of strategic overview is lacking in the proposals currently outlined in the framework.

DH/IN

Planning Reform Working Paper: Streamlining Infrastructure Planning

Mr Hook asked to carry this matter forward as there was no set deadline for response.

DH/IN

Consultation on Custom and Self-Build Housing

It was agreed that no response would be made to this consultation.

Norwich to Tilbury - Targeted Consultation Project Update - January 2025

There is a second consultation in progress. Mr Hook proposed, Mr Turner seconded, and it was agreed unanimously that the Clerk responds to the consultation by restating the points previously made.

DH/IN

Matters arising from previous Parish Council meetings – completed

Playing field grass cutting

The Clerk had accepted the quote from Excite Solutions and informed the old contractor that we would not be re-engaging them except for the old churchyard grass cutting.

Parish meeting

The Clerk had issued notices and requested reports.

Matters arising from previous Parish Council meetings – for discussion.

Willow Drive trees / earth mound

Any Baines of SNC has reported to the Clerk that *“I have had confirmation that the trees at the front of Willow Drive will be replaced this plant season (before the end of March). Apparently, they have been vandalised which is disappointing to hear. The planting at the rear of the site continues to do well.*

With regard to the large mound of earth I have been advised by the developer the removal of this was curtailed by poor weather but as soon as the ground dries to enable the machinery on to the field works will re-commence getting this taken away. This will also include the removal of the Heras fencing.”

It was agreed that the Clerk should write to SNC as not all the points raised by the parish council in previous correspondence had been addressed by the above response and reiterate the points of concern.

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Flood management

West end of the village

The Clerk had contacted Fritton & Morningthorpe parish council three times with a view to meeting to discuss matters further, with a view to involving the EA later. Unfortunately, they had not replied to emails of 28/03/24, 03/04/24 and 10/07/24 nor to messages on their clerk's phone. Mr Bates agreed to talk to a councillor of Fritton & Morningthorpe and the Clerk to provide a copy of the emails to Mr Bates

PB/IN

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Bench on Play area / ROSPA report

Mr Delf has arranged for the contractor to lay the matting under the metal climbing frame and provide the new bench and fix the double gates. This should be carried out in the near future.

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Mr Delf will also be replacing 2 brackets on the MUGA and replacing the basketball nets.

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Mr Delf will carry out a safety inspection after the work has been completed.

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Graveyard maintenance / wall

The Clerk had attended a meeting with the contractor and awaited a quote to repair the wall in the same style as the section next to it.

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With regard to the fallen cross on the gravestone near the entrance to the church the Clerk reported that the parish council had the power to repair a gravestone but not the duty to do so. That power only lasted for 100 years from the date of death recorded on the gravestone. It was agreed to investigate the inscription on the gravestone and possibly contact any surviving relatives before deciding any further action.

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Installation of owl sculpture on playingfield

Mr Delf had obtained a quote from NGF of £210 + VAT for the erection of the sculpture at the same time they carry out the other play area work. The Clerk had accepted the quote. We await the work to be carried out.

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Community Emergency Planning WhatsApp Proposal

The Clerk had determined that there was not a legal requirement to have a coordinator, and he had distributed a template for a plan to councillors for consideration. Mr Bates proposed, Mr Delf seconded, and it was agreed unanimously that the Clerk ask for a volunteer for the role in the next newsletter.

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Another SAM2 unit

This item was carried forward in the absence of Mr Elliott

RE

Correspondence from Parishioners

There was none.

Items for next newsletter

The Clerk to draft and publish, when appropriate, articles on the following:

- Speedwatch
- Bird nesting / hedge cutting
- East Pye Solar timeline for the NSIP process
- Community Emergency Planning volunteer

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Items for next main meeting

- There were no extra items.
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Date of next meeting

The next Parish Council meetings will take place as follows:

18 March 2025 at 7:00pm in The Mill - parish meeting

18 March 2025 at 7:45pm in The Mill - main meeting

15 April 2025 at 7.00pm in The Mill – planning meeting

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There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 20:12

Signed _____ Date 15/04/2025