



YAXHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF YAXHAM PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24th JANUARY 2024 AT 7.30PM IN THE DAVID MYHILL ROOM AT YAXHAM VILLAGE HALL

Present: Cllrs Maggie Oechsle (MO) (Chairman), Ben Conway (BC), Chris Couves (CC), Graham Howe (GH), Bob Gust (BG), Gary Davison (GD) and Paul Bone (PB)

In attendance: Clerk, DC P Plummer, and 11 members of the public

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone, introduced the Councillors and informed that the meeting was being recorded as usual.

2. Apologies for Absence

County Councillor Ed Connolly had sent his apologies.

3. Declarations of interest

There were none.

4. Public Session

A resident who has recently submitted a planning application for a single dwelling gave a brief outline of the history and the design of the intended dwelling. He invited Councillors to ask any questions. He confirmed he had put the site forward for Breckland's call for sites for nine dwellings. If this planning application is successful, he will withdraw from the nine dwellings for Breckland's call for sites.

A resident spoke who has a severe flooding problem on his farm caused by a pipe which is almost completely blocked owned by Mid Norfolk Railways (MNR). During the recent wet weather, he has been up all-night for two days pumping out water to keep his livestock from drowning. A representative of MNR who was also present responded that he had recently visited the site and confirmed that it did seem the pipe was not letting through water as it should. He has discussed the problem with colleagues and a maintenance man from MNR had also been out and taken pictures and sent them round. The MNR representative confirmed he would do his utmost to resolve the problem and agreed to liaise directly with the resident to let them know how things were progressing.

A resident spoke about the sewerage problem. The pumping stations in operation do not have the capacity to cope with the amount going into the system. There have been three incidents of sewerage flooding causing damage to property. There is continually sewerage in the roads and on driveways eventually making its way into the River Tud. He has contacted the CEO of Anglian Water and he has copied in MP George Freeman and the Chair of Breckland saying there should be no more housing in Yaxham until the pumping stations are dealt with.

The Chair said there are two issues. One the sewerage system and Anglian Water will have to be contacted to deal with that. The other is surface water and every ditch in the village needs to be cleared to help the water flow. CC Ed Connolly has agreed to a site visit and the Chair will ask what the Strategic Flooding Alliance is doing.

P Lowings said after speaking to the workmen at the pumping stations they had confirmed the pumping stations are working to capacity. He explained that all the surrounding Towns and Villages are on a much higher flood plain than Yaxham hence the significant flooding experienced by residents. He had also been checking ditches and some were well maintained and water was flowing, but he agreed that other ditches in the village needed to be cleared.

5. Reports from County and District Councillors if present

DC Paul Plummer explained that Yaxham has the same problem as most other villages. Surface water gets into the sewer system and the pumps are only designed to take sewage from the houses. They are not designed to pump surface water. He explained Anglian Water only calculate the water from sewage not from surface water, which is impossible to calculate. He agrees with finding the ditches that need clearing as a way to help the problem.

6. Minutes of Previous Meeting

6.1. To approve the minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 22.11.2023.

The Chair proposed that these be agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting. **All agreed.**

6.2. To receive the Clerk's Report on matters since the last meeting.

The Clerk wrote to Yaxham Primary School asking if they could include the Community Speed Watch in their next newsletter.

The Clerk wrote to the owner of 40 St. Peters Close regarding the blocked ditch.

The Clerk contacted Matt Lines at NCC Highways regarding the manhole cover opposite Spring Lane. He spoke to Yaxham Chair confirming the manhole cover at the top of Spring Lane belongs to Anglian Water. Anglian Water are being un-cooperative, so he has passed it on to their contractors and it should be done the week commencing 29th January.

The Clerk sent a letter of thanks to Powermedix who installed the electrics for the Defibrillator at the school free of charge.

The Clerk wrote to Yaxham Primary School asking for the hedge along the footpath to be cut back – it was confirmed this had been done.

The Clerk applied for the Breckland Neighbourhood Plan top-up grant.

The Clerk contacted Community Action Norfolk to ask for help with policies for Yaxham Parish Charity.

The Clerk reported the damaged road sign on Paper Street and Highways have agreed to resolve the issue. This has now been done.

6.3 To consider matters arising from minutes of previous meetings not considered elsewhere on this Agenda.

None.

7. Flooding

As discussed in the public session.

8. Planning

8.1 To receive and consider any new planning applications.

The Chair explained that two planning applications had come in after the agenda had been published so although the Councillors would discuss them now, they would hold another meeting on 31st January to agree comments to be sent to Breckland.

3PL/2024/0041/F - Demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings and erection of replacement two storey dwelling with detached garage/ carport with hobby room above, driveway and amenity space - Beech Farm, Land south of Norwich Road Clint Green.

The Councillors again asked various questions of the applicant for when they agree their comments next week.

3PL/2023/1193/O - Outline planning application for the Sub-division of garden and erection of 1no. four-bedroom bungalow and detached garage (self-build) - Land adjacent Clinton Willows Cutthroat Lane.

It was agreed to use the new RAG (Red, Amber, Green) criteria developed by the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group when commenting on this application.

8.2 To note any planning responses made since the last meeting

PC Response - 3NM/2023/0107/NMA; 3NM/2023/0108/NMA; 3NM/2023/0109/NMA – Appendix 1

3PL/2023/1126/HOU - Rear first floor balcony to Annex – YAXHAM – 8 Fieldings Drive - Yaxham Parish Councillors feel their agreed response to 3PL/2023/0917/HOU - " The Parish Council has no objection to this application but feels it should remain under single ownership." still stands against this application.

3PL/2023/0652/F - Use of land for the Stationing of 3 Holiday Lodges and the provision of Decking and Drainage Infrastructure (Area A Countryfield and Areas B & C Middlefield) - Yaxham Waters Dereham Road - Yaxham Parish Council share the same concerns that were raised during their last response to this application.

8.3 Other planning issues

None

8.4 To note any planning decisions

3PL/2023/1126/HOU - Rear first floor balcony to annexe -YAXHAM: 8 Fieldings Drive – **APPROVED**

8.5 Yaxham sites assessments

GH explained that Breckland had put four sites in Yaxham into its new local plan which it has sent out for consultation. Breckland consider the sites appropriate for future development. He went through each development showing how Breckland had assessed the suitability of all the sites they have put forward.

Yaxham Parish Council have been asked to comment on the four sites. The NP working group have assessed each site against the neighbourhood plan policy and the current Breckland local plan policy, which means two responses will be made for each site. GH went through the four sites showing how the steering group have assessed the sites, using the RAG criteria.

The Chair explained Breckland have not yet formally consulted on these sites and the consultation will start on 6th February.

8.6. Breckland's Local Plan Consultation response – Paper Street

A prospective green space had been identified by residents in the NP4Yaxham Review in 2023. The piece of land is a continuation of FP4 from the Recreation field leading walkers across a field to the copse and pond leading to Mill Lane. The copse and oak tree in the ancient hedgerow had TPOs placed on them in 2023.

A piece of land already owned by the Parish Council on Paper Street has also been identified as a possible green space.

It was proposed this land be put forward by the Neighbourhood Plan as a green space, as Clint Green currently has no green space of its own, Proposed GH, Seconded CC and **all agreed**.

GH pointed out that he had spoken to the Planning consultant who said there is a specific section of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which defines what can and what cannot be green space in Neighbourhood plans. GH said he will make sure these sites do agree with the NPPF before they are put forward.

8.7 To receive an update from Yaxham's Neighbourhood Plan review

Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group Chair Gary Osborn acknowledged all the work GH had put into the site assessments.

He explained the current Neighbourhood plan was completed in 2017 and runs till 2036, but there is a 5-year review which they are currently doing. They now have their funding and have a consultant, they are reviewing all the current policies and adding to some to make them relevant. They are trying not to make material changes as then they would have to have a referendum and an inspection.

9. PC and WG Newsletter

The final version of the newsletter was **agreed** and the Chair of Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan WG to send to the Clerk who will arrange printing.

10. Play Area Report

10.1 To consider the weekly inspection reports and agree any actions arising

No issues at present.

10.2 To consider the addition of a recreational area for older children/teenagers

The Chair explained that the one of the policies being reviewed by the Neighbourhood Plan WG was the COM 2 policy which is a list of wishes for the village. It was agreed the parishioners should be asked for their suggestions when the next consultation is carried out.

The Clerk to circulate the policy to the Councillors prior to the next meeting so they can review it and discuss at the next meeting.

Standing orders were suspended

11. Defibrillator

Powermedix as a goodwill gesture installed the electrics for the Defibrillator for free. The defibrillator is now sited outside the Yaxham School.

12. Highways and Footpath issues

A resident had counted 24 Potholes from the junction of Station Road to Yaxham Waters along Dereham Road, the Clerk to report this.

The pavement on Norwich Road near Spring Lane heading towards Yaxham School is deteriorating and due to recent flooding dirt and silt has built up. The Clerk to report to highways.

Cllr CC reported a split manhole cover on Station Road and the Clerk to report to Highways.

13. Biodiversity

13.1 It was unanimously **AGREED** to adopt the policy, proposed by BG, and seconded by BC.

13.2 The action plan would be added to the next agenda

14. Grounds maintenance

The Chair reported the current contractor who strims the playground and cuts the hedge on Pinn's footpath can no longer continue due to other work commitments. The Clerk had a received an email from a local resident offering grass cutting and hedge cutting and she will forward on to BG to make contact. He will also contact Idverde to confirm the price for the coming cutting season.

The hedges at the Village Hall were discussed.

Grounds maintenance to be added to the next agenda.

15. To consider D-Day 80

The Chair reported it had been added to the Newsletter and they needed Volunteers to organise an event.

16. Finance

The Clerk informed the Councillors that the YVAA would not be charging for the Community room hire before Christmas as they felt it was an opportunity for the whole village to come together. The Councillors thanked the YVAA.

16.1 To agree the following items for payment (December and January) * - already paid

To Pay	Detail Invoices available for viewing	£ Total	VAT	Ex VAT
M. Oechsle	Land registry fee	83.99	14.00	69.99
YVAA	Community room hire	-	-	-
R Wade	Clerk expenses for December	21.99	1.67	20.32
R Wade	Clerk wages for December	448.00	-	448.00
R Wade	Clerk expenses for January	52.59	5.82	46.77
R Wade	Clerk wages for January	746.00	-	746.00

The payments were unanimously approved and all **agreed**.

16.2 To note any receipts

Detail	£ Total
Unity Bank Interest received	54.25

16.3 Neighbourhood plan payments

To Pay	Detail Invoices available for viewing	£ Total	VAT	Ex VAT
Abzag Ltd	Neighbourhood Plan consultant	1,114.56	185.76	928.80
YVAA	David Myhill room hire	180.00	-	180.00

All agreed

16.4 Neighbourhood plan receipts

Detail	£ Total
Locality grant received for Yaxham Neighbourhood plan	10,000.00

16.5 Bank Position

This was circulated prior to the meeting and was noted.

16.6 To agree 2024/25 Precept

After discussion and with reference to the agreed budget it was **agreed** to increase the precept by 5% from £12,000 to £12,600 resulting in a tax band D rise from £38.68 to £40.05 per year. **All agreed**

16.7 To consider the purchase of an overhead projector

After discussion it was decided a projector would be too expensive and they are becoming obsolete. It was agreed a 70" TV would be more cost efficient and would do everything the council required. GD to investigate and report back at the next meeting.

BG to confirm with the YVAA trustees that they are happy with a TV being mounted on the wall.

16.8 To receive and consider the Financial Monitoring Officers report

PB confirmed he had been through the accounts and was happy that all was in order.

17. Correspondence received since last meeting

Filigree Communication – Breckland’s Local Plan, Norfolk County Council Highways, CC Ed Connolly’s briefing’s, Norwich Western Link updates, King’s Coronation living heritage fund – Breckland, Community Action Norfolk, Emails from residents, CPRE, MP George Freeman – Mid Norfolk Flooding Campaign, Vattenhall Project update and upcoming public information day, MP George Freeman – Reporting Back 2023, Breckland Community Workshop, Norfolk PTS and NWL/A47 Liaison Group.

18. Urgent Business

The Chair has prepared a response to Breckland’s comments about Yaxham in the new Local Plan. She asked the Councillors to read and compare both Breckland’s comments and her own and to let her know their thoughts.

19. To note the next meeting dates of the Parish Council

21st February 2024, 27th March 2024, and 24th April 2024

The Chair closed the meeting at 22.08pm

APPENDIX

Yaxham Parish Councillors view this NMA as a very retrograde step for the following reasons:

1. A gravity led surface water drainage system leading through ditches down to the River Tudd is preferable to a rising main to be dug 0.9m under grazing land which is much more difficult to maintain. On the Rossi Long map the new pipeline is very close to hedges and tree root structures. This rising main will require electricity to pump the outflow. Where is the mention of a back up generator in the event of an electrical failure which is known to happen in the village?.

2. In a storm "event" which is now far from unusual, the surface water would overflow the attenuation pond on the western side of the Elm Close development site and flood into the drainage system on Whinburgh Road leading to the Norwich Road pumping station which continues to have capacity problems. The flooding in Norwich Road was the main reason why the discussion about drainage conditions on this site have been so lengthy and the surface water flows re-directed. Despite these discussions, St Peter's Close itself continues to have drainage problems with Anglian Water very frequently on site (including this week) despite any "remedial drainage ditch works this summer" supposedly undertaken as noted in the Rossi Long report (2.2).

Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan Policy ENV04 requires the proposer to demonstrate that this amendment will not result in any increase in surface/groundwater flooding in the parish.

3. The Parish Council would also recommend a full survey and assessment to see that all the utilities under St Peter's Close are identified before the road is dug up to minimise disruption to residents. The mature oak tree on the public footpath at the northern end of St Peter's Close should also be properly identified on the map of the proposed works. This tree is subject to a Tree Preservation Order confirmed by Breckland Council on 8th June 2023.

4. Before agreement on any amendment to the previously agreed drainage strategy, a Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Assessment should be submitted which covers the whole length of the proposed altered water course. Councillors assume that the Tree and Countryside Officer will be consulted and his recommendations on tree protection works will be agreed by the LPA on by-passing the root structure of not only the protected Oak tree but all the trees and hedging close to the newly proposed rising main pipework.

5. Councillors would like to be assured that the LPA has the legal agreements in place for the outfall to flow into ditches to the north of Cutthroat Lane and into the river. These ditches run alongside fields which councillors are led to understand are under a Higher Level of Stewardship. Does this scheme allow for surface water from a housing development to course through?

6. It is noted that in the S.106 Agreement dated 7th January 2016 under clause 5.5 the LPA is under no obligation to agree any amendment under S.73 until it considers all elements of the drainage obligations have been satisfactorily met. In fact when the drainage strategy was last considered on 21st December 2021 it was noted by Mike Horne, Breckland Council solicitor, that *"the fact is that in the structure of this planning application there is a Grampian Condition to be included and once the relevant condition comes up for discharge and we're going to look at the proposals very very carefully and, having taken legal advice on drainage matters, we will need to be 100% sure that we are covered otherwise there will not be a discharge of condition ... so if at that juncture the external legal advice says that riparian law is not sufficient then we will not discharge the condition ..."*

Yaxham Parish Council will expect all these queries to be satisfactorily addressed and answered because surface water flooding continues to be of huge concern to residents.