

Scarning Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2024 at Scarning Village Hall

Councillors Present: F Bradford (Chair) T Abel, M Blackburn, S Bunn, C Hewson, H Manning, M Steward.

In attendance: N Hartley (Parish Clerk), Cllr L Turner (Breckland Council). Two members of the public.

Cllr Bradford said she was recording the meeting. Cllr Abel asked why she was recording the meeting. Cllr Bradford said that she would be using the recording in her role as Chair. She said she would be keeping the recording for future use.

Public Participation

A member of the public asked if the Council could put up dog fouling notices in its noticeboards and if the Council had considered highlighting dog mess around the parish with fluorescent paint to draw attention to it. Cllr Manning will speak with the Dog Warden regarding both matters and will provide an update at the next Council meeting.

The meeting went into session.

1 Apologies for Absence

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

2 Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Hewson and Abel declared an interest in any matters relating to Scarning Playing Field Committee.

3 Minutes

The Council discussed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2024. Cllr Bradford proposed ten amendments to the minutes. Councillors said they did not want to make the amendments and had already indicated this by email, but Cllr Bradford insisted on going through each proposed amendment individually. Cllr Bradford read each proposed amendment alongside the minute recorded by the Clerk.

Councillors expressed disquiet and made their feelings known. A full and frank exchange of views took place for the next 30-40 minutes. Many councillors objected to Cllr Bradford's continued interference in the minutes.

Cllr Abel left the meeting as he was not prepared to sit through Cllr Bradford's proposed amendments.

Cllr Bradford was asked to listen to the views of her fellow councillors. She pressed on regardless.

It was suggested that Cllr Bradford's behaviour did not cast a favourable light on the Council, particularly as there was a member of the public at the meeting who was considering applying to join the Council. Cllr Bradford took no heed of this suggestion.

It was **RESOLVED** to make two of the ten amendments proposed by Cllr Bradford.

Cllr Bradford announced that she would not be signing the amended minutes in the usual manner, but referred to Standing Order 10d, which reads as follows:-

10d. If the Chair of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect at the next available meeting of the Council in person:

"The Chair of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on [date] in respect of were a correct record but their view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings."

4 Matters Arising

It was noted that the sale of the former Highway Surveyors land at Daffy Green is proceeding through the solicitors.

5 Report of District Councillor

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

6 Request from George Freeman re proposed Solar Farm

The Council considered a request from George Freeman MP to join a Steering Group regarding the proposed High Grove solar farm, which may affect land in Scarning. Cllr Turner (Breckland Council) said that she was part of the Steering Group and was happy to report to the Parish Council. It was noted that more information will be available from March 2025. It was **RESOLVED** to make a decision when further information is available.

7 Invitation from CPRE re proposed Solar Farm

The Council for the Protection of Rural England had emailed the Council with its concerns about the loss of agricultural land and the number of large solar farms planned for Norfolk. The Council was asked if it wanted to join an Alliance coordinated by the CPRE to provide

support in opposition to the proposed solar farm. It was **RESOLVED** that the Council did not want to join the Alliance.

8 Finance

8.1 It was **RESOLVED** to make the following payments in accordance with the Council's budget:-

N Hartley, clerk's salary, £990.99

HMRC, clerk's Paye, £5.80

SCS Accounting, payroll services, £18

NPTS, training courses for councillors and clerk, £184

PKF Littlejohn, fee for external audit, £252

D Bracey, annual play equipment inspection report, £240

NGF Play Ltd, installation of new A Frame netting at Blackthorn Drive play area, £684

Dereham Men's Shed, purchase of six bird boxes, £90

Npower, unmetered street lighting, £407.52

Scarning Village Hall, hire of the hall (April-September), £203

Scarning Fuel Allotment, transfer of rent incorrectly applied to Parish Council account, £10

Royal British Legion, Remembrance Day wreath, £50 (Section 137)

8.2 The Council noted receipt of the following payments:--

Breckland Council, balance of the Precept, £22,000

Scottish Widows, interest paid on account, £343.25

A Buckingham, rent of the former Broadway Allotment site, £400

S Eagle, rent of former Highway Surveyors land at Chapel Lane, £15

8.3 The meeting received a report of Actual to Budgeted expenditure

9 Conclusion of the Audit 2023/24 and the External Auditor's report

The Council noted the conclusion of the Audit. The External Auditor's report noted that the Council's information in the Annual Return was in accordance with proper practices and that no other matters had come to the Auditor's attention that would give cause for concern that the relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

10 Trial membership of Parish Online's mapping system

The Council considered a proposal for a three month trial membership of Parish Online's mapping system. The system will allow the Council to create its own maps as well as having access to maps at Land Registry, the Environment Agency and other organisations. The cost

after the trial is £144 for the year plus Vat. It was **RESOLVED** to apply for a three month trial and to review at the end of the three month period.

11 Annual Play Equipment Safety Inspection Report

The Council considered the contents of the annual play equipment safety report. All the items listed were described in the report as 'low risk.' It was **RESOLVED** that no current action is necessary.

12 Request from Scarning PCC to cut the grass in Scarning churchyard in 2025

The Council considered a request from the Parochial Church Council to cut the grass in Scarning churchyard in 2025. It was **RESOLVED** to cut the grass in 2025.

13 Dereham Road footpath

The Dereham Road footpath had been resurfaced by Norfolk County Council. Cllr Blackburn asked who was responsible for the hedgerow. The guidance from Norfolk County Council was that the landowners are responsible. The Council noted its displeasure at the standard of the slurry seal that had recently taken place on the footpath. The Council had been assured by Norfolk County Council that the hedgerow would be strimmed back prior to the slurry seal. This had not been done, nor had the path been taken back/resurfaced to the original tarmac. The Council noted that areas of the footpath had not been filled in, but had been left. It was **RESOLVED** to request a meeting with Norfolk County Council and to ask them to review the work to determine if, in their opinion, it was of an acceptable standard.

14 Representatives' Reports

Cllr Blackburn noted there were some comments on social media about dog fouling and about grass growing through the newly surfaced Dereham Road footpath.

Cllr Hewson said that both tennis courts on the Shipdham Lane Playing Field had been closed due to the moss on the courts. The courts were closed until further notice.

Cllr Bradford said she was asking for the contractors to update their quotes re new play equipment on the Blackthorn Drive play area and that the Council would be asked to consider these at its November meeting. Cllr Manning asked if it was possible to approach Proludic for a quote, as this company had some innovative equipment, but was told by Cllr Bradford that there was not time for this. Cllr Bradford noted that some councils ask members to complete a survey when determining the appointment of a contractor in case a contractor disputes the Council's decision. Councillors agreed that they would make a collective decision and not complete individual surveys.

The Clerk noted that the pre school thanked the Seckar Trust for its continued support of speech and language therapy and music. The pre school is seeking to raise £834 for a water pump for the children and was encouraged to apply for a grant from the Parish Council.

15 Items for the Next Agenda

As itemised in the minutes.

16 Next Meeting

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

The meeting was closed at 8.35pm.

The Chair of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on October 21 in respect of items 3 and 14 were a correct record, but her view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

Signed Chair

Date

Cllr Turner's report (Breckland Council)

Congratulations to Sharon on her award as an unsung hero for Scarning. There have only been three successful nominations, so well done to her.

There are several new grants available for groups and individuals – via BDC website.

Reminder of SNAP meeting 6 November at Scarning Village Hall – all members of the public are welcome for 7pm start. There are SNAP meetings every three months, plus a SNAP meeting in Shipdham next April. Full details on the Norfolk Police website.

Reminder that work on the Local Plan has been suspended until further information and guidance comes from central government.

A new Housing Strategy is being published, and work to support homeless and vulnerable people continues as a priority for the Council. District Councils have a legal obligation to provide accommodation for those who are deemed homeless – at a cost of several thousand pounds a month.

The Breckland Council website is being updated to make it more user friendly, and hopes to go live in December.

I am delighted that Breckland has won a Platinum and Gold Award from the RSPCA for its Dog Warden service – this is a service we are not obliged to provide, but do so, as it benefits so many residents and animals.

I have added in a useful information sheet, published in Shipdham News, which residents of Scarning might find useful.

As ever, I am happy to answer any questions, emailed to myself or Paul Hewett.

Scarning Parish Council Actual to Budgeted Expenditure at 1 October 2024

Administration	Budgeted Expenditure	Actual Expenditure	Over/under spent
Insurance	1,000	896.95	
Clerk's salary	11,000	5,957.34	
Clerk's expenses	450	157.95	
Clerks Paye	150	23.40	
Council phone	50		
Payroll services	100	18.00	
Office supplies	150	18.99	
Photocopier ink	-	71.32	
Keyboard and riser		45.88	
Internal Auditor	150	120.00	
External Auditor	400		
Norfolk Parish Training Subscription	450	440.00	
Information Commissioner	40	35.00	
Microsoft subscription – Council laptop	60	59.99	
Community Action Norfolk subscription	-	50.00	
Council website - Wix	100		
Parish website Costs	130	25.00	
Hire of Village Hall	320		
Council Training	300	242.00	
Capital costs			

Cutting roadside verges/meadows play areas (see below)	5,500	3,508.54	
Cutting hedge – Dereham Road	700		
Street lighting energy	1,650	963.85	
Street light maintenance	1,700	1,013.79	
Street lights – conversion to LEDs	800		
Tree survey	500	408.00	
Tree works	1,200	1,200.00	
Solar lights – repairs	300	144.00	
Church clock maintenance	250		
War memorial	-		
Defibrillator costs	352	52.00	
Noticeboard maintenance	-	120.00	
Noticeboard Fen Road	500		
SAM2	-		
Flower boxes – flowers	60	27.20	
General repairs	488		
Grit/dog bins	-		
Blackthorn Drive Play Area			
Grass cutting	Included in verges figure above		
New play equipment	5,000		
Repairs to play equipment	500	165.00	

Play Safety Report	250		
Maintenance of Outdoor Fitness equipment	2,000	2,296.80	296.80
New Air Walker		1,938.00	
Ted Ellis Play Area			
Fence/gates	-	4,020.00	3,895.00
Shipdham Lane Playing Field			
Maintenance costs – grant to Playing Field Committee	3,100	3,100.00	
Outdoor Fitness equipment maintenance	-		
Zip wire maintenance	200		
Tree works			
Grants and Donations			
Grants	2,000	688.82	
Grass cutting in churchyard (Section 137)	1,600	595.38	
Remembrance Day wreath (Section 137)	50		
Community Grants Scheme			
Additional			
Christmas tree	400		
Litter picking	50	7.00	
Events	1,000		
TOTAL	£44,000	£28,410.20	

Bank reconciliation as at 1 October 2024			
Barclays Current Account £42,865.50			
Scottish Widows £22,084.20	£64,949.70		
Balance c/f £47,578.17			
Add receipts £45,781.73			
Less payments £28,410.20	£64,949.70		
Schedule of Earmarked funds			
Play equipment (Blackthorn Drive)	£12,000.00		
Car Park (Shipdham Lane)	£10,200.00		
Grant to Playing Field Committee – maintenance costs	£3,100.00 (Paid)		