

# BURNHAM THORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 6.00 pm at The Nelson Memorial Hall, Burnham Thorpe

**Present:**

Councillors: Chris Yardley, Colin Hitchcock Clerk: Sarah Raven

Members of the Public: 4

## **1. Minutes of the last council meeting held on the 12 May 2025.**

Minutes were circulated before the meeting. The Minutes were AGREED to be signed as a true record with no amendments by the Vice-Chair, Cllr C Yardley.

## **2. Chairman's Annual Report:**

### **Introduction**

Welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting. This is our chance to pause, take stock, and talk with you — the people who actually live here — about what's been happening in Burnham Thorpe over the past year.

It has been a busy twelve months. There has been progress on several long-running issues, a few headaches that refused to go away, and the usual assortment of dog bins, hedges, and parking problems that keep parish councils across England gainfully occupied.

### **Thanks**

Before the updates, a sincere thank you to everyone who makes the Parish Council work.

To our Councillors: Chris Yardley (Vice-Chair), Mima Garland, Colin Hitchcock, Sarah Greenall, and Barbara Linsley, who stepped down during the year after many years of dedicated service. Barbara's contribution to this council has been considerable, and she leaves some rather large shoes to fill.

And to our Clerk, Sarah Raven — who keeps the minutes, chases the highways department, organises the auditors, files the paperwork, and somehow makes it all look straightforward. It isn't.

Parish councillors are volunteers. Nobody does this for the power and the glory. We are simply residents who care about the village and are willing to give a little time to help things run smoothly.

### **What Does the Parish Council Actually Do?**

It's a fair question. The honest answer is: a lot of chasing, a fair amount of writing to people who don't always write back, and occasional wins. More specifically:

- Managing the byways and highways and village open spaces alongside the Playing Fields Committee
- Street lighting and the new noticeboard
- Reviewing planning applications on behalf of residents
- Working with the Borough Council, Norfolk County Council and other bodies
- Supporting community initiatives and keeping residents informed

We don't control everything — far from it — but we do make sure Burnham Thorpe's voice is heard when decisions are being made that affect the village.

### **Parish Finances**

The precept for 2026/27 has been set at £9,880. The accounts for 2025/26 have been completed and submitted for internal audit, with Roger Gillett appointed as internal auditor.

The council's finances remain in good order. We continue to hold a sensible level of reserves so that the council can respond to unexpected costs without a sudden leap in the precept.

### **Millennium Piece**

A significant development this year was the surrender of the Millennium Piece lease back to Holkham, with notice given in July 2025. The two benches from that site still need to find their permanent new home — the Community Payback Team were going to help, and the job is in hand.

### **Old Railway Line – Public Right of Way**

The council has been working for some time to establish the old railway line as a public right of way. Evidence forms have been gathered, notices prepared and submitted to Norfolk County Council Legal Services, and notice sent to Holkham.

The route map has been approved by Norfolk County Council. We are now waiting on their Legal Services team to progress the matter but we understand Holkham will not object so we can hopefully have the right of way protected for years to come.

### **Flooding**

Flooding in and around Burnham Thorpe has remained an ongoing concern. A flood monitoring device is now in place on the bridge near Manor Farm, and issues have been logged in the Burnhams Newsletter.

A meeting on flooding in the area took place in May, and councillors were encouraged to attend. We continue to press Norfolk County Council for updates and meaningful action.

### **Highways and Roads**

The overgrown hedges on Rectory Lane/Green Lane were causing real problems for school buses — one of those issues where the solution seems obvious but the wheels of local government turn at their own pace. The Clerk has been chasing Highways for a response.

Potholes on Goodricks Lane have also been reported and followed up. We are also exploring access improvements for wheelchair users between the car park and the ramp at the Nelson Memorial Hall — a matter which has been deferred to our next meeting's agenda.

### **Village Improvements**

A new noticeboard has been installed — a visible improvement to the centre of the village, and thanks to Cllr William James (me!) for organising and installing it. The old one will be taken down but we hope to preserve the top board.

The council also approved a new village map project, which Cllrs Garland and Yardley have been developing. Work is ongoing and we look forward to sharing the results when complete.

A new streetlight on the junction of Lowes Lane and Church Lane was installed following a long wait for Westcotec to schedule the work. The village is, very literally, a slightly brighter place.

## **Dog Bins (Yes, Really)**

No annual report from a parish council would be complete without a mention of dog bins. This year: the bin lid on Church Lane was not closing properly (allowing bags to become airborne in a way that pleased no one), the new bin on Lowes Lane was eventually installed — not quite where requested, but close enough — and the Millennium Piece bin was earmarked to move near the playing field.

Progress, of a kind.

## **Local Government Reorganisation**

Residents may be aware that Norfolk is going through a period of local government reorganisation, with discussions ongoing about how many councils the county should have. We have been monitoring this carefully to understand what impact, if any, it may have on parish councils. At present, parish councils are not affected — but we are watching.

## **Council Vacancies**

Following the resignation of Cllr Barbara Linsley, a vacancy notice was issued. We are currently waiting on the Borough Council to confirm whether the council can co-opt to fill the seat. If you are a resident interested in getting involved in your local community, we would love to hear from you.

## **Finally**

Burnham Thorpe is a wonderful village to live in — and it stays that way because of the people who care about it. The Parish Council can help a little along the way, but it is really the residents who make this place what it is.

Tonight's Annual Parish Meeting is your opportunity to ask questions, raise concerns, and tell us what matters to you. Please do. **William James** *Chair, Burnham Thorpe Parish Council*

## **3. Report from Borough Councillor:**

Thank you for the invite to your parish AGM. May I take this opportunity to thank all the Councillors and Clerk for their hard work over the last year. I look forward to continuing working with you all. Being any sort of Councillor can be challenging yet very rewarding. Since the last AGM a couple of you are new Councillors, so I would just give you an update as to what roles I have within the Borough Council. I am the Chair of the Homeless and Housing task Group. I am the Vice Chair of the Standards Committee. I sit on the Appointments Board, we have had some really good candidates apply for many of our higher tier management posts, some have been difficult to call as all the candidates had very good experience and skills. I also sit on the Local Plan Task Group, the Environment and Community Panel, the CIL spending panel and last year I was voted as the Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group. Being a Cllr I sit on 2 outside bodies, one being the Burnham Overy Harbour trust and the second one being West Norfolk Girls School trust. I am always at the end of an email or telephone if anyone has any issues. I do try and respond within 24 hours and like to give the residents an answer to their queries quickly. This is just a snapshot of my role, I do also try and attend as many Parish councils as I can. I have 6 Parish Councils within my ward. I am also a Parish Councillor where I live, a trustee of the Village Hall and the Alms-house trust. I also Chair Burnham Market Surgery Patient Participation Group. Over the last 12 months the Borough Council has started to see change and the future of the Borough is changing. This is because of Local Government Reorganisation. It will mean that rather than a Borough and County Council there will be one council doing the roles of both

Councils. There will no longer be County and Borough Councillors there will be one person doing the role. As you know Norfolk has been split into 3, which is the best option for the residents, in terms of finances and the services provided. The Borough will stay until 2028. Unitary elections will be next year 2027. The Government will develop a statutory change order to create the new Council. This will be laid out before Parliament in the summer and signed off late Autumn this may be subject to change ....unitary will go live in April 2028. I am still receiving emails about the increase in the 200% council tax. The Borough only receives a very small portion of this. We are using the extra money for our Homeless and Housing strategy. In the Budget there is a provision of half a million pounds for community projects. CIL will be much more difficult to access. Planning Changes are coming into force in September I believe. Planning Committee will meet once a quarter and it will be Chair of Planning and the Assistant Director making planning decisions. There will be no option for Borough Councillors to call applications in. Parish Councils must be a strong voice for any applications in their village. The Local Plan is now being reviewed the Last one took 9 years the Government have said that this one has to be done in 30 months. Our housing delivery numbers have been increased from 554 to over a thousand. This doesn't include windfall sites. If the Council doesn't build them, we are financially penalised. LOCAL PLAN – the Government, in setting political targets before analysis, are reducing the weight of public opinion. I recommend each Parish sends a representative to training sessions, (currently arranged for 15th and 22nd June). Last Thursday night we welcomed in our new Mayor for the municipal year. This is just a snapshot of things happening within the Borough. If you have any queries or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. With Best Wishes Cllr Sam Sandell. Borough Councillor for Burnham with Docking

#### **4. Report from County Councillor:**

None

#### **5. Report from Playing Field Committee:**

Playing Field Committee continues to manage the playing field. It continues to be well used by locals and visitors. We provide annual maintenance and inspections and there are outstanding tasks that still need to be addressed like the maintenance of the football goals and cricket pavilion, as well as the never ending up keeping of the benches. We had two benches refurbished last year and an area fencing reinstated thanks to generous donation of a villager. There will be a village duck race on the playing field next weekend and a cricket match this summer which is being organised privately.

#### **6. Report from Nelson Memorial Hall:**

It has a lot more events this year than in previous years most weekend events. Fees are in line with other halls. The hall has challenges as an ageing community building but being available to the local community is a priority. We continue to support local community bookings. Last year we hosted weddings, Christmas day lunch and other events. The Shantyman also provided entertainment in the hall during the Trafalgar celebrations

#### **7. Report from Church:**

None

#### **8. Report from Tim Fisher River Fly Scheme:**

Norfolk Rivers Trust continue the Riverfly surveys at Burnham Thorpe Common and Overy Watermill from April to October. Total samples shown at Burnham Thorpe Common are 18 with 0 trigger levels breached. The total samples shown at Overy Watermill is 3 with 0 trigger levels breached. Norfolk Rivers Trust has not got any projects due to be delivered in

the area however we are hosting the Norfolk Catchment Partnership and welcome parish councils to engage with this partnership. As part of this process, please share this anonymous questionnaire with parishioners as we need to know what people like and don't like about their local rivers.

<https://forms.monday.com/forms/3b9077770d7dba66b5b4f1e396ee4861?r=use1>

**9. Questions and Statements from Parishioners:**

- Dog bin – Lowes Lane is this being moved as in the wrong position. This will not be moved now.

Meeting Closed: 6.25pm

..... Chair                      Dated: