

SPARHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Sparham Parish Council held on Tuesday 10th March 2026 at 7.30pm in the Old School Room, Sparham.

Present: Cllr Adam Pryke (Chair)
Cllr Leona McConnell (Vice Chair)
Cllr Charles Sayer
Cllr David Chapman
Cllr Nigel Fielding
Cllr David Gerrie
Cllr David Sayer

County Cllr Bill Borrett
Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Council noted that Cllr McConnell will arrive later. District Cllr Bambridge sent his apologies.

2. To receive any declarations of interest.

There were none received.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2025.

Cllr Pryke proposed that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting, this was seconded by Cllr Fielding and unanimously agreed by Council. The Chairman duly signed the minutes.

4. County & District Councillor Reports.

County Cllr Bill Borrett reported that the closure of Wood Lane had resulted in other local roads being used as rat runs and Council has set aside £100,000 to make repairs to those roads. Wood Lane is due to reopen at the end of April.

The next consultation of the Breckland Local Plan is due to take place in June and Breckland are keen to get the plan in place before District Council is abolished.

The decision regarding how many unitary authorities there is to be is due in March. County elections will take place in 2026. The move to a unitary authority will result in higher council tax bills for Breckland residents. The mayoral elections have been delayed until 2028.

At this point in the meeting, Cllr McConnell arrived.

Finally, the C/Cllr said he would now be able to donate £1,000 towards the parish partnership application for road safety signs.

The Chairman raised the issue of flooding near the bus shelter and explained the works required and how dangerous the flooding was for both road users and pedestrians, particularly if it freezes. C/Cllr Borrett will speak to Highways to resolve the issue.

In response to a question regarding a bus stop at Sparham Hill, alternative sites for a stop on the westbound side were considered and also the installation of a trod so bus users could walk safely along the A1067. There is a good regular bus service and people who want to use it, including visitors to the Bug Park. Cllr David Sayer suggested that the developers building large housing sites at Reepham could fund it. The C/Cllr will speak to Highways about this issue.

5. Meeting open for public participation.

There were no members of the public present.

6. Planning issues.

a) Applications for consideration.

Council noted the lawful development certificate application for a pergola at The Old Green Man, Main Road.

b) Decisions to note.

Council noted the following application has been approved.

- PL/2025/1936/HOU – 19 Whitwell Road - retrospective Single and Two Storey Rear & Side Extensions & Detached Car Port Outbuilding.

Council noted that no decisions have been made on the following applications.

- PL/2025/1515/FMIN – Access Point off Lime Kiln Road - proposal: Permanent retention of an access to an agricultural field constructed as part of the Vattenfall/RWE windfarm scheme.
- PL2026/0019/FMIN – Sparham Hall Farm – conversion of farm building for educational space with toilets.

c) To receive an update regarding enforcement matters.

Council noted that this matter has been resolved.

d) To receive an update regarding the Breckland Local Plan.

This item was dealt with at item 4 above.

7. Highway & Footpath issues.

a) To receive an update to the request for an additional bus stop at Sparham Hill.

This item was dealt with at item 4 above.

b) To receive an update to the application to the Parish Partnership scheme for 'Please drive carefully' signage.

Council noted that the application has been approved and Cllr Pryke said that highway safety was a major concern in the village and proposed that Council accepts the offer of 50/50 funding and funds the £1,823.70 required from Council, this is in addition to the £1,000 kindly funded by C/Cllr Borrett. This was seconded by Cllr McConnell and unanimously agreed by Council.

c) To receive an update regarding the flooding issues arising from water draining onto the highway from the field adjacent to the bus shelter.

This item had been dealt with at item 4 above.

d) To receive an update regarding any issues reported to Highways and to report any new highway issues.

Council noted that the many potholes are being reported.

It was noted the road near the Old Post Office/Coal Yard is flooding due to blocked drains and these will be reported.

The Chairman said that the grups opposite the Old School Room had been cleared but one, near the dog bin, is blocked. The landowner has given permission for the grup to be cleared beyond the highway verge. The Chairman will get a quote for the works which will require a mini-digger.

The Chairman thanked C/Cllr Bill Borrett for his inputs and the C/Cllr then left the meeting.

8. The Village Green

a) To receive a report regarding land registration of the Village Green.

Council noted that the land registration is now complete.

b) To consider an application for free orchard trees to plant on the area of uneven, wet ground.

Council considered planting trees on the area which is currently sectioned off with bollards, as well as the installation of mud mats. The Chairman will request a quote from a contractor to firm up the ground.

c) To receive an update on restoration to the wall and other maintenance works.

Council noted that further works will go ahead in the summer.

9. To receive a maintenance report and an update regarding alternative uses for the Phone Box.

The Chairman reported that the phone box and notice board will be repainted when the weather improves.

In respect of the phone box, the recycling facility is not being used as much as it once was and Cllr Gerrie will bring alternative suggestions to the next meeting for consideration.

10. To receive a report regarding the Permissive Pathway agreement.

Cllr Charles Sayer reported that all is well and the pathways continue to be well used. Council thanked Cllr Sayer for this much appreciated facility in the village.

11. Breckland Community (land) Transfer Policy – to consider the transfer of land from Breckland ownership to Sparham Parish Council.

There was no proposal to take on the maintenance of the verges at Well Close as it would be an additional expense for Council.

12. To receive updates on issues raised:

- a) **Whitwell Road – pollution from horse muck heap** – Council noted that the landowner had bolstered up a bund around the heap which has improved matters.
- b) **Woodland Court – polluted ditch** – the Chairman has looked at this issue on behalf of residents and will respond with proposed solutions.

13. Finance & Governance Matters

a) To receive a financial report for the year ending 31st March 2026.

The financial report (attached) was noted.

b) To consider approval of the following documents:

- Data Protection Policy
- Planning Policy

Cllr Charles Sayer proposed that the two policy documents be approved, this was seconded by Cllr Fielding and unanimously agreed by Council.

c) To receive a report regarding the Annual Governance Statement - Assertion 10.

Council noted the new requirements under Assertion 10, which related to websites and accessibility, data protection, an IT policy and email accounts. The Clerk reported that policies and systems have been put in place and the Council can fully meet the new requirements of Assertion 10 and be able to answer YES on the Annual Governance Statement.

d) To consider any charitable requests for donations.

There was no proposal to make any additional donations.

e) To authorise financial payments as set out below and note any receipts.

Cllr Pryke proposed that the following payments be approved, this was seconded by Cllr McConnell and unanimously agreed by Council. The receipt was noted.

PAYMENTS

P29	Clerk Salary & Allowance – December	£140.35 (SO)
P29	HMRC PAYE	£32.60
P30	Clerk Salary & Allowance – January	£140.35 (SO)

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P30	HMRC PAYE	£32.60
P31	Clerk Salary & Allowance – February	£140.35 (SO)
P31	HMRC PAYE	£32.60
P32	Bus Shelters Cleans (x 3)	£54.00
P33	Clerk Salary & Allowance – March	£140.35 (SO)
P33	HMRC PAYE	£32.60
P34	Website Domain/Hosting Annual Renewal	£142.06
P35	Hill & Vale Donation	£103.00
P35	Church PCC Donation – Grass Cutting	£578.00
P35	Norfolk Citizens Advice Donation	£100.00
2026/27		
P1	Norfolk Parish, Training & Support	£90.00
<u>RECEIPTS</u>		
	Bank Interest	£20.26

14. Correspondence for circulation

There was no correspondence to note.

15. To receive any new items for the next agenda.

Flood management and a planning issue regarding a high fence installed on a road boundary were received for the next agenda.

CLlr David Sayer asked that the Annual Parish Meeting be advertised in the Hill & Vale.

16. To note the next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 12th May 2026, following the Annual Parish Meeting which commences at 7.30pm in the Old School Room.

Council noted the date of the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Council Meeting and the Chairman then closed the meeting at 8.48pm.

Signed:

Date:

SPARHAM PARISH COUNCIL - YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2026
FINANCIAL REPORT - MARCH 2026

BUDGET UPDATE	Actual	Budget	To date	%
	2024/25	2025/26		
PAYMENTS*				Paid
Admin	1,080	1,343	1,111	83%
Salary	1,864	1,877	1,955	104%
Open Spaces	750	630	915	145%
Permissive Pathway	160	160	160	100%
Bus Shelter/BT Box	85	200	63	32%
Donations	781	781	781	100%
Wall Repairs	1,770	1,770	3,500	198%
Defibrillator	-	50	-	0%
TOTAL	6,490	6,811	8,486	125%
RECEIPTS				Received
Precept	7,000	7,000	7,000	100%
Bank Interest	158	-	65	
TOTAL	7,158	7,000	7,065	101%
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	668	189	- 1,421	

Balance as at 01.04.2025	8445.61
Less Payments @ 27.02.2026	7402.56
Plus Receipts @ 27.02.2026	7081.65
TOTAL	8,124.70
Balance as at 27.02.2026	
Current Account	1,547.19
Business Account	6,577.51
TOTAL	8,124.70
less outstanding payments	0.00
	8,124.70
Defibrillator	50.00
Wall Repairs*	-
GENERAL RESERVE	8,074.70
*included 2025/26 budget (£1,770) & additional £1,000. Current year repairs over budget by £30.20.	
Balance as at 01.04.2025	8445.61
Less Payments @ 31.03.2026	8498.57
Plus Receipts @ 31.03.2026	7081.65
PROJECTED BALANCE AT 31.03.2026	7,028.69
including	
Defibrillator	50.00
Wall Repairs*	-
GENERAL RESERVE	6,978.69