

SPARHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Sparham Parish Council held on Tuesday 12th November 2024 at 7.30pm, in the Old School Room, Sparham.

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

Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Council noted that Cllr McConnell would be arriving later.

2. To receive any declarations of interest.

There were none declared.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 2024.

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

4. To consider the co-option of a new member to fill the one Council vacancy.

There was no update on the vacancy.

5. County & District Councillor Reports.

In the absence of both Councillors, written reports had been submitted. Council members did not highlight any issues.

6. Meeting open for public participation.

There were no members of the public present.

7. Planning issues.

a) Applications for consideration.

There were no new applications for consideration.

b) Decisions to note.

Council noted the following application has been approved:

- 3PL/2024/0638/HOU – 1 Sparham Hill - install replica tiled roof extension to the side of the property.

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

Council noted that the Local Plan has now been paused, due to the increase in housing targets set by the new Government.

d) To consider the Norfolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Publication of proposed Main Modifications and Additional Modifications – closing date 13/12/2024.

Council agreed that no proposals directly affected Sparham.

8. Highway & Footpath issues.

a) To receive an update speeding issues on A1067 and the need for a lower speed limit, including an update on the PPS application for Village Gates.

Council considered the quote for Village Gates on the A1067 at a cost of £14,911.34 and agreed that even with 50/50 funding from the County Council, this was completely out of the reach of the parish council. It was agreed to approach County Cllr Bill Borrett for assistance.

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

Council noted that funding sources are being sought by County Council for the installation of the bus stop.

c) To receive an update re the request to NCC to enlarge the current stop on the A1067 (westbound).

Council agreed to submit this request to Highways once again as no response had been received.

d) To receive an update to the request for a 30mph speed limit within the village.

Council noted that an application for funding will be submitted in the following financial year.

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

Council noted that the landowner had been helpful but, to date, no action appeared to have been taken and this will be chased up.

At this point in the meeting, Cllr McConnell arrived.

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

- Damaged Whitwell Road sign – this will be reported to Breckland again as no action has been taken.

- Missing reflector strips on safety fence around pond on A1067 are missing and will be reported to Highways.
- Potholes have been reported and some have been marked for repair.

9. The Village Green

a) To receive an update regarding the wildflower project.

Cllr McConnell reported that there was nothing to report, with everything now dormant.

b) To receive an update regarding repairs to the wall.

Council noted the repairs to the wall which had made the wall stable, and there had been a lot of positive feedback received. Further repairs are now dependant on more funds.

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

The Chairman will investigate the current situation and report back to the next meeting.

10. To receive a maintenance report and consider alternative uses for the Phone.

There was no update in respect of this matter.

11. To receive an update regarding the Permissive Pathway agreement.

The landowner reported no issues and Council thanked him for permitting the pathways as they are well used.

12. To review the grass cutting contract for 2025.

Cllr McConnell proposed approval of the increased fee of £95 per cut, with seven cuts required per year, this was seconded by Cllr Pryke and unanimously agreed by Council.

13. To consider a change to the constitution of the Sparham Village Hall Charity.

Council noted the requirement, because of grant application conditions, to add a new clause to the constitution regarding the dissolution of the charity. This is a standard clause in many constitutions and the wording has been advised by the Charity Commission. Cllr Pryke proposed approval of the change and this was seconded by Cllr McConnell and unanimously agreed by Council.

Cllr Pryke went on to report the details of the grant application to the RWE Community Fund for new windows which, due to cost, are likely to be quality plastic rather than replacement wood. A planning application has been submitted, in the name of the Parish Council as owners of the building, for approval.

Cllr Chapman suggested an application to the Postcode Lottery as he had had a good experience elsewhere with this grant.

14. To consider an application to the RWE Community Fund.

There were no other suggestions for an application to the Fund.

15. To consider joining the CPRE Alliance re mega solar farms.

Cllr Chapman proposed that Council join the Alliance as there are concerns re use of agricultural land being used, this was seconded by Cllr Gerrie and put to the vote, with five in favour and one abstention, the proposal was carried.

16. Finance & Governance Matters

a) To receive a financial report for the year ending 31st March 2025.

The financial report (attached) was noted.

b) To consider the draft budget and set the precept for the year ending 31st March 2026.

Council considered the draft budget for years ending 31st March 2026 and 2027 and agreed there was sufficient general reserves at present, although an increase may be necessary next year due to rising costs. Cllr Pryke proposed the precept remain at £7,000 for the year ending 31st March 2026, this was seconded by Cllr Sayer and unanimously agreed by Council.

c) To consider approval of a e-valuation of the Old School Room at a cost of £145.00.

Council reconsidered the previous valuation and the insurance cover and agreed that it was adequate and there was no need for a further valuation at this time.

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

Cllr Pryke proposed approval of the following payments, this was seconded by Cllr Chapman and unanimously agreed by Council. The receipts were noted.

PAYMENTS

P23	Wall Repairs	£1,065.00
P24	Wall Repairs	£1,000.00
P25	Weed Spray/Strim Wall	£120.00
P26	Bus Shelter Clean	£18.00
P26A	Wall Repairs	£1,000.00
P27	Clerk (Salary & Allowance) October	£129.04 (SO)
P27	HMRC PAYE	£29.80
P28	Clerk (Salary & Allowance) November	£129.24 (SO)
P28	HMRC PAYE	£29.60
P21	Grass Cutting – Village Green (Sept)	£90.00

RECEIPTS

Bank Interest	£45.63
Breckland – Precept	£3,500.00

17. Correspondence for circulation

Rural England Prosperity Fund – Briefing Note – Council agreed no action was required.

Breckland – Community Orchards Grant – Council agreed that no orchard trees were required at this time.

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

Cllr David Sayer requested that highway safety issues at The Street be added to the next agenda.

19. To note the next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 11th March 2025, at 7.30pm in the Old School Room.

The date of the next meeting was noted and the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.18pm.

Signed:

Date:

SPARHAM PARISH COUNCIL - YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2025					
FINANCIAL REPORT - NOVEMBER 2024					
BUDGET UPDATE	Budget	To date	%		
	2024/25				
PAYMENTS*			Paid		
Admin	1,343	898	67%		
Salary	1,877	1,191	63%		
Open Spaces	630	660	105%		
Permissive Pathway	200	-	0%		
Bus Shelter/BT Box	200	55	28%		
Donations	781	-	0%		
Defibrillator	50	-	0%		
TOTAL	5,081	2,804	55%		
Wall Repairs	6,373	5,673	89%		
RECEIPTS			Received		
Precept	7,000	7,000	100%		
Admin	150	-	0%		
Bank Interest	-	91			
PAYE Refunds	-	-			
TOTAL	7,150	7,091	99%		
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	2,069	4,288			

Balance as at 01.04.2024	11675.68
Less Payments @ 27.09.2024	8328.97
Plus Receipts @ 27.09.2024	7113.8
TOTAL	10,460.51
Balance as at 27.09.2024	
Current Account	1,659.93
Business Account	9,929.62
TOTAL	11,589.55
less outstanding payments	1,129.04
	10,460.51
Including the following reserves:	
Wall Repairs*	699.80
GENERAL RESERVE	9,760.71
*includes 2024/25 budget	