

FRANSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Fransham Parish Council, held on Tuesday 16th September 2025, at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

Present: Cllr Richard Watts (Chair)
Cllr James Sheringham
Cllr Emma Spratt
Cllr Gerry Taylor
Cllr Jessica Jones
Cllr Peter Howells

County & District Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris
Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies received from Cllr Lake were approved.

2. To receive any declarations of interest.

There were none received.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 15th July 2025.

Cllr Taylor requested that the final line of item 8, b – ‘Amendment: Red line amended to incorporate new access point be removed’. This was agreed and Cllr Watts proposed that the amended minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting, this was seconded by Cllr Spratt and unanimously agreed by Council. The Chairman duly signed the minutes.

4. To note the two council vacancies and consider the co-option of new members.

Two potential councillors were in attendance and, as their eligibility and a short statement saying why they wished to join the Council had been received, Cllr Watts proposed that Jessica Jones be co-opted onto Council, this was seconded by Cllr Taylor and unanimously agreed by Council. Cllr Watts then proposed that Peter Howells be co-opted onto Council, this was seconded by Cllr Taylor and unanimously agreed by Council.

The Chairman thanked both new councillors for their interest and welcomed them to the Council.

5. To receive County/District Councillor reports.

County & District Cllr Kiddle-Morris reported that the next consultation in respect of the Local Plan ‘Issues and Options’ was due out mid-October.

The Local Government Reorganisation work continues with one, two and three unitary options now on the table. The decision will be made by Government, with elections due in 2027 and the Unitary replacing current District and County in 2028. However, at Breckland business currently continues as normal.

If Councils agree with Devolution and a Mayor for Suffolk and Norfolk, they will be elected in May 2026. There will be no crossover in responsibilities with the Mayor and Unitary Councils.

He also reported that the High Grove solar farm has been delayed due to a lack of connection to the grid. It is anticipated that the planning submission will be submitted in March 2026, rather than this year, as previously anticipated.

In respect of the Trod, he reported that the Highway Engineer recommended that a soakaway in an adjoining field may be a better alternative, if the landowner would allow.

The Chairman thanked the Cllr Kiddle-Morris who then left the meeting.

6. Open Forum for Public Participation.

There were no members of the public present.

7. Highway Matters.

a) To receive updates in respect of issues previously reported.

Council noted the following updates:

- New Gate on Footpath 6 (Station Road) – Highways are investigating to see if there is a valid reason for the gate.
- Flooding on Dereham Lane – reported to Highways and now resolved.
- Station Road pothole – reported to Highways and now repaired..
- Loose drain covers on A47 – reported to National Highways.
- Grit Bin on Crown Lane – Highways have been requested to refill.
- Pothole and Grass Verge on land at Crown Lane – investigations are taking place to see who is responsible for the upkeep.
- SLOWS – the new signs have not been painted and the C/Cllr will be asked to chase this up.

b) To receive an update on requests to National Highways for a pedestrian crossing and an extension of the pavement from Spicer's Corner.

Council noted this continues to be in abeyance until the next financial year and a reminder will be sent early next year.

c) To receive an update to the application for funding under the Parish Partnership Scheme for an extension to the trod.

Further to the recommendation at item 5 above, Council agreed that the ground is unlikely to be suitable for a soakaway and agreed to proceed as previously agreed, with an extension to the trod. The decision will be known in March 2026.

8. Planning Matters.

a) New Applications.

There were no new applications to consider.

b) Decisions Due.

Council noted the following application has been refused.

- PL/2025/0508/FMIN – Barn off Station Road, Great Fransham - Proposal: Resurrection of a previously existing brick & tile single storey calf house.

Council noted that no decision has yet been made on the following application.

- PL/2025/0998/FMAJ – land at Dykewood Farm, Beeston - proposed construction of ground mounted solar panel arrays and associated infrastructure.

Council noted that the following application has been approved.

- PL/2025/1085/HOU & 1093/LB – Mill Farm, Beeston Lane - regularisation of small single storey extension, oak framed pergola to southern elevation.

c) To receive an update regarding the Local Plan.

This matter had been dealt with at item 5 above.

9. To receive an update regarding the proposed local solar farms and any update from the George Freeman, MP, solar farm group.

In addition to the update at item 5, Cllr Sheringham requested that Council consider an appeal from Necton Parish Council to call on Breckland Council to insist on a full Environmental Impact Assessment for a potential 300 MW battery storage facility on the west side of the A47 at Necton. Cllr Sheringham proposed support, this was seconded by Cllr Howells and unanimously agreed by Council.

10. To receive a report and to consider any issues arising from the regular inspections of council assets.

Cllr Watts reported that all was in order and that work on the plaque can commence now the layby has reopened.

11. To consider the installation of a second defibrillator in the Village and to nominate an officer to carry out regular checks to the unit at the Village Hall.

Cllr Watts volunteered to carry out the regular defibrillator checks. He also agreed to make an initial approach to the Canary & Linnet owner with a view to installing a unit at the building, once it has reopened.

12. To receive an update regarding improvements to the appearance of the village.

Council noted that, to date, just one suggestion had been received and that was to establish some wildflower areas on the road verges. Council agreed the merit of this suggestion and Highways will be contacted to establish what is permitted.

A planning enforcement issue was also raised as it related to an unsightly area of Fransham and, if appropriate, this matter will be referred to Breckland.

There is also an overgrown hedge on Station Road and the owners will be asked to cut it back.

13. Finance & Governance Matters.

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

Council noted the financial report (attached).

b) To appoint an internal auditor for the year ending 31st March 2026.

Cllr Watts proposed the appointment of Mrs Dann at a cost of £40, this was seconded by Cllr Taylor and unanimously agreed by Council.

c) To note the transition to a .gov email address.

Council noted the move to a .gov email address which will meet part of Assertion 10 of the Practitioners Guide, a requirement of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

d) To consider approval of the following policy documents:

- Training & Development Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Staff Appraisal Policy

Cllr Taylor requested that the Lone Working Policy be deferred to the next meeting and this was agreed by Council. Cllr Watts then proposed approval of the remaining four policy documents, this was seconded by Cllr Taylor and unanimously agreed by Council.

e) To consider approval of the following payments and note any receipts.

Cllr Sheringham proposed approval of the following payments, this was seconded by Cllr Howells and unanimously agreed by Council. The receipt was noted.

PAYMENTS

P8	Bus Shelter Clean	£100.00
P11	Clerk Salary & Office All (Aug)	£149.77 (SO)
P11	HMRC – PAYE	£35.00
P10	Dog Bin	£204.00
P12	Clerk Salary & Office All (Sept)	£176.69 (SO)
	-includes Pay Award back-dated to 01/04/2025.	
P12	HMRC – PAYE	£41.60

R2

£10.82

Date:

*includes payments awaiting authorisation at this meeting as listed on the agenda.