

FRANSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Fransham Parish Council held on Tuesday 20th January 2026 at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

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

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

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. To receive any declarations of interest.

There were none declared.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 18th November 2025.

Cllr Lake proposed that the 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.

Cllr Taylor reported that the footpath gate, mentioned in the minutes but now removed, had been stolen but is now replaced.

4. To receive County/District Councillor reports.

In respect of County matters, Cllr Kiddle-Morris reported that the mayoral election has been delayed until 2028 which is disappointing as elections for new unitary members will take place in 2027, with the unitary authority(s) taking over from the current on the 1st April 2028. There is a lot of work for the Mayor to do before the local government reorganisation.

In respect of Breckland, the Local Plan consultation has now ended and it is expected to be on the website in due course. Highways have objected to most sites and Breckland are now looking at alternatives. A new National Planning Policy Framework is being developed and the Local Plan will need to match the policies, which are quite different from the previous version.

County council tax will increase by 4.99% and Breckland will increase by £4.95 per year for a Band D property.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Kiddle-Morris for his input.

5. Open Forum for Public Participation.

There were no members of the public present.

6. Highway Matters.

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

Council noted the following updates:

- Loose drain covers on A47 – reported to National Highways. It was noted that another cover had been damaged recently and National Highways had repaired it promptly.
- SLOWS – one Slow has been painted, leaving three still to be done. The C/Cllr will chase this up.
- Hedgerow opposite trod on Station Road – reported to Highways and letter sent to landowners.
- Roadside subsidence on Station Drive – reported to Highways and repairs will be made.
- Dereham Road – flooding with standing water reported to Highways.
- Large signage on A47 – reported to National Highways. The C/Cllr said that it was a criminal offence to install signage on the highway without permission and this will be reported to Planning.
- The sharp corner on Beeston Lane is becoming dangerous because of the mud coming from the property and this will be reported to Highways. It was noted that there may also be an issue regarding pollution and this will be reported to Breckland Environmental Department and the Environment Agency.

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

There was no update on this matter and it will now be chased as funding was supposedly to be available in the next financial year.

7. Planning Matters.

a) New Applications.

- PL/2025/1763/OMIN – land at Kirkhams Meadow, Lt Fransham - outline application with all matters reserved except for access for 3 no. dwellings with associated garages and garden amenity space – Cllr Lake proposed that Council supports this application, this was seconded by Cllr Watts and unanimously agreed by Council. The dark skies policy comments will also be submitted.
- PL/2025/1989/PAAF – High Green Farm, Beeston Road, Gt Fransham - application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed erection of a mono pitched two bay cart-shed for the storage of agricultural equipment including tractors and livestock equipment (not to house animals) – Council noted the application which was for information only.

- PL/2025/1911/HOU – 1 Linnet Loke, Lt Fransham - proposed double garage - no objections were raised and the dark skies policy comments will be submitted.
- PL/2026/0038/PAAF – Hyde Hall Farm, Main Road, Gt Fransham - application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed erection of Steel Framed Building for the storage of straw – Council noted this was for information only but agreed to submit a request for tree planting for screening as the building will be visible from the road and the dark skies policy comments will also be submitted.

b) Decisions Due.

Council noted the following applications remain pending:

- PL/2025/0998/FMAJ – land at Dykewood Farm, Beeston - proposed construction of ground mounted solar panel arrays and associated infrastructure.
- PL/2025/1312/FMIN – The Cottages, Drury Square, Beeston - proposed change of use of land for the stationing of 3No mobile homes for residential use, a proposed day room ancillary to that use as well as 3No touring caravans, hardstanding and parking areas as well as refuse storage area.

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

This item had been dealt with at item 4 above.

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

Council noted that The Drovers site has now gone to the Planning Inspectorate for permission. Council considered that the planned mitigation is inappropriate for the wildlife actually present.

The site between Little and Great Dunham has submitted an early application to build a small sub-station on site.

The RWE High Grove site is currently on hold until March and has no connection to the National Grid confirmed.

Cllr Jones has attended two meetings of opposition groups and said that there were people available to advise Council, there was currently no joined up approach. Cllrs Jones, Sheringham and Watts will meet with RWE in March to discuss the plans and Cllr Jones will seek advice beforehand as to what approach to take.

There was no update from the George Freeman group.

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

Cllr Watts reported that all was in good order.

10. To receive an update regarding the plaque on the Village Sign and to consider new plaques for the bus shelters.

Council noted that works will commence once the weather improves.

11. To receive an update regarding the installation of a second defibrillator in the village.

Council noted that this is on hold until such time as the Canary & Linnet reopens.

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

Cllr Howells reported that large sums of money may be available to the parishes of Fransham and Necton, as they were both affected by the Statkraft application at Necton. Cllr Howells and Watts are meeting Statkraft in March and will report back to the next meeting.

Sites for bulb planting will also be considered at the next meeting.

13. To receive an update regarding any action to improve phone coverage in the village.

The Chairman reported that he had looked at various schemes to improve the phone signal but it appears that Fransham is better served than most other places on the list for improvement. It was noted that the signal coverage maps are not accurate and the service is worse than shown. Cllr Watts will continue to investigate and the County Cllr will also be asked for any update.

14. Breckland Community (land) Transfer Policy – to consider the transfer of Breckland land to Fransham Parish Council.

Council noted two small plots of land in Fransham which Breckland are hoping to transfer to the Parish Council's ownership. Council could see no advantage in doing so as it would simply bring additional maintenance responsibilities; this matter will not be pursued.

15. 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 policy documents:

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Asset Register
- Risk Assessment & Management Policy
- Co-option Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- IT Policy
- Planning Policy

Cllr Watts proposed approval of the policy documents set out above, this was seconded by Cllr Sheringham 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 approval of the following payments and note any receipts.

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

PAYMENTS

P18	Clerk – Salary & Allowance (December)	£154.35 (SO)
P18	HMRC – PAYE	£36.00
P19	ICO – Data Protection	£47.00 (DD)
P21	Clerk - Salary & Allowance (January)	£154.35 (SO)
P21	HMRC – PAYE	£36.00
P20	Website Domain/Hosting Annual Renewal	£142.06

RECEIPTS

Bank Interest	£22.76
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16. Correspondence for circulation.

There was no correspondence for consideration.

17. To receive any new items for the next meeting.

The following two items were received for the next meeting:

- To consider requesting Highways to install 'Caution Horse' road signs in Great Fransham.
- To consider how to achieve a greater use of the parish magazine.

18. To note the next meeting of Fransham Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 17th March 2026, at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

The date of the next meeting was noted and the Chairman then closed the meeting at 8.14pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

FRANSHAM PARISH COUNCIL - YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2026
FINANCIAL REPORT - JANUARY 2026

BUDGET UPDATE	Actual 2024/25	Budget 2025/26	To Date	% Spend
PAYMENTS*				
Admin	1,063	1,487	1,153.07	78%
Salary	2,063	2,199	1,803.54	82%
Maintenance	215	150	-	0%
Grass Cutting	1,734	1,764	1,372.00	78%
Bus Shelters	300	520	350.00	67%
Donations	100	50	-	0%
TOTAL	5,475	6,170	4,678.61	
RECEIPTS				Received
Precept	5,750	6,000	6,000.00	100%
Bank Interest	130	20	74.45	
Recycling	-	40	10.82	27%
HMRC	-		-	
TOTAL	5,880	6,060	6,085.27	
SURPLUS/DEFICIT		- 110.00	1,406.66	

Bank Balance at 01.04.2025	9,044.24
Plus Receipts at 30.12.2025	6,210.25
Less Expenditure at 30.12.2025	4,524.20
	10,730.29
Balance at 30.12.2025	
Community Current Account	2,944.37
Business Savings Account	7,821.92
	10,766.29
Plus any outstanding receipts	-
Less any outstanding payments	36.00
	10,730.29
including:	
Highway Reserves	2,026.00
GENERAL RESERVE	8,704.29

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