

Strumpshaw Parish Council

Minutes

Council meeting held at 7:30 pm on Tuesday, 17 March 2026 at Strumpshaw Community Hall, Mill Road, Strumpshaw. NR13 4FS

Present: Ellie Buckton (Chair), Russ Blake, Michael Green, Tina McAulay (Vice Chair), and Bob Morgan.
In attendance: Tanya Rowlandson (Clerk). Members of the public: six, including Sarah Cartwright (Community Hall Committee Chair), Bob Hunt (SAM2 Volunteer), Lynda Hunt (CHC member).

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and noted, from County Councillor Andrew Proctor.

2. Declarations of Interest for Items on the Agenda and Dispensations for Councillors with a Pecuniary Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 20 January 2026

These were agreed as a true record of proceedings.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Receipt of reports from County and District Councillors, followed by the Public Open Forum District Councillor's Report

- Cllr Eleanor Laming read out highlights from the district councillor report.

County Councillor's Report

- A written report was submitted by County Councillor Andrew Proctor.

Copies of both reports are attached to these minutes.

Public Open Forum

- **Member of Public 1:**

- Offered positive feedback on the newly reinstated Long Lane trod.
- The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council is now responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the trod and will be arranging regular grass cutting from the Parish Council's budget, in addition to the two seasonal cuts carried out by Norfolk County Council Highways.
- The Clerk also advised that the project had been delivered through the Norfolk County Council Parish Partnership Scheme, which operates on a 50/50 funding split between Norfolk County Council and the Parish Council. The Parish Council was fortunate to have secured generous grant funding from the Paul Bassham Trust, Adnams Charitable Trust, Broadland and District Council, and County Councillor Andrew Proctor to meet the £7,000 contribution required from the Parish Council.
- Clerk will pass on the Parish Council's thanks to the Highways Engineer.

6. Chair's update (Cllr Ellie Buckton)

- Cllr Buckton reported that the new grit bin on Mill Road is now full and further advised that the new community noticeboard and the set of village gates had been collected from Brundall Men's Shed. Council recorded its sincere thanks to Bob Cameron for the use of his van and for collecting the noticeboard and gates, with grateful assistance from Mark Buckton. The noticeboard will be installed shortly.
- Councillors were reminded that the Annual Council Meeting, to be held on 19 May, will include the election of the Chair and Vice Chair for the new municipal year, along with appointments to committees and the allocation of responsibilities.

7. Community Hall Committee

7.1. Update (CHC) (Sarah Cartwright)

- **Finances:** No discounted charging this year. Income has already exceeded the annual budget, supported by two new weekly hirers and interest from a further potential hirer. Expenditure is projected to remain well within budget. Reserves have increased by approximately £11,000, although rising costs may affect future spending.
- **Events:** The February Cheese & Wine Quiz was fully booked and generated a profit of £620.
- **Operational Matters:** Builders will repair the gulley once weather conditions allow. The booking process has been updated to require expected attendee numbers for ad hoc hires, and the maximum capacity has been set at 70 in the hiring agreement. The next formal CHC meeting will take place in April.

A copy of the update is attached to these minutes.

7.2. Plug in Norfolk (Lynda Hunt)

Council **resolved to defer** a decision on participation in the Plug In Norfolk electric vehicle charging initiative. Members noted the contents of the report and agreed that further consideration is required regarding local demand, potential locations, grid capacity, and the longer-term financial and maintenance implications beyond 2030. A further report may be brought forward should Council wish to revisit the matter.

A copy of the report is attached to these minutes.

8. Speed Awareness Message Sign (SAM2) (Bob Hunt)

- Monthly SAM2 reports continue to be uploaded to the Council website. Carlos Inacio has kindly volunteered to assist Bob with moving the SAM2 unit and taking it offline during any periods when Bob is away for longer durations. Council recorded its thanks.
- A quote had been obtained from Westcotec for an additional locking key (£15.00 plus £7.50 delivery), and the expenditure was authorised. It was noted that the SAM2 unit will be four years old in December. Bob has contacted Westcotec regarding a solar-operated replacement unit; Westcotec advised that they are happy for representatives to visit their site, although they do not attend parish council meetings.
- The SAM2 was recently positioned on Buckenham Road to raise driver awareness of the 30mph speed limit. Data recorded an average of 73 vehicles per day, with an average speed of 28.2mph. This information was noted.
- There was discussion about the potential installation of a permanent small flashing 30mph roundel sign, similar to those in Brundall. The Clerk will make enquiries with the Highways Engineer at Norfolk County Council.

9. Buckenham Wood

9.1. Buckenham Ancient Woodland Trust (BAWT) update (Cllr Michael Green)

- The laying of the footpath along the northern perimeter of the woodland has been delayed due to the extremely wet conditions in February. Contractors advised that work should wait until the ground has dried, and as bluebells are now emerging and will flower from mid-April, Trustees agreed that the work should take place after the flowering season (mid/late May onwards). Broadland District Council's Green Infrastructure Officer is seeking approval from the Greater Norwich Growth Board, who are funding the project, for an extension to the completion deadline.
- The design of the information boards has been completed, and installation is expected in the coming months, although two boards are dependent on the new footpath and may therefore be delayed.
- Management plans have been drafted by the contractor for both BAWT's central portion and Strumpshaw Parish Council's eastern portion of the ancient woodland. These plans will complement each other and must align with the 20-year strategy for the whole of Buckenham Wood, which is yet to be drafted.
- Events:
 - A Barn Dance will take place on 11 April at 7pm at Lingwood Village Hall (tickets available via the BAWT website).
 - Bluebell Day will be held on 26 April, with trustees and volunteers on site to gather visitor feedback via an online survey.

9.2. Buckenham Woods (SPC) - Report from Cllr Bob Morgan

- Spring growth is now evident across the woodland, with primroses in bloom and chiffchaffs first recorded on 10 March. Early indications suggest a strong bluebell season, likely supported by the wet winter.
- Work on the northern path has been delayed due to unsuitable ground conditions. Contractors have advised that the works should be undertaken after the bluebell season, later in the spring.
- On 22 February, members of the SPC Woods Team met at Buckenham Wood to consider the draft Management Plan prepared by Sheridan Sayer. Matters discussed included potential realignment of the path network, management of the meadow area, provision for youth groups, and identification of veteran trees and associated conservation requirements. Comments have been submitted to the contractor for incorporation into the final SPC Management Plan. Dates for the final BAWT/SPC woodland strategy and the final Management Plan are awaited.

- BADCOG volunteers have undertaken further work removing sycamores and creating dead-hedge fencing to protect ground flora and discourage the formation of unauthorised paths. A further BADCOG work party is scheduled for 28 March.
- Four car tyres have been removed from the site and disposed of free of charge by Pages. Several lorry tyres remain near the car park; disposal options are limited, and it was noted that one tyre may be retained within the woodland as a hibernacle, providing a habitat feature for hibernating species.
- The woodland continues to attract increasing numbers of dog walkers, including visitors travelling from outside the parish. Dog fouling remains an issue, and a reminder sign has been installed on the car park kissing gate. The gate's return spring remains intact.
- Council **resolved to fund** Cllr Bob Morgan's online First Aid course (£40.00) and agreed to purchase an additional bleed kit and a first aid kit for use during volunteer work in the woodland.

9.3. Terms of Reference for the Buckenham Wood Working Group

Amendment required for item 6 in the TOR:

- Review the SPC Buckenham Wood Management Plan and the BAWT Management Plan to ensure they align with the 20-year strategy for the whole of Buckenham Wood, which is yet to be drafted by BAWT.
- The final draft will be brought back to Council in May for adoption

10. Neighbourhood Plan update

The referendum on the Strumpshaw Neighbourhood Plan will be held on 7 May, alongside the Norfolk County Council elections. Posters and household leaflets are prepared and ready for distribution. The Council's consultant, Rachel Leggett, has recommended that leaflets should be delivered to households during the week commencing 27 April, approximately ten days before the referendum. Broadland District Council will issue separate poll cards and postal vote packs for the referendum.

11. Community Emergency Plan (Bob Hunt, Plan Co-ordinator)

Bob reported that he had met with Cllr Jan Davis to discuss progress on the Community Emergency Plan. He has also been in contact with Simon Faraday-Drake at Broadland District Council, who has indicated he would be willing to attend a future Council meeting if required. Bob has been advised to keep the plan straightforward and proportionate to the needs of the parish. Sample templates and the current draft version of the plan have been provided to him for redrafting.

12. Annual Parish Meeting, Tuesday 21 April 2026, 6:30pm (Cllr Ellie Buckton)

Cllr Buckton provided an update on arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting:

- The Parish Council will be purchasing sweet treats from Dreamy Bakes for the event and is pleased to be supporting a local business. Doors will open at 6:30pm, with refreshments served from 6:30pm. Community groups have been advised that they are welcome to arrive from 6:00pm to set up their display tables.
- Confirmed attendees include PC Jackie Chambers, District Cllrs Jan Davis, and Eleanor Laming, BADCOG, BAWT, Strumpshaw Coffee Break, Buckenham and Hassingham Social Club, and 1st Strumpshaw Brownies.
- Invitations have also been extended to Yare Valley Rotary, 1st Lingwood and Strumpshaw Air Scouts, Revd Jane Morris, Brundall First Responders, and Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service.
- The formal meeting will commence at 7:30pm, including updates from attending groups.

13. Broadland Big Litter Pick (Cllr Ellie Buckton)

Council resolved to take part in the Broadland Big Litter Pick, with the date to be agreed (the initiative runs until 31 May). Cllr Buckton will organise the date and complete the registration on behalf of the Council. Interest in participating was expressed by a member of the public in attendance at the meeting.

14. Annual Policy Reviews (Clerk)

14.1. Data Protection Policy

14.2. Health and Safety Policy

Council confirmed the review of both policies, and these were signed by the Chair at the end of the meeting.

15. Finance

Council reviewed payments, income, bank reconciliations, and reserves. Reports were accepted, payments approved, and documents signed at the end of the meeting.

Copies of the finance reports are attached to these minutes.

16. Correspondence and Clerk update

16.1. Parish Partnership Scheme 2026/27 - Village Gateways

The Clerk reported notification from Norfolk County Council confirming that the Parish Council's bid for the 2026/27 Parish Partnership Scheme (Village Gateways) has been successful. Council resolved to sign the acceptance form. Now that the Long Lane trod is in place, a further site visit from Tom

Cox, Norfolk County Council Highways Engineer, may be required. The Clerk will contact TC to arrange this.

16.2. Other Correspondence

- The Clerk reported receipt of three pieces of negative feedback via email and Facebook comments regarding the proposed village gateways. These emails have been forwarded to all councillors. Members of the public who had raised concerns have been invited to attend a future Council meeting and share their views during the Public Forum.
- An email was also received regarding bird boxes made by a local resident, who has offered to install them within the parish. The Buckenham Wood Working Group and BADCOG will contact the resident to discuss the type of boxes available and whether they may be suitable for use in Buckenham Wood and the Stone Pit (Community Orchard).

17. Date of the next meeting

Tuesday, 19 May 2026, 7:30pm.

18. Council resolved to exclude the press and public for the next agenda item, as it involves confidential staffing matters.

The public meeting closed at 8:30 pm.

19. Clerk's appraisal and Employment Matters

Council noted the Clerk's appraisal and reviewed the current salary scale point and eligibility for the HMRC homeworking allowance. It was agreed to increase the Clerk's salary from SCP 19 to SCP 20, effective 1 April 2026, and to introduce a £26 per month tax-free homeworking allowance from 1 April 2026. An addendum to the Clerk's contract will confirm these changes.

20. Meeting closed at 9:00pm

Chair's Signature..... Date.....