

CAISTOR ST EDMUND AND BIXLEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on
Wednesday 6th May 2026, 7.00pm at Arminghall village hall

Present:

Cllr Diane Bainbridge – Chair (DB), Cllr Paul Chapman (PC), Cllr Paul Kelly (PK), Cllr Dave Porter (DP), Cllr Jeanette Utting (JU), Cllr Sujata Walkerley (SW), County Cllr Vic Thomson (VT), District Cllr Nicola Fowler (NF), District Cllr Lisa Overton-Neal (LO), and Yvonne Wonnacott – Parish Clerk (YW).

Apologies:

Cllr Barry Catchpole (BC) and District Cllr John Overton (JO).

Members of the Public:

Ten.

2026/001 To elect the Chair of the Parish Council

Cllr Bainbridge was proposed for the position of Chair by Cllr Utting, and this was seconded by Cllr Chapman. All other Councillors supported the proposal. Cllr Bainbridge accepted position of Chair for 12-month term. Declaration of Acceptance of Office completed by Chair.

2026/002 To elect the Vice-Chair of the Parish Council

Cllr Utting was proposed for the position of Vice-Chair by Cllr Chapman, and this was seconded by Cllr Porter. All other Councillors supported the proposal. Cllr Utting accepted position of Vice-Chair for 12-month term.

2026/003 To receive any apologies for absence for approval

Apologies received and approved from Cllr Catchpole and District Cllr Overton. Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and recently refurbished village hall.

2026/004 To receive declarations of interest

None.

2026/005 To approve a time limit for the meeting

Chair proposed aim for meeting to finish by 8.30pm, all agreed.

2026/006 To agree minutes of the Parish Council (PC) meeting held 11th March 2026

The proposed minutes of the PC meeting held on 11th March 2026 as previously circulated were unanimously approved as correct. Chair signed minutes.

2026/007 Matters arising from the minutes of the PC meeting held 11th March 2026

None.

2026/008 Adjournment for public participation

Member of the public asked whether the PC had received any further contact from Crown Point Estate. PC advised that no further contact had been received. Members of the public thanked the PC for its perseverance and hard work in retaining the village hall. Chair advised

that the first phase of works had now been completed and, subject to securing funding, the PC hoped to undertake a second phase of works in the future, to include the installation of a kitchen and toilet facilities. Member of the public asked whether there had been any further update regarding the requested bus service through Arminghall. The Clerk advised that the PC had been informed that previously raised concerns had been passed to the Network Team for consideration. County Cllr Thomson advised that Norfolk County Council (NCC) had no control over bus services, as third parties operated these. However, he believed the reason there was no scheduled service through Arminghall was due to the narrow width of the roads, which made the route problematic. Agreed that PC would follow up the request with the service provider, and County Cllr Thomson would provide the relevant contact details to the Parish Clerk – VT/YW.

2026/009 Annual reports

Noted reports received from the following local organisations. Key points summarised.

Caistor St Edmund Fuel Allotment Trust (Report for period 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025)

- Income:
 - o Rent from land (Gross) £1,929.70
 - o – Management fees £231.56
 - o Rent from land (Net) £1,698.14
 - o Income on investments £32.23
- Six fuel grants were made totalling £1,600.00
- One payment to the Clerk was made of £450.00

Arminghall Fuel Allotment Trust (AFAT)

- Land is fully let
- No new tenants this year, all rents paid.
- Front hedge cut, October 2025.
- Ditch on the left of the AFAT land (Bungay road side) was cleared by Crown Point Estate in February 2026. That completes the ditch work for the AFAT land, with exception of short run of ditch, owned by a different landowner. The Trustees are grateful to Crown Point Estate staff for the help and co-operation with this project.
- The garden allotments have a waiting list of four names.
- Received no requests for grants this financial year.
- The Trustees would welcome interest in AFAT from the younger members of the village.
- The accounts have not been finalised for year 2025. Interim accounts are as detailed below.
 - o Income £880
 - o Expenditure £489.31
 - o Profit £390.69
 - o Interim financial balance £3,539.14 as of 3rd January

Chair's report, PC

- Cllr Fields formally resigned as Chair but remained a valuable member of PC until his resignation earlier this year.
- The devolution process continues and the government have announced their preferred model of three unitary authorities across Norfolk (West, East and Greater Norwich). The consultation continues with the final announcement still to be made. Under current proposals the parishes of Caistor St Edmund and Bixley would fall within the boundaries of Greater Norwich.

- Arminghall Village Hall - The first phase of the work is now complete, and the hall is once again available for public use. We thank GW Gooch and Sons Ltd for all their hard work and particularly Richard Childs for managing the project on behalf of the PC. The first phase despite some minor delays was completed within budget. Grass seed has been requested as part of the South Norfolk in Bloom grant. PC continues to explore funding opportunities to complete the second phase which will be to add a kitchen and toilet extension to the side of the hall. The challenges encountered relating to foul drainage and biodiversity net gain continue. Once we have a solution to the challenges and funding has been secured, we will seek planning consent to add the extension.
- Bus Stops - PC successful in a bid to secure match funding, resulting in the bus stop located on the corner of Stoke Road / Markshall Lane receiving a makeover and now has a shelter in place. There are further plans to add a shelter to the Bus stop on the opposite side of the road. The annual cleaning of the bus stop in Arminghall has taken place along with the sign outside the village hall, thanks expressed to parishioners who undertook these works.
- For 2025/26 the PC provided donations to both St Edmund's and Arminghall Churches.
- Annual tidy up of the area around the memorial has taken place and Cllr Utting attended the Remembrance service on behalf of PC and laid a wreath at the memorial.
- Raking Pit - Work was completed to the entrance following damage caused by a car accident. General maintenance has taken place across the year to facilitate public access. A tree survey was carried out October 2025. PC was successful with South Norfolk in Bloom grant securing funding towards bulbs and grass seed for Raking Pit and village hall.
- The annual litter pick in the parish has taken place successfully, thanks expressed to all those involved.
- Through Members funding an additional Speed Awareness Machine was secured which is located in Arminghall Lane. Thanks expressed to those who oversee the data collection from both machines in the parish.
- Six Strategic Group – Meetings were attended by Cllr Porter and Cllr Chapman
- Cllr Chapman continued in the role of Tree Warden and Footpath Warden.
- Thanks expressed to all Parish Councillors, Clerk, volunteers, and members of the community for their dedication, hard work, and continued support through the year.

County and District Councillor reports

County Cllr Thomson provided report to meeting. Key items summarised as follows.

- Last year main issues devolution and reorganisation.
 - Balanced budget.
 - Nearly up to the one million trees.
 - Very cold and wet winter, still catching up on works.
 - Birth rate dropping, will affect schools.
- May 6th, 2026: Election for Norfolk County Council (NCC). Not National. This will be the last ever election to the County Council. The term will only last 2 years and will operate within some restraints.
- May 6th, 2027: There will be a Shadow Council election. The term will last 5 years. 1 year to the vesting date for Unitary and then a 4-year term.
 - May 6th, 2028, is vesting date and the Shadow member will become Unitary members.

County Cllr Thomson left meeting 7.25pm.

Noted report previously provided by District Cllr Overton-Neal. Key items summarised as follows.

- The Government has chosen the three new Unitary Councils Option which means Caistor St Edmund and Bixley will become part of Greater Norwich. Services continue as normal; in this transition period all Norfolk Councils will work together preparing information for the new Shadow Councillors who are elected in May 2027.
- New Surface Water Drainage Officers, supporting ongoing work on surface water management and community resilience.
- South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils' Handyperson Service was named Handyperson Service of the Year at the prestigious National Healthy Housing Awards.
- Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy (GNGIS). These strategies are a collaborative approach to restoring and protecting biodiversity in Norfolk and Suffolk, and they are working with residents, experts, communities, and local authorities to design a better future for nature.
- Business Builder - 472 businesses supported through the programme, £2.3 million paid out in grants, 277 jobs created.
- Let's Go: This is a new visitor economy initiative which will be launching in the summer 2026. It will connect people with their beautiful outdoors and local businesses.
- CAF Grant: The two £500,000 pots, one for community projects and one for facilities, are now open for applications with the deadline for submission of applications the 16th of August 2026
- Business Awards - Another successful Business Awards event on the 18th of March.
- Received several consultations on planning reforms.
- Received notification of the notice of acceptance and an application for a Development Consent Order for the East Pye Solar project. This will now go before an Inspector for a hearing where they will make the decision.

Clerk to contact Community Infrastructure Officer at District Council for guidance on grant funding – YW. District Council District Cllr Overton-Neal left meeting 7.40pm.

Noted report previously provided by District Cllr Fowler. Key items summarised as follows.

- Members grant fund of £2,000 per Councillor.
- South Norfolk Community Awards nominations close 15th May 2026.

2026/010 Finance matters

Financial statement as of 31st March 2026

Received and noted.

Annual internal audit report

Noted internal audit report as previously circulated. Noted three observations/recommendations as follows.

- In line with Assertion 10, recommended Councillors email addresses are removed from website. Noted email addresses had been removed.
- Recommended link to be placed on website to District Council website and Councillors Register of Interests. Noted link had been added.
- To adopt a separate Bullying and harassment policy to be covered later in agenda.

All agreed PC to engage internal auditors services for next financial year 2026/27 – YW.

AGAR – Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

Statement agreed and signed by Chair and Parish Clerk.

AGAR – Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26

Statements approved and signed by Chair.

Expenditure for approval/to be noted

Following items of expenditure for financial year 2025/26 were formally noted and/or approved.

- HMRC, Parish Clerk, quarter 4 @ £30.28
- Westcotec @ £1,981.60 + VAT, funded through CIL, supply & installation of bus shelter
- Parish Clerk expenses, March @ £63.11, includes £7.50 VAT. (£37.48 + VAT funded through CIL, door mat, and utility bin for village hall)
- Tidswell Childs LLP @ £230.00 + VAT, fire evacuation plan for village hall, funded through CIL

Following items of expenditure for financial year 2026/27 were formally noted and/or approved.

- Parish Clerk gross pay, May, and June @ £439.40 per month
- Parish Clerk pension, Nest, May, and June @ £48.33 per month
- Ecotricity @ £60.12 + VAT
- Ecotricity @ £56.57 + VAT
- C A & K J Bailey @ £90.00, internal auditor
- Ian Smith @ £110.00, grounds maintenance
- Reimbursement to Cllr Chapman @ £20.35, includes £3.39 VAT, padlocks for SAM
- Zurich Municipal @ £1,386.46, insurance renewal
- Parish Clerk expenses, April, @ £95.13, includes £63.25 SLCC membership renewal
- Reimbursement to J Wymer @ £49.32, food, litter pick
- Reimbursement to J Utting @ £11.00, food, litter pick

Reserve's policy and earmarked reserves

PC agreed to adopt updated Reserves policy with immediate effect – YW. PC approved following earmarked reserves as of 1st April 2026.

- Contingency by-election fund @ £2,000
- Contingency external auditor fund @ £300
- Archive and storage of Council documents @ £162
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) @ £4,735.35
- Contingency village hall @ £3,600
- Contingency Raking Pit / tree works parish land @ £1,300
- Legal fees @ £1,000
- Litter picking @ £170.09
- War memorial cleaning @ £440
- Information Technology @ 50

Insurance renewal

Noted PC on a 3-year LTA (Long Term Agreement) with Zurich Municipal, the LTA expires May 2028. Premium £1,386.46 approved, Clerk to arrange payment – YW.

CIL

Noted balance as of 1st April 2026 @ £4,735.35. Final invoice from G Gooch and Sons Ltd to be paid with CIL @ £2,136.80, leaving CIL balance @ £2,598.55. Noted PC may receive additional invoice for asbestos and lead paint testing @ approx. £600.

Savings account

PC approved that the Clerk be given authority to transfer between the two Lloyds accounts as appropriate.

2026/0965, 47 Caistor Lane. Proposal: Single storey rear extensions. PC agreed to respond “no comment” – YW.

Decisions

None.

2026/012 Village hall

Fire safety log book

Fire safety log book as previously circulated approved. Agreed following.

- Fire safety responsible persons: Cllr Chapman and Cllr Utting
- Emergency contact numbers: Mobile numbers of agreed fire safety responsible persons.
- Keyholders: Cllr Bainbridge, Cllr Chapman, Cllr Utting, Clerk and agreed member of public.

PC to check how often alarms should be tested – YW. PC to research fire alarm procedures for village halls – YW. PC to produce A4 checklist of key dates/checks for village hall – YW.

Hire rates

Agreed following hire rates.

- Standard £8.00 hourly rate
- Reduced rate of £7.00 per hour for block bookings of 6 or more sessions.

Agreed above rates to be reviewed. Chair to be point of contact for booking enquiries, Chair to set up email address for bookings – DB. Clerk to draft article for website – YW.

Advertising

Agreed to advertise village hall through following methods.

- Website
- PC noticeboards
- Church magazine
- Poringland Facebook page

Clerk to draft article for approval by PC – YW.

Snagging list

Following items identified.

- Drop kerb to one side of pathway
- Base plate at front, south side near front door not filled in
- Front door closing
- Expansion gaps have appeared between the interior wall boards, exposing the undercoat and in some places the wood.

Clerk to produce draft snagging list for approval by PC and once approved to be sent to architect – YW.

Future projects / funding grants

Noted Clerk had limited time resource. Three members of public agreed to join village hall committee. Committee meeting date agreed, 1st June 2026, 5pm, village hall, to agree provisional scope of future works and initial discussions in relation to funding. As per minute ref 2026/009, Clerk to contact Community Infrastructure Officer at District Council for guidance on grant funding – YW.

General update

Bench that was situated outside village hall has been refurbished and will be re-installed in due course. Tea urn will be PAT tested on 12th May cost @ £30, minimum charge for 10 or less items. PC to contact Church to ascertain if it would be possible to combine future PAT testing with Church – JU.

2026/013 Administrative updates

Councillor vacancies

PC noted that there are currently two vacancies. Agreed advert to be placed in Free for All – **JU**.

Local Governments Association (LGA) Code of Conduct

PC formally noted and agreed the adoption of the LGA Code of Conduct.

Governance documents

Financial regulations – Noted review undertaken, agreed to re-adopt existing policy with agreed amendments – **YW**.

Risk management scheme – Noted review undertaken, agreed to re-adopt existing policy with no amendment – **YW**.

Bullying and harassment policy – Agreed to adopt policy with immediate effect – **YW**.

Representatives and responsibilities

Agreed for representatives/responsibilities to remain as previously agreed.

- Planning Committee – All members of PC
- Tree & Footpath Warden – Cllr Chapman
- Caistor Roman Town Joint Advisory Board – Cllr Catchpole
- Six Strategic Group – Cllr Chapman and Cllr Porter
- Raking Pit – Cllr Chapman and Cllr Porter
- Village hall inspections – Cllr Bainbridge and Cllr Utting to cover
- Village hall committee – Cllr Bainbridge, Cllr Utting, Cllr Chapman, Parish Clerk and 3 members of the public.

Delegation arrangements to Parish Clerk

PC unanimously agreed that the adopted Standing Orders and Financial Regulations adequately cover delegation arrangements.

General Power of Competence

Noted that resolution was passed at Annual PC meeting on 10th May 2023 to re-adopt The General Power of Competence.

Bank signatories

Agreed existing signatories Cllr Porter, Cllr Utting, and Parish Clerk to remain in place with no change.

Future sub-committees - for consideration, to include play area

Agreed item to be deferred as no further development with play area.

2026/014 Parish land and environmental matters

Raking Pit

No update.

Footpaths

Noted correspondence received from Norfolk Area Ramblers proposing each parish has a documented audit of their paths and Rights of Way. Clerk to ascertain if they hold any parish boundary maps – **YW**. Agreed next step would be to check all footpaths are mapped.

Speed Awareness Machine (SAM), Arminghall

2 members of public have kindly agreed to manage the new SAM located in Arminghall. To be added to next meeting's agenda for review – **YW**.

2026/015 Litter pick

Noted successful litter pick undertaken with 18 volunteers. Thanks, expressed to Cllr Utting for organising event, all participants, and the Church for hosting the barbecue.

2026/016 Correspondence and consultations

Mindful village training, 23rd June

Noted Mental Health Awareness in the Community Training, 23rd June 2026, Dunston Hall Hotel.

Parishioner correspondence

Noted correspondence received advising of £60 fine received for parking illegally in car park near war memorial for 14 minutes. As the car park is managed by the Norfolk Archaeological Trust, Clerk recommend parishioner contacted the Trust directly to explain the situation.

2026/017 Date of next meeting, 1st July 2026, and items to be considered for agenda

Noted. Councillors to notify Parish Clerk of any items for agenda – ALL. Meeting to be held at Arminghall village hall.

Meeting closed 8.36pm.

Minutes prepared by Yvonne Wonnacott, Parish Clerk, 07/05//26.

Approved:

Date: