

OXBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

2024/2 MINUTES

Ordinary Meeting held at the Village Hall, Oxborough
Wednesday 10 May 2023, starting at 7.30pm

PRESENT:	David Hotchkin	Chair
	Simon Willies	Vice Chair
	Graham Allison	Councillor
	Martyn Cockerill	Councillor
	Jackie Lambert	Councillor

14 Members of the Public

Open Forum (questions regarding the Agenda)

Concerning agenda item 9, Mr. Tomlinson asked what the Rangers Visit would comprise. The Chair gave a few examples (potholes and road hazards). Mr. Tomlinson explained that the slow sign painted on the road surface on the corner between his house (Windy Corner) and Darwin house had been obliterated years before when the road was resurfaced but that when he approached NCC Highways to have this rectified, he was informed that it did not meet their intervention criteria. The Chair said he would make an application and the clerk also advised that Oxborough Parish Council has an account on NCC Highways so she will raise a ticket enquiry. In addition, Mr. Tomlinson asked for the adjacent verge area to be cut - this was also noted. Concerning agenda item 11, Mr. Cutler handed out paperwork to the councillors detailing the steps he had taken so far, of which he spoke for a few minutes. The Chair asked if Mr. Cutler had the full agreement of his barn neighbours and he confirmed this: Cathy Warnock spoke up to support the agenda item, adding that it had been most disconcerting time for the many years which had passed without their property names being displayed adequately. Concerning agenda item 10, Mr. Le Clercq suggested the PC may consider the burial grounds as a suitable location and regarding agenda item 16, suggested that terms of reference would need to be agreed, to which the Chair pointed out that there had been a lot of discussion about traffic calming prior to the village acquiring the SAM2 sign, asking whether the PC would be expected to form the sub-committee. Cllr Willies explained that this agenda item had been added following the Parish Meeting held in April and that terms of reference could be added to the standing orders. Cathy Warnock agreed that there had been very strong support for this notion, especially as there are so many younger and older residents living in Oxborough for whom road safety is very important.

1. Apologies for absence)
2. Declarations of Interest) The Chair advised that these had been covered in the AGM
3. Declarations of recording and social media use)
4. **To approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held 15 March 2023**
The draft Minutes had been circulated and displayed on the Notice Board (and PC website). Cllr Willies proposed that the minutes should be accepted, seconded by Cllr Allison - all in favour- the minutes were signed by the Chair.
5. **Matters arising**
Cllr Willies asked if a letter of thanks had been sent to Cllr Mike Nairn following his retirement as the Breckland Council councillor for Oxborough. The clerk confirmed this. He asked Mr. Le Clercq if the plan for re-establishing a hibernaculum during the Autumn was still on track and whether he had considered the location. He confirmed that this was still ongoing.
6. **Planning Matters**
 1. Planning Screening Consultation - 3SR/2023/0001/SCR. Proposed water Pipeline (Oxborough - Cockley Cley)- Applicant is Anglian Water.
 2. TRE/2023/0125/TCA, Oxborough Hall: T1 - Strawberry tree - undertaken an overall crown reduction.**Councillors considered these and there were no comments.**

7. Correspondence Received

a) Norfolk Police (see website)

1. PC147 Les Maguire (Beat Manager from the South Breckland Safer Neighbourhoods Team based at Thetford) - 'keen to raise the visible policing profiles in our Beat Parishes and increase both Public and Council accessibility to your local Police. We are aware that our emergency-response teams at Thetford may not always be able to provide as much visible policing in rural areas as they'd like due to excessive demand for service and that's where your local SNT can step in. The idea will be to make sure each of our twelve rural parishes feels able to contact us for local concerns, events where they'd like a Police presence (such as fetes) and Council meetings, which we would be able to occasionally attend to better understand local concerns. We will also seek to increase engagement surgeries on the parishes where Public can meet and greet us and chat freely about the things that concern them etc.'

b) NCC (see website)

c) Breckland Council:

1. Jason Elliott, Spatial Information Manager, concerning property sign request.

2. The following is a statement of the persons nominated for election as a Parish Councillor for Oxborough:

ALLISON Graham (33, Church Farm Lane, Oxborough, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE33 9PS).

CHAPMAN Bernie (Lilac Farm, Stoke Ferry Road, Eastmoor, PE33 9QA).

COCKERILL Martyn (Leveret House, Field Lane, Wretton, Kings Lynn).

HOTCHKIN David Stafford (Chantry Cottage, Oxborough, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE33 9PS).

LAMBERT Jackie (Lime Trees, Oxborough Rd, Eastmoor, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE33 9PY).

WILLIES Simon Charles (27 The Green Oxborough, Kings Lynn, PE33 9PS).

3. DECLARATION OF RESULT OF POLL

ALLISON, Graham 58 Elected

CHAPMAN, Bernard Derek 44

COCKERILL, Martyn 68 Elected

HOTCHKIN, David Stafford 54 Elected

LAMBERT, Jacqueline, Hilary 82 Elected

WILLIES, Simon Charles 66 Elected

d) Brave Futures- Local Children's Charity: Carrie Baker (Events & Community Fundraiser): 'We do need your support, please. You can help with donations, nominating us as your charity of the year, running a fundraising event, or helping us raise awareness within your community. Please get in contact for further information and help us create Brave Futures for local children surviving sexual abuse'.

e) PKF Littlejohn external auditors, advising about the Annual Governance and Accountability Returns (AGAR. Deadline to send supporting documentation or the Certificate of Exemption (as appropriate) is 3 July 2023.

f) Ryston Runners booked village green for annual Wissey ½ marathon, Sunday 3 September 2023.

g) Email from Jeff Cutler to request a sign on grass verge on Swaffham Road with names of barns (at Church Farm). OPC would need to request from NCC Highways the necessary licence authorising the sign to be erected on the grass verge.

h) Email from David Hotchkin -there are spiders and cobwebs inside the SAM2 sign and he recommends a service: 'The device has been in almost continuous operation for nearly six years, barring a couple of minor hitches on the way, and today is actually the anniversary of its inauguration. It has survived well but is beginning to show signs of ageing - so the Parish Council may wish to consider replacement of the unit at some point in time'.

i) Westcotec quote for service & calibration of the SAM2 sign: £85 plus VAT. DHL collection £27.50 plus VAT. Any faults found during the service will incur additional costs. "We are going to be increasing our prices soon, however, we can honour the costs in the quotation until your meeting/ decision".

j) Priscilla Bacon Hospice (Lodge)- information on this NHS specialist end-of-life care in Norfolk and Waveney, and the appeal to raise the final £750K (part of the £ 12.5M appeal) to complete the project for opening this Summer.

k) Lee England (Fox Terrier Rescue Garden Party) emailed to advise that the setting up will take place on the Sunday morning (and not the day before as in earlier years).

l) Mrs. Jackie Palmer-Hibbert request to book the village green for 4 June (to be used for parking - Craft Fair and Well-Being event in the village hall).

m) RoSPA Annual Inspection notification - precise date in June to be advised closer to the time.

n) NALC- subscription (membership rate) £82.92

o) Email from Sarah O'Donnell concerning Oxborough Speed Watch: 'I have been advised to contact you after I spoke with Cllr Lambert. I, and another household wish to raise a formal complaint against Oxborough Speedwatch. I have been unable to find any contact details for Speedwatch so have contacted the Parish Council. Cllr Lambert said that it could be added to the next PC meeting - if this is the case please could I come and address the council?'

p) Julie Wood, Secretary OVHC, advised that the AGM is taking place 18 May and requested the PC to nominate their representative to serve on the Village Hall Committee

8. Accounts

a. To receive bank balance and reconciliation

The councillors considered budget vs. actual (Appendix A), and the clerk asked for any questions.

Cllr Allison asked about the grass cutting schedule (the expectation that the grass would be short enough for the upcoming Fox Terrier dog event on the weekend) and the final contract details from CGM: 13 cuts @£100 each plus VAT, 2 herbicide treatments @£50 plus VAT. The clerk explained that she had asked CGM to reduce the number of cuts from 15 - which is why the grass had grown so long during April. Cllr Willies asked when the invoice for the election cost is received, perhaps the PC should challenge it (as there is nothing to lose in the attempt) although the Chair reminded the council how this had been attempted following the last election, but without success. Cllr Cockerill asked at what time of the year the herbicide would be applied, but the clerk did not know. He added that prices for herbicide had been dramatically increasing plus he shared the rumour that CGM may be selling out - the clerk responded that the contract price should be honoured. Cllr Hotchkin proposed accepting the accounts, this was seconded by Cllr Willies, all in favour.

b. To consider authorisation of payments and to sign cheques

a) Payments

1. TSB bank fees -£10

2. Npower - invoice for period 1 April 2022-31 March 2023, added to previous account balance, new invoice charge is £49.31, due for payment on 29 April 2023.

b) Receipts

1. Breckland Council Precept (1 of 2) £1679

2. Ryston Runners- hire of village green for annual ½ marathon (3 Sept 2023) - £100

3. E. England - hire of village green for Fox Terrier Rescue event (13 May 2023)-£100

The clerk asked the councillors to consider the electric bill. There was some discussion concerning whether there is even a live electrical feed to the telephone box and the majority of councillors were against paying the bill until this was proved beyond doubt. Mr. Tomlinson offered to undertake the check. Cllr Allison proposed that the bill should not be paid, pending the confirmation of a live electric supply when this would be reconsidered at the next meeting. This was seconded by Cllr Lambert, all in favour.

9. Highways

1. Parish Rangers attending Oxborough - Report all your Parish defects through the online system by 22/05/23

It was agreed that the fingerpost located on Eastmoor Road, which is just propped up against the hedge, should be securely installed as it is currently unsafe. Cllr Cockerill pointed out how the recent digging of grops along Swaffham Road had been poorly carried out, as whilst the machine dug out the verge the actual highway had been scraped off. The clerk will contact Highways (and NCC councillor Fabian Eagle) to query this.

10. Motion to agree on location of the Swift Tower

Cllr Allison commented that it appeared that there was no agreement on where it should be located, as preferably it needs to be close to a power point so that it can be fitted with a mechanism which emits swift calls, and even if this was the case, it could take more than 3 years for any successful nesting. Cllr Willies thought that the Pound may be a suitable location or perhaps the church grounds as this would provide access to old, established buildings. Cllr Cockerill noted that the agreement to find a suitable location had not been getting anywhere, although maybe the pub grounds could be a reasonable solution but failing that, why not somewhere on the village green. Cllr Allison dismissed the idea of the church grounds, as there would be considerable and complex paperwork to work through. Cllr Lambert had thought that somewhere close to the beech monolith, but others mentioned the covenant on the green (concerning permanent structures) although it had been made clear that the swift tower could be moved should the location be unsuccessful. But besides that, there would be a need to seek and secure agreement from residents in close proximity, which might be problematic bearing in mind the size of the structure (5m in height). The Chair said that he has had swifts nesting under the tiles on his roof in the past, but that he did not know whether they would do so this year. Last year he saw a "scream of swifts" over the

village and thought that this may have indicated up to 8 nesting pairs. He suggested that although the sentiment to award the swift tower to Oxborough had been well received, the challenge to locate it had become insurmountable. He proposed that the swift tower should be returned to Cllr Eagle, which was seconded by Cllr Lambert, 1 against and 4 in favour -motion agreed.

11. Motion to appoint PC representative to the Village Hall Committee

The Chair proposed Mrs. Hernandez should continue in her role, this was seconded by Cllr Lambert, all in favour.

12. Motion to consider request for a sign on grass verge on Swaffham Road with names of barns (at Church Farm) and to approach NCC Highways for the necessary license

Cllr Cockerill asked how far back against the hedge would the sign be located, and would it obstruct the view of drivers joining the main road, adding that he was aware that NCC only own the first meter of the verge and suggesting that the bulk of the verge may be owned by the fishing lakes owner. Mr. Cutler responded that NCC had not revealed that they do not own the entire verge. Cllr Lambert had no objection to the proposal that the properties at the end of the driveway should be properly sign-posted and that the suggested location would not block drivers' views. Cllr Willies had no objection as it would provide a clear location of the 4 barns for people, visitors, delivery drivers and emergency services. Cllr Allison questioned whether this was actually an issue for the PC to consider. Mr. Cutler had provided evidence to support the need for the license application to be made by the PC. Cllr Hotchkin asked him what Oxborough Farms Ltd had to say about the issue and Mr. Cutler responded that he had not made contact. Cllr Cockerill advised him that he should approach OFL out of courtesy, to ensure it would be acceptable to install a sign in front of the hedge, bearing in mind routine hedge (and verge) maintenance which he carries out for OFL. The Chair agreed and proposed that the PC consider support for the application for a license for a sign on the grass verge on Swaffham Road with names of barns (at Church Farm), provisional on consent being given by OFL, and to approach NCC Highways for the necessary license. This was seconded by Cllr Lambert, all in favour.

13. Motion to accept quote for a service of the SAM2 sign

Westcotec quote for £85(service) plus £27.50(delivery charge) -both subject to VAT. Cllr Hotchkin stated that the sign was over 6 years old now and should have been serviced after 3 years. Cllr Allison asked if there was any evidence that it had not been working correctly - no obvious evidence (besides that of spiders taking up residence). Cllr Willies noted that the quote included delivery charges, but the Chair responded that this cost would not be incurred as he would be happy to handle the transportation. Cllr Cockerill asked if a new battery would be required - which would incur additional costs - but this was unknown. Cllr Hotchkin proposed that the PC should accept the quote, seconded by Cllr Cockerill, all in favour.

14. Motion to contact the Environment Agency in regard to the burial land

Cllr Allison had found out that the cost for any exploratory work carried out by the EA would be £2708 incl. VAT; there could be further fees payable as well. Cllr Hotchkin proposed that nothing should be done until 2027 when the lease should be re-examined and reviewed as currently the PC cannot afford such costs, and the National Trust would be very unhappy to relinquish the land, essentially claiming squatters' rights, Cllr Allison adding that the PC has no access to the land. Cllr Cockerill pointed out that the NT had been making a lease payment, so they would have no claim to owning the land and Cllr Lambert agreed saying that the NT does not have any such rights. Cllr Willies added that bearing in mind Charles Ashley of the PCC had advised the PC of the Church's need for additional burial ground, this issue could not be put on hold until 2027. Cllr Cockerill added that if the land had been bought in the first place as an extension to the churchyard burial area, then the PC would be duty bound to look into accommodating the request from the PCC, and unless there is a gentleman's agreement to rent the land to the NT, there should be a formal contract put into place. Cllr Hotchkin proposed that the PC make contact with the EA in regard to the burial land, seconded by Cllr Cockerill, 4 in favour and 1 against.

15. Motion to apply to Breckland Council for a Mobile Food Store

Following the Parish Meeting held the previous month, this motion had been put forward by Cllr Willies. The Chair read out information from the BC website: Breckland Mobile Food Store is formed in partnership with Norfolk Community Foundation and Breckland Council and is delivered by Kickstart. For £3 one-off joining fee, once a week a household 'shops' affordable, healthy, nutritious food and store cupboard staples at a reduced price. The closest villages are Narborough and Weeting. If residents, parish councillors or local groups identify the scheme as relevant for their area and it is not currently scheduled to stop at a neighbouring parish, the following steps

should be taken: Identify and where possible, collate evidence of need: reasons of low-income, an inability to access local shops or nearby supermarkets, or an inability to cook and/or prepare food. Levels of low-income and/or unemployment, levels of fuel poverty, number of children in receipt of free school meals, number of isolated residents (such as for reasons of ill health or lack of transport links) and local data from experience of serving the community (including number of residents accessing help from community groups). Cllr Cockerill thought that if the need is identified, then this is a good service, but Cllr Lambert questioned how this information could be determined. Cllr Willies noted that there are no nearby shops, and no transport links in the village so he would support the motion and Cllr Allison agreed. Cllr Willies suggested the PC contact their new BC councillor, Ian Sherwood for his comments. Cllr Hotchkin thought that the village would probably be turned down. Cllr Allison asked member of the public Anita Cutler to relate the time when she distributed food parcels from her car - Mrs. Cutler said this was during Covid, when her husband was deemed vulnerable and for some weeks received food parcels for which they had no need (even though they had immediately reported this) so she had made village enquiries and located only a single household who gladly accepted the weekly donations. Cllr Allison concluded that there had not been a big response to her offer. Cathy Warnock offered anecdotal evidence from the recent Oxborough Hotspot (on Wednesdays, 12.30 -3.00pm) when free hot lunches were offered to residents over a period of 10 weeks, but only taken up by people with means who really looked forward to the sociable side of getting together. Councillors agreed that Social Services would be the best source for the information required. Cllr Willies proposed that the PC should apply for the Breckland Mobile Food Store, seconded by Cllr Cockerill, all in favour.

16. Motion to consider setting up a traffic calming group (sub-committee) for Oxborough village

Following the Parish Meeting held the previous month, this motion had been put forward by Cllr Willies. Cllr Cockerill spoke about how the Speedwatch group do a good job and thought that the PC, wider community plus traffic police work together well, although he was not in favour of a sub-committee where information would get diluted. Cllr Willies reported that, during the parish meeting, a lot of residents had spoken about the issue of speeding vehicles, and although farm vehicles must be accommodated, if the local community see an issue and high-speeding vehicles are being recorded, then the evidence is there to support this motion. The Chair asked him if we would be willing to be the PC representative and he said he would, but pointed out that he is not on the main road, so really it is up to those most affected by the speeding traffic to form the group. Cllr Allison related how about 7 years earlier a group had been formed to consider a broad range of traffic calming measures, which took many months to investigate and that the SAM2 sign had proved the most feasible and financial solution. Cllr Hotchkin concurred with this but added that a sub-committee does not need to be sanctioned by the PC. Cllr Willies proposed setting up a traffic calming group for Oxborough village, seconded by Cllr Cockerill, 3 in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention.

17. Motion for the SAM2 sign data to be sent to the police every time the sign is moved.

Cllr Hotchkin began by saying that the Speedwatch coordinator (Mrs. Frankie Watkins) had asked him to send data from the flashing sign to the police, which he said could be possible but only from the location close to Red House. This is because the trigger point at the Swaffham end of the village is beyond the 30mph speed limit indicator, so information of speeding vehicles from outside the 30mph zone would be recorded. Cllr Willies suggested that he include the fact about the trigger point when he sends in the data to the police. Cllr Cockerill suggested that offering this point of transparency would strengthen the argument that traffic police should attend Oxborough more frequently, although ultimately it is their decision. Cllr Willies asked the Chair if he already shared the data with the SW coordinator. He said yes but Mrs. Watkins advised the council that no information had been received for over 3 months. Cllr Hotchkin explained that his laptop had failed during that time but that he wanted to make it clear that once the SAM2 sign had been serviced, he would no longer take responsibility for siting the sign, moving it to different locations or handling the recorded data. Cllr Willies asked him if we would be willing to provide training on the management of the SAM2 sign and he said he would. Cllrs Willies proposed that the SAM2 sign data be sent to the police every time the sign is moved, seconded by Cllr Cockerill, 3 in favour and 2 abstentions.

Public participation

18. To receive information or suggested items for consideration at the next meeting

a) Mr. Heatley asked if Mr. Cutler received permission from OFL to install the sign by his hedge, would the PC expedite the matter immediately. The Chair said yes as this had already been agreed under the agenda item.

b) Concerning correspondence received what did the PC have to say about point (o) concerning the Speedwatch complaint. Cllr Lambert explained that she had passed this on to the clerk and that the clerk had made initial response as follows: Please address your concerns and/or complaints via the Police. (I attached the 'Community Speed Watch' letter). Ms. O'Donnell responded: I am extremely disgruntled about the conduct of Oxborough Speed Watch so whilst I can and will be raising the complaint with Norfolk Police, I do feel that the Parish Council have a duty to hear and act if necessary on this matter due to the severity of it. Would I still be able to speak in a meeting please? The clerk said yes of course, but later Ms. O'Donnell advised that she would be unable to attend due to childcare arrangements but shared a copy of the letter she wrote to Norfolk Constabulary. This letter detailed her experience, which included her remarking *'how hostile the Speedwatch team were as we drove through as they all glared into my car as we drove past'*. After Ms. O'Donnell received a warning letter from the police she also wrote *'I strongly believe by my slow speed I drove through the village and the way I was glared at by the volunteers that there is an ulterior motive to their recording. I understand that should a certain a number of people be caught speeding the village speed limit may be lowered or they may be able to have a law enforcement officer carrying out speed checks in the village. I would like this letter to be removed from my record please as it has been issued under completely false pretenses. I also would like to think an investigation will take place into Oxborough Speedwatch and their practices. I feel it is a role with the highest set of responsibilities and I have to question the ability of the volunteers conducting the checks'*. Councillors agreed that this was not a matter for the PC to consider as Speedwatch is a village community group and therefore the PC has no authority in matters arising.

c) Mrs. Prichard understood that following the retirement of Cllr Mike Nairn, the PC had written a letter of thanks, but asked whether the same had been accorded to Mr. Ian Monson, who had served 40 years as a Parish Councillor. There was support in the public area for this idea and the Chair agreed that this should be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

d) Mrs. Willies asked whether the SAM2 servicing would fix the issue of the trigger point. The Chair responded that the sign should be considered a deterrent and not a data recording device, but that the trigger point feature can be adjusted (as there are 7 different settings) and the calibration of the radar reading would be checked. Mrs. Pritchard suggested changing the location of the SAM2 sign so that the trigger point would be accurate on the Swaffham end of the village. Mr. Le Clercq asked if the SAM2 sign is a deterrent or could it be a prompt and the Chair said that there are settings available for either. Cllr Allison reminded everyone that at the time the SAM2 sign offered 90% of what the group were looking for, especially from a financial viewpoint, as the costs were shared equally between the group and the PC.

19. Dates of next meetings

12 July 2023, 13 September 2023, 15 November 2023, 17 January 2024 and 13 March 2024.

The meeting closed at 9.43pm

APPENDIX A	Meeting 10 May 2023				
Report: Accounts reported against the budget quarterly					
IAW Statement of Internal Control and Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control (section Financial Reporting)					
BUDGET 2023/24	Budget	Actual	Outstanding		
Estimated Gross Payments					
Accountants	158.40	0.00	158.40		
Clerk's salary	1430.00	0.00	1430.00		
Clerk's expenses	165.64	0.00	165.64		
CGM (grass cutting x15 plus herbicide)	769.45	0.00	769.45		
Hedge cutting (x1 cut)	344.68	0.00	344.68		
RoSPA annual playground inspection	88.20	0.00	88.20		
St. John the Evangelist donation	175.00	0.00	175.00		
Royal British Legion donation	30.00	0.00	30.00		
Insurance	322.99	0.00	322.99		
Bank charges	60.00	10.00	50.00		
Village Hall Hire	84.00	0.00	84.00		
Village green bench	380.00	0.00	380.00		
Cleaning of the war memorial	546.00	0.00	546.00		
Election Costs	1000.00	0.00	1000.00		
	5554.36	10.00	5544.36		
Estimated Receipts					
Village Green Hire	260.00	200.00	60.00		
National Trust Lease	200.00	0.00	200.00		
VAT refund on usual expenditure	140.00	0.00	140.00		
Precept	3358.00	1679.00	1679.00		
	3958.00	1879.00	2079.00		
Bank Reconciliation					
Bank Balance b/f	6248.32		2499.15	Estimated Balance end of financial year 2023/24	
Add Receipts:					
Breckland Council (precept)	1679.00				
Ryston Runners (village green hire)	100.00				
E. England (village green hire)	100.00				
sub-total	1879.00				
Less Payments:					
Bank charges	10.00				
Ewing Account Services (accountants)	79.20				
CGM (hedge cutting)	391.67				
Oxborough Village Hall (annual hire)	78.00				
S. Hernandez (clerk annual salary)	1144.00				
S. Hernandez (clerk annual expenses)	173.94				
HMRC (Tax on clerk's earnings)	286.00				
sub-total	2162.81				
Bank Balance @ 8 May 2023	5964.51				