

## BROCKDISH (inc. THORPE ABBOTTS) PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of scheduled Parish Council Meeting

Thursday 26th June 2025 7pm Thorpe Abbotts Village Hall

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**Present:** Cllrs MacKenzie (Chair), Castagnetti (Vice Chair), Clark, McCluskey & Russell.

**Public:** 2

**In Attendance:** District Cllrs Hudson & Thompson + Clerk

**1. Welcome**

Cllr MacKenzie (Chair) welcomed all to the meeting.

**2. To consider accepting apologies for absence:**

Cllr Cobbold & County Cllr Wilby apologies received & accepted.

**3. To consider declarations of interest:**

Nil

**4. To approve the minutes of the last meeting of 22nd May 2025**

The minutes of 22nd May were ratified as a true record of the meeting & a hard copy signed by Cllr MacKenzie (Chair).

Proposed: DC Seconded: SR

**5. The meeting adjourned for public participation:**

- Thorpe Abbotts resident reported damaged perspex on the footpath map board by the notice board, however the footpath map is not damaged.
- Lisa Buck of Campaign Against Dodds Wood BESS gave an update. She thanked the PC for their comments re: planning application 2025/1332. She also informed the meeting of the TPO request to SNC submitted by CADW. Anyone who wishes to join the group please contact Lisa [stopdoddswoodbess@gmail.com](mailto:stopdoddswoodbess@gmail.com) There are over 200 comments on planning application 2025/1332 requesting a full EIA, & signs placed all around villages. District Cllr Hudson suggests the timescale for full EIA decision will be at the end of July. Cllr MacKenzie (Chair) reported an email from a resident has been received re: signs & posters on the Pump & surrounding grassed areas objecting to BESS. Resident feels the communal areas should be neutral in their views. Cllr MackKenzie (Chair) read NCC Rules re: Unauthorised signs on Highway &/or verges. Lisa Buck advised she would inform the group to be mindful of where any signs are placed in the future i.e. avoid village greens, signs & notice boards. She apologised & informed that the group is being run responsibly & respectfully. Cllr MacKenzie (Chair) to respond to the resident.

Cllr Clark reported Highway signs are obscured by foliage, Clerk to report to Highway Rangers/Highways Dept.

**6a. To receive District Cllr Hudson's Report see Appendix A.**

Delivered to the meeting by District Cllr Hudson

**To receive District Cllr Thompson's Report see Appendix B.**

Delivered to the meeting by District Cllr Thompson.

**To receive County Cllr Wilby's Report see Appendix C.**

Delivered to the meeting by Cllr Castagnetti (Vice Chair).

**6b. To co-opt a new Councillor to fill the current vacancy.**

Stuart Woodruffe was proposed by Cllr MacKenzie (Chair), seconded by Cllr McCluskey to be co-opted to the PC. Cllr Woodruffe signed the Acceptance of Office & joined Cllrs for the remainder of the meeting.

**The meeting of the PC resumed:**

**7. Planning (applications/decisions/updates as notified by SNC):-**

**At Risk Register:** (ongoing)

**37 The Street, Brockdish.**

For information: Chris Bennett, Heritage Officer, SNC previously reported the property is now being investigated by another department (a very long process).

The Community Enforcement Officer is involved & the council do have capacity to serve an improvement notice which requires remedial works to the property that would make the property safe for occupation. The notices tackle hazards within the property & its curtilage but are not targeted specifically at the appearance of the property - however they can consequently assist in the building being repaired which is important from the heritage point of view. An urgent work notice can not be served if the building is occupied - the owner is stating & providing evidence that this is the case, even though it is in poor condition. Cllr MacKenzie (Chair) contacted Chris Bennett via email on 30/03/25 for an update. Response received to say that the Compliance Officer is to take a look at the building - we will report back once he has done so. Chris Bennett has also contacted the empty homes officer for an update & will advise when he has received a response. Cllr MacKenzie (Chair) contacted the Compliance Officer (AB) on 30/04/25 & 19/05/25 requesting updates. Cllr MacKenzie (Chair) contacted Chris Bennett on 22/06 to request an update.

**Update received** - from CB on 23/06 'passed to another officer & plans being made for a site visit. Cllr MacKenzie (Vice Chair) to forward emails to District Cllrs Hudson & Thompson.

**Application:**

**2025/1752** Agricultural Building South of Hilltop Farm, Hall Road, Brockdish

Variation of condition 2 - To revise design to incorporate balcony on south side (rear) of dwelling on consented permission 2024/2293 (which gave permission for demolition of existing agricultural building with part Q approval & erection of new replacement dwelling & garage with additional residential garden land). Date of decision: 11/04/25. The PC supported this application.

**To note: 2025/1332 BESS - PC response attached Appendix D.**

(Clerk to include response in the Mardler).

**8. Correspondence to note :** (sent to Cllrs upon receipt).

- Campaign Against Dodd's Wood, BESS informed PC of their request to SNC to place TPO on 27 trees which are threatened by damage from root compaction, felling or canopy removal due to access upgrades or heavy construction traffic as part of the proposal re: BESS. (Clerk to email CADW to inform of PC support of the TPO request).
- Devolution/LGR, Norfolk. NCC advised the conclusion of the options appraisal is that

the recommended preferred option is one unitary council covering all of Norfolk. NCC will be in touch in the next few weeks with further details of the next round of engagement. SNC recommends two unitary bodies.

- Email received from Thorpe Abbotts parishioner re: the display of campaign signs on Thorpe Abbotts Pump & surrounding grassed area. Issue raised, & discussed during Public Forum Agenda Item 5.
- Norfolk Community Foundation. Photo competition re: Norfolk Day. Further information [www.norfolkfoundation.com](http://www.norfolkfoundation.com) closing date 15/07/25. Cllr Clark to forward details to WVfN.
- Details to join Norfolk Local Access Fund [www.norfolk.gov.uk/nlaf](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/nlaf) closes 14/07/25.
- Parish Council Generic email account requirements as informed by NALC/the latest 2025 edition of the Practitioners Guide. Every authority must now have a generic email account hosted on an authority owned domain. Cllrs to set up their [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) email accounts (CM & EC completed set up). Primary email address [clerk@brockdishandthorpeabbotts.norfolkparishes.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@brockdishandthorpeabbotts.norfolkparishes.gov.uk) is being used.

**9. AOB/Updates/Matters Arising:-**

\*Flooding: Cllr Woodruffe informed the meeting that there is not much to report at present. NCC PFR review & grants - nothing as yet. A meeting to be held in September. Fortunately, no flooding in 18 months, why are they not looking at grant applications? NCC responsible for grants & follows EA guidelines. No contact made with Ed King re: RDN funding, Cllr MacKenzie (Chair) will contact. Cllr MacKenzie (Chair) reported EA £35 million underspent! Cllr MacKenzie (Chair) to speak with GL re: clearance of the Brook, The Street. Cllr Clark suggested clearance of the ditch, Brockdish Common. Cllrs MacKenzie (Chair) & Woodruffe have previously looked & possibly a chainsaw is required to remove tree stumps. A working party could be formed. Cllr Clark will speak with GL. To be included on the Agenda of the next meeting.

\*Speeding/Traffic Calming: Cllr Castagnetti (Vice Chair) reported speeding statistics as carried out by the Speed Enforcement Team as follows:-

- Feb 2025 6 offences = 0 Brockdish addresses
- Mar 2025 13 offences = 5 Brockdish addresses
- Apr 2025 15 offences = 4 Brockdish addresses
- May 2025 11 offences = 2 Brockdish addresses
- June 2025 7 offences = 2 Brockdish addresses

A new operator is taking over shortly & it is hoped Grove Road will be targeted.

SN Police held a street surgery at Brockdish on Saturday 21st June, however PC not notified (Cllr Castagnetti (Vice Chair) made this known to Officers & they will ensure PC is notified of their next visit).

SAM2 with Westcotec Ltd for assessment. Cllr Cobbold would like more adhesive wheelie bin stickers (quotation provided). Cllrs Castagnetti (Vice Chair) & McCluskey have spare stickers. To be included on the Agenda of the next meeting.

\*The Commons/WVfN inc. Biodiversity (Action Plan).

Cllr MacKenzie (Chair) & Cllr Clark met with Cllr James Bensly, NCC & County Cllr

Wilby on 19th June to discuss the old school playing field. On the face of it, both approved of the idea. NCC can not dispose of the old school playing field until mid 2026, after achieving consent from the Secretary of State. It is hoped the PC will be able to acquire it with a grant from SNC, who are updated. A reprint of Wildlife Friendly leaflets ordered for WVfN Family Day to be held on 21st September 2025 on the Common. There will be lots going on & the Village Hall will be open for refreshments. The PC will have a table & it is hoped Cllrs will support the event (Cllrs MacKenzie (Chair) & McCluskey will be away).

WVfN plans to undertake a hedgerow survey.

\*Thorpe Abbotts new notice board (same as Brockdish). As in the Conservation area, may require permission from SNC Heritage Officer, Clerk awaiting response.

Quotation received in the sum of £752.00 + VAT. Cllr McCluskey to measure the existing posts to see if a new notice board can be attached to them.

\*Street Lighting costs. Clerk reported street lights on the cheapest tariff available (UMS Business). All street lights are led.

\*Date of Xmas Tree Light Switch-On. Date for Brockdish is Saturday 6th December at 17.30 hours. Large tree to be placed outside the Village Hall, with carol singing. To be followed by refreshments in the village hall.

Thorpe Abbotts date tbc at the next meeting.

\*Proposed Village Fete 2026, Brockdish. Date 4th July 2026. Committee to be formed & the Village Hall Committee will be involved.

\*Village Sign, Brockdish. Cllr MacKenzie (Chair) & Cllr Castagnetti (Vice Chair) to meet to discuss ideas with a local graphic designer, date to be arranged & possibly a committee to be formed. Ideas have been provided.

\*Proposed notice board by Waveney Heights junction (green area) Brockdish.

Suggestion to place on existing wooden posts by High Hedge Path. Awaiting advice/ permission from NCC. To request an update 27/06/25.

\*Cllr Woodruffe reported picnic bench on Brockdish Village Green is in need of repair or replacement. Cllr Castagnetti (Vice Chair) to look. Clerk to obtain prices for plastic picnic benches.

\*GL would like a 'No Dog Fouling' sign for Brockdish Village Green. Cllr Russell would like signs for Thorpe Abbotts. Clerk to source.

\* Cllr Russell reported eroded verges around Thorpe Abbotts Pump requires tidying & grass seeds sown. Clerk to inform GL.

\*Cllr MacKenzie (Chair) reported broken sign Nature Reserve at junction of Hall Road/Grove Road, Brockdish. Clerk to report.

\*Cllr MacKenzie (Chair) reported vehicles using farm access on Hall Road, Brockdish to access/exit A143, a fast, dangerous section of road. Contacted the tenant farmer who informed the gates are left open as when shut with chains & locks, these were cut off & removed on several occasions so gave up closing after several replacements. Cllr

MacKenzie (Chair) is happy to close gates & tenant farmer in agreement, until signage stating 'Farm Access' can be supplied (spoken with Cllr Bensly & awaiting his reply).

\*Clerk reported 'Give Way' sign + post broken Scole Road, Brockdish to A143. NCC Update received to say: 'Works programmed for repair, awaiting authorisation from Cadent Gas to complete the works due to high risk, high pressure gas apparatus nearby.

\*Footpath 9 Thorpe Abbotts/Dickelburgh, obstructed by crops. Clerk reported to NCC. Update received to say: 'we have investigated & have written a letter to the responsible party (landowner) to resolve this issue.

\*Cllr Clark reported the current Brockdish Village Hall committee is active!. The hall has been re-decorated & new blinds on order. A book exchange storage box to be placed next to the telephone box, also a food bank donations box.

\*Cllr McCluskey reported building plot for sale with planning permission for 3 bed house permission granted 1989), at The Street, Thorpe Abbotts.

\* Brockdish War Memorial. For information - 3 additional names to be added/inscribed as per request of Church Warden PT. Requires listed building consent as grade II listed. Clerk has contacted the Heritage Officer at SNC. Advised there would be no problem in adding names to the bottom of lists already in place, however no space to do so & in this case HO not quite sure what the plan would be - it would in some respect not be ideal to inscribe on the octagonal bases/plinths as these do not have any writing on at present. It may be better to add another tablet like the one attached (as previously suggested by PC) HO asked do we have any background to the people we are proposing to put on it so it is clear why they are not on it already?

**Update:** Clerk has forwarded names & rank details to the HO. Cllr Castagnetti (Vice Chair) suggested obtaining a quote for a small plaque.

\* Village website. AS continues to update the website. NALC website is updated.

## 10. Payments/Transactions for approval/authorisation: May June 2025 to date.

COMMUNITY ACCOUNT (current). Proposed: CM (Chair) Seconded: EC (Vice Chair)

Payee March April	Description	Amount
WHC	Hire Fee	£20.00
Pearce & Kemp Ltd	Street Light maintenance	£37.50
G. Leech	Grass cutting etc	£246.66
TH (reimbursement)	Paper, Printer Ink	£58.43
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>£362.59</b>
<b>BALANCE c/f</b>		<b>£11167.72 (+*CIL)</b>

\*monies we hold: £872.53 re: Brockdish 'Xmas Switch On' donations (village sign?)

£61.79 re: Brockdish Defibrillator (funds from clothes bank)

( £280.83 \*CIL October 2022 Hilltop Farm, Brockdish)

(£2155.83 \*CIL October 2023 Hilltop Farm, Brockdish)  
(£5566.01 \*CIL April 2024 Hilltop Farm, Brockdish)

\* 5 years to spend CIL payments. a) The provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or  
b) Anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an Area.

**11. To consider items for the next Agenda.**

Quotation re: a further 100 vinyl stickers for wheelie bins (AC).

Ditch clearance, Brockdish Common (CM/SW).

**12. To consider date of next scheduled meeting:**

To be held on Thursday 31st July 7pm at WHC, Brockdish

The meeting closed at 21.00 hours.

SIGNED: .....DATE.....  
Cllr Christine MacKenzie (Chair)

**District Cllr Clayton Hudson's Report to meeting 26/06/25**

**Appendix A**

SNC Village Housing Cluster Allocations Plan will now go forward to full Council in July to get approval for the document to be submitted to the Secretary of State.

Labour Gov would like more houses built in South Norfolk so possibly more sites will be required.

Demolition proposed of old SNC premises South Norfolk House, to build houses (building has been empty since 2022).

LGR/Devolution. SNC favours the two unitary bodies option.

BESS. 100% against.

**District Cllr Delme Thompson: Parish Update 26th June 2025**

**Appendix B**

**Local Government Reorganisation**

The South Norfolk Council recommendation for two unitary bodies, has been published. Full

details and a survey, open until 25 July are available here: <https://orlo.uk/CEeyy>

Deadlines:

- Friday 26 September 2025 – submission of LGR full business case to Government • New unitary councils up and running in Norfolk by 2028

Planning

I have been asked to join 4 other councillors on an **Enforcement Oversight Board**, to conduct periodic reviews of the enforcement processes and effectiveness at SNC. The Board will cover the following areas:

- Overview of the key performance indicators for the service.
- In depth understanding of the enforcement process.

- Deep dive into indicators that are not meeting their target.
- Oversight of enforcement cases which have not reached a resolution within 6 months from the date of receipt. The Board will make recommendations to the Lead Officer and the Portfolio Holder Planning and Economic Growth.

(Cllr Thompson explained the role).

#### **BESS**

I am keeping an eye on the proposed development here and local concerns. As previously mentioned, I will not comment publicly, so as not to jeopardise my ability to actively contribute to discussions should the application come before the planning committee.

#### **Grants and community Support**

I'd like to reiterate my evergreen ask for the council to continue to encourage community groups to check out the grant funding available from SNC. Many are simple to apply for and, it may well be that local groups who don't think they would qualify – will! [Community funding | Broadland and South Norfolk](#)

#### **County Cllr Wilby's Report to PC 26/06/2025**

#### **APPENDIX C**

Saffron Housing is to extend its affordable living portfolio into Harleston with the development of 107 brand-new Independent Living homes for individuals aged 55 and over with additional care needs. Norfolk County Council has provided £4.37m of capital funding to support the scheme named by local children and known as the Oaks at Harleston as part of its independent Community Living programme to build more modern, attractive, and sustainable homes for later life across the County. Funding has also been awarded to the development by Homes England. As part of a wider housing development being created on site, the Independent Community Living will deliver a mix of one and two bed affordable apartments and shared ownership property. On-site, 24/7 care and support will enable people to remain independent in a home of their choice. Facilities on site will include a hairdressing saloon and community gardens. Further information, including how to apply to rent an apartment at the scheme, or purchase a shared ownership property, will be published prior to the scheme being completed in the autumn of 2027.

NCC has agreed to create the Norfolk Community Fund, a pot of almost £500,000 that councillors can award to local groups. All 84 councillors will be allocated £5,000 from this fund. They can distribute this in the form of grants ranging from £200 to £2,500, to support local projects promoting social inclusion, volunteer opportunities, and community engagement. For grants of £500 or more, groups will be asked to match-fund 50pc, potential doubling the funding. Grants under £500 will not be required to seek match-funding, but groups are welcome to do so. Norfolk has an estimated 10,000 voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations, including about 3,500 registered charities. In the last year, Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service has helped more people than ever before stay safer in their homes. Between April 2024 and April 2025, the service's Prevention team, fire crews and volunteers completed 8,164 in-person Home Fire Safety Visits, which is a 139% increase on the previous year and the highest on record for the service. Home Fire Safety Visits are free, in-person visits designed to reduce the risk of fire and improve safety and wellbeing in homes across Norfolk. They identify potential hazards, raise awareness and influence safer behaviours and also serve as a gateway to wider health and wellbeing support – with teams able to make onward referrals to services

such as social care, mental health support and assistive technology providers. If you know someone who may benefit from a Home fire Safety Visit, please refer them via our website where we will check if they are eligible: [www.norfolk.gov.uk/firesafetcheck](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/firesafetcheck) A new campaign and resources are being launched helping Norfolk's residents to understand how aging might impact safe driving. NCCs Road Safety Team, in collaboration with Norfolk Police, Norfolk fire and Rescue Service and East of England Ambulance service, are supporting people to review their driving and get the support they need when they need it. The campaign encourages people to look out for subtle health changes, to talk honestly with trusted friends, family or a professional about how health could impact your driving and take extra steps to ensure you can drive safely for longer. More information about this campaign and safe driving can be found at [www.norfolk.gov.uk/drivesafe](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/drivesafe) Looking forward to seeing the Pink Tractor Ladies on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> of July (hoping for kind weather)

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Re: Planning Application 2025/1332**

#### **Location: Land East Of Cuttings Road, Rushall Proposal: EIA Screening Request - Proposed Battery Energy Storage System**

##### **Dodds Wood BESS**

Elmya advance no substantial reason why the Dodd's Wood site is chosen for a BESS. They simply state that the site "is available" i.e. it is a speculative venture. There are however many substantial reasons why **the site should not be chosen for this development**. No locational criteria are advanced as to why this site is chosen and yet there are serious questions about its relationship to the National Grid to which it must essentially be related. Elmya display no awareness of how or where their BESS would connect to the Grid or of the limited capacity of the Grid in Norfolk to cope with 900 MW discharge from the BESS. The route of power lines across the countryside has not been considered. The development would likely lead to further industrial development involving hydrogen production as a way of using surplus power which could not be discharged to the Grid. There is also the concern that local solar farm applications would be an inevitable consequence of this development. High on the list of concerns is the likelihood of uncontrollable fires involving the discharge of extremely toxic fumes. It is well known that such fires are extremely difficult to extinguish and, as a result, have in some cases been left to 'burn out' and so extend the impact of dangerous fumes. High volumes of water are needed to tackle fires of this type and if used would also result in local flooding. The Dodd's Wood area is noted for water supply issues but these are not addressed. Emergency vehicles will have many problems in the narrow rural roads as well as telecommunication issues. It is a matter of record that Fire Brigade authorities have serious concerns about the adequacy of regulations controlling BESS developments and the resources for dealing with fires at BESS sites.

The impact on water supply in the area is also of wider concern as the impact on the aquifer from the development will affect water quality over a much wider area.

There are also concerns regarding the management of surface water & the impact on the River Waveney. Given the size of the proposed site, how will this be managed to prevent problems further

downstream? Brockdish had surface water flooding in 2020 & 2023. Also, any resultant flooding is likely to be highly contaminated.

The threat of terrorist attacks is a worry. Compared with other highly protected sites it will be a relatively easy target for terrorists wanting to compromise the National Grid.

No thought has been given to access routes by construction traffic over the 2 or more year construction period. Many, many thousands of heavy vehicle movements will be required for removal of waste material and delivery of concrete and equipment. The single-track rural roads will become impassable and totally frustrate access by local residents.

The claimed local employment bonus does not stand up as in the construction period large contractors will be needed rather than local contractors and technical staff will, according to Elmya, "come from a wider area". Following construction there will be very little employment other than visiting technical staff.

The proposal is to cover the southern half of the site with batteries and a sub-station leaving the northern half, extending to the southern edge of Rushall, as "amenity and wildlife area". In practice however the noise from the BESS will be harmful to wildlife and result in a disbenefit.

The life of the scheme is about 40 years after which we would be left with a 'brown-field site' impossible to return to agriculture but ripe for industrial use. Elmya argues that BESS is a temporary development that will not change the agricultural land classification – clearly a nonsense.

Elmya has not produced a detailed O.S. based map of the site and surrounding area. It is impossible to fully assess the impact of the development on houses, footpaths, woodlands and other features from a fuzzy aerial photo so we must reserve comment on those issues.

Despite the sound arguments about sustainability and the wisdom of capturing renewable energy for later use, this proposal has to be seen for what it is: a speculative venture with no place in the middle of a beautiful but relatively inaccessible piece of countryside. Being unrelated to other infrastructure the claimed environmental gains will be offset by the costs. Sites which do overcome the objections and serious concerns expressed above should therefore be considered as part of a strategic approach to provision of developing renewable energy resources.

We are aware that Elmya is commissioning an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) SNDC Ref: 2025/1332. We must insist that any EIA conducted is (a) totally independent of Elmya, and (b) that it includes the views of all relevant bodies concerned with fire, water, highway, wildlife and environmental safety.

We request the full Environmental Impact Assessment.

**Brockdish & Thorpe Abbotts Parish Council wish to be consulted at any further stages of this proposal.**