MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Tuesday 13th October 2026 at 7.30pm at New Buckenham Village Hall

Chair	**Cllr Andrew Bingham (AB)**
Councillors present	Cllrs Don Crossman (DC), Mary Dowson (MD), Steve Highton (SH), Karen Hobley (KH) and Mark Quinton (MQ).
Clerks	Angela Thornton and Melanie Eversfield
Also present	4 members of the public and District Cllr Stephen Askew

Meeting opened at 7.30pm

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from the Chairman, Cllr Paul Martin.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 11th August 2026 be approved as an accurate record. Proposed by Cllr Hobley, seconded by Cllr Dowson, all in favor.

3. Matters arising from the minutes.

It was noted that the works at the closed Churchyard were now complete.
KH gave a brief update on her investigations into developing a Community Emergency Plan. She will submit an article to the Parish News seeking volunteers and relevant information to assist with preparing the plan.

ACTION: KH

4. Declarations of interest and dispensations

There were none.

5. Public participation

Discussion took place regarding the closure of the village shop and its importance as a community asset. Various options were considered including a community-run shop, alternative traders and parcel collection services. It was suggested that a public meeting could be held to seek residents' views. District Cllr Askew would make initial enquiries at Breckland Council.
The possibility of resuming bonfires at the allotments following the warmer weather was raised.
Discussion also took place regarding the forthcoming village bonfire and fireworks event, including what materials could be placed on the bonfire.

6. Governance matters

6.1 County Councillor Report: The County Councillor was not in attendance, and no apologies had been received. Members expressed their disappointment at the continued lack of attendance or apologies. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk would write to the County Councillor to formally express the Council's disappointment.

ACTION: Parish Clerk

6.2 District Councillor Report: District Councillor Askew's report had been circulated with the agenda. Cllr Askew provided a further update on the review of the Scheme of Delegation, explaining that the proposed changes would remove members' ability to call in planning applications, with decisions now being dealt with by officers. Concerns were expressed regarding the potential impact on parishioners, and members were advised that representations were being made against the proposals. Further updates would follow.

6.3 Parish Councillors Reports: KH reported that a volunteer morning had been organized for Saturday between 10.00am and 12.00pm, with any assistance welcomed. MQ agreed to advertise the event at the café.
MD reported concerns raised by residents regarding a property in the village which has been unoccupied for several years and has fallen into disrepair. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk would contact Breckland Council to enquire about the Council Tax status of the property.

ACTION: Parish Clerk

MQ queried the arrangements for holding the castle key following the closure of the village shop. It was suggested that the café would be a suitable alternative location. AB agreed to discuss this with the relevant parties involved.

ACTION: AB

7. Financial matters

7.1 The 2026-2027 bank reconciliation as at 27th September was agreed. The figures reported included: Community Account £16,992.84, Business Base Rate Account £82,972.30, total funds £99,965.14.

7.2 The schedule of payments as set out below were considered and APPROVED.

Payee	Description	Amount
A Bingham	SAM3 Padlock	£16.25
PKF Littlejohn LLP	Annual External Audit Fee	£252.00
Broadland Trees	September Maintenance	£1,192.50
TT Jones Electrical Ltd	July-September Street Light Maintenance	£27.30
Npower	Street Light Electric – September	£52.08
The ICO	Data Protection registration	£45.00
Npower	Street Light Electric – September	£59.93
A Thornton	October Salary and backdated pay award from April	£640.91
Norfolk County Council	October Pension and backdate to April	£161.47
HMRC	NI for October 2026	£30.64
M Eversfield	New Clerk October Salary and WFH Allowance	£449.52
A Thornton	Mileage Reclaim	£24.20
New Buckenham Village Hall	Hall Hire – July to September	£52.20
	TOTAL	**£3,004.30**

7.3 Community Project Fund Applications: No new applications have been received by the Clerk. KH reported that a potential application for funding towards the installation of broadband at the church was being considered, although a formal application had yet to be submitted.

7.4 Councillors noted that the external audit for the financial year 2025-26 had been completed. The External Auditor had identified an incorrect response to Box 11 of Section 2 of the AGAR and an omission in the published Notice of Public Rights. These matters were noted, with the correct information to be included in future submissions and notices.

8. Planning and Highways

8.1 New Planning Applications: PL/2026/0829/FMIN – Demolition of single garage and replacement with single storey cart lodge – Crawfords, Market Place, New Buckenham NR16 2AN – Councillors welcomed the amendments made to the revised plans and were pleased to see previous concerns had been addressed. The Parish Council therefore raised NO OBJECTION to the revised application.

PL/2026/1327/TCA – T1 Yew Tree – crown reduction of 2m top and 1.5m side – Stow House, Booseys Walk, New Buckenham NR16 2AE – Noted.

8.2 Planning Decisions: There were none.

8.3 SAM3: AB reported that the SAM3 has been installed since early September but had stopped recording data after approximately 2 weeks. Following enquiries with the supplier, it was established that the battery requires replacing approximately monthly, despite the solar panel. The device will be returned to the supplier for investigation into the data transmission issue. Councillors also discussed relocating the device to the opposite end of the village and potentially purchasing a second unit under the Parish Partnership Scheme. RESOLVED that the Clerk obtains a quotation for an additional device to reconsider the matter at the November meeting.

ACTION: Parish Clerk

9. Other business for consideration

9.1 Neighbourhood Plan: A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was RESOLVED to defer consideration of the report until the November meeting, when Cllr Martin would be in attendance.

10. Amenities

10.1 Grounds Maintenance: Nothing to report.

10.2 Closed Churchyard: It was noted that the conservation area grass had been scythed and cleared.

10.3 Cemetery: MQ sought clarification regarding his responsibilities for the cemetery. It was confirmed that his role was to undertake regular visual checks to ensure everything was in order and report any concerns. The Clerk will provide MQ with a map of the cemetery for reference.

ACTION: Parish Clerk

10.4 Allotments: Councillors noted that the increased fire risk had now subsided and therefore bonfires could resume, provided they were undertaken safely and with consideration for neighbouring properties. The Clerk agreed to provide MQ with a map of the allotments also. It was also noted that the annual allotment invoices would be issued during October.

ACTION: Parish Clerk

10.5 Play Area / Cricket Pitch: DC advised that he wishes to relinquish responsibility for this amenity and take on an alternative role. MQ agreed to take on this responsibility. It was noted that the Cricket Club should be reminded of the agreed terms and conditions regarding maintenance of the pitch during the football season. The minor maintenance items identified in the play area inspection report required further consideration. It was agreed that DC and MQ would review the report together and report back to the November meeting.

ACTION: MQ & DC

10.6 Public Footpaths: It was noted that previously reported issues concerning the footpaths remained outstanding. AB agreed to follow up with Norfolk County Council to seek a response.

ACTION: AB

10.7 Community Car Scheme (CCS): Nothing to report.
10.8 Street Lights: Nothing to report.
10.9 Defibrillator: It was noted that the battery seems to be okay at the present time.

11. Correspondence

11.1 Closure of Kings Stores: Councillors discussed the closure of Kings Stores and the impact on the village community. Concerns were raised regarding the loss of an important local amenity, and the need to explore options for restoring retail provision within the village was discussed. Potential options included a community-run shop, attracting alternative traders and introducing additional services such as parcel collection facilities. The importance of understanding residents' views and the viability of any future provision was acknowledged. It was suggested that the Parish Council could facilitate a public meeting to enable residents to express their views and explore possible solutions. It was noted that Cllr Askew had agreed to make initial enquiries with Breckland Council regarding potential options and support available. RESOLVED that the Parish Council organizes a public meeting.

ACTION: PM & Parish Clerk

11.2 Mobile Refill Van: Correspondence regarding a mobile provisions van was received and noted. It was proposed that the refill van is stationed at the village hall rather than the play area car park.
11.3 Patient Participation Group (PPG) Request: Correspondence from the PPG was received and noted.
11.4 Poppy Wreath and Village Christmas Tree: Councillors RESOLVED to donate £50.00 to the Royal British Legion for the Poppy Appeal.
Arrangements for the village Christmas tree were also discussed. It was noted that arrangements for the tree were underway and the council RESOLVED expenditure of up to £750.00.

12. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 10th November 2026 at 7.30pm to be held at New Buckenham Village Hall.

Meeting closed at 8.51pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

DRAFT