

## BOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

HELD ON TUESDAY 28<sup>th</sup> JULY 2026 at 7pm IN ALL SAINTS CHURCH, BOUGHTON**Present:**

Parish Councillors: Cllrs Neil Matthew (Chair), Sue Pogmore, Tam Payne (at item 50/26), Phil Boyle, Sarah Miller.

Parish Clerk – Jo Lloyd

In attendance: B Cllr Sue Lintern, C Cllr Mike Westman

Public - 13

47/26 **Opening and Apologies for absence:** Cllr Matthew opened the meeting, welcomed those present. Apologies were received from Cllr Payne who said he would arrive late due to work, and C.Cllr Westman who said he had to leave after his report due to other meetings.

48/26 **Declarations of Pecuniary Interest (DPI) for items on the agenda:** none.

49/26 **Approval of Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2026:** Having been previously circulated, the minutes were proposed as an accurate reflection of the meeting by Cllr Miller, seconded by Cllr Pogmore and approved. The Minutes were signed by the Chair.

50/26 **Reports from visiting officers:**

**County Cllr Westman:** Update on LGR judicial review: there is no date yet and the process might be influenced by the change in Prime Minister. The deputy leader of NCC has just circulated a letter to Parishes re. PPS funding available in 27/28. Cllr Westman has liaised with NCC Highways on behalf of the PCC re. the drainage issue around Boughton Church. Cllr Pogmore reported there has been update yet. Cllr Westman asked for questions: Cllr Matthew asked on what basis the decision was made by NCC to ask for a judicial review into LGR. Cllr Westman answered that this is due to the NCC debt of 923 million and the costs involved in moving to Unitary Authorities (the Government would pay approx. 2.5million, with 85-95 million to be paid by Norfolk taxpayers.) NCC considered it better to focus on saving money and giving high value. Cllr Matthew asked about how NCC could make costs savings, e.g. in staffing costs and pensions. This is being looked at. Cllr Matthew queried the decision to end the C.Cllr Highways Fund. Cllr Westman answered that there is expected to be a 25% saving in administration costs by using the fund centrally. Cllr Matthew stressed that the costs for highways maintenance (e.g. village gateways) are disproportionate for very small parishes such as Boughton, which have a smaller population to share the costs, and this discretionary fund made a huge difference. For other schemes such as the Parish Partnership, the village has to find match funding which is more difficult for smaller parishes.

**Borough Cllr Lintern** – The Borough Council Community Fund has now launched and information circulated. It is available for parish councils and community groups, with grants available up to £25000 for capital projects and up to £5000 for revenue. Requirements include 3 quotes to show value for money, and demonstration of public support. The Borough Councillor must also back the project. The deadline for applications is 2<sup>nd</sup> October. Consultation is due to begin on the New Local Plan and an information session has taken place. Cllr Lintern stressed the importance of small parishes such as Boughton taking part

in the consultation, as with the upcoming changes to the planning system this will be one of the only chances to have a say in local planning. There has been a “call for sites” for potential developments and identified sites will soon be available on a map via the BC website. There will also be a scoping consultation for mapping open spaces; parishes should make sure they are included. The consultation is open to the public as well as parish councils. The Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan is another opportunity to put forward what the village wants, and can be completed online by councils.

**51/26 To hear from the public:**

A MOP asked what is happening with the pond. This discussion was referred to item 53/26. A MOP asked what had caused the NCC debt. Cllr Westman had left for another meeting so could not answer on behalf of NCC, but it was suggested that this is not unique to Norfolk and was likely contributed to by increases in costs, an increase in services delegated from central government along with less funding from government.

**52/26 Financial Matters:**

- a. Reconciliation of accounts: The clerk had circulated a bank reconciliation which was checked and signed by Cllr Miller.
- b. Payments approval: The payments at Annex A were approved, proposed by Cllr Pogmore and seconded by Cllr Boyle. It was noted that an invoice for mower repairs had been paid using delegated authority between meetings, and this decision was ratified.
- c. Income: The income at Annex B was noted.
- d. Budget report: The clerk had circulated a budget report to the end of quarter 1 (30/06/26) showing that the Council are operating within the budget for 26/27. It was noted that the cost for the annual play area inspection was slightly higher than expected.

**53/26 Pond and Green Maintenance:**

- a. It was noted that the new bench is now installed on the Green, with the plaque from the old bench reinstated. Thanks were expressed to Cllr Payne for installation and teak treatment.

**b. Update on pond maintenance and silt management options:**

*Council resolved to suspend Standing Order 3 during this item to allow public discussion.*

Cllrs Payne and Matthew gave a summary of the position so far:

The message received from the public meeting was that the idea of a silt bund was not acceptable to the village. A case has been made to the EA for spreading the silt to improve agricultural land, but they have again said this is not allowed. The Council have been in discussion with waste contractors to look at the option of disposal.

Mr Rob Martyr, a local ecologist who specialises in water systems, has been working on an assessment of the pond and a new proposal. It appears the pond was dug out in around 19<sup>th</sup> century where there was already a source of ground water from a spring. This ties in with maps from that time and the knowledge that the Bedingfeld Estate encouraged the digging of ponds for livestock. The pond level will therefore reflect the level of ground water, and the pond will dry out when the local chalk streams dry out. With climate change and hotter drier summers this is expected to happen more often, and the Council will not be able to prevent it.

Trying to maintain a tidy, amenity pond into the future is likely to be challenging and

costly. An alternative would be to work with nature to maintain it as a wildlife pond and wetland area, making some changes to make it more resilient. Suggestions include creating a zone around the pond with extended, more gradual banks and vegetation including reeds, rushes, purple loosestrife; moving irises closer to the wet zone where they have more chance of survival; altering the mowing regime to reduce nutrients at the pond edges, encouraging different plants to grow around the edges; discouraging duck feeding; some silt excavation to create deeper reservoirs which may hold water during dry spells, giving a refuge for wildlife.

The Council explained plans to consult with the village via a public meeting and a questionnaire, and residents will need to decide what sort of pond they want. The Council will share the scientific information they have from the ecologist, who will give a presentation at the public meeting. The questionnaire will need to establish what balance people want between appearance verses wildlife, a clear stretch of water verses seasonal wetland habitat, lower maintenance or more costly intervention.

Public discussion:

It was accepted that it isn't possible to prevent ducks visiting the pond, but the numbers are currently artificially high due to feeding.

It was noted that the pond is not currently in a natural state, and there is little of the wildlife which would be associated with a natural pond such as dragonflies and damselflies. Some MOPs indicated that they would be in agreement with the Council making decisions on behalf of the village based on facts and scientific evidence.

It was noted that a questionnaire showing public engagement and interest in the pond would be necessary for funding applications. A MOP suggested the questionnaire should include information about the costs involved in different options. It was suggested the questionnaire should be circulated outside of Boughton.

Some MOPS showed photos of the pond from 20-30 years ago.

A MOP asked about silt removal: the recommendation might be to dredge some areas but relocate the silt to change the gradient of the edges.

The Council expressed how grateful they are to have the advice of an ecologist to help make these decisions and wished to thank him for his input. They also noted thanks to Cllr Payne for his ongoing work maintaining the Green and pond, and looking into potential solutions.

- c. To consider action to control reeds on the north side of the pond: item deferred.

#### 54/26 **Play Area:**

- a. Annual inspection report: The inspection was carried out by The Play Inspection Company and the report circulated to Councillors. It was noted that the balance beam has some rotten wood which will be monitored. It was also noted that there is bird excrement on the bench and swing seats which will be cleaned.
- b. It was noted that the sign backing has been repaired, with thanks to Stephen Eyres for carrying this out.

- c. It was noted that the steps of the multi-play ladder are loose, and Cllrs agreed that these can be repaired by a Cllr Millers' husband.
- d. It was noted that the base of the bin is beginning to rust. Timescale for replacement was deferred to a later meeting.
- e. It was noted that the play area inspections have increased from fortnightly to weekly, and these are being recorded on a mobile app (Jotform).

**55/26 Correspondence:**

- a. A phone call was received from a resident re. uneven surface along the edges of Mill Hill Road and The Green. This was reported to NCC who have said it will be repaired.
- b. A letter was noted from a resident re. pond maintenance.

**56/26 Training:** It was agreed that the clerk can attend a NALC training course on procurement at a cost of £43.50 +vat.

**57/26 Planning Consultations:**

- a. Planning applications:
  - i 26/00942/F | VARIATION OF CONDITION 2 OF PLANNING PERMISSION REF 22/00955/F: Single-storey side and rear extension. | Jubilee Lodge, Mill Hill Road, PE33 9AE: A comment of no objection was submitted between meetings with all Councillors in agreement. This comment was ratified.
  - ii Late planning applications: none.
- b. Decisions:
  - i Late decisions: none.

**58/26 Highways Matters:**

- a. Traffic and speed monitoring: Cllr Matthew reported that the latest data has been uploaded to the Parish Council website, and the camera is currently working ok.
- b. Any other matters: It was noted that some potholes on Gibbet Lane have been filled.

**59/26 Cllr and Clerk's report on ongoing matters:**

- a. The Clerk reported that she attended the Borough Council Parish Planning session. The information covered was in the Borough Councillor's report.

**60/26 New reports from Cllrs and agenda items for the next meeting:**

- a. It was agreed the pond maintenance discussion will continue at the next meeting, following the public meeting and questionnaire.
- b. Cllr Matthew asked the clerk to write a letter of thanks to Rob Martyr for the considerable time and expertise he has given to the Council.

**61/26** The meeting was closed at 8.42.

Chair .....

Date .....

Prepared by

Jo Lloyd

Clerk to Boughton Parish Council

**Annex A: Payment Authorisation**

| <b>Payment date</b> | <b>Payee</b>               | <b>Details</b>                     | <b>Gross Amount</b> |
|---------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 28-May-26           | NALC                       | Website hosting and domain renewal | 156.00              |
| 28-May-26           | J Lloyd                    | Salary month 2 May                 | 199.58              |
| 28-May-26           | Clear Insurance Management | Insurance                          | 524.27              |
| 09-Jun-26           | Hylton Gott                | Fuel                               | 24.06               |
| 19-Jun-26           | Play Inspection Co         | Annual inspection                  | 115.80              |
| 24-Jun-26           | Tamar telecom              | Virtual phone inv                  | 7.49                |
| 02-Jul-26           | J Lloyd                    | Salary month 3                     | 199.58              |
| 10-Jul-26           | Reliance (Murco)           | Fuel                               | 23.40               |
| 10-Jul-26           | Lawn Boy                   | Repair to mower                    | 201.84              |
| 13-Jul-26           | ICO                        | Annual subscription                | 47.00               |
| 22-Jul-26           | Norfolk Designer Gardens   | Bench                              | 339.00              |

**Annex B: Income Received**

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Details</b>     | <b>Amount</b> |
|-------------|--------------------|---------------|
| 09/06/2026  | HMRC PAYE refund   | 39.94         |
| 03/07/2026  | HMRC VAT126 refund | 361.85        |
| 03/07/2026  | PCC Marquee hire   | 15.00         |
| 21/07/2026  | PCC Marquee hire   | 15.00         |