

**MINUTES OF SEETHING PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT SEETHING AND MUNDHAM VILLAGE HALL ON
MONDAY 5TH JANUARY 2026**

Present: Dr Hudspith (Chairman), Mr Garnham (Vice-Chairman) and Mr Stockdale

In Attendance: Mrs Andrews (Clerk)

Absent: Mrs Key

1. Apologies for absence:

Apologies were received from Mr Cowan, Mr Parsley and Mr Steward

2. Declarations of interest:

Dr Hudspith declared an interest in item 5.1 on the agenda regarding planning application number 2025/2621.

3. Minutes of meeting 28th July 2025:

The minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting. All present agreed them to be a true record of the meeting. The minutes were signed by the Chairman accordingly.

4. Matters arising from meeting 24th June 2025:

4.1 East Pye Solar proposal

Dr Hudspith reported that he had sent a response to the targeted consultation on 25th November 2025. The response covered points noted regarding unsuitability of Harvey Lane for HGV traffic and included a detailed tree survey from Seething : Kirstead boundary to CRC14 site. The PC response was published in the village newsletter which is delivered to all householders and is published on the Village Hall Committee website.

4.2 School pond

Dr Hudspith reported that he is still waiting to receive an update from the Headteacher, Vicky Mackenzie who is waiting to hear from County Council. The deeds show the pond to be half in and half out of the school boundary.

4.3 Breydon Cottage

Dr Hudspith reported that the Heritage team is aware of the state of Breydon Cottage. They advise that the property is going through probate. They are in discussion with the executor and are awaiting potential sale/acquisition of the property in order to be able to discuss the responsibility/requirements of owning the building with any potential future owner and the requirement to ensure that the building is in a sound and safe condition.

5. Planning:

5.1 New and amended planning applications

The following applications were discussed between meetings

2025/2769 – Proposed new single storey home office at Well Cottage, Seething Street

There were no objections to this application.

2025/2620 and 2025/2621 – Proposed installation of 4m x 3m x 2.4m galvanised pergola to existing patio area at rear of White Lodge , The Loke

There were no objections to these applications. Application number 2025/2021 was subsequently withdrawn because it related to the listed status of the property and the application type did not require this consideration because it does not relate to the property itself.

6. Highways:

6.1 Village signs

Notification has been received from Highways to state that all defective signs will be replaced by the end of this financial year.

6.2 Footpaths

There was nothing to report regarding footpaths

7.3 Resurfacing works

The Clerk received an email from a Highways Engineer to advise that resurfacing works will be taking place to the Loddon Road between the junction with Seething Street and Mundham Church. The works will be carried out some time in the coming financial year, details to follow.

7. Public Spaces:

7.1 Meres

Dr Hudspith has received a quote from Aquatic Solutions of £1445 + VAT for cutting the encroaching reeds. He will obtain a further quote from an alternative contractor. The reeds were last cut back in February 2020.

7.2 Wildlife and ecology

Dr Hudspith reported that the Seething Wilding group had been awarded the Richard Waddingham Award for ponds in the Norfolk Biodiversity competition. Congratulations to them.

8. Finance

8.1 Clerk's financial statement

The Clerk's financial statement had been circulated prior to the meeting and was agreed to be an up to date record of the PC's financial position.

8.2 Cheques to be authorized

The following cheque was approved and signed accordingly:

£61.95	J Andrews	Clerk's expenses
£40.00	The Royal British Legion	Poppy wreaths

8.3 Precept

Last year's precept request was for £6016 which when divided by the tax base of 162 eligible households equated to £37.13 per household.

The tax base this year is 161 eligible households.

Dr Hudspith proposed that the precept request should be increased by 3.5% to allow for inflation. This equates to £6189 in total which when divided by the tax base would equal £38.44 per household. Mr Garnham seconded the proposal with all present in agreement. The Clerk will submit the precept request form accordingly.

9. Parish Council administration:

9.1 Land registration

This item was deferred.

11.2 Biodiversity Plan

The Clerk had obtained a copy of the model document which Dr Hudspith has considered. He advised that the Parish Council is already complying with the Biodiversity plan. Clarification is needed in respect of who is responsible for the Churchyard and wording amended accordingly. Wording also needs to be amended in respect of the playpark which falls outside of the PC's remit. Once clarification has been sought, the Biodiversity Plan can be adopted.

Dr Hudspith reported that the defibrillator pads went out of date on 1st January 2026. There is currently a supply problem and pads are unavailable for purchase. The supplier (Heartsafe) have confirmed that it is fine to keep using the existing pads for the time being as this is a better option than taking the defibrillator out of service. The British Heart Foundation have also confirmed that they are happy for the out-of-date pads to be used, as long as they have not been opened or used. Dr Hudspith will continue to monitor the situation. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to the PC's insurers to explain the situation and seek confirmation that the PC would still be insured using the old pads.

10. District and County Councillor reports

Neither the District or County Councillors were present. Kay Mason-Billig had sent a general County Council report which is attached as an addendum to the minutes.

11. Correspondence:

There was no correspondence.

12. Items for agenda of next meeting

Biodiversity Plan
Defibrillator
East Pye Solar proposal

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.52pm

County Council report

Councillors back new devolved powers and funding to boost jobs and growth

New powers and funding to boost jobs, transport, housing and growth are coming to Norfolk and Suffolk, after councillors voted in favour. Following a discussion at full council Norfolk County Council's cabinet voted in favour of proceeding with devolution,

Under the Government's devolution priority programme, Norfolk and Suffolk have been offered:

- The transfer of powers and funding from Whitehall, to enable decisions on jobs, skills, transport and housing to be taken in Norfolk and Suffolk
- A multi-million pound investment fund for 30 years, to spend on local priorities

The decision means that the new devolved powers and funding would be overseen by a mayor, elected by voters in May 2026, to lead a new combined authority. The combined authority would be made up of the mayor, plus councillors from Norfolk and Suffolk.

The mayor and the combined authority will take responsibility for a range of functions and funding, including:

- Local transport
- Skills and jobs
- Housing development
- Economic growth and regeneration
- Environment and climate change
- From 2027 - taking on police and crime commissioner and fire and rescue authority functions

Positives of Devolution for Norfolk and Suffolk

1. Greater Local Control and Tailored Solutions

· Devolution will empower local leaders to make strategic decisions closer to the communities they serve, rather than relying on central government. This enables more responsive, integrated, and locally relevant public services.

2. Significant Long-Term Investment

· The establishment of a Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) will unlock an investment fund of £37.4 million per year for 30 years, over £1.1 billion in total. This provides long-term financial certainty and autonomy for planning and delivering place-based projects, reducing reliance on short-term, competitive funding pots.

3. Economic Growth and Resilience

· Devolution enables the development of tailored economic strategies, boosting productivity, attracting inward investment, and supporting local businesses. It also allows for the creation of innovation hubs, infrastructure projects, and skills programmes that are specific to local needs.

4. Improved Transport and Infrastructure

- The new authority will have powers over local transport planning, bus franchising, and the ability to coordinate a Key Route Network. This should lead to more consistent and strategic transport policies, better integration, and targeted investment where it delivers the greatest impact.

5. Skills and Employment

- Control over adult skills funding will be devolved, allowing the region to tailor skills provision to local economic needs, target key sectors, and increase access to lifelong learning. This flexibility should help address skills shortages and support economic growth.

6. Housing and Regeneration

- Devolution brings new powers to accelerate housing delivery and regeneration, including direct partnerships with Homes England and the ability to allocate housing and regeneration grants locally. This should help address local housing needs more effectively.

7. Environment and Climate Change

- The authority will have a role in regional energy planning, heat network zoning, and local nature recovery strategies. This enables more coordinated action on decarbonisation, energy security, and environmental protection

8. Health, Wellbeing, and Public Service Reform

- There will be a statutory duty to improve health and reduce inequalities, with the Mayor and CCA required to factor health outcomes into every decision. This should lead to more joined-up approaches to public health and social care.

9. Public Safety

- The Mayor will take on Police and Crime Commissioner and Fire and Rescue Authority functions, aligning public safety governance with other devolved powers for more integrated service delivery.

10. Enhanced Local Voice and Influence

- Devolution gives the region a seat on the Council of Nations and Regions, amplifying the local voice in national policy-making and ensuring regional priorities are heard and acted upon.

11. General Power of Competence

- The Strategic Authority and Mayor will have a general power of competence, allowing them to innovate and act in the public interest, provided actions are not prohibited by law.

12. Inclusive Growth and Equality

- The Equality Impact Assessment highlights that devolution can be used as a catalyst to embed 'accessible by design' in new strategies and services, better aligning them to the needs of vulnerable and protected groups, and reducing inequalities. You can find out more about devolution at www.norfolk.gov.uk/devolution.

New Norfolk-wide highways contract awarded with strong focus on boosting local skills and employment

Norfolk County Council has appointed Kier as its new long-term contractor responsible for the maintenance and construction of the county's highway network.

Kier will deliver a comprehensive programme of highways maintenance and improvement, including road resurfacing and surface dressing, bridge works, drainage and the delivery of new transport infrastructure.

As part of the contract, Kier will invest significantly in its existing site in Wymondham, upgrading facilities to reduce energy consumption and support the latest in sustainable construction and materials innovation, which will benefit the wider Norfolk economy.

A key feature of Kier's approach to the contract will be its commitment to local skills and employment. At any given time, Kier will employ at least 15 apprentices, providing structured training, professional qualifications, and career pathways for young people across Norfolk.

The company will also run an annual 10-week programme for young people in care and care leavers, offering taster sessions, work experience, and employability skills, with support from supply chain partners.

Give Norfolk County Council your views on fire and rescue priorities

A public consultation on Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service's safety and risk plans for the next five years has gone live.

Residents, businesses and organisations now have an opportunity to feedback on areas the service has identified as priorities for 2026-2031, to mitigate risk and keep our county as safe as possible.

Eight proposals have been put out for the public to comment on, around the areas of:

- Road safety
- Prevention activity
- Building safety
- Preparing for and responding to emergencies
- Responding to climate change (specifically extreme weather risks such as flooding and wildfire)
- Supporting our people
- Fire station improvements
- Responding to medical emergencies

Details of the eight proposals are below. The public can fill in an online survey via www.norfolk.gov.uk/crmp to respond.

CRMP Proposal 1

Working to Improve Road safety: We will play a more active role in Norfolk's Road Safety Partnerships to analyse data and coordinate action to reduce the occurrence and impact of collisions on our county's roads.

CRMP Proposal 2

Focussing on prevention: We will work within Community Safety Partnerships to further focus on vulnerable groups, including children and young people. We will increase our early intervention activities, developing resilience in our communities and improving outcomes.

CRMP Proposal 3

Ensuring better Building Safety: We will prioritise inspection and engagement activity for the highest risk buildings in Norfolk, effectively applying legislation across relevant residential and commercial buildings to keep people safe in their homes, at work and during their leisure activities.

CRMP Proposal 4

Enhancing our Response: We will review how we locate and deploy our assets and resources to optimise how we train for, and respond to, emergencies.

CRMP Proposal 5

Responding to Climate Change: We will review our extreme weather response, specifically water and wildfire capability, to mitigate the impact of these incidents. We will continue to lobby government to make water and flood response a statutory duty for all Fire and Rescue Services in England.

CRMP Proposal 6

Supporting our People: We will continue to further develop our high performing and inclusive culture; supporting our staff to be skilled, healthy and engaged, and empowering them to uphold the highest professional standards that our communities expect.

CRMP Proposal 7

Providing Fit for Purpose Fire Stations: We will secure long term investment in our fire stations, so firefighters are protected from contaminants and facilities are fit for a modern workforce.

CRMP Proposal 8

Responding to Life Threatening Medical Emergencies: We will continue to develop our work with East of England Ambulance Service Trust around Emergency Medical Response to improve outcomes for our communities.

Norfolk's budget consultation - Have your say

As the county council's annual budget consultation has launched, people are being urged to take a look at the proposals and have their say.

The county council is working to set a balanced budget, despite the need to save £41.6m in 2026-27.

This year there are 50 budget saving proposals, and proposals to increase council tax, which provides a large part of the funding the county council needs.

These proposed savings add up to £35.7m - which would make a big contribution to the overall amount that needs to be saved.

To help deal with cost pressures and invest in vital services, the current budget planning for 2026-27 is based on an assumption to increase council tax.

Three options are being considered:

- An increase of 3%
- An increase of up to 5%
- An increase of more than 5% People can find out more and have their say at www.norfolk.gov.uk/budget.

The consultation opens on Monday 27 October and closes on Monday 15 December 2025.

'It's never too late': Norfolk County Council is supporting healthy ageing

Looking after your health as you get older is not just a recommendation - it's a vital investment in your future quality of life. Evidence shows that staying physically active, keeping up with recommended vaccinations and screenings, and maintaining social connections are among the strongest predictors of how well you age. These actions play a direct role in preventing illnesses, reducing the risk of falls and long-term conditions, and supporting mental wellbeing.

Norfolk is home to one of the highest ageing populations in the UK. Now, the county council's Public Health department has launched a new campaign to encourage residents aged 50 and over to prioritise their health so they can live healthier, more connected lives as they age. The campaign is centred around a brand new Healthy Ageing subsite, called 'It's never too late', which highlights resources, guidance and opportunities to help residents make positive changes to their health and wellbeing.

This includes:

- Protecting your health: information on vaccination eligibility and booking, NHS screening appointments, and NHS health checks.
- Being active: information on moving more, strength and balance, falls prevention, and finding local groups.
- Feeling connected: finding clubs, groups and one-to-one support, building new connections, and practical guidance on transport and digital skills.

To explore the new webpage and find out more, visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/healthyageing.

Major refurbishment announced for Millennium Library to mark 25-year anniversary

Norwich's Millennium Library is set to undergo a £1m transformation in 2026, marking 25 years since it first opened its doors.

The refurbishment has been shaped by extensive feedback from library users and will include a re-designed early years library as well as new homes for both the 8+ and teen library areas, each with their own identity.

There are also plans for a bookshop-style entrance for easy browsing and an increase in study space, primarily on the first floor.

Accessibility has been a key part of the design with lower shelving units throughout the library and improved signage and wayfinding.

Visitors can also look forward to improved lighting, new furniture with built-in power points and a new gathering space for events and talks.

Work is scheduled to begin next year. While some disruption to services is expected during the refurbishment, full details will be shared closer to the time.

Norfolk bucking national trend for recruiting adoptive parents

Norfolk is bucking the national trend for recruiting adopters, with the numbers of adopters increasing in the county.

Across the country, there are 12% fewer families considering adoption this year compared to last, whereas in the year 24/25, Norfolk County Council's Adoption Service recruited 43 adoptive households - a 53% increase on the number of adopters who were approved in 23/24.

Of these 43 households, 37 were couples and six were single adopters. The council has also seen an increase in adopters from global majority backgrounds and from the LGBTQ+ community.

The news comes as the county marks National Adoption Week, with this year's focus being on busting the misconceptions about who can adopt.

People considering whether adoption is right for them are invited to contact Norfolk Adoption Services on 01603 638343 for a friendly chat and invitation to an information event where they can find out more.