The Minutes of Saham Toney Parish Council Meeting
held on Monday 3 November2025 at 7:30 pm
at The Wells-Cole Community Centre, Bell Lane

Present:	Cllr J Baldwin (Chair)	Cllr K Avery (Vice)	Cllr R Harrold
	Cllr M Baldwin	Cllr D Freeman	Cllr Alistair Wilson
	Cllr L Rees-Murphy	Cllr M Winter	

Also in Attendance: Sue Marsh (Clerk), and 6 members of the public.

1. **Apologies for Absence**
   Apologies from Cllr C Millan, Cllr G Morton and Cllr S Rees-Murphy were received and accepted. District Councillors Helen Crane and Pater Bate also sent apologies

2. **Declarations of Interest and requests for Dispensations**
   No declarations of interest were declared

3. **Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 6 October 2025**
   It was agreed to accept these minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting, and they were duly signed by the Chair.

4. **To report matters arising from the minutes - for information only**
   - Clerk to contact Highways and Sowerbys regarding overgrown hedges
   - Baby and Toddlers swing needs bird deterrent added to the top
   - Signs need to be installed on the gateways at Richmond Road and Ovington Road
   - Cllr Avery to organise defibrillator training
   - Clerk to contact Highways regarding the bad state of repair on Ovington Road
   - Meeting taking place with Wells-Cole Community Centre and Playfield on Monday 10th at 7:30pm

5. **Reports from District/County Councillors:**

   Cllr P Bates:
   At the council meeting on October 17th. Reform criticised the quality of the written answers they had been given for questions on notice. They said they were waffly nonanswers that avoided the questions. |Having read them that does seem to be the case.
   The independent group asked about the nature of the development of the Abbey Farm estate. Which seems to be poorly planned and very hard on its residents. The answer was that if the plans are not approved the council would have to find another way of building on the estate.
   A question was asked about the transfer of car parks to the local towns and how this could be done to continue with free parking in Watton. Still work in progress is the answer.
   Reform asked about the amount of money spent rehoming Afghans compared to the amount Of money on ex-servicemen. Which was an odd question and a strange comparison. More Mischief making.
   Reform brought a motion against the climate change emergency declaration. They are blaming Breckland's policy on climate change as the reason we have large solar farm developments seeking permission from the government. Their motion was anti science and blames a position taken by Breckland in 2019 as the reason the government are encouraging solar farms now.
   The independent groups statement by councillor Atterwill was well done and says all that needs to be said.

The motion was voted down, and the reform group were ridiculed by all the other parties.

Cllr H Crane:
Breckland Council submitted its plan for 3 unitary councils in Norfolk to the secretary of state on 26th September. We await government decision in the new year. Grateful thanks to all those who completed the survey regarding this, which helped formulate the response and plan.
At cabinet on 20th October the draft local plan (reg 18) was approved. The consultation is now open. Again huge thanks to the parishes that engaged so well throughout this process.
A market town stall grant will be available offering small pots of money to help traders establish a regular stall at one of Breckland's town centre markets.
At full council a motion was brought by the reform party to rescind the climate declaration made by Breckland Council in 2019. I am pleased to say that the motion was not passed with only the 5 reform councillors voting for it, 30 voting against the motion and 1 abstention. Many members across parties spoke against the motion. As lead member for sustainability I was able to speak as to why I would not support the motion. My response is below:
Councillor Crane, as the Cabinet Member for sustainability, stated that she was not called the Cabinet Member for net-zero. Reform UK was using climate change nationally as a political football and was really grateful to colleagues in the meeting for their support not to rescind the declaration. In 2019, the original Motion was brought by a former Councillor, a Labour Member of the Opposition Group, and in the words of the Leader at the time, it was a 'sit up and think' moment and he called upon the Council to develop its commitment and implementation of an overarching and achievable Breckland Strategy, now called Breckland 2035. Breckland 2035 was about sustainability and was business as usual. When this Council talked about climate change it was not just about emissions, it was about improving the lives of residents and helping businesses, it was about making sure that people have warm, energy efficient homes, protecting communities from flooding and creating places that were healthier, safer and more resilient for the future. It was about getting our own house in order and setting an example to others and helping businesses if they had a desire to improve their own emission targets. This was normal and sensible. There was a budget in 2019 of £525k and due to the Council's fiscal management over £300k remained whilst leveraging over £600k in grant funding from elsewhere to make energy efficiency improvements to the leisure centres. It was about good housekeeping and getting on with the job, and as was answered to Councillor Hunter-Clarkes previous question, this money had been spent on community projects such as 2,400 trees being planted at Oxborough Hall. The Council continued with Breckland 2035 as according to the 2022 residents survey, 97% said that this was important or very important that the environment should be protected and rescinding this climate change declaration would change nothing and therefore would not be supporting this Motion.

6. Planning

PL/2025/1523/CLOPUD Proposed single story extension to rear
No comment

7. To receive questions or comments from members of the public

A brief discussion was held around where the public participation item should be on the agenda. It was agreed to move it nearer to the end of the meeting on a trial basis.

A brief update was given on the seating project which is now underway.

A representative from Fiona's Meadow handed out his replies to the Parish Councils questions. The Parish Council would respond if any further questions arose.

8. Correspondence

Norfolk County Council had sent an engagement pack and a questionnaire regarding property flood resilience (PFR). This was discussed and the questionnaire completed. The questionnaire would be taken to the next Watton and Saham Flood Action Group meeting by Cllr Avery.

9.Finance

a. Approval of Payments

The following payments were approved:

Clerk	Salary	£ 571.20
HMRC	PAYE	£ 160.00 (direct debit)
GB Paving	Seating area	£3,918.00 – From WC Trust
MK Metal Works	Railings - seating area	£2,960.10 – From WC Trust

b. The Chair checked and duly signed the bank reconciliations from April to September

c. It was agreed to appoint the same internal auditor as last year

d. It was agreed to hold a finance meeting on Monday 8th December at 7:30 pm

10. Projects

It was agreed to hold a consultation regarding a multi-use games area. A questionnaire will be published in the New Year within the Saga magazine

11.To consider whole council training

It was agreed that the clerk would request more information on the topics available and these would be discussed at the next meeting

12. To discuss the Parish Partnership Grant

It was agreed that the clerk would submit a bid for a SAM 2/3 speed camera

13. Asset Maintenance

a. A report was submitted on the condition of the play equipment. There are just a few cosmetic issues that will be investigated by the councillors

b. A discussion was had regarding the defibrillators. It was confirmed that these are checked every week and are all accessible and in working order

14. Village Organisations

Wayland Partnership

The Digital Creative Media Centre proposal for the current Wayland House site will be launched at the Dragon Hall Norwich on Friday 31st October. Special guests include Robin Milton, founder of Fairer Games, one of the gaming industry's most influential voices. There will be opportunity to experience a virtual tour of the proposed new build with VR experience of an e-sports arena and podcast studios.

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This venture supported by Breckland District Council will appeal particularly to young people wanting to gain a foothold in the industry.

Wells-Cole Community Centre
Due to committee members' commitments the October meeting had to be postponed until 6 November so update for PC is limited.

A small group met to discuss the accounts for 24-25, hopefully the accounts will be ready this week, a very big thank you to Mr & Mrs Freeman for going through them all. It was discussed that with the Councils help it would be a sensible idea to purchase the Xero accounting program and pay an accountant to set this up. This would help the hall going forward in producing accurate accounts each year for reporting to the charity commission and parishioners.

Racking has been installed in the storeroom and the left-hand storage cupboard in the meeting room will be handed back to the heritage group for safe storage of their archives – this should double their storage capacity.

A group of dog walkers at the park have volunteered to manage the garden area at the hall and paint the picket fence, the area is already looking better for your hard work, thank you. The Christmas event "The North Pole Roll" is booked for December 7th 11 -4 pm it is going to be a Festive Christmas fayre with a Santa's grotto for children and 4 legged friends – with sponsorship opportunities and a few spaces for craft tables still available, we hope you will help make this another successful fund raiser – please see the website, posters & social media for more information.

Funds stand at - Business account £9232.33 + reserve account £635.41

Wells-Cole Trust Fund
Work has commenced on the Playing Field to install the floodlighting part funded by the Trust with completion expected before Christmas.
The project to provide a paved seating area with specimen trees and planting between the WCCC and Bell Lane will commence shortly with the first specimen tree will be planted on the 8th November 2025.
Current Bank Balance £78,852.27

Bird Sanctuary
7 October, Two Volunteers met with Elizabeth on site to discuss the possibility of working with the youth justice service, there were some concerns regarding lack of toilet facilities; the use of a porta loo during any work party could be possible, good news- it wasn't a definite No!

St Georges Church
Coffee morning at the WCCC 8th November 10am

The water issue at the Church is currently awaiting a response from the Diocese before work can be carried out in providing a rerouted mains water supply. This follows a disruption of the present shared supply with Old Rectory since July 2025 when the present owner isolated the supply.

Meeting scheduled for 19th November to establish grant funding for the documented restoration works.

Christmas Tree event – set up Friday 5th December open to all village organisations and individuals. This year's theme 'St Nicholas in all his names and forms'

15.To consider items for the next agenda

- Whole Council training
- Cley Lane Safety Questionnaire
- Dog Signs
- Live Service Guide
- Community Centre – closed session

16.Date and Place of the next Parish Council Meeting

Monday 1 December at 7:30pm at the Wells-Cole Community Centre

With no further business, the meeting closed at 20.49pm.

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