The Minutes of Saham Toney Parish Council Meeting
held on Monday 6 October 2025 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 C Millian	

Also in Attendance: Sue Marsh (Clerk), Helen Crane Breckland District Councillor, Peter Bate Breckland District Councillor and 10 members of the public.

1. **Apologies for Absence**
   Apologies from Cllr A Wilson, Cllr G Morton, Cllr D Freeman, Cllr L Ree-Murphy and Cllr S Rees-Murphy were received and accepted.

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

3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 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 – refer to the Action Sheet:**

   - WCCC cashbook – ongoing
   - Signage for village gateway – signs have been delivered, need installing
   - Defib/CPR training – ongoing
   - Ovington Road in a bad state of repair – Highways have given a 6-week window – ongoing
   - Baby toddler swing – on agenda
   - Parish Partnership – on agenda
   - "who does what" – on agenda

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

   Cllr P Bates:
   On 18th September a special meeting was held to discuss Breckland's proposal for devolution. Breckland favour a 3 unitary authority model which the drafted in conjunction with 5 other district councils. The proposal had to be completed by the 26th September, so that a decision can be made in the first quarter of 2026 and the new councils established in 2027.
   The advantages of this proposal are councillors know their communities better and communities know their councillors. Services will be more localised, 50 million pounds worth of savings by the 4th year and a lower council tax rise, (there will be a rise though).
   Questions were asked about the payment of the 900 million pounds worth of debt that would need to be divided amongst the new councils. The feeling was that this would be divided per capita as has happened in similar situations.
   NCC favour a single unitary model. This is the cheapest option, but councillors would be remote from the people, and it would be very Norwich centric.

All the Breckland councillors voted for the 3 unitary model except for just one vote. Personally, I think this is the one that is most likely to be adopted.

Cllr H Crane:
Local Plan-Members had a briefing on Friday 3rd October. The plan is on time at present with no slippages and will come to cabinet on 20th October. The cabinet report will be published 10 days prior to cabinet and will be on the website. There will be a 6 week consultation period and processing of responses which is expected to run from 31st October until December 2025. Publication of the draft (Reg 19) consultation and processing of responses-July –September 2026. Submission to secretary of state for examination December 2026. Examination in public followed by council adoption in 2027. For interest (or not!) the plan comprises over 100,000 words and over 475 pages of planning policies, supporting text and site allocations. This is a massive piece of work and the most important document that Breckland produces. The plan sets out a strategy, vision, and planning framework for the future development of Breckland. The plan aims to establish requirements for growth and development in the district up to 2042. The chapters of the plan will be :

- Design and sustainable development
- Housing
- Employment and economic development
- Retail and commercial development
- The environment
- Design & quality principles
- Community
- Resilient and adaptable infrastructure

Breckland Council in partnership with Sport England launches 'Bowl for health'-targeting those aged over 40yrs who have a chronic or long term health condition or experience social isolation. This will be an 8 week programme run across Thetford, Watton and Attleborough. RSPCA PawPrints award-Breckland has won a platinum award for stray dog services and a gold Award for kenneling, alongside this a special recognition award has been given to Alan Goodall animal licensing officer for his outstanding commitment to animal licensing in Breckland.

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

A member of the public enquired regarding plans for the bird sanctuary and what was happening with the wildlife group. The council confirmed that the wildlife group did not exist, but they would be willing to support one should any parishioners wish to volunteer.

The council confirmed that a meeting had been arranged with the Youth Justice Service to see if the bird sanctuary was suitable for a working team of young people to attend next year.

A member of the public requested that some Neighbourhood Watch signs be erected when the new council signs are installed. The council confirmed that they have no objection to this depending on the space available.

A short presentation of the assisted living community (Fiona's Meadow) was made by Garioch Estates. A member of the public asked what the difference between a C2 and a C3 planning application. One of the presenters confirmed that C2 was a business application.

7. Correspondence

- Email regarding the spread of Himalayan Balsam

8. Finance

a. Approval of Payments

The following payments were approved:

Locum Clerk	Salary	£ 243.70
Skwegll	Window Cleaning	£ 250.00
R Harrold	Postage	£ 8.75
J Baldwin	Maintenance & Windows software	£ 217.99
Neighbourhood W	Signs	£ 40.00
GB Paving	Seating area	£3,918.00 – From WC Trust
Scribe	Accounts software	£ 891.60

9. Planning

- PL/2025/1186/FMIN - Proposal: Construction of 9 no. assisted care dwellinghouses (Use Class C2), with associated access and landscaping Site: Land at Saham Tythe Barn Chequers Lane, Saham Toney

  The Garioch Estate were politely asked to leave the room so that council could have a full and frank discussion. After much debate, it was agreed that the council is supportive of the principle of providing assisted living but needed further clarification of several areas. There was also a concern that Breckland District Council planning department appeared to be uncertain whether the application should be considered under class C2 or C3 which did not help the council when considering the application – Garioch Estates rejoined the meeting.

  It was agreed that further clarification would be requested in writing from Garioch Estates and that District Councillor H Crane would contact Breckland Planning department. The council would also request a further extension from the planning department in order to have further discussions.

- PL/2025/1101/FMIN - Proposal: Change of use from Use Class E (g) (iii) to 1 no. residential dwelling and including part demolition of existing building to create internal courtyard. Site: Dairy Farm Saham Road, Ovington

  No objection

10. To consider Co-option of a Councillor

It was agreed to co-opt Mike Winter onto the council, he duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took his seat

11. To discuss the Parish Partnership Grant

Deferred to November's meeting

12. To consider purchasing an accounting package

The council currently deals with their finances by using spreadsheets which have inherent risks, no simple way for auditors to access records and are very time-consuming.

It was agreed to obtain Scribe accounting software which is bespoke to councils at a cost of £891.60 (inc VAT) which included a set up cost. Going forward the annual cost would be in the region of £450 plus VAT.

13. To discuss responsibilities between the Parish Council, the WCCC and the Playing Field – who is responsible for what

Cllr Avery produced a list and after a discussion this was refined and will be sent to all councillors, The Wells-Cole Community Centre and the Playing Field.

14. To receive reports from

- Wayland Partnership – No report
- Wells-Cole Community Centre – A meeting was held on the 25th September. The final car boot sale was held in September which raise in the region of £400 for the hall. The Bingo continues to be well attended, and dates have been set for next year. The date for the Christmas event is Sunday 7th December, details to follow. A deep clean took place on the 27th September. The EDF bill now stands at £ 17,245.09 and the bank accounts hold £8,086.58 and £588.38 respectively. We are setting up a "friends of" and a new email address for all fund-raising events – friendsofsahamwccc@gmail.com
- Playing Field – A joint meeting took place on 29th September. The outstanding items on the check list were discussed. Emergency lights and PAT testing have been completed. The noticeboard has been installed outside, and the hot water heater has been replaced in one of the changing rooms. Quotes are being obtained for the other outstanding items.
- Wells-Cole Trust Fund – Balance of account £76,352.27
- Play Park Inspection – A covered swing could not be found, so some ecofriendly bird protection for the swing would be sourced. There are a couple of pieces of equipment that need to be worked on including a few benches. These will be dealt with in the next couple of weeks.
- Bird Sanctuary – A meeting has been arranged with a representative from the Youth Justice Service. They will conduct a risk assessment to see if the site is suitable for a working team of young people to help next year with the Himalayan Balsam removal.
- St Georges Church – The issue with respect to the disruption of the water supply continues. A surveyor recently attended and there is a problem with the proposed route for the pipe, awaiting response from Anglian Water.

15. To consider items for the next agenda

- Parish Partnership

16. Date and Place of the next Parish Council Meeting

Monday 3 November at 7:30pm at the Wells-Cole Community Centre

With no further business, the meeting closed at 21:21pm.