FRANSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Fransham Parish Council held on Tuesday 17th November 2026 at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

Present: Cllr Richard Watts (Chair)
Cllr James Sheringham
Cllr Emma Spratt
Cllr Jessica Jones
Cllr Gerry Taylor

County Cllr Tom Dickerson
Mr Steven Parker & Mr James Ruppert (Bradenham Parish Council)
Six Members of the Public
Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies received from Cllr Lake were approved. Apologies were also received from District Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris.

2. To receive any declarations of interest.

There were none received.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 15th September 2026.

Cllr Sheringham proposed that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting, this was seconded by Cllr Spratt and unanimously agreed by Council. The Chairman duly signed the minutes.

4. To receive an insight into the local solar situation from the Steven Parker, Bradenham Parish Councillor and Highgrove Opposition Group.

Mr Steven Parker and Mr James Ruppert spoke regarding the High Grove solar factory and related matters, and this included the following points:

- They are both members of the High Grove Opposition Group, which is not opposed to solar but it must be in the right place, car parks, brownfield sites etc. The group covers the area across the High Grove sites.
- There are two types of application, larger sites decided by Government (NSIPs) and smaller sites with an output of 49.9mw and under, which can be decided by local planning.
- There are a number of NSIPs nearby, High Grove, The Droves and Longmarsh, and other large farms in South Norfolk.
- The Group would like Breckland to postpone decisions on smaller applications until decisions have been made on the larger sites.
- If High Grove is approved, there is likely to be infill between the sites.

- Solar factories are not 'green' and issues include fire risks, potential flooding, detrimental to health (inference with medical equipment), low frequency noise etc. The panels go to landfill at the end of their life.
- House values will plummet.
- Companies can compulsory purchase farmland.
- Scarning and Shipdham Airfield have been earmarked for a sub-station although smaller sub-stations will be dotted around the site.

County/Cllr Dickerson said that the Reform led County Council oppose large scale sites and will be taking legal action, alongside other impacted counties. The Council are also putting obstacles in the way to slow the process.

The Opposition Group are trying to galvanise local action and will link up with Longmarsh for advice.

Mr Parker advised Council to respond to the High Grove application once it has been submitted, which is anticipated to be April 2027.

In response to a question, Mr Parker confirmed the group are not currently meeting as everything is now in place for the anticipated application, however, Cllr Jones will be kept up-to-date and invited to any future meetings.

In response to another question, C/Cllr Dickerson said that the County Council has looked at alternative sites, car parks, brownfield sites etc, but the energy companies and Government are not interested. He also confirmed that there are some precious minerals recyclable from redundant panels but the majority will go to landfill.

The Chairman thanked Mr Parker and Mr Ruppert for their helpful input.

5. To receive County/District Councillor reports.

The C/Cllr circulated some leaflets regarding heating oil grants and these will be put on the notice boards and website.

In respect of a crossing on the A47, he had met with National Highways and survey equipment will be installed in the new year. He is pushing for a reduced speed limit and a pedestrian crossing.

6. Open Forum for Public Participation.

In response to a query regarding the recent trod works, the Chairman said that the works carried out were not the works expected. Council had funded works to extend the trod but apparently cabling had been found and the road has been raised instead, despite Highways previously saying this was impossible. The County/Cllr will take this forward on behalf of Council.

The new landlords of The Noon Gun introduced themselves and the Chairman took the opportunity to request that the Parish Council sites a defibrillator in the empty defib box on the building. Council were grateful for approval and will now look for grant funding.

A resident requested that the redundant road works signs on the A47 towards Necton be removed and the County Cllr agreed to deal with this.

A resident reported overgrown pavements on the A47 and these will be reported to National Highways.

7. Highway Matters.

a) To receive updates in respect of issues previously reported.

Council noted the following updates:

- Loose drain covers on A47 – no further loose covers located and this will be removed from the agenda.
- SLOWS (x4) – awaiting works.
- S Bend sign on Station Road obscured by hedgerow – reported to Highways and works completed.
- Installation of H-Bars at locations on Station Road (awaiting works) and Spicers Corner (will not proceed – does not meet criteria).
- Installation of 4 x 'Caution Horse' signs – awaiting works.
- Kerb grass cutting – inconsistent and inadequate works. It was noted that the grass has been cut recently and that more cuts will be carried out next year which it is hoped will improve the situation.
- Overhanging hedge at Village Hall – VHC requested to deal.

Cllr Jones reported that she had received requests from a number of horse riders, following incidents of dangerous driving, that a request to lower the speed limit be submitted. The Chairman confirmed that they had previously tried and any request is unlikely to be successful. Cllr Jones will collate evidence and also contact the British Horse Society for advice.

b) To receive an update on request to National Highways for a pedestrian crossing on the A47.

This had been dealt with at item 5 above.

c) To receive an update regarding the extension works to the trod.

This had been dealt with at item 6 above. Council agreed to submit a letter to the County Council regarding monies paid for works not carried out as per the specification, under the parish partnership scheme.

d) To consider an application to the Parish Partnership Scheme.

There was no proposal for an application.

8. Planning Matters.

a) New Applications.

There were no new applications to consider.

b) Decisions Due.
Council noted that the following application remains pending.

- PL/2025/1763/OMIN – land at Kirkhams Meadow, Lt Fransham - outline application with all matters reserved except for access for 3 no. dwellings with associated garages and garden amenity space.

c) To receive an update regarding the Breckland Local Plan.
Council noted that the plan is now ready for submission.

9. To receive an update regarding the proposed local solar farms and any update from the George Freeman, MP, solar farm steering group.

This had been dealt with at item 4 above.

10. To receive a report regarding Statkraft grant funding for Fransham.

Cllr Sheringham confirmed that Village Hall Committee are submitting an application for three new exterior doors.

11. To receive a report and to consider any issues arising from the regular inspections of council assets, including maintenance of the two benches.

The Chairman confirmed that all is in good order.

12. To receive an update regarding the new plaques for the bus shelters.

The Chairman reported that the new plaques have been installed on the bus shelters.

13. To receive an update regarding the installation of a second defibrillator in the village.

This had been dealt with at item 6 above.

14. To consider how to achieve a greater use of the parish magazine.

Council agreed to submit any appropriate information for publication and it was agreed to remove this item from the agenda.

15. To consider the grass tender for 2027 and 2028.

Cllr Watts proposed approval of the grass contract for 2027 and 2028 at £1,764.00 per annum, this was seconded by Cllr Spratt and unanimously agreed by Council. Council agreed the current contractor was doing an excellent job.

16. To consider a refresh of the Parish Council website.

Council agreed the current website was adequate and required no refresh.

17. Finance & Governance Matters.

a) To receive a financial report for the year ending 31st March 2027.
The financial report (attached) was noted.

b) To consider an increase to Clerk's hours due to a rise in workload.
Council considered a request from the Clerk to increase their monthly hours, from ten to 12, due to the increase in workload in recent years. Cllr Watts proposed approval of the request, with hours increased to 11 from 1st January 2027, then to 12 with effect from the 1st April 2027, allowing them to be fully budgeted. This was seconded by Cllr Taylor and unanimously agreed by Council.

c) To consider approval of the budget for the year ending 31st March 2028 and 2029 and set the precept for the year ending 31st March 2028.
Council considered the draft budget for the years ending 31st March 2028 and 2029 and Cllr Watts proposed that it be accepted and the precept set at £7,215 to keep in line with rising costs, this was seconded by Cllr Taylor and unanimously agreed. This will result in an annual increase of £3.56 for a Band D property.

d) To consider approval of the following payments and note any receipts.
Cllr Taylor proposed approval of the following payments, this was seconded by Cllr Sheringham and unanimously agreed by Council. The receipts were noted.

	PAYMENTS	
P13	Bus Shelter Cleaning	£100.00
P14	Clerk – Salary & Allowance (Oct)	£191.99 (SO)
	(including back dated salary increase to 01/04/2026)	
P14	HMRC – PAYE	£45.60
P14A	Bus Shelter Plaques	£36.00
P15	Grass Contractors (total cost)	£1,176.00
P16	SLCC Membership	£37.95
P17	Clerk - Salary & Allowance (Nov)	£162.82 (SO)
P17	HMRC – PAYE	£38.20
	RECEIPTS	
R3	Breckland Precept (2 of 2)	£3,250.00
	Bank Interest	£20.59

18. Correspondence for circulation.

There was no correspondence to consider.

19. To receive any new items for the next meeting.

There were no new items for the next agenda.

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20. To note the next meeting of Fransham Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 19th January 2027, at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

The date of the next meeting was noted and the Chairman then closed the meeting at 8.12pm.

Signed: Date:

FRANSHAM PARISH COUNCIL - YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2027
FINANCIAL REPORT - NOVEMBER 2026

BUDGET UPDATE	Actual 2024/25	Budget 2025/26	To Date	% Spend
PAYMENTS*				
Admin	1,432	1,597	939.26	59%
Salary	2,164	2,310	1,528.13	66%
Maintenance	-	150	-	0%
Grass Cutting	1,372	1,764	-	0%
Bus Shelters/Signs	600	525	280.00	53%
Donations	50	50	-	0%
TOTAL	**5,619**	**6,396**	**2,747.39**	
RECEIPTS				**Received**
Precept	5,750	6,500	6,500.00	100%
Bank Interest	130	30	42.93	143%
Recyling		20	-	0%
TOTAL	**5,880**	**6,550**	**6,542.93**	
SURPLUS/DEFICIT		**154.00**	**3,795.54**	

*includes payments awaiting authorisation at this meeting as listed on the agenda.

Bank Balance at 01.04.2026	**9,401.98**
Plus Receipts at 30.10.2026	6,626.60
Less Expenditure at 30.10.2026	4,066.18
	11,962.40
Balance at 30.10.2026	
Community Current Account	2,123.35
Business Savings Account	9,884.65
	12,008.00
Plus any outstanding receipts	-
Less any outstanding payments	45.60
	11,962.40
including:	
Highway Reserves	438.24
GENERAL RESERVE	**11,524.16**

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