

FRANSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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

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

County & District Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris
Three members of the public
Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. To receive any declarations of interest.

There were none received.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 20th January 2026.

Cllr Lake 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 County/District Councillor reports.

County Cllr Kiddle-Morris reported that council tax will increase by 4.99%. In respect of District, it will increase by £4.95 and Breckland remains the lowest in the country and is debt-free.

Food waste collections due to commence on 1st April, will now commence in September and the delay is due to the high demand for bins and suitable collection vehicles from all councils across the country.

The next consultation in respect of the Local Plan is due in July and the Plan needs to be in place before the move to a unitary authority.

Cllr Kiddle-Morris had also circulated written report which included the following:

The county council elections will take place on 7th May. This division, Necton and Launditch, will be renamed Launditch; Necton will be in a new division and Launditch will gain Newton-by Castle Acre, Hoe & Worthing and Swanton Morley. All other parishes remain in the new Launditch division.

The government has allocated an extra £27m over the next five years for the maintenance of highways assets. The money will be used for bridge maintenance, major road resurfacing work, improvements to the public transport infrastructure, and pothole repairs.

A decision is due this month on how many unitary councils there will be in Norfolk. Elections for councillors for the new unitary councils will take place in May 2027 with the current number of councillors being reduced from 399 to either 168 or 84.

The election of a mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk has been postponed until May 2028. This election was due to be held this May and on election the new mayor would bring at least £37m per annum in funding for large scale capital projects, the promise was for additional money to be available in the future.

There have been headlines about the level of debt carried by Norfolk County Council which is currently around £850m. This debt has been accrued to finance capital projects such as road building (Northern Broadway Long Stratton Bypass), the Yarmouth 3rd River Crossing, new schools for SEN and mainstream pupils. Due to government finance rules, capital projects cannot be paid for from revenue receipts, that is council tax and other income. Capital debt does not affect the Council's ability to deliver services paid for from revenue receipts.

5. Open Forum for Public Participation.

A member of the public raised the issue of pedestrian safety, particularly at the southern end of Station Road and Council agreed to look at the possibility of extending the trod to meet the existing pavement. Possible funding sources included the Statkraft fund and the parish partnership scheme.

The member of the public also asked if the A47 could be tidied up as you enter the village from the west. Council will investigate although it is likely that there is little that can be done as much of the land is privately owned or National Highways.

A member of the public asked that something be done about the cars parking at the junction of Station Road with the A47. County/Cllr Kiddle-Morris suggested a H-bar put across where cars should not park and a request will be submitted. A member of the public said there was a similar problem at Spicers Corner where people who are parking to use the public footpath were blocking entrances to houses. A request for a H-bar here will also be submitted.

6. Highway Matters.

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

Council noted the following updates:

- Loose drain covers on A47 – reported to National Highways. Drains just before Top Farm are now dropping too and will be reported.
- SLOWS – outstanding Slows (x3) will be painted later in Spring.
- Hedgerow opposite trod on Station Road – referred to Highways who have contacted the landowners. The road signs are also obscured and these will be reported to Highways.
- Roadside subsidence on Station Drive – reported to Highways and repairs will be made.

- Dereham Road – flooding with standing water reported to Highways.
- Large signage on A47 – signs now removed.
- Graffiti on Dereham Lane railway bridge – reported to National Highways Historical Railways Estates who will not carry out any remedial work as the graffiti is not offensive. The Estates will be contacted to see if the graffiti can be painted over.
- Great Fransham sign, Beeston Road – rotting posts reported to Highways.
- Mud on A47 pavements – reported to National Highways.
- Trees adjacent to A47 – a privately owned tree had recently fallen and taken out the phone lines and there had been concerns raised that further falls of similar trees could take place – Council agreed that as the trees were privately owned there was nothing that could be done.

b) To receive an update on requests to National Highways for a pedestrian crossing and an extension of the pavement from Spicer’s Corner.

Council noted that due to financial pressures the pavement extension will not proceed, however, funds are available to improve access to public transport, which a pedestrian crossing will help to do. To progress the issue, Council have been requested to provide details of the levels of bus service use in the village and any difficulties faced by people wishing to use the bus stops. Council considered various ways to do this including requesting bus use statistics, a poster at the bus stops, something circulated with the annual report etc.

c) To receive an update regarding the application for 50/50 funding under the Parish Partnership scheme to extend the trod.

Council were pleased to note that the application for 50/50 funding has been approved, with C/Cllr Kiddle-Morris also making a contribution of £1,000. Cllr Taylor proposed that the project proceed with the additional amount due of £1,587.76 being funded from Highway reserves, this was seconded by Cllr Howells and unanimously agreed by Council.

d) To consider requesting Highways to install ‘Caution Horse’ road signs in Great Fransham.

Cllr Jones suggested four possible sites for new ‘caution horse’ signs, in order to improve road safety for local riders. C/Cllr Kiddle-Morris requested the site map be sent to him as he may be able to assist in this matter.

7. Planning Matters.

a) New Applications.

PL/2026/0098/FMIN – High Green Farm, Beeston Road, Great Fransham – proposed change of use from agricultural grassland to support glamping site & Installation of 4 Glamping Pods – Cllr Taylor proposed a response be submitted that ‘Council shared the concerns raised by consultees in respect of this application and there is not enough information provided to make a reasoned decision’. This was seconded by Cllr Watts and unanimously agreed by Council.

b) Decisions Due.

Council noted the following application has been approved:

- PL/2025/1911/HOU – 1 Linnet Loke, Lt Fransham - proposed double garage.

Council noted that no prior approval was required in respect of the following applications:

- PL/2025/1989/PAAF – High Green Farm, Beeston Road, Gt Fransham - application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed erection of a mono pitched two bay cart-shed for the storage of agricultural equipment including tractors and livestock equipment (not to house animals).
- PL/2026/0038/PAAF – Hyde Hall Farm, Main Road, Gt Fransham - application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed erection of Steel Framed Building for the storage of straw.

Council noted the following application has been refused:

- PL/2025/1312/FMIN – The Cottages, Drury Square, Beeston - proposed change of use of land for the stationing of 3No mobile homes for residential use, a proposed day room ancillary to that use as well as 3No touring caravans, hardstanding and parking areas as well as refuse storage area.

Council noted the following applications remain pending:

- PL/2025/0998/FMAJ – land at Dykewood Farm, Beeston - proposed construction of ground mounted solar panel arrays and associated infrastructure (Scoping opinion application withdrawn).
- 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.
- PL/2026/0243/HOU – 9 Station Drive, Great Fransham – proposed extension to Frontage of Bungalow

c) To receive an update regarding the Breckland Local Plan.

The C/Clr had updated Council at item 4 above and added that many of the sites put forward had been deemed unsuitable by statutory consultees, however, the majority of them can be reconfigured to suit.

d) To receive an update regarding enforcement matters.

Council noted that the matter had been considered by Breckland and no further action would be taken at this time.

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

It was noted that The Drovers is now awaiting a decision from the Planning Inspectorate and High Grove is yet to receive a confirmed connection to the national grid.

9. To receive an update regarding possible Statkraft grant funding for Fransham.

Cllr Howells reported that he and the Chair had met with Statkraft regarding this grant. Representatives from Fransham will include himself and two members of the Village Hall/PCC as the majority of eligible works will relate to either the Village Hall or Churches. It was hoped that the fund can be separated into two, one for Necton and one for Fransham, to avoid conflict.

10. To receive a report and to consider any issues arising from the regular inspections of council assets.

The Chairman reported that there was no change and all was in order.

11. To receive an update regarding the plaque on the Village Sign and to consider new plaques for the bus shelters.

Cllr Taylor reported that he now had all the materials and the works will be carried out now the weather is improving. He will also get a sample of the suggested material for the two plaques.

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

The Chairman reported that this continues to await the reopening of the 'Canary & Linnet' but it was noted this has been delayed again.

13. To receive an update regarding improvements to the appearance of the village.

Council agreed to consider village gates and provisional costs will be obtained.

The Chairman thanked all residents who help with litter picking as they go about the village.

14. To receive an update regarding any action to improve phone coverage in the village.

Cllr Jones reported that during a recent power cut she had contacted BT and been told that anyone who had been moved to a digital line was entitled to a battery back-up. This information will be double-checked and, if accurate, an article put in the village magazine.

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

It was agreed that suitable articles should be submitted more regularly, with the BT information and fireworks being suitable examples.

16. Finance & Governance Matters.

a) To receive a financial report for the year ending 31st March 2026.

The financial report (attached) was noted.

b) To consider any charitable requests for donations.

Cllr Taylor proposed a £50 donation to the Swaffham & Litcham Hospice, this was seconded by Cllr Watts and unanimously agreed by Council.

c) To consider approval of the following payments and note any receipts.

Cllr Lake proposed approval of the following payments, this was seconded by Cllr Spratt and unanimously agreed by Council.

PAYMENTS

P20A	Bus Shelter/Sign Cleaning (Dec)	£150.00
P22	Clerk – Salary & Allowance (February)	£154.15 (SO)
P22	HMRC – PAYE	£36.20
P24	Clerk - Salary & Allowance (March)	£154.35 (SO)
P24	HMRC – PAYE	£36.00
P23	Village Hall Rental Fees (2021 – 2025)	£288.00

17. Correspondence for circulation.

A request for a dog bin at the junction of Beeston Lane and Station Road had been received but Council considered this location would not be approved by Breckland as there was nowhere for the van to pull in safely to empty a bin. It was also agreed that there is an adequate number of bins in the village.

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

There were no new items received for the next agenda.

19. To note the Annual meeting of Fransham Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 19th May 2026, following the Annual Parish Meeting which will commence at 6.30pm in the Village Hall.

Council noted the date of the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Council Meeting and the Chairman then closed the meeting at 8.18pm

Signed:

Date:

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

BUDGET UPDATE	Actual 2024/25	Budget 2025/26	To Date	% Spend		
					Bank Balance at 01.04.2025	9,044.24
					Plus Receipts at 27.02.2026	6,210.25
					Less Expenditure at 27.02.2026	5,053.61
						10,200.88
PAYMENTS*						
Admin	1,063	1,487	1,432.40	96%		
Salary	2,063	2,199	2,164.24	98%	Balance at 27.02.2026	
Maintenance	215	150	-	0%	Community Current Account	2,378.96
Grass Cutting	1,734	1,764	1,372.00	78%	Business Savings Account	7,821.92
Bus Shelters	300	520	500.00	96%		10,200.88
Donations	100	50	-	0%	Plus any outstanding receipts	-
TOTAL	5,475	6,170	5,468.64		Less any outstanding payments	-
						10,200.88
RECEIPTS				Received	including:	
Precept	5,750	6,000	6,000.00	100%	Highway Reserves	2,026.00
Bank Interest	130	20	74.45		GENERAL RESERVE	8,174.88
Recycling	-	40	10.82	27%		
HMRC	-	-	-			
TOTAL	5,880	6,060	6,085.27			
SURPLUS/DEFICIT		- 110.00	616.63			

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