
Welney Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Welney Annual Parish Assembly, Tuesday 3rd March 2026, 7.15pm at the William Marshall Centre

Committee Members: Cllr Goodger (Chair), Cllr Gaylor (Vice Chair), Cllr Gardiner, Cllr Lowry, Cllr Bombata, Cllr Barker, Cllr Clayden, Cllr Harvey.

Those Present: Cllr Goodger, Cllr Lowry, Cllr Gardiner, Cllr Clayden, Cllr Bombata, Cllr Gaylor, BCllr Rose, Clerk M Hilton.

Apologies: Cllr Harvey, Cllr Barker, BCllr Spikings, CCllr Dawson.

Public: three

MINUTES

- 1. Welcome and to consider apologies:** apologies were accepted.
- 2. Declarations of Interest by Councillors:** none were given
- 3. Agree the Minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2025:** these were agreed and signed by the Chair.

4. To receive a report from the Chairman of the Parish Council: Cllr Goodger

Firstly, I would like to thank all my fellow councillors for their continued support to our council and its parishioners. Our clerk Mel is always there for advice when needed and keeps us all on our toes in meetings and keeps us well advised for all matters of council when needed so a big thanks there. Our district councillor Colin Rose should also be thanked for the support he gives to the village with both matters of council and other village groups and a big thanks for helping a group of our parishioners recently in their hour of need. Chris Dawson as our County Councillor also gets a thank-you for his support of the council and other groups in Welney and especially from myself with recent highway and wash road issues.

The parish has been like other parishes affected by many road closures and infrastructure works with the Anglian Water works to replace the main in the Tips End/Welney part of the parish probably the most disruptive, fibre cable installation is another ongoing issue within the parish.

The wash road has again flooded recently after having almost a year without an event, new signage has been evident and does appear to be working better than previous models. The close working of Flood watch, highways and the EA seem to have improved the communication of all matters relating to the road and flooding and is benefitting the village and commuters alike.

The council did look at other areas within the parish for siting of extra defibrillator's but finding sites with adequate power sources proved difficult and this was left for the time being.

After several year of activity in the village our speed watch group led by peter Gardiner was stood down due to lack of volunteers, big thanks to Peter for keeping this going for all the years he was involved in an attempt to address the ongoing battle against speeding motorists.

Your council is currently dealing with the issue of streetlights within the parish that have turned blue and will be replacing them in batches once avenues of failed life expectancy have been addresses with the suppliers.

5. To receive a report from Our Borough Councillors:

From BCllr Rose...BCKLWN Budget report for 2026/2027 for Parishes in Upwell and Delph ward
The following article has been approved for public information and may be used in Parish mags.
The spending plans were agreed at Full Council on the 26th February including a last

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minute additional National funding grant of about £4.4m due to an incorrect national Gov, assessment earlier.

The BC 's part of the Council Tax bill will be £157.44 for an average Band D property, this is an increase of 2.99%. The Council has managed to remain as one of the lowest in the country whilst retaining key services which is quite an achievement in challenging times. This has taken some difficult decisions but reliant on full transparency and enquiries about peoples needs and will maintain finances as a sustainable part of the Councils' Medium - Term Financial Strategy for 2025 – 2030 reflecting:

- Changes to government funding through the 'Fair Funding' system
- A full reset of business rates from April 2026
- Inflationary pressures and LGR uncertainty beyond 2027/28

Council Tax Support will remain at 100% for those vulnerable residents most in need.

There is a new £500k community fund in addition to the Councillors' continued annual £1k. This represents Cllr. led financial projects in their wards up to £75k. *I have requested clarification on this regarding exactly how this is to be arranged for elected members.*

The Council tax premium on 2nd homes will remain to support people who are at risk of being homeless and supporting the council to deliver more 'affordable homes' for local people along with provision being made to ensure continued support for major capital projects such as its housing programme including a significant number at affordable rents and regenerating heritage assets such as the Guildhall and Ferry.

The council will make planned /controlled use of reserves to maintain reserves above the minimum level required.

Council tax is a core part of the Council's income which is collected on behalf of various organisations. For every £1 collected around 93p goes to Norfolk County Council, the Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner and Parish councils. For every 7p in the £1 allocated to the BC, 3p goes to pay a levy for IDBs (Internal Drainage Boards). This means a loss of £3.9m of income. Although the BC supports the work of these important bodies it is felt that this should not be a burden on West Norfolk council tax payers as areas without IDBs have no such levy, hence the BC is lobbying for this to be a central government responsibility. Uncertainty about local gov. reorganisation and dealing with the outcome of the Government's funding review caused last minute pressures to be accommodated.

Fortunately, due to prudent planning and thanks to the work of officers and elected members a further £2.78m of savings has enabled us to present a balanced budget. Which will support the funding initiatives mentioned above. And let us not forget that the CIL remains but is increased to £100k and not match funded to the extent previous - this takes off in March for July decisions.

With regards to Local Gov. Reform (LGR) we await confirmation and further details, elections for NCC will take place this year.

From Cllr Spikings...It has been a strange year with the focus on Officers to engage with the other Councils re Devolution and the Local Government review. Hopefully more information as to the way forward should come anytime now with the Government informing Councils as to whether there will be a Norfolk Suffolk arrangement or 3 Councils.

New rules are coming soon this year regarding consultation on Planning reforms.

This will mean that Members will have compulsory training with an exam to sit before they can attend and deliberate. Numbers will also go down from presently 15 to between 8 and 11.

There will be no Member "call in" on ward applications and that all minor applications will be dealt with under Officer delegation.

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Planning Members will only deal with majors with the likelihood of only 1 item being dealt with by Planning Members.

Parish Councils will still be consulted as usual but the local Councillor can still make a comment but cannot make a decision for or against with their local knowledge as we do now.

Our 4-year period is up next year and we have to see if it will be held or put back a year with supposedly a transition put in place.

I watch with interest.

I would like to thank you and your residents and will continue to help all I can.

6. To receive a report from the William Marshall Centre:

New play equipment was installed early last year and is now getting regular use.

A running track/footpath for the perimeter of the field has been suggested and currently quotes and possible grant options to fund the project are being explored. This will be a double as a hard access to the play equipment area.

The events team continue to raise funds and hold events to give activities to the parishioners as well as additional funding for the field and hall. Events in the pipeline for this season are, Gala Day, Xmas market, beetle drive, race night, singer/dance and a treasure hunt. A big thanks to all the event team members under the chair of Jo Macey for taking on this valuable role.

Youth Football is returning to the field with Upwell youth team keen to further their sport on the field working up to more regular use for next season. It is hoped to add an additional outside storage container for increased equipment that is required by the hall users and events team. In addition to the annual hall maintenance the entrance steps are to be replaced plus a new fixed hot water heater to facilitate, tea/coffee and washing up use.

Improved insulation to the water feed to the building along with extra security lighting at the rear of the building is planned.

The hall is in regular use from the user groups and numbers of private users, other external groups and business users continue to increase which helps to fund annual costs.

8. Open Forum – public opportunity for questions to Councillors or issues about matters in the Parish:

Despite notice being served on the Back Drove resident for noise nuisance, the dogs continue to bark constantly. The RSPCA visited after the dogs were left alone over a weekend. Councillor Dawson and BCouncillor Rose have been assisting the residents. The Parish Council were asked to be a liaison between the Environmental Agency and themselves, but complaints must be made directly by residents. Councillor Lowry suggested contacting MP Terry Jermy. The Council also advised residents to report issues to the Police for proper records.

9. To Close: the meeting closed at 19.47pm

Signed by the Chairman **Date**

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