

Minutes of BEACHAMWELL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2025



held in Beachamwell Village Hall on Tuesday 11th March at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllr D Lambert (chair of the Parish Council)

District Councillor Peter Wilkinson

Clerk: Sarah Hunt

15 members of the public were present.

1. Welcome by Chairman of the Parish Council
Councillor Lambert welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting.
2. The minutes from the last Annual Parish Meeting on 12th March 2024 were AGREED as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.
3. Presentations:
 - 3.1 Mr Peter Wilkinson – District Councillor.
The Breckland Council Tax is the lowest in Norfolk. Alongside the statutory duties Breckland has also:
Supported over 45 enterprises which created 65 new jobs with the successful start up programme.
Secured £1.6m of National funding in supporting Swaffham business.
£100,000 for domestic abuse survivors supporting the Daisy programme.
Promoted the importance of mental health and well-being, training with Breckland partners. Mental health first aid, trained over 300 Breckland residents to be mental health champions in their parishes.
Breckland helped link residents to support groups like the Swaffham and Litcham home hospice through Breckland social care prescribers, easing pressure on the NHS.
Awarded over £150,000 to local community projects, provided funding for historical anniversary events such as the Queen's Jubilee and the King's Coronation.

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Working smart programme, reducing the Council carbon footprint, on the proposed journey to net zero.

Local Government Reform means that Breckland District Council will cease to be operative in 2 – 3 years time. This is a worrying time for Breckland as the above support will probably disappear for residents. Under the new plans an elected member would serve around 5,000 people.

Clerk will share the questionnaire to facebook – it will also feature in the Breckland magazine.

County Council members will remain in office for an additional year.

The mayoral elections will be held alongside the County elections in 2027. This is to elect a mayor for Suffolk and Norfolk combined.

The Chair thanked Cllr Wilkinson for giving up his time.

3.3 Village Hall – Mr Malcolm Warner

The Village Hall charity now has 5 newly elected Trustees. Justin deals with bookings and web-site and Claire is public relations and publicity. Jane, Jerry and Malcolm are a sub-committee and are managing the pop up pub events.

The Parish Clerk has assisted with treasurer and secretary as the positions were unfilled. Volunteers are being sought.

The Trustees need to investigate insulating the hall, possibly a more efficient heating system and maybe solar on the roof to help reduce the running costs along with ideas to encourage more hall rentals. There is a plan to integrate the hall master booking app with heating and door locking to enable a more efficient operation.

There will be some achievable short, medium and long term goals for hall improvements and approaches will be made to villages with a view to finding out any ideas and preferences.

Trustees are currently investigating changing the governing structure to make it easier for people to feel able to join the meetings without standing as a Trustee.

Pop up pub will continue with some slight changes, hopefully to everyone's approval.

3.4 St Mary's Church – Mr Peter Berendt

The building site has currently come to a standstill, but offsite works continue at the glaziers and work on stone mullions.

The church is now interregnum meaning there is no priest in charge. This has meant that the archdeacon has personally worked with the project and been very supportive. The current target is to work towards getting the interior started – the electrics need to go in, then ceilings, insulation over the south aisle then works from roof down to ground level. It is anticipated that the

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Church will be restored to its former glory and completed for Spring 2026 with only the stained glass outstanding.

At the Christmas Carol service there were 72 congregationalists, it was a splendid evening and a great success. It is hoped by the next Carols service access will be in place and everyone will be accommodated within the Church. It was confirmed that the ivy on the outside of the church and gravestones will be removed shortly.

There is a dark mesh on the inside of the openings in the tower to prevent bird access, the church is checked at least weekly whilst it is not operational.

There have been delays, but hopefully they are now resolved.

There are plans to repair the churchyard wall once the church itself is completed. There has been water damage which was the same as that discovered at the top of the tower. The wall is not just damaged in one place, but despite the repairs to the coping stones historically they need to be replaced, the render mix used was not strong enough and allowed water to enter the wall – gravity causes the wall to collapse.

The faculty application should be in before June, then a month will be needed as there is a 28 day consultation period.

It was noted that the Church is now using the left hand noticeboard on the village green.

A change of structural engineers has taken place – the new engineers are going to hammer tap the walls to check for cavities.

There is a deal of modern fix and concrete present – it was acknowledged it would be good to restore back to original, ie plaster and limewash were relevant. Later in the project traditional repairs will be considered.

It was noted that the East End is Victorian, and the West End 1,000 year old Anglo Saxon, so back to original may mean different things in different parts of the church.

The meeting closed at 7.24pm.