MINUTES OF FOULDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Meeting held on **Thursday 9th April 2026**
at **6.00pm in Foulden Village Hall**

Present: Councillors C Balding (part), J Green, S McMahon, S Parker (chair), B Pye (part) N West.
Clerk: Sarah Hunt
3 members of the public were in attendance.

1. To consider apologies for absence.
   Apologies were RECEIVED and ACCEPTED from B Parnham – family commitment. It was RESOLVED to extend the leave of absence for Cllr B Parnham to the next Parish Council meeting.
   It was RESOLVED to move meetings from Thursday evenings to Wednesday evenings to facilitate Cllrs Parnhams attendance at future meetings.

Cllr B Pye joined the meeting.

2. To receive Declaration of Interests and any requests for dispensation.
   None.

3. The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12th February 2026 were AGREED as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

Cllr C Balding joined the meeting.

4. Public Forum.
   It was noted that the presentations by County and District Councillors would be reflected in the Annual Parish Meeting which is following this meeting.
   4.2 District Councillor Mr Scott Hussey.
   Breckland has set the Council tax at the maximum possible increase (4.9%). Cllr Hussey had been approached by parishioners requesting an explanation on the Parish Council increase. Elections for the new three unitary authorities will take place in 2027. County Council elections are taking place in 2026.
   4.3 County Councillor Fabian Eagle.
   There are elections in May of this year. Moving forward the Local Government Review will create three unitary authorities in Norfolk. East, West and the area around Norwich.
   Norfolk County Council have extended the crisis support scheme covering heating oil. There will be central government support but the detail is still awaited.
   The rural business awards scheme is still open for nominations in 9 categories. Applications close in two weeks.

5. Noticeboards.
   5.1 Cllr N West has received the two remaining community noticeboards. They will be modified to remain unlocked and be erected over the coming weeks. It was NOTED that the donation of £775.85 from the Former Highway Surveyors Land Charity has not yet been received.

6. Updates on previous matters NOTED.
   6.1 The new website was live and annual premium Wix Subscription cancelled (renewal fee would have been £230.40).
   6.2 Peadiatric defibrillator pads received.
   6.3 Defibrillator – confirmed that Cllr J Green is monitoring the defibrillator and the Clerk has The Circuit log in and is updating the availability online.
   6.4 Scribe accounting software – this is now in place and 2026-27 accounts will be processed on Scribe. Clerk undertaking set up – attending free training on 29th April.
   6.5 Play Area Inspection Course – confirmed that Cllr S McMahon and Cllr N West have been booked onto the Community Action Norfolk course taking place on the 7th of May 2026.

7. Finance
   7.1 End of year accounts 2025/26:
      7.1.1 RECEIVED a bank reconciliation to the 31st March 2026 showing balance at bank of £3,031.87. This was signed by Cllr J Green as agreeing with bank statements.
      7.1.2 The final budget against expenditure for 2025/26 was RECEIVED and NOTED.
      7.1.3 The Internal Audit report was RECEIVED by the meeting - all necessary actions will be picked up on the next agenda.
      7.1.4 The Annual Governance Statement was AGREED with 'no' being recorded for Risk assessments being undertaken during the year, and for IT and data management as a Privacy Notice is needed. With these amendments it was signed by the Chair of the meeting. It was NOTED that the Council had exceeded £25,000 income for the year and therefore would be subject to external audit which will incur an anticipated unbudgeted expenditure of £210.00.
      7.1.5 The Accounting Statements were AGREED and signed by the Chair of the meeting.
      7.1.6 The statement of variance was RECEIVED and REVIEWED.
      7.1.7 NOTED that the dates for the exercise of public rights will be Wed 3rd June to Thurs 14th July 2026.
   7.2 To authorise the payments attached at Appendix A, plus any received prior to the meeting date.
      To note receipts:
      Npower refund £483.66 VAT £23.03 NETT £460.63 (duplicate payment refunded). 12th March 2026
      To note that the end of year VAT refund has been claimed at £758.30 received 26th March 2026.
      Bank Interest £15.72. 31st March 2026.
      Precept payment (one payment for 2026-27 was previously agreed so this is full payment) of £26,932.00.
   7.3 NOTED the FSCS deposit protection limit has raised to £120,000.00.

8. Planning
   8.1 To consider any applications received from Breckland District Council as consultee and note any responses sent between meetings: NONE.
   8.2 No decisions taken.
   8.3 NOTED first publication of comments with regard to the review of the Local Plan.

Previously Circulated.

8.4 NOTED extension on call for sites consultation period to 1st May 2026.

8.5 NOTED the consultation email regarding the Council's Local List dated 16th March and circulated prior to meeting. Response sent following consultation with Councillors as deadline was 8th April 2026:
The process has become very complicated.
How is the effectivity of the process measured?
Does it encourage or dissuade applications?
Any response to be circulated to Councillors.

9. Correspondence.
   9.1 The meeting considered from the Ramblers to publish an annual audit report on footpaths within the Parish it was AGREED to undertake this – Cllr S McMahon to produce report.
   9.2 Norfolk County Council email: Swaffham Flexibus Consultation. Shared on facebook.
   9.3 Breckland District Council – email. Notification regarding Local Government Re-organisation. Decision to replace current arrangement with three new unitary authorities. NOTED.

10. Highways Matters.
   10.1 Speeding on Foulden to Didlington Road – update from Cllrs West and McMahon following meeting with Highways. Positive meeting with the opportunity to outline concerns. It was agreed that Highways will look at road markings/slow/hazard/bends/width restrictions. Cllr McMahon will discuss mobile non-permanent signage with County Cllr F Eagle. Next meeting – animated signs.
   10.2 To consider whether the Council wishes to pursue the provision of a bus shelter and a suitable location to be put forward. Funding from Norfolk County Council to be announced shortly. Clerk to ensure Council receives invitation this year. Given the upcoming changes Clerk to establish if there are to be bus stops within the parish where shelters could be sited. Next meeting.
   10.3 NOTED notification from Norfolk County Council of an application to upgrade two public rights of way. Previously circulated. This is to reinstate public rights of way to restricted by-ways. These are now in progress. Next Agenda – Cllr S McMahon.
   10.4 To receive a complaint of local verge damage by agricultural vehicles. NOTED.

11. Administrative matters.
   11.1 It was RESOLVED that the clerks weekly hours remain at 7 hours/week.
   11.2 Community Resilience Plan. Not to be undertaken.
   11.3 The Clerk is looking to update the UKSMO information for the streetlights to ensure the current price is suitable for electricity provided. Current npower electricity costs 50.188p/Kwh 0.00775/KWh for CCL. No standing charge on this tariff. Council is not under contract. September agenda for price comparisons with other councils and other suppliers.
   11.4 It was RESOLVED to instruct replacement of the 7 new bracket arms and GRP cabinet boxes. All as budgeted for year 2 streetlight improvements. Original quote of £1,715.00 remains valid.

Clerk to obtain additional quotes for year 3 works of replacement columns prior to budget setting.

11.5 NOTED that the Clerk has ordered the annual playground inspection via Fields in Trust as before for 2026. Cost of £150.00 plus VAT. To confirm the Council will pay this sum on behalf of the Recreation Ground Charity.

12. Trees

12.1 NOTED one additional elm was felled due to unsafe assessment. NOTED that work completed on 3414 has revealed a large cavity. It was RESOLVED to accept the recommendation from treelink that tree 3414 be felled due to proximity to power lines, and potential to fall within a public area. Tree surgeon would need to arrange power lines to be shut down – approximate 6 week lead in. Price to be obtained prior to instruction.

13. To consider list of responsibilities/ideas. Councillors to feed back to Cllr S Parker any amendments necessary. It was NOTED this formalises work already being undertaken by Councillors.

14. Public Forum.
No comments.

15. To receive items for the next agenda.
Review of Standing Orders.
Review of Financial Regulations.
Review of Financial Risk Assessment
Review of Risk assessment and management
SAM2 risk assessment
Review of Internal Controls
SAM2 reports – Cllr S McMahon
Privacy Policy
S137 Limits

16. To note future meeting dates:
May 13th, 6pm Annual Parish Council Meeting followed by Annual Public Meetings of the Recreation Ground Charity and the Former Highway Surveyors Charity.
July 8th , 6pm Parish Council Meeting
September 9th , 6pm Parish Council Meeting
November 4th, 6pm Parish Council Meeting

APPENDIX A

Payee	Reason	Nett	VAT	Gross	
Sarah Hunt	March Salary (incl homeworking)	£612.04		£612.04	PAID
Unity Bank	Charge for returned cheque	£6.00		£6.00	PAID
Treelink	Tree works	£1,200.00	£240.00	£1,440.00	
Norfolk Parish Training & Support	Membership for 2026/27	£263.92	£52.78	£316.70	
Cozens Uk	6 Streetlight Brackets (replaced)	£990.00	£198.00	£1188.00	
RLS Computer servs.	New website/hosting	£480.00	£96.00	£576.00	PAID
Foulden Village Hall	February meeting hire	£20.00		£20.00	PAID
Unity Bank	Monthly fee February	£7.00		£7.00	PAID
Greenbarnes Ltd	2 Additional Noticeboards	£1480.35	£296.07	£1,776.42	
G Fendick Landscapes	Grounds maint. 12.3.26 Village Hall (£55.00) Recreation Ground (£95.00)	£150.00	£30.00	£180.00	
Sharon Sweet – NPTS	To refund training course from September 2026	£40.00	£8.00	£48.00	PAID
Sarah Hunt	April Salary and home wkg	Tbc		Tbc	
Scribe	April monthly cost	£24.00	£4.80	£28.80	
Sonya Blythe	Internal Audit	£130.00		£130.00	
Npower	Streetlight energy (annual)	£522.26	£26.11	£548.37	DDR
Scribe	One off fee	£99.00	£19.80	£118.80	
Community Act. Norfolk	Training	£80.00		£80.00	

The meeting closed at 7.06pm.