

Topcroft Parish Council

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Topcroft Pavilion

Monday 15th September 2025 - 7.30 pm

Attended: Step Dye (Vice Chair), Daphne Beckett, Nicola Eastell, Robin Frampton, Trevor Potter & Kathy Thomson

Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer (RFO): Sally Chapman

Also present: County Councillor Barry Stone & District Councillor Martyn Hooton

PUBLIC FORUM

A. To Receive Reports from the County and District Councillor

County Councillor Barry Stone sent a report and gave an update, main points:

- Norfolk County Council will submit its Devolution and Local Government Reform business plan to Government in two weeks. The Council is progressing with devolution plans, although details of the budget allocation remain unclear. If the plan is not advanced, there is concern that other unitary councils will receive greater funding.
- Local government reform will proceed, with each authority taking on additional responsibilities from May. There will be County Council elections for one year, followed by the election of a Mayor. If County Council cannot reach a decision, Government is expected to step in, likely influenced by financial considerations. The Council hopes to achieve significant savings by moving to a single authority model.
- The Norfolk Community Fund still has small grants available of up to £500 per group. Norfolk County Council has also confirmed its opposition to the East Pye solar plans, submitting 20 objections.

Full Report: <http://topcroftpc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk/category/polices/meetings>

District Councillor Martyn Hooton gave a verbal report, main points:

- Morningthorpe Recycling Centre has extended its lease for a further year.
- The Long Stratton Bypass is now open, with the far end due to open shortly. All side roads will be surveyed for necessary repairs before the bypass is fully operational. Once fully open, landscaping works will be completed.
- Residents in Fritton and Morningthorpe have received letters from East Pye Solar stating that their homes may be subject to compulsory purchase. This has caused understandable concern. South Norfolk Council offers legal advice and support through the Help Hub.
- East Pye Solar has scheduled a meeting for 23rd September 2025.
- Food waste collections will begin next month in three phases. The first phase will go live in early October, followed 6–8 weeks later by the second phase, with the final phase introduced afterwards. All households will receive food waste caddies.
- The Litter Bin app is not working correctly and will soon be replaced with an updated version.
- Topcroft Pavilion has been awarded a grant of £4,000 from the Community Action Fund (CAF). In addition, the District Councillor has donated £1,000, bringing the total to £5,000 for improvements to the Pavilion. The Chair thanked the District Councillor for his support.

B. Public Forum – for Members of the Public

No public

MINUTES

1. To Approve Apologies for Absence

[Apologies were Approved and Accepted from Cllr Rout.](#)

The Vice Chair Step-Dye, Cchaired the meeting.

Signed

Date

Topcroft Parish Council

2. Declaration of Interests and Consider Requests for Dispensation

None

3. To Approve the Minutes and Decisions from the Meeting held on Monday 21st July 2025

The Minutes from the Meeting held on Monday 21st July 2025 were confirmed unanimously as a True and Accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

4. Finance

a) Certificate of Exemption for 2024/25

Cllrs noted the External Auditors Notification of Exempt Status 2024/25 and no review to be performed.

b) To Receive the Financial & Budget Reports and Approve the Income & Expenditure

Councillors Approved the Financial & Budget Reports and the following Income & Expenditure:

Date	Ref.	Income	Receipts	Payments
28/07/2025	S/O	Clerk's Salary - July		£ 153.08
29/07/2025	7	Clerk's Backpay - April-July		£ 19.93
31/07/2025	Fee	Bank Service Charge		£ 6.00
28/08/2025	S/O	Clerk's Salary - July		£ 158.06
31/08/2025	Fee	Bank Service Charge		£ 6.00
15/09/2025	8	SNC - Dog Bin Annual Charge		£ 500.40
15/09/2025	9	NALC - Annual Subscription 2025/26		£ 128.09
15/09/2025	10	Clerk's Expenses August-September		£ 12.00
15/09/2025	11	Topcroft Recreation Ground – VE Day Grant		£ 150.00
		Total	£ -	£ 1,133.56
		Total Restricted Reserves		£ 852.21
		General Reserve		£ 3,670.36
			Total	£ 4,522.57

c) Invitation to Bid for Parish Partnership 2026/27

Councillors discussed the Parish Partnership bid and Resolved there were no major projects in the village suitable for a 50/50 grant application.

Cllr Potter reported that the post and chain fence at the village signs required replacement. He agreed to measure the chain and report back to the Clerk with the number of posts requiring replacement.

Action: TP

d) To Note the Clerk's NALC Contract Salary Award

Cllrs noted the Clerk's Salary Award for 2025/26.

5. Planning Applications and Decisions (circulated as received)

Cllrs noted the following:

Applications

a) 2025/1845

Details for conditions 13 & 14 of 2022/1803 - (13) - External Lighting & (14) - Proposed Lighting |
Spring Farm Spring Lane Hempnall Norfolk NR15 2NY
Councillors Resolved to submit Light Pollution comments at the July meeting

b) 2025/0367

Location: Hill Farm Rectory Road Topcroft Norfolk NR35 2BT
Proposal: Conservation works and minor remodelling of the Grade II listed farmhouse with energy efficiency improvements. Demolition of two structures within the curtilage.
Application Type: Listed Building Consent
Status: Pending Consideration (Comments closed)

Signed

Date

Topcroft Parish Council

c) 2025/0449

Location: Low Farm Snakes Lane Topcroft Norfolk NR35 2BU

Proposal: Notification for a prior approval for change of use, partial demolition and cladding of existing agricultural buildings to create 4 x dwelling houses

Application Type: Prior Notification - Agricultural to Residential

Status: Pending Consideration

Councillors Approved with comments

Decisions

d) South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan (Local Plan)

No Site Allocations or Settlement Limit Extensions have been proposed for Topcroft

e) 2025/2187

Approval of Condition Details

Location: Aquarium Topcroft Street Topcroft Norfolk NR35 2BL

Proposal: Details of condition 3 and 10 of 2023/1719- (3) Tree protection (10) Air source heat pump details

Decision: Approval of details – Approved (Delegated)

6. Councillor Protocol

a) To Discuss and Clarify the Protocols relating to Councillors issuing Correspondence or making Representations on behalf of the Parish Council

The Clerk circulated a Councillor Protocol for Communication and Representation document. Councillors and the Clerk discussed the recent miscommunication since the last meeting.

7. Village Issues

a) Highways

- Drains/Potholes/Gullies Issues

Cllr Potter reported that the pothole on Church Road had been repaired. He also noted that the sign approaching the crossroads had been snapped off. A large and deep pothole was reported on Oxnead Lane at the Hempnall Road (B1527) crossroads.

Action: Clerk

- Blocked Culvert at Long Wood

The Council has contacted the land agent regarding the damaged culvert at Long Wood, which is at risk of collapse and may block the main watercourse serving Hardwick airfield and Topcroft village.

- Road Weight Restrictions – update

The Clerk confirmed that she had not received any response from Norfolk County Council Highways and does not think they will replace the sign.

- 30 mph Limits – update

The Clerk confirmed that she had not received any response from Norfolk County Council Highways and she does not anticipate any 30-mph speed limit adjustment being implemented.

- Church Road New Gateway & Filled Ditch – update

Cllrs advised the hedge will be replanted in the autumn, when planting conditions are more suitable.

b) Footpaths

No issues reported.

c) Litter Picking – c/f

8. To Note Correspondence Received

a) To Consider CPRE Norfolk Free Membership

Councillors considered the offer of free membership to the Norfolk branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Agreed to join.

Action: Clerk

Signed

Date

Topcroft Parish Council

b) Parishioner Letter – Farmyard Oxnead Lane

Cllrs discussed the farmyard at Oxnead Lane and Cllr Beckett agreed to investigate the ownership of the land. Cllrs also agreed to provide the Clerk with relevant photographs. **Action: DB**

c) East Pye Solar Farm – update

- Hempnall Parish Council Meeting – 23rd September 2025

Councillors noted the new date of the above meeting. A number of Councillors agreed to attend and report back.

9. AOB (*For discussion only – the Council cannot make decisions on non-agenda items*)

a) Councillors' Telephone Numbers

The Clerk confirmed that she had circulated a list of Councillors' details, including telephone numbers, on 11 February 2025 and recirculated it on 2 September 2025. She suggested that it may be useful for Councillors to print out the list for reference.

b) Defibrillator Training

Cllr Step-Dye confirmed that defibrillator training has been booked for 6 October 2025 at 7:00 pm in Topcroft Pavilion. He will circulate the details to the village via the WhatsApp group and place a notice on the village noticeboards. The Clerk suggested to Cllr Step-Dye that one set of defibrillator pads, which expires at the end of September, could be provided to the trainer for use during the session. **Action: SD**

10. To Receive Items for the next Agenda

a) Budget and Precept Setting

The Clerk asked Councillors to inform her as soon as possible if they wish any projects or expenditure to be included in the budget and precept setting, which will take place at the next meeting.

11. To Note the Next Meeting Dates

- Monday 17th November 2025 - 7.30 pm

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm