

# Parish Council

----- Biannual -----

## Newsletter

Edition 7

November 2025

**W**elcome to the seventh edition of the Weasenham Parish Council Newsletter. It's a little late in coming out due to other pressing commitments. Also, in a bid to save money, it's coming to you in electronic form and not in print, as has been the case up to now. We hope you find this edition informative. We welcome your feedback.

### **New Chairman**

On 10 September, Councillor Martin Romanovsky resigned as Chairman and from the Council. On 24 September, an extraordinary meeting of the Council was convened, and Councillor Tom McClenaghan was elected as the new Chairman. The Council would like to place on record its appreciation of Martin's hard work and many hours spent since May 2023 working for the benefit of our community. It was Martin who first mooted the idea of forming a Council to take over from the Interim Council. Had it not been for his suggestion, we may well still have a Council comprising District and County Councillors or, possibly, no Parish Council at all. The Council wishes Martin all the very best for the future.

### **Latest Projects**

Since the publication of the Chairman's Report in May, there have been several projects completed in the village. We are delighted to have succeeded in getting the car park at the Recreation Field totally resurfaced. This was achieved through a Parish Partnership Bid with Norfolk County Council, which covered 50% of the cost, with the remaining funds coming from the Solar Fund. The overwhelming opinion is that the contractors, Haller Builders, have done an excellent job. No more getting bogged down in the wetter months! Together with the new lighting, the area is a much safer place when there is an event or meeting in the Community Building.

Staying at the Recreation Field, we managed to find a new home for the old portable toilet, thanks to a contact provided by Gail, our Clerk, and the old blue storage container has had a makeover. The paint for the job was bought through the Solar Fund, and the work was carried out by Councillors and a couple of volunteers from the village.

Also on the Recreation Field, we have a new pair of 16 foot by 7 foot goalposts. These were purchased using funds from the Former Highways Surveyor's Land Charity.

[The Former Highways Surveyor's Land Charity derives its funds from the renting of a piece of land at the south end of Weasenham. It can be used to make grants to individuals or organisations for general charitable purposes and amateur sport for the benefit of the residents of Weasenham.](#)

The goals are made of heavyweight steel and are powder coated to prevent against rust. They are portable, manufactured in Great Britain and conform to the relevant British Safety Standards. They are there for the enjoyment of all, but please encourage your kids and grandkids to use them with respect.

Another great project we are really proud of is the total refurbishment of the 1937 Coronation Bench. The bench has occupied a few locations around the village over the years, but latterly it was sited beside the container on the Recreation Field, presumably to overlook the old bowling green. It was in a sad state with the metalwork rusting and the timbers cracked and rotting. Thanks to a very generous offer from Ian Bishop (T&B Blasting), the metalwork was sandblasted, zinc coated then powder coated all completely free of charge. Another act of generosity was a donation of £180 from Nancy and Brian Pearce. They donated the sum to the Council following a family event and asked that it be put towards the refurbishment of this lovely old bench. The bench has now been relocated and is sitting proudly beside the village sign on the corner of Massingham Road and School Road.

**A few important messages ...**

**Wheelie bins:** A member of the community brought to the Council's attention a concern that they have over wheelie bins being left out on the street after being emptied. At one location, the resident counted 10 bins lined up along the pavement. Please can we ask that you bring your bins back within the boundary of your property as soon as possible after they've been emptied. This will help to keep our village looking tidy. Thank you.

**Driving on the Green:** There are still instances of vehicles driving over and parking on the village Green. It is an offence to drive on the Green, and it may be considered as a public nuisance. The Green is a protected area and is there for the recreational enjoyment of all. Apart from the illegality aspect, driving on the Green can damage the grass, especially as the weather gets wetter, and ruin the general appearance of this beautiful asset to our village. Please, stick to the tracks and park appropriately.

**Dog fouling:** Despite there being plenty of bins in the village, where bagged dog waste can be deposited, we are still receiving complaints about irresponsible dog owners wandering off and not cleaning up after their pets. Dog mess is being found on our pathways and on the Recreation Field. Not only can an owner, or person in charge of the dog, be fined up to £100 for failing to clean up the mess (up to £1000 if it goes to court), but it can be dangerous. Whilst rare, contact with dog excrement can cause toxocariasis – a nasty infection that can lead to dizziness, nausea, asthma and even blindness or seizures. Is this a risk you want our children and grandchildren exposed to whilst playing on the Field or Green? This is not a dog problem; it's an owner problem! Please take responsibility for your pets and help keep our streets, paths and green areas clean, safe and enjoyable for all.

### **Weasenham Solar Farm**

Radiance Energy is proposing to build a new solar farm in our Parish on land to the east of Common End. The site is currently in arable agricultural use.

The proposal outlines the development of a Solar Farm with capacity to generate up to 37.45 MW. This, according to Radiance Energy, is enough to power 12,400 homes annually. ADAS Planning and Radiance Energy held an in-person presentation event in Tittleshall Village Hall on 23 September. The PC Chairman went along to the event with a view to finding out more about the proposed development. He raised the issue of additional traffic and the routes to be used during the construction phase (if the application is approved) and also sought some reassurance that the company will give consideration to providing some form of financial benefit to the village. He followed this up with a written request. This was part of their Public Consultation phase, which ended on 3 October. A full planning application will be submitted to Breckland District Council and a determination is expected in Spring 2026.

### **Our next big task**

It's that time of year again when we need to sit down and spend many hours working on the budget for 2026-27. The Clerk, as the Council's Responsible Financial Officer, takes the lead on this task, but all Councillors contribute their thoughts and suggestions so that we can get it right.

The process starts with us listing all projected expenditure for the year ahead, e.g. utility bills, grass cutting costs, the Clerk's salary, professional subscriptions and audit fees. Once this is all calculated, we subtract any income that we expect to receive and the sum that we estimate we will have in the bank on 31 March 2026. The resultant figure is what we submit, as our Precept, to Breckland District Council (BDC). BDC then collects this sum as part of your Council Tax and pays it back to the Parish Council in two instalments (April and September).

The difficulty arises when we try to estimate the cost of our mandatory External Audit. The cost of a standard Limited Assurance Review is £210 + VAT. That's what it would cost if there were no objections raised against the accounts. However, as we know, for the 2023-24 accounting period, 38 objections were raised by one parishioner. Of these 38, the EA fully upheld one and partially upheld four. None of these upheld objections incurred any cost to the Parish and none were deemed sufficiently serious to raise a Public Interest Report. They were administrative issues. The cost to reach this conclusion was £5,538 + VAT (£6,645.60). On appeal to the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments, this reduced to £4419.48 + VAT (£5303.38) For a full explanation of the audit of the 2023-24 accounts, please click on this link: [Audit Process for 2023-2024](#)

For the 2023-24 financial year, the Interim Council set a budget for the EA of £1,000. So, you can understand that when a bill is received for £4419.48 + VAT it can cause a problem.

This additional cost, together with the anticipated cost of future audits, must factor in our budget for 2026-27, and there is only one place the money can be raised, through the Precept, i.e. through your Council Tax.

It should be stressed that the Parish Council is fully supportive of the accounts being scrutinised and, where appropriate, objections being raised. It's an important accountability process. But the system is there to provide assurance to residents and the Council that the Council's finances are soundly managed, and the annual accounts present a true and fair view of the Council's income and expenditure and its assets and liabilities. It is not designed to be used to highlight petty administrative issues. It is this that incurs high External Audit fees.

Another issue considered last year was the fact that the Council has never had a 'general reserve' fund. This is a fund that is set aside in the budget to cover unanticipated costs, or to assist with temporary cashflow issues. Having a general reserve is considered good practice. We came to an agreement with the Solar Farm Account Manager (GrantScape) that we could use £9000 of SF money as a general reserve, which put us in a secure financial position. However, there was a rethink by GrantScape, and it was decided that the £9000 should only be used for 'emergency projects'. Given that this doesn't really serve the true purpose of a general reserve, we opted to return the £9000 to the SF account. This means that in the Precept calculation for 2026-27, we need to consider how we can start to build a fit-for-purpose general reserve. This, together with excessive audit costs and the general increase in the cost of living, will inevitably mean that our Precept will need to rise for 2026-27.

We continue to enjoy a good working relationship with GrantScape and fully appreciate the funds that we receive from them annually.



"The number given is the County's single number for reporting any incidence of flooding, before, during or after the flooding event. Remember, if there are no records of inquiries or calls being made, then there will be limited evidence to devote future resources to our flood-risk areas." (Breckland District Council)

#### **Parish Council and Charity Meeting Dates 2026**

All meetings are held in the Community Building.

January Tuesday 13

Green Charity at 6.30pm

Ordinary Parish Meeting at 7pm

March Tuesday 17

Former Highway Charity at 6.45pm

Ordinary Parish Meeting at 7pm

May Tuesday 19

Green Charity at 6pm

Annual Parish Assembly at 6.30pm

Annual Parish Meeting at 7pm

July Tuesday 21

Former Highway Charity at 6.45pm

Ordinary Parish Meeting at 7pm

September Tuesday 15

Green Charity at 6.30pm

Ordinary Parish Meeting at 7pm

November Tuesday 17

Former Highway Charity at 6.45pm

Ordinary Parish Meeting at 7pm

Have you spotted a pothole or damaged road sign? You can go online and report it at:

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/highwaysproblem>

Happened upon or witnessed a fly-tip? You can report that directly at:

<https://www.breckland.gov.uk/report-flytipping>

If you aren't able to do this online, report it to the Clerk or one of the Councillors.

Breckland deal with reports of fly-tipping very quickly and their contractor, Serco, are usually on the scene within a matter of hours.

**Gail Robinson (Parish Clerk)** can be contacted on: 07594 410101 or  
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