**SANTON DOWNHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 6TH OCTOBER 2025 AT 7.30 PM**

**In attendance: Michael Mackender (Chairman)**

 **Andrew Butcher (Vice Chairman)**

 **Sylvia East (Parish Clerk)**

 **Ann Landells (Parish Councillor)**

 **Paul Brown (Parish Councillor)**

 **Kim Daplyn (Parish Councillor)**

 **Adrian Baugh (Parish Councillor)**

 **Victor Lukanuik (County Councillor)**

 **Jools Savage (District Councillor)**

**There were no public in attendance**

1. The Parish Chairman welcomed all in attendance.
2. Apologies received from Duncan Slade (Forestry England) and Phil Wittam( District Councillor).
3. There were no declarations of interest on any of the Agenda items.
4. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 7th July 2025 were agreed and signed as correct.
5. **FINANCIAL REPORT**
6. The current balance on account is £17,767.00.
7. The precept was discussed and all agreed the increase for 2026/27 should be in line with current rate of inflation at 4%.
8. **GENERAL**

**EV CHARGERS**

1. Nothing further has come forward regarding the Parish Council’s decision that any EV chargers and mast must be located to the rear of the Village Hall. The Clerk stated she would pursue this again. It was the overall consideration of the Parish Council that unless said chargers and mast were located at the rear of the hall, there was no point in pursuing the matter further.

 **PARKING METRES AT THE FORESTRY CAR PARK**

1. The Clerk advised Forestry England are not able to assist with the problem of visitors to the village parking anywhere other than in the provided Forestry England car park. It was agreed signs are likely needed on the village green and indeed outside the church. With regard the church, although the Parish Council owns the piece of land in front of the Church, it would be polite to ask if this was acceptable. It was agreed we do not wish to end up with a village full of ‘signs’ and it was suggested by the Chairman perhaps the sign for the village green could be mounted on top of the sign about no camping etc. The Clerk to take this matter forward.

**VILLAGE HALL CHARITY REGISTRATION**

1. The Clerk advised the forms had been sent to the Charities Commission by the Village Hall Committee.
2. **PARISH COUNCILLORS REPORTS**

The Chairman asked the Parish Councillors if they had anything to report:

**Ann Landells**

* Can we approach Forestry England with regard to a bin for dog poo bags. Ann advised she had come across a walker who was parked in the Forestry England car park who asked her where the bin for dog poo was. There being none , Ann offered to put said dog poo bags in her own bin. The Clerk stated she would ask the question. This then inevitably led back to the age old question of a dog poo bin on the village green. It was agreed putting a bin or bins in this area

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was not the problem, rather it is a problem as to who would offer to empty on a frequent basis. The general consensus of opinion is that any thoughtful/ responsible person would pick up their dogs poo and take it home to put in their own bin.

**Paul Brown**

* Made the suggestion that possibly it was time to ‘knock the EV charger idea on the head”.

**Andrew Butcher**

* Just commented on the bad mobile signal in the village, but as we have said on so many occasions, yes it would be nice to have a Mobile Mast, the fact is we need a supplier willing to pay to have this installed.
1. **COUNTY COUNCILLORS/DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS**

**Cllr Lukaniuk**

* referred to the ongoing issue of Local Council Re-organisation (LCR) and advised on the possibility smaller parishes in time will be asked if they would like to amalgamate with other Councils. The Chairman asked how would Brandon for example feel about taking on the responsibilities of Santon Downham’s private roads and land and Cllr Lukanuik stated that if such a situation arose then there would be no ’cherry picking involved.
1. **CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**
* The Chairman advised the Clerk had pursued the issue of two dead trees on the Village Green that need to be cut down and it had been agreed this could go ahead but that the trees would need to be replaced. The Clerk has commented to West Suffolk that in the last 15 years 3 or 4 trees have been taken down and at least 14 trees have been planted, we will see if this makes any change to the situation, failing which two more trees will need to be planted. The Chairman advised he had been approached by a village resident that the wood should be ‘shared’ and he had replied anyone willing to volunteer to help with the work involved could indeed have a share of the wood. Volunteers from the Parish Council had made offers and the Chairman and Vice Chairman would take the matter further.
* The Chairman commented on the state of the roads and it was suggested by the Clerk a walk around was again necessary to check on both the road and tree situation. However, in the meantime the Chairman advised he had seen some potholes down Mark’s Lane in between the old Post Office Hall Drive. He had some infill to hand but needed the use of a pothole rammer. Ann Landells advised she had one that the Chairman could borrow. The Chairman also commented on the fact that the edging of the Village Green , private road side was eroding badly and it was generally agreed something needs to be done to stop the edges of the road breaking away further. It was suggested that crushed concrete or planings could be infilled into the ridges between the asphalt and the green. This matter will be taken further in the New Year.
* The Chairman advised he had set out to cut the village green 5 times this year but in fact had cut it closer to 10 and asked whether a last cut was needed. The Parish Council felt no further cut was necessary but left this to the Chairman’s discretion.
* It was advised there are overhanging branches near the Speed Cameras which needed to be trimmed back, it was agreed this could easily be undertaken inhouse.
1. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
* The Chairman advised on the process of the separate entrance for the Village Hall and stated two quotations had been received and another was awaited. Pre planning had been put into West Suffolk and we await the outcome.
* The Chairman had been approached by Vera Sayer with regard to placing commemorative bench seats for Gilly Sayer in the village. The Breckland Club had raised a very handsome amount and would like to purchase two such seats, one to be installed inside the Church

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* for which permission will be sought separately by the Breckland Club, and the other possibly close to the Breckland Club. There were no objections raised by the Council regarding a bench seat to be situated presumably close to the Breckland Club, and all considered this a worthy project. However, the Chairman reiterated it is necessary to ensure the Parish Council are not left holding responsibility for the maintenance of any commemorative seats and this has been impressed upon the Breckland Club.
* It had been reported to the Chairman on one of the meetings in the village hall a few cars had parked near the parking recess opposite Mrs Sayer’s house and she had not been able to exit. Dot Sayer had stated she had a sign to put up and requested Parish Council permission. It was agreed the road is a private one and there was no objection to Dot Sayer’s suggestion. In fact a discussion continued and it was assumed there was a sign in place already stating this to be a private road ( this is not the case so the matter needs to be attended to) .
* The Chairman advised that some 6 months ago Open Reach carried out some work on the Village Green and a manhole cover was broken. They left a warning bollard and have never returned, the result being a hole that someone could fall into, especially if we had snow and the hole was covered! The Clerk has been finding it difficult to make a complaint and Paul Brown mentioned he had a contact and would get the Clerk a telephone number.
1. NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Monday, 22nd December 2025.

1. MEETING CLOSED

The meeting closed at 8.35pm

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