

FLEGGBURGH PARISH COUNCIL

Serving Burgh St Margaret, Billockby and Clippesby

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Chairman: Cllr Terry Gammans, Vice Chairman: Cllr David Flowerdew, Parish Clerk: Paul Johnson

MINUTES OF MEETING

Members of Fleggburgh Parish Council (FPC) were summoned on 28 July 2025 to attend an extraordinary meeting of FPC on Monday 1 September 2025 at 7.30pm at Fleggburgh Village Hall for the purpose of transacting the business detailed below. Members of the press and public were invited to attend.

This extraordinary meeting was called by the Chair to enable a decision to be made on a matter that could not wait for the next scheduled meeting of FPC. No business was transacted at this extraordinary meeting of FPC other than that specified in the summons. The next scheduled meeting of FPC is on Wednesday 17 September 2025 at Fleggburgh Village Hall at 7.30pm.

1. Present: All Councillors attended. David Flowerdew (DF), Christine Merritt (CM), Terry Gammans (TG), Adrian Thompson (AT), Keith Osborne (KO), George Manning (GM).

2. *Declaration of interest for items on the agenda and applications for dispensation*

It was noted that AT was a dual-hatted member, serving on both FPC and GYBC. His interest has been declared in that the decision at this meeting directly affects GYBC. However, his insight at FPC is highly regarded and respected and he is granted a dispensation to speak and vote on this matter.

3. *To approve the draft minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 16 July 2025 and request the Chair to sign to evidence approval.*

These had been circulated on 25 July and two minor changes made before being posted onto the FPC website as draft minutes since the end of July. They were confirmed as an accurate record and the Clerk was instructed to update the FPC website to reflect their finalisation.

Proposed KO; Seconded (GM). All Councillors in agreement. They were signed by the Chair to indicate approval.

4. *Public Participation*

One member of the public was present. John Clarke and Rev Phil Rodd attended on behalf of Parochial Church Council (PCC) and St Margaret's Church. The Chair permitted them to speak during the meeting if any items required clarification.

No representatives of County Council or Police were present.

5. *Decision required on future Maintenance of the Closed Churchyard Fleggburgh*

It was noted that the background to this decision was set out in the agenda, namely:

"The Parochial Church Council (PCC) which is liable to maintain the closed churchyard served notice on FPC on 9 June 2025 requiring FPC to take over the maintenance of the closed churchyard. The closure was confirmed by an Order in Council. The maintenance of the churchyard shall be taken over by FPC three months after service of the request. However, before the expiration of the said three months FPC can give written notice to Great Yarmouth Borough Council (GYBC) and to the PCC maintaining the churchyard, that GYBC, and not FPC, shall take over the maintenance of the churchyard at the expiration of the said three months. FPC will debate cost and other implications and make its decision on whether it wishes to assume the maintenance of the Closed Churchyard. This extraordinary meeting of FPC is required to pass the resolution required under s215(3) of the Local Government Act 1972. FPC will consider all relevant information at this extraordinary meeting including GYBC's due diligence, surveys assessments and proposals for costs which will be communicated by GYBC in August 2025."

The Chair invited each Councillor in turn to share their views on whether FPC should assume responsibility for the maintenance or pass on that responsibility to GYBC. The Councillors referred to:

- a) An email dated 19 August 2025 to FPC where GBYC set out the works to make the graveyard safe. This work would be completed by GYBC's contractors over the next three months.
- b) The works GYBC recommended as ongoing maintenance and associated costs, particularly in respect of monuments and trees.
- c) There being no financial contribution offered by GYBC to FPC to take on the maintenance.
- d) The fact that GYBC has asked FPC to sign a formal agreement for remedial works and FPC's role going forward if FPC were to take on the maintenance itself. Notwithstanding the fact that GYBC commenced this exercise at end of July, this agreement to be signed if FPC takes on the maintenance role was not received until 28 August 2025 (4 days prior to this meeting).
- e) FPC has to decide whether it takes on the costs of the future maintenance or whether it passes the maintenance function and associated costs onto GYBC. The objective is to have an important space in the village professionally maintained to a good and safe standard. Passing on the responsibility to GYBC does not prevent FPC from carrying out additional enhancement work by volunteers with the PCC's permission. FPC knows that the graveyard will be restored to become a safe place in the next 3 months if GYBC is instructed by FPC to take on the maintenance role.
- f) Notwithstanding the tree survey undertaken by GYBC which was a "from ground" survey, there was no guarantee that all faults had been identified. The trees are nearly all mature specimens.
- g) Given the size of FPC's annual income (£20,000) the future costs could jeopardise FPC's financial sustainability. Council taxpayers may question a precept increase to accommodate future work when the costs could be legitimately and legally absorbed by GYBC as a borough.
- h) There was merit in FPC taking on the maintenance as the quality could be controlled. However, it was noted that GYBC would work to acceptable standards even if less than FPC's expectations. FPC would be able to monitor GYBC's work and challenge if necessary. FPC could with agreement from PCC undertake additional complementary work such as envisaged by an upcoming volunteer event. It was pointed out that GYBC would become legally responsible for the existing gate fronting Main Road and the mesh fencing missing at rear of graveyard. It was noted that GYBC would create a temporary access adjacent to the existing gate. GYBC state that the existing gate does not permit vehicular access. The temporary access would be made good on completion of the initial identified works.
- i) Devolution would almost certainly result in GYBC no longer existing but the maintenance function would be novated to a unitary authority or successor authority.

Following significant debate of the merits and demerits of either option the Chair invited Councillors to vote for or against taking on the maintenance. The Chair needed to cast his vote in favour of the maintenance being passed to GYBC.

It was resolved that the Chair instruct the Clerk to give written notice to GYBC and to the PCC that GYBC, and not FPC, shall take over the maintenance of the Churchyard.

6. *Next scheduled meeting*

The next meeting of FPC is on Wednesday 17 September 2025 at Fleggburgh Village Hall at 7.30pm.

7. *Meeting Closed at 8.20pm*