



Minutes of Reach Parish Council meeting held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 3rd February 2026 at 7.30pm

Attendance

Tim Quilter	Chair	Present
Hilary Fielding	Vice Chair	Present
Edward Hall	Councillor	Present
Catherine Gibson	Councillor	Present
Nick Acklam	Councillor	Present
Vacancy	Councillor	
Vacancy	Councillor	
Susan Bailey	Clerk	Present
John Trapp	District Councillor	Not Present
Charlotte Cane	District Councillor	Not Present
Yannifer Malinowski	County Councillor	Not Present

Apologies for absence

There were none.

Forum for members of the public

There were none.

Declaration of Interests

There were none.

1. REACH LODE CATCHMENT PLAN – an introduction by Steve Boreham

Steve Boreham gave an excellent presentation covering his document Reach Lode Catchment Plan. The PC fully endorse the Plan, and **Councillor Acklam** & Steve Boreham to arrange a presentation to Swaffham Prior PC to encourage wider endorsement. **Clerk** to circulate to the village emails & **Councillor Hall** to upload to the website.

2. Planning

Since the agenda was published several applications had been received for tree works at 9 Burwell Road. The PC's main concern regarding the work centered on the ongoing health of the trees. The PC delegated power to **Councillor Acklam**, as tree officer, to look at the plans, speak with the ECDC tree Officer, visit the site should he see fit and make any necessary representation to ECDC. Any representation would be circulated to the PC prior to submitting to ECDC.

3. District Councillor Report

Operational Services Committee 26 January

- Roll out of the new Waste Collection project remains on budget and on track. Further information will be sent to all residents to prepare them for the change. It was noted that discussions on collecting waste from flats and shared bins were ongoing, and that the operating crews were being consulted on the changes, which was sadly lacking when the collection rounds were last changed.

- The Committee approved the RECAP Waste Strategy; a joint document produced by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership. Unfortunately, we are still locked into a contract for dealing with waste which is no longer suitable for us.

Local Government Reorganisation

There will be a public consultation on this issue. This is currently expected to be in February.

Finance and Assets Committee 29 January

- The East Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Report was presented and discussed. Some members felt that it had not enough ambition; reports will be submitted bi-annually in the future.
- The revenue budget for the next year was presented, but there was little debate as the major discussion will be at Full Council on 24 February.
- The contingency budget for the Mepal Crematorium has been fully committed since more subterranean structures were encountered despite assurances that a full ground survey had been done before the project was costed. There was some concern that this was a fixed cost agreement with the construction company, and that we should not be giving more money. With the Chair's casting vote, it was agreed that an additional £300,000 should be made available for the project to go ahead. No other option, e.g., reducing some of the facilities, was presented to the committee.

4. County Councillor Report

No report received.

5. Minutes of previous Meeting

The minutes were approved as correct.

6.1 Finance

Nothing to report.

6.2 Parish Council Members

Councillor Gibson agreed to become the PC liason member for the Village Hall.

Parking on the village green had continued despite the PC asking the Village Hall and residents to refrain from doing so, to avoid damaging the surface.

A resident had asked the PC for permission to park on the green for a party being held at the hall, following discussion this was approved if necessary, but the PC request that parking on the road is used if available.

The Dykes End had informed the PC that opening hours had been reduced on Saturdays & Sundays. **Clerk** to add to next agenda.

Defibrillator, it had been recommended that the unit was locked now it is in a more prominent place, and defibrillator signs are need on the top window **Councillor Gibson** to arrange. The box also needs some repairs and painting **Clerk** to arrange. **Councillor Hall** add a tab on the PC website menu bar to give easy access to the defrib information.

6.3 Play Spaces

Nothing to report.

6.4 Rights of Way

Nothing to report.

6.5 24Acres Committee

On 1st February nine villagers joined a team from Cambridge Conservation Volunteers to lay part of the hedge that runs along the southern edge of the 24 Acres.

The hedge had been planted by the village over decade ago and in recent years has become unruly. Rather than flail it into shape, the PC decided that we should lay it. The hedge will become neater and more robust and a better haven for wildlife as a result. The Conservation Volunteers led the hedging work, passing on the traditional skills involved to residents. We plan to use the skills acquired to manage this and other hedges in the future.

We have now laid 90 of the 150 metres of this particular hedge and plan to complete the task in early 2027. If anybody wants to have a go at hedge laying, please contact Councillor Acklam.

6.6 Friends Of Reach Wood

Nothing to report.

6.7 A to B1102 Group

Nothing to report.

6.8 Nature Recovery Plan

Councillor Acklam & Steve Boreham continue to interact with the Ground Up & Chalk Stream groups but there has been little progress. They will continue to participate for the time being to see what develops.

6.9 Hythe Restoration Group

Councillor Acklam continues discussions with Anglia Water regarding the land at The Hythe. AW are concerned about access to the site and parking along the road way. **Councillor Acklam** to arrange to meet AW on site again to discuss, other councillors hope to attend.

6.10 Website & public communications

Councillor Hall has been discussing IT support with a local company, quote to follow. The present IT package renews at the end of March **Clerk** to add to the next agenda. **Councillors Hall & Acklam** to meet and update documents & articles on the website.

6.11 Energy developments in the locality

Kingsway Solar

In late December 2025, the National Energy System Operator (NESO, the publicly owned body that oversees the planning of the UK's energy infrastructure) completed a review of all applications to connect to the grid from solar farm (and battery storage) developers. The review was needed because there has been substantial over subscription in both areas. Kingsway failed to secure a guarantee of connection to the grid before 2035. This calls into question the financial viability of its project. Nonetheless Kingsway has indicated that it intends to proceed with its proposed development.

In early January Kingsway launched a targeted consultation on amendments to its proposal in light of submissions to its statutory consultation. (Reach PC and virtually all other consultees had objected to the proposal). The amendments are limited and make no reference to the proposed pylon route between the solar farm and Burwell substation so there is nothing for us to add. However, parishes in the southern part of the development area are concerned about a seeming expansion of the area designated for battery storage. Given the uncertainties, Reach PC, and the Alliance of PCs (to which we are affiliated) are continuing to prepare for an application for development consent from Kingsway at some point in the spring of this year.

The Alliance continues to grow and now has a membership of twelve parish councils representing 21,300 people. I have agreed to join the Alliance steering group which oversees funding and tasking of professionals supporting our opposition to the proposal. Councillor Acklam's presence ensures that the northern part of the area affected by the Kingsway scheme is represented on big decisions and the steering group has agreed to fund a full landscape analysis of the entire pylon route. This analysis is likely to provide important evidence in opposing Kingsway's application.

The PC has received correspondence from the Alliance solicitor asking for confirmation of consent to the PCs name being included in correspondence sent by the Solicitors regarding the Kingsway Solar Farm. **Clerk** to sign and return.

Greenergy Battery Storage

On 15 January ECDC's Planning Committee met to consider Greenergy's application to build a battery storage plant on a field between the 24 Acres and Newnham Drove. The planning officer had recommended acceptance of the application despite strong opposition from local people. ECDC had received nearly ninety formal objections.

The opposition (BEAT, the National Trust and Reach and Burwell residents) was well represented at the committee meeting. Councillor Acklam was there to reiterate the objections of both Reach and Burwell PCs. Our collective concerns focused on public safety (the proposal is too near to homes, given the consequences of

a fire at the site), damage to the landscape and natural environment and associated loss of amenity, especially at the 24 Acres, and a failure by the applicant to demonstrate that the scheme is needed (NESO's above mentioned review reveals there are already more BESS schemes with planning approval than the UK electricity grid can possibly accommodate in the foreseeable future)

Our concerns were taken on board and the Committee looked minded to reject the application but pressed by ECDC officers, it has deferred taking a decision to confirm that the case for refusal is watertight. The planning officers have a legitimate concern that the Planning Inspectorate could award costs against ECDC if it finds a planning refusal wanting on appeal. Nonetheless, from a commonsense perspective at least, the case for rejecting the application is compelling and the PC hopes the Committee sticks to its guns.

Since this meeting Grenergy has submitted amendment documents. The PC questions whether this is procedurally appropriate. The PC feels the amendments have not made any difference to the concerns submitted, there is still an absence of an emergency plan, BESS are a risk to public health, there is also no mention of cyber security at the site. Additionally, the Burwell group have commissioned an independent noise assessment as the Grenergy assessment is not robust enough. **Councillor Acklam** to produce a letter of comments on the amendments and circulate to the Councillors prior to submission by **the Clerk**.

7. Village Community assets register

Councillor Acklam had produced a Village Community assets register to help keep track of village assets and their upkeep. **Clerk** to add known costs to document.

9. Payment

E.on – Power on the green	£22.17
Reach Village hall - hall hire	£19.20

Payments approved. **Councillor Hall** to authorise.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held **on 3rd March 2026 at 7.30pm**.

The agenda for this meeting will be issued by the previous Tuesday and can be accessed from the Parish Council website <https://reachparish.gov.uk/parish-council/agendas-and-minutes>

Chairman:

Date: