

**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK**

**COUNCIL**

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 30th January, 2025 at 5.00 pm in the Assembly Room, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

**PRESENT:** Councillor P Bland (Chair)

Councillors B Ayres, T Barclay, P Beal, A Beales, S Bearshaw, J Bhondi, R Blunt, F Bone, A Bubb, A Bullen, R Coates, Mrs J Collingham, S Collop, R Colwell, C J Crofts, S Dark, M de Whalley, P Devulapalli, S Everett, D Heneghan, P Hodson, H Humphrey, A Jamieson, B Jones, C Joyce, A Kemp, J Kirk, P Kunes, S Lintern, B Long, J Lowe, J Moriarty, C Morley, S Nash, T Parish, J Ratcliffe, S Ring, C Rose, J Rust, A Ryves, S Sandell, D Sayers, Mrs V Spikings, S Squire, M Storey, D Tyler and A Ware

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Anota, T de Winton, A Dickinson, A Lawrence, J Osborne and M Wilkinson

**C:73 MINUTES SILENCE FOR THE LATE HONORARY ALDERMAN SLIM WILKINSON AND FORMER MAYOR'S CONSORT, SIMON BOWER**

Council held a Minute's silence as a mark of respect for the late Honorary Alderman Lawrence (Slim) Wilkinson and former Mayor's Consort Simon Bower who had both recently passed away.

**C:74 PRAYERS**

Prayers were led by Rev Canon Ling.

Following prayers, Councillor Steve Everett read a tribute to the late Honorary Alderman Slim Wilkinson, his Grandfather.

**C:75 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** The Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 November 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

**C:76 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Bhondi, Blunt, Devulapalli, Lintern, Moriarty and Storey declared a pecuniary interest in the item on Second Homes Council Tax, and left the meeting during its consideration.

**C:77 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were none.

**C:78 URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

**C:79 WAIVER OF THE SIX MONTH RULE**

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Under section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, a request has been received for Council to consider the waiver of the six month attendance rule by Councillor Margaret Wilkinson due to her ill health. Councillor Beales proposed and Councillor Bone seconded the recommendations.

**RESOLVED:** 1) That the waiver of the six-month attendance rule provided for within Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act for Councillor Margaret Wilkinson due to illness be approved..  
2) That the extension of the permitted non-attendance time period for a further six-month period, to expire on 29 August 2025.

**C:80 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

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**1 Question from Mrs E Reeve**

According to your own figures there are 2,800 empty properties in the Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, the majority of which are residential. All major parties seem to have the same view that we need more houses built and the Government will be putting requirements in place. I understand that many councils in England are contacting the Government to say they aren't able to deliver on the Govts new requirements, so why cant the existing empty houses be brought back into use for those needs.

Councillor Rust gave the following response:

Thank you for your question Mrs Reeve. I know that this issue has long been of concern to you. I think we all agree that it would be better for us to be able to utilise the empty homes that we have in the borough rather than leaving them empty.

The figure of 2,800 empty properties doesn't match our own figures taken from our council tax information.

Our data shows that there are currently 1984 properties which are empty in West Norfolk. Of these only 686 properties have been empty for more than a year and are now paying the empty homes levy. The levy is 100% for properties empty between 1 and 5 years, 200% for properties empty between 5 and 10 years and 300% for properties empty over 10 years.

We are currently assessing the impact of the empty homes levy to determine if this reduces the number of long term empty properties in the borough.

The details of the empty homes and the duration that they have been empty is broken down as follows

Empty between 1 and 5 years	592 properties
Empty between 5 and 10 years	71 properties
Empty over 10 years	23 properties

It's important for us to bear in mind that there is always churn in the housing market and some properties can take a while to sell, especially where probate is concerned

We have approx. 68 properties are uninhabitable but still on the Council Tax database

Figures from the VOA show that for 2023/2024 there were no dwellings deleted from the council tax list because they were derelict and no longer viable as a domestic property (there is a very high bar for this). A number have changed from domestic use, and these are normally holiday lets which now qualify to be in business rates instead

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## **2 Question from Ms J Irving**

Firstly, my thanks to Cllr Moriarty for his full and informative answers to my questions about Hedgerow protection and the enforcement and monitoring of Tree Preservation Orders.

It seems that trees with TPOs are not routinely monitored by tree officers except in the context of impending development: the system of monitoring then relies on the public knowing which trees have TPOs, how to report a danger to them and trusting that action will be taken. From a citizen's point of view, finding all this information is difficult and time consuming using current cumbersome systems.

It is clear that it is difficult for the authorities to know how many trees with TPOs have been felled or damaged on an ad hoc basis, when that damage is not part of a building development.

My question to the council, is therefore, how many trees with TPOs have been lost in the course of building and other developments since records began in 2005 ?

Councillor Moriarty gave the following response:

As I have previously said, It would not be practical or possible to routinely monitor tree preservation orders. We do rely on passive monitoring by neighbours, members of the public, Tree Contractors, Town and Parish Council's, our own Council members, staff. We regularly receive enquiries about tree works taking place from

interested members of the public, and Parish Council's who are very vigilant. The system has successfully self-monitored itself since 1947.

It had been thought that searching for a TPO on our website was relatively straightforward, the search method may not be perfect, but with a postcode or address it was hoped it was user friendly and would take about a minute to search for a TPO or Conservation Area.

However, you have described it as cumbersome and time-consuming and it is a users perspective we need to listen to.

We are planning a couple of improvements which I hope will help.

Firstly, the intention is to set up a form on our website where reports re TPOs can be made anonymously. Public awareness of tree protection is high in West Norfolk, and I would encourage the council to do anything practicable to encourage that to increase further and to foster better communication with residents, and public and community bodies. There are, of necessity, our eyes and ears.

In addition, we are currently developing a replacement Tree Preservation Order map for our website (and beyond).

The map will display all the TPO points (single trees), TPO polygons (areas, woodlands and groups), and Conservation areas in an easy to access and viewable map with an up to date base map and simple address search facility. I have viewed the prototype and was impressed. The only outstanding issue is linking the spatial TPO data and the TPO documents itself. Please don't ask me as your supplementary question exactly what that last sentence means, as I will be doubling my jeopardy with my answer.

The map can be viewed and is usable on desktop PCs, tablets and mobile phones.

I now would like to ask something of you. Would you be prepared to come into the Council offices in Kings Lynn and sit down with officers and myself and see a demonstration of the new map before it goes live ? Your input as an end-user familiar with the frustrations of our current system would be invaluable.

Ms Irving accepted the request.

C:81

## **APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

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Council was invited to appoint to the following vacancies on Outside Bodies:

King's Lynn Internal Drainage Board – Councillor Long nominated Councillor A Bubb to the Board. This was seconded by Councillor Beales. On being put to the vote this was agreed.

Norfolk County Council - Police and Crime Panel – The Council had been requested to nominate a Labour member to the Body. No nomination was put forward at this stage.

**RESOLVED:** 1) That Councillor A Bubb be appointed to the King's Lynn Internal Drainage Board.

C:82

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COUNCIL BODIES**

i

### **Cabinet: 10 December 2024**

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CAB91: Notice of Motion 15/23 – Wash East Coast Management Strategy – Nuit C – Technical Report was proposed by Councillor Squire and seconded by Councillor de Whalley. The recommendations were approved.

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube](#)

CAB86: Community Governance Review – Burnham Market was proposed by Councillor Beales and seconded by Councillor Ring. The recommendations were approved.

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CAB89: Audit Committee Terms of Reference was proposed by Councillor Morley and seconded by Councillor Beales. The recommendations were approved.

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube](#)

CAB92: West Norfolk Economic Strategy was proposed by Councillor Ring and seconded by Councillor Beales. The recommendations were approved.

**RESOLVED:** That the recommendations from the meeting on 10 December be agreed.

**ii Cabinet : 14 January 2025**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube](#)

Councillors Bhondi, Blunt, Devulapalli, Lintern, Moriarty and Storey declared a pecuniary interest in the item on Second Homes Council Tax, and left the meeting during its consideration.

CAB103: Council Tax Discount Resolution was proposed by Councillor Morley and seconded by Councillor Beales.

Council debated the recommendations and on being put to the vote the recommendations were agreed.

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube](#)

CAB104: Review of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Fee Levels was proposed by Councillor Moriarty and seconded by Councillor Rust. The recommendations were approved.

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CAB105: Revision of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Procedures and Conditions was proposed by Councillor Moriarty and seconded by Councillor Rust. The recommendations were approved.

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CAB108: Members Allowances 2024/25 was proposed by Councillor Beales and seconded by Councillor Ring. The recommendations were approved.

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube](#)

CAB109: Procurement Policy and Contract Standing Orders was proposed by Councillor Morley and seconded by Councillor Beales. The recommendations were approved.

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CAB110: Social Value Policy was proposed by Councillor Morley and seconded by Councillor Beales. The recommendations were approved.

**RESOLVED:** That the recommendations from the Cabinet meeting on 14 January be agreed.

At 6.10 the Council adjourned, and re-convened at 6.30.

**C:83**     **NOTICE OF MOTION**

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The following Notice of Motion ( 1/25 ) had been submitted by Councillor A Beales:

“This Council is supportive of Norfolk County Council’s ambition to fast track devolution in Norfolk by joining with Suffolk County Council in making a request to Government to join the Devolution Priority Programme and will engage constructively in any forthcoming programme of devolution and local government reorganisation. However, this Council strongly opposes postponement of County Council elections due in May 2025 as people should not be denied their right to vote, especially as there is unanimous support for devolution from the leaders of all Norfolk and Suffolk local authorities”.

Councillor Beales sought Council’s permission to amend his Motion as follows:

“This Council strongly opposes postponement of County Council elections due in May 2025 as people should not be denied their right to vote.

This Council agrees to hold an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council on 13<sup>th</sup> February to debate devolution and local government reorganisation.”

This was seconded by Councillor Ring. Council agreed to the amendment.

Council debated the Motion as amended with points raised on:

- the democratic mandate of holding elections and the need for the Council to debate local government review and devolution.
- cost of the elections which could be spent on services
- Inevitability of local government review
- Potential of near double term of office.
- Not having the detail of the proposals at this stage.
- Costs not being a reason not to hold the elections.
- Cancelling or delaying elections should only be done in exceptional circumstances.
- Delaying elections was in the self interest of the County Council.
- The Motion brought to ensure members could have their say and the Leader had a mandate going forward in discussions.

With the required number of supporters a recorded vote on the Motion was requested.

<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
Ayres	Heneghan	Long
Barclay		
Beal		
Beales		
Bearshaw		
Bhondi		
Bland		
Blunt		
Bone		
Bubb		
Bullen		
Coates		
Collingham		
Collop		
Colwell		
Crofts		
Dark		
Devulapalli		
Everett		
Hodson		
Humphrey		
Jones		
Joyce		
Kemp		
Kirk		
Kunes		
Lintern		
Lowe		
Moriarty		
Morley		
Nash		
Parish		
Ratcliffe		
Ring		
Rose		
Rust		
Ryves		
Sandell		
Spikings		
Storey		
Tyler		
Ware		
De Whalley		
<b>43</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

**RESOLVED:** That the Notice of Motion as amended above be approved.



**C:84**     **CABINET MEMBERS REPORTS**

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Councillor Beales presented the Cabinet members reports. Updates were given by Cabinet members.

Councillor de Whalley gave an update to his report on the West Lynn Ferry.

Councillor Moriarty gave an update to his report correcting the date of the CIL Panel as 17 February rather than March, and on the performance on the Council's Housing Delivery Target the results of which had been challenged as the large number of static holiday homes had been included in the 2011 census figures. Discussions were continuing with ONS and the Ministry.

Councillor Ring updated Council on the future of the Carnegie building being leased to the Garage Trust.

Cabinet Members answered questions on the following matters:

- The Florence Fields wildlife site
- Bringing empty homes back into use in the borough.
- West Lynn ferry future funding.
- Festival Too
- Planning Committee training
- Garage Trust and Marjorie Kemp Trust accommodations.
- Councillor's court appeal challenge against Standards ruling. (Councillor Ware left the meeting during discussion on this item)
- The review of council grants
- Late cabinet members reports
- Consideration of packages available for tourists to the area.
- The number of new homes required to be built in the borough under new government rules.
- Improvements being planned to borough cemeteries due to the rise in water levels.
- IDC processes going forward.

Councillor Moriarty undertook to respond to Councillor Devulapalli on the encouragement of taxi drivers to transition to green vehicles.

Councillor de Whalley undertook to respond regarding the inspection routines for the Ferry.

At this point the meeting had sat for 3 hours so the meeting closed.

**The meeting closed at 8.11 pm**