



Rackheath's Annual Community Meeting

Held at The Pavilion, Green Lane West, Rackheath, NR13 6LT

on Monday 12th May 2025 at 7.15pm

An open public meeting for residents to bring up any village matters

Refreshments served from 7pm

Chair of Meeting: Pippa Nurse (Community Council Chair)

Attendance: Aileen Beck Community Clerk, 5 Members of the Community Council, 2 members of YMCA Norfolk and 9 Members of Rackheath Community.

1. Welcome

Pippa welcomed residents and Councillors to the meeting

2. To confirm the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held 21st May 2024

The minutes of the previous Parish Meeting held on 21st May 2024 were approved as a correct record.

3. To receive the annual report from the Chairman of the Community Council

Rackheath continues to see significant transformation, both in its growing population and evolving community needs. The council remains dedicated to ensuring housing development funds known as Section 106 and CIL contributions are strategically invested in facilities and projects that bring tangible benefits to the local community.

We remain committed to collaborating with our neighbouring parishes—Salhouse, Sprowston, and Wroxham—to bring to the attention of District and County Councils the pressing issues and challenges posed by large-scale developments like Beeston Park and GT16, which have a projected build plan of 30+years. Our focus is on addressing both current and future community needs, encompassing key areas such as education, road safety and traffic congestion. Additionally, we are advocating for a forward-thinking approach to infrastructure planning, ensuring considerations for power networks, water capacity, and wastewater treatment are included in the bigger picture.

Achievements/Work in Progress

Over the last year, the council have delivered the following benefits to the community (albeit with only 6 volunteer councillors and 2 office staff).

Our current community projects are:

- Jubilee Park
 - Significant investment in replacing the tired safety flooring.
 - Installation of a zip wire.
 - Replacement of aging toddler play equipment.
 - Implementation of walkway lighting along the main path through Jubilee Park out to Salhouse Road.
- Stracey Park
 - Installation of play equipment for older children.
 - Outdoor gym equipment, which continues to gain popularity with the improving weather.
 - We will be addressing further upgrades relating to accessibility over the next financial period.
 - We are exploring the feasibility of Cricket pitches running alongside the football pitches in liaison with multi-sports agencies.
- Other Play Equipment
 - We are actively engaging with housing developers to explore the possibility of the community council managing open spaces that include play areas. Our goal is to ensure that every play area in the community is accessible to all residents. While this process is lengthy, we remain fully committed to achieving this vision.
- Newman Road Woods
 - The adoption of Newman Road woods is still progressing – the journey has been long, but we are nearing completion.
- Neighbourhood Plan
 - The updated document has now been officially submitted to Broadland District Council for final consultation, paving the way for the next stages: referendum and/or inspectorate review.

Issues faced by the Council

- We continue to face a shortage of councillors, which places considerable strain on a small group of individuals. Once again, we warmly encourage members of the community to step forward as volunteers to help support and share the responsibilities. Your involvement could make a significant difference to our efforts
- Due to the limited number of councillors, we have unfortunately been unable to organise any community events. Looking ahead, we are hopeful that more

volunteers from the community will step forward to help, allowing us to bring these events to life once more.

- Anti-social behaviour in Jubilee Park continues to pose challenges for the community. The council is actively working with local agencies to monitor and tackle the issue as effectively as possible, despite existing limitations and constraints. Incidents of graffiti and vandalism on play equipment demand significant staff time, as they frequently visit the park to clean up and ensure the play equipment & area is safe for use.

Rackheath Community Council is collaborating with Broadland District Council and the YMCA to introduce youth activities and services to Rackheath. With our community expanding, we are committed to meeting the needs of our young people by providing support, engaging activities, and fostering a sense of belonging. We are just beginning this initiative, and to ensure its success, the YMCA will carry out an engagement process and consultation with Rackheath's young adults. This approach will help identify their needs and preferences, ensuring that the most suitable and impactful services are provided.

We would like to express our gratitude to Social Moments Enterprises for establishing the community café at the Pavilion. Their efforts in providing accessible activities and food packages have made a meaningful difference in supporting families within our community.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the organisers of the many groups and clubs in Rackheath for generously dedicating their time to bring people together and foster shared interests. Volunteers are the backbone of our community, and we deeply appreciate each and every one of you for the invaluable role you play. Thank you!

4. To receive reports from:

County & District Councillor

Fran Whymark, District and County Councillor spoke about:

- Magna Medical Centre as a recent update has been provided by the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board:
 - Building work is due to complete at the end of July 2025
 - Once the building has been 'fit out' with IT and furniture, it is hoped that service delivery will commence in September 2025.
 - Initial services will include: GP facilities provided by Hoveton and Wroxham Medical Centre, Community Nursing and the Urgent Community Response Team.
- The application for a new pharmacy, dentist and optician facilities is currently going through planning to be based on the same site as the Medical Centre.

- Devolution & Local Government Reorganisation: Norfolk and Suffolk are in a priority group so are working together with plans to form a unitary authority. The district councils are working on a model of three unitary authorities. The final submission deadline is at the end of September 2025 and, when approved, there will be a one year transition period with a shadow unitary authority.
- NHS England & Integrated Care Board: There are currently 42 Care Boards in the country which need to be reduced to 20, along with 57% cuts to running costs, so lots of changes are afoot. Norfolk's three main hospitals have merged their leadership teams and operate under a single chief executive. The three organisations, which will continue to operate independently, will be collectively known as the Norfolk and Waveney University Hospitals Group.
- International Composting Awareness Week – 220l compost bins are available from Norfolk Recycling Centres for £15 and larger sizes are available.

Norfolk Police

Please see report from the Rackheath Beat Manager, my apologies for not being able to make the meeting this evening.

Team Members:

PC 855 Al Jennings.

Sgt 841 Steve Knightley.

We have welcomed our new Sgt to the team at the beginning of March this year. He is very keen on getting out and about on patrol with us so hopefully you will get to meet him at one of our community events or when generally patrolling.

We can be contacted on SNThorpeandrew@norfolk.police.uk

I have enclosed a Team Poster that can be displayed locally for information.

Broadland Beat Team Priority Setting Meeting:

Our next Priority Setting Meeting is at 18.00hrs on June 11th 2025.

Our current Priority is Road Safety.

As outlined at the last Priority Setting Meeting we held on the 13th March, there is a desire within the Force to have a consistent approach to priority setting across the county. As a result, moving forward we will fall into line with what is taking place in the rest of the county and we will hold 1 meeting for the Sprowston, Old Catton, Thorpe, Wroxham and Acle policing areas and all the Parishes in between. The meetings will be held in person at an advertised venue with a facility for people to also join the meeting online.

In addition, the Beat Managers will continue to work locally running engagement events across the District to listen and deal with local concerns.

Once the priority setting meetings have taken place, we will meet with partner agencies to discuss the priorities raised and then formally set the policing priority following that consultation to ensure that all agencies are working towards a shared goal.

We are aware of recent Anti-social behaviour at Jubilee Park. This seems to be on the increase again as we head towards the summer and lighter nights. I have been patrolling the area in the evening when my shifts allow and will continue to do so.

I have received complaints about parent parking outside Rackheath Primary school in the last week or so. I will patrol the area and assess the situation in the coming weeks.

Crime figures (snap shot) January 2025 to May 2025

This is for Rackheath only: 29 crimes recorded in total. Several of these are Domestic related offences.

Crimes of note:

4 crimes relating to people in care.

Criminal Damage to the play equipment Jubilee Park.

Theft of tools from a shed.

Theft in an open yard.

We have had a few thefts from Allotments across the area, so would like to advise anyone with an Allotment to make sure sheds and outhouses are secure.

Road safety work:

We also held a joint traffic operation with Student Officers and colleagues from the Road Policing Department where we targeted the Fatal Four. Speeding, Seat Belts, Mobile phones and Drink Driving.

I have also carried out speed checks with the Community Speed Watch team in Salhouse. PC 855 Al Jennings.

YMCA Norfolk

Cat Watling, Communities Partnership Manager for YMCA Norfolk introduced herself and her colleague Matthew (the project lead) as having been appointed by the Community Council to instigate outreach work to find out what the young people of Rackheath would like/need to enable them to feel as if they belong to their community, and to enable them to thrive and strive.

The project is in its embryonic stages so recruitment for a specific youth worker for Rackheath has yet to be advertised and the team are looking for ideas of who to talk to and to connect with potential partners.

Volunteers will be required, so anyone interested please contact Cat or Matthew direct or via the Community Clerk. Further information will be distributed/shared as the project progresses.

So, the vision is to create pride in the youth of Rackheath to enable them to fulfil their potential, although at the moment there is no way of saying what the offer will actually look like, until the consultation has been carried out.

Questions were raised about the age: YMCA works with juniors (aged 5 – 11 years) and seniors (11 – 16yrs). Cat was asked whether they would be going into schools, it was confirmed that the local high schools are Broadland and Thorpe St Andrew and that those children registered as being homeschooled would also be included. Inclusivity was discussed; all services are to be accessible and there is a hope that suitably competent individuals with the necessary skills can be employed to fulfil the roles that may arise, however YMCA Norfolk does have a specific recruitment process and provides training.

The £30,000 funding for this project has been provided by Broadland District Council and will cover the first year's work, with ongoing costs being funded by other sources.

The Pavilion & Stracey Sports Park facilities

Stracey Sports Park in Rackheath has seen significant enhancements, making it a vibrant hub for community sports and recreation.

New Gym and Play Equipment

In October 2024, the new outdoor gym and play equipment, funded by local housing developers were opened to the public. The equipment includes climbing frames, slides, and exercise apparatus. These facilities were designed to cater to all age groups, promoting health and well-being in the community.

Sports Facilities

The park boasts two well-maintained full-size football pitches, which are popular among local clubs and are available for hire. One team plays on a Saturday, with three teams using us as their home base when playing in Sunday leagues.

Behind the pavilion lies a competition-standard bowls green, regularly used by local teams for both competitive and casual play. There is a separate report from the Bowls Club.

Pavilion Building

The pavilion serves as the central facility of Stracey Sports Park. It features two spacious changing rooms equipped with showers, benching, and a tactics board, along with an officials' changing room and a locker room with 30 secure coin-release lockers.

Additionally, the pavilion houses a large hall suitable for various events, complete with heating, air conditioning, tables, chairs, sound system, projector and a disco ball! There is also a fully equipped kitchen. A patio and private outdoor grassed area complement the hall, making it ideal for parties and gatherings.

The hall flooring has been upgraded for sports use, again funded by developer contributions. Rackheath Community Council is also committed to reducing waste, and has both recycling and general waste bins for early compliance with The Separation of Waste (England) Regulations 2025.

Regular bookings include dance classes, yoga, 1st Rackheath Rainbows, Cookstars, Stay and Play and the Community Café. Private hires, for functions, parties or seminars happen throughout the year. Rackheath residents receive a favourable rate – full information can be found on the website <https://www.rackheathparishcouncil.org.uk/pavilion> or by calling the office on 01603 920990 or emailing facilities@rackheathparishcouncil.org.uk

These developments have transformed Stracey Sports Park into a comprehensive facility that supports a wide range of sporting and community activities, reflecting the area's growth and commitment to enhancing local amenities.

Rackheath Village Hall Management Committee

Steve Handa, Chairman, spoke and gave the following report:

Rackheath Village Hall continues to be a valuable asset to the village of Rackheath and the local environs. It remains a charitable trust administered by a small group of trustees and regular volunteers and is supported and used by regular groups offering a wide range of activities. The request for “new blood” from our Community that I sought last year has so far gone unanswered, so my small committee continues to run this facility and seeks to address its various challenges as they arise as well as looking towards ongoing development. The benefits of charitable status, which allows our rates to some of the lowest in the locality and provide more favourable rates to Rackheath residents continue and we have several large expenditure refurbishment tasks in train. My Committee and I continue to liaise with the Community Council about the Village infrastructure development.

Hall Improvement

Last year, I reported the redecoration of the main hall, the installation of electronically-controlled thermal blinds and self-help redecoration of the kitchen which improved the general appearance of the main hall. As we continue to move forward, so far this year work

has begun to improve the foyer, ceilings in the toilets and replacement of the blinds between the kitchen and the main hall. Later this year, during the summer, we will be tackling the main hall ceiling and replacing the tiles. Additionally, we have looked at refurbishing the main hall floor which we hope to move forward on with a plan once the ceiling has been completed. I previously mentioned the plan for an extension to the Hall to provide better storage, reworked kitchen and toilets that meet current legislation/requirements. That is currently on hold, but will be considered again when the other large tasks are complete. We have just made provision for a cleaner twice a week bi-monthly and continue to rely on our users to leave the Hall in a clean condition on departure – this has, as you might expect, variable results and, like most community buildings, occasionally results in more than “fair wear and tear” from non-regular hires. .

Grants

Where the Village Hall has access to grants or funding as a recognised asset of the village, my committee will seek to defray costs of larger works where possible. This year, we have requested support for the costs associated with the main hall ceiling replacement and also on behalf of the Rackheath Players for their replacement of the tin storage shed at the rear of the Hall. After gaining planning permission where required, we have been in consultation with the Community Council who are working with Broadland DC to ensure that any development funds given to us are in accordance with the legislation. Various meetings are in train at present and the Community Council Sec is preparing a CIL grant policy. Together we hope to get an answer that benefits the community and that we might be able to progress an application for CIL money towards the middle of this year.

Areas Of Concern

Sadly, the RVH Committee is increasingly facing the sorts of challenges faced by most volunteer organisations. The following areas are not new to this audience:

- **Lack of New Committee Members Coming Forward to Help Run RVH.** As identified to this forum over the past years, this situation remains critical for the Village Hall to function. New committee members who recognise the importance of the facilities the Hall provides for its users and how it should and can be used are essential. There has been discussion with the Community Council about the Village Hall being administered as a responsibility of the Council. Having explored the provisions of our situation of as a trust with charitable status, any change of control has further provisions and constraints that need careful consideration. Useful information has been provided by ACRE (the body that guides village halls) and I hope to be able to lay out the various arguments to my committee soon. However, the “takeaway” is that trusteeship has to be maintained and the Village Hall has to be run by a self-contained committee – so the call for new members remains!
- **Ongoing Structure & General Fabric Maintenance.** The need for a general structural survey carried out on the whole building has yet to be taken forward. As previously mentioned, we look to our users to read and heed instructions and guidance so that

the hall is looked after. Sometimes, that needs reinforcing. (Did I mention stacking chairs?!)

- **Energy Supply.** The reliance on gas for heating and the limitations on electricity need further consideration about what solutions could be viable, whilst being protected from damage.
- **Respect For Property & Users.** As I've noted previously, the Village Hall and its grounds are private property. Members of the Community are asked to respect those who have booked the Hall and acknowledge that the rights of our hirers extend to the grounds as well as the Hall itself. That also extends to the refuse bins which are not a communal dumping facility.

Summary

The Village Hall continues to meet the needs of regular local groups and a wide range of other hirers. The committee is working to make sure it remains viable through longstanding, planned refurbishment within the available budget and funding constraints. Going forward, areas of concern around support from the community have to be addressed within the requirements of the Hall's charitable trust status.

Steve Hands
Chairman
Rackheath Village Hall

Rackheath Bowls Club

By the end of the 2024 season, with a depleted bank balance, fewer playing members than in previous years and with our associate clubs, who share our green, reporting similar circumstances, we began looking forward to the 2025 season with some trepidation.

At the league fixture meetings in January it became clear that most clubs in the three leagues, of which we are members, are now facing similar hardships. It was, therefore agreed, unanimously, to reformat all leagues to play 3 blocks of 3 players per game instead of the usual 4 blocks of 3 to reflect declining player numbers.

While this action will improve player availability per game, at the same time, it will reduce match fees per game by 25% putting further pressure on our club finances overall. This is at a time when the combined cost of our council green rental and contractor maintenance costs would cost significantly more than 3 times greater than for the 3 individual teams renting council maintained greens separately.

Therefore, our club is only viable if the two teams who share with us, (Wellington and ECOC), also remain viable.

I am pleased to say, they have now both confirmed their intention to play for the 2025 season, and that we are 'good to go'.

Given the fragile state of bowls in general, and of our own club and of our associate clubs specifically, each season we hang on raises new challenges. While, for now, I can say we are looking forward to the 2025 season with some confidence, beyond that lies uncertainty for RPFBC and lawn bowls in general.

Footnote. If anyone would like to play for us please contact our club secretary Anne Tolver (tanda48@btinternet.com or call 01603 783304)
Louis Betts (Chair)

Pathfinders

Ivan Barnard, founder of the Pathfinders and Director of the 467th BG Association USA spoke about site 6, the mess site, known locally as Newman Road woods, and the work of the volunteer group who meet on Saturday mornings to uncover and clear the site as well as researching history of the site and those who served.

Approximately 3,000 Americans were feed on that site during WWII, with fresh provisions being bought locally.

The group were know as the Rackheath Aggies and in total they flew 212 missions for 5,538 sorties, losing only 29 aircraft in combat. Witchcraft, one of Rackheath's Liberators, held the Eighth's record for B-24 aircraft, flying 130 missions with no turnbacks.

Visitors to the site include Brownies, Cubs, Beavers (as well as their parents and leaders). The American Library recently gave a talk to the yr 5 class at Rackheath Primary, several of whom were fully aware of the site!

Progress is recorded and posted onto the Facebook group 'Rackheath Pathfinders – site 6 (467th USAAF)

Silver Wings: The US Army Air Forces in WWII Norfolk will culminate in a ten-day exhibition and series of talks at The Forum, presented Fri 12 - Sun 21 September 2025 as part of Norfolk Heritage Open Days. The project will be supported by a programme of community participation, including free creative writing workshops, research workshops and school outreach in Spring 2025. For anybody who wants to find out more about Silver Wings: The US Army Air Forces in Norfolk during WWII, please contact americanlibrary@norfolk.gov.uk

One exhibit will be the QM's command car from Rackheath, which has been lovingly restored.

Ivan and the team welcome visitors and are pleased to share their knowledge with anyone interested. The site is open all year round with free access and car parking.

WI

Currently we have an excellent membership of 36 WI members.

We meet on the 4th Thursday evening every month at the Holy Trinity Church Hall with an interesting speaker or a demonstration. After the presentation tea and coffee is served allowing time for a social catch-up.

Most months an event is planned including theatre trips, lunches, walks, river trips, garden parties and afternoon teas.

A very popular annual event is our Quiz & Chip evening where other local WIs are invited and this year is no exception as we have a total of 69 WI ladies taking part. The delicious fish & chips supper is always ordered from Jason's fish shop in Rackheath. Every Easter and Christmas we collect bars of Chocolate which a member distributes amongst people sleeping rough on the streets in Norwich as well as giving to the Night Refuge Centre. Also toiletries are collected each month again to be given to homeless people when they have had a stay in hospital and ready to leave.

Frances Pointer President Rackheath WI.

Any other community group/representative

Cookstars Norwich East and Broadland run cooking workshops for children from the pavilion on Saturday mornings – see their website for more information and to book your place <https://www.cookstars.co.uk/cooking-classes/norwich-east-and-broadland>

There was a suggestion that the classes could be advertised through the primary school and council will share information on its website and social media channels too.

5. To discuss volunteering opportunities in Rackheath

It was noted that most, if not all, attendees are all volunteers in one capacity or another, so if anyone would like to get together to discuss ways of advertising for help and/or to support each other then contact council and a meeting could be arranged.

6. Residents Questions/comments

None

Meeting closed at 8.22pm and informal networking followed