

Keswick and Intwood Parish Council Meeting on the 22nd of July 2026.
Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held at the Reading Room, Keswick at 19:00.

Present: Janet Hill (JH); Suzannah Billington (SB); Monica Warmerdam (MW); Marguerite Russell (MR) and Adrian Spencer (AS).

Also present: Samantha Thurston (Parish Clerk); Deborah Sacks (District Councillor); Daniel Elmer (County Councillor) and 18 members of the public were also present.

2026/41. To consider apologies for absence: Apologies were received and agreed for Alex Gordon (AG) and Mike Pilgrim (MP).

2026/42. Declarations of Interest: a) in accordance with s.31 of the Localism Act 2011, Members to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on this Agenda; and b) the Clerk to report any written requests for dispensation in respect of items on this Agenda: N/A.

2026/43. To confirm the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council meeting held on the 27th of May 2026: The minutes were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

2026/44. To report matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda for information only: N/A.

2026/45. Public Participation:

- *Resolution to adjourn the meeting for public participation and any County and District Councillor updates:*

The Chair (JH) provided an overview of the meeting held between Parish Councillors and APEX on 7 July, prior to the developer's public pre-application consultation regarding the proposed data centre at Keswick Industrial Estate. It was noted that a number of questions raised at that meeting had not yet been answered and it was anticipated that further detail would be provided within the formal planning application.

JH reported that APEX had indicated that the proposed Low Road traffic calming measures would be delivered soon, with delays attributed to Norfolk Highways. Following enquiries by the Parish Council, Highways had advised that the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) had still not been issued. The Parish Council had sought clarification as to the reason for the delay but had not yet received a response.

Concern was expressed that the developer's public consultation appeared to be little more than a "tick-box exercise". It was noted that the planning application was expected to be submitted during the summer, following a public exhibition that had attracted several hundred attendees from the local area. JH encouraged parishioners to write to their Member of Parliament, local newspapers and District Councillors to make their views known.

The meeting was then opened to questions from members of the public. District Councillor Daniel Elmer advised that there had been positive news regarding the Low Road Traffic Regulation Order, confirming that it had been signed off that afternoon. He explained that the Order should be published within approximately one week, after which it would return to the developer to establish an implementation timetable. A Highways Officer would also consider whether any measures could be introduced sooner to address current concerns whilst longer-term improvements were progressed.

Residents raised ongoing concerns regarding speeding traffic along Low Road, particularly the danger posed to pedestrians. Several parishioners commented on the developer's public consultation event, stating that:

- They had experienced significant traffic congestion when travelling to the venue.
- They had requested consultation literature but had not received it.
- The chosen venue was too small, making it difficult to move around or ask questions.

JH then provided background to the planning history of Keswick Industrial Estate, outlining applications submitted since 2017 and explaining that the current proposal represented a significant change from previous schemes. It was noted that the proposed data centre and associated offices would operate on a 24-hour basis and would, in the view of the Parish Council, be out of character with the surrounding area.

Reference was made to World Health Organization guidance regarding prolonged environmental noise and its potential impact on long-term health. Members noted that many questions regarding noise and wider environmental impacts remained unanswered.

A parishioner suggested that the Parish Council consider appointing an independent planning consultant to review the application in detail once submitted. Members agreed this could be considered if necessary, noting that Councillor Gordon also had considerable planning knowledge.

Several residents commented that many concerns currently stemmed from uncertainty surrounding the proposal and that, once the application was available, the community would be able to scrutinise the details more effectively. It was suggested that other data centre developments around the country should be examined to understand their impacts and identify potential issues.

Questions were raised regarding planning policy protecting the southern bypass corridor and whether this should prevent development. Daniel Elmer explained that the bypass protection zone remained a material planning consideration but did not provide an automatic veto. He advised that landscape impact would likely be one of the strongest planning considerations. He also explained that, following changes introduced in October 2025, developers could choose to pursue the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) process rather than submitting the application through South Norfolk Council, although it remained unclear whether this route would be taken.

When asked whether such a decision could be appealed, JH advised that any challenge would generally be limited to circumstances where the correct process had not been followed.

Residents expressed concern regarding previous instances where planning conditions had not been adequately enforced by South Norfolk Council and feared similar issues could arise should the proposal proceed.

One resident summarised a recent discussion with Phil Courtier (Director of Place – South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils), noting that:

- National Government strongly supports data centres as critical infrastructure.
- General objections relating solely to electricity or water consumption were unlikely to carry significant weight.
- The strongest planning arguments would focus on the proposal's scale, height, massing, landscape impact, visual appearance, residential amenity, heritage and suitability for the rural setting.
- The proposal represented a substantial escalation from previous industrial estate developments, which had comprised lower-profile buildings.
- A clear, evidence-based objection would be more effective than exaggerated claims, as credibility would be essential.
- Residents should seek measurable planning conditions rather than relying on assurances from the developer.
- A unified community approach, supported by political engagement, would provide the strongest opportunity to influence the decision.

Another resident encouraged the community to focus on factual planning considerations rather than emotion, suggesting comparisons with other developments, including those at Norwich Research Park and in neighbouring parishes. It was also suggested that, if the development were ultimately approved, the Parish Council should consider negotiating community benefits.

Further support was expressed for appointing an independent planning consultant, with residents noting that professional advice and coordinated evidence would strengthen the community's response.

Questions were asked regarding the planning process and decision-making should the application proceed through either South Norfolk Council or the national infrastructure route.

In response to questions regarding timescales, JH advised that the Parish Council would normally have three weeks to submit its formal comments once the planning application was validated. Residents suggested that planning consultants should be contacted in advance so that support could be secured promptly when the application was submitted. Daniel Elmer referred to the recent Ben Burgess site proposal at Swainsthorpe as a useful

case study, noting that local residents had jointly funded professional planning advice and suggesting that a similar approach could be considered.

It was anticipated that the planning application would be submitted within the following fortnight.

A parishioner suggested that advice should also be sought from Ben Goldsborough MP, particularly if the proposal were ultimately considered by the Planning Inspectorate.

JH introduced discussion on planning application 2025/75, relating to the proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). Members noted that the facility was intended to store surplus electricity and would be located close to Keswick Hall, nearby residential properties and Brooks Green Gypsy and Traveller Site.

JH summarised the Council's agreed objection to the proposal. MR thanked Councillor Gordon for the time she had spent preparing the draft objection.

A parishioner asked whether the Grade II listed status of Keswick Hall would strengthen planning considerations relating to the surrounding area.

A resident reported that ongoing noise issues associated with the Ørsted development remained unresolved, stating that although the company had indicated it would visit the property, no visit had yet taken place. It was requested that this be recorded in the minutes. The Clerk agreed to contact Ørsted regarding the outstanding visit. **ACTION CLERK**

Deborah encouraged residents to continue writing to District Councillors, Members of Parliament and other relevant representatives to express their concerns regarding both planning proposals.

MR introduced a parishioner, who had expressed a wish to install a memorial bench near the Mill area in memory of her late husband. Members were supportive of the proposal.

*All members of the public left the meeting.
County Councillor Elmer left the meeting.*

2026/46. Planning:

- *To receive feedback from the meeting held with APEX on 7th July 2026 regarding their pre-consultation for a data centre in Keswick:* this was discussed under item 2026/45.
- *To discuss updates received regarding the proposed Low Road traffic calming measures:* this was discussed under item 2026/45.
- *To discuss planning applications received for comment:*
 - 2025/75 – this was discussed under item 2026/45. The Clerk would submit the Council's agreed objection. **ACTION CLERK**

- *To note and ratify planning applications responded to since the last meeting due to the deadline date:* N/A.
- *To consider planning applications which have been received since distribution of the agenda:* N/A.

2026/47. Highways:

- *To receive an audit of pathways in Keswick and Intwood:* SB had investigated the 5 public pathways and bridleways in the parishes. SB agreed to fill in the document that the Norfolk Area Ramblers had requested (minute 2026/35), and monitor their condition going forward. **ACTION SB**

2026/48. Correspondence received:

- *Norfolk Local Access Forum (NLAF) – to note their strategic outlook for 2026/27:* noted.
- *Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) – to note their notice of intention to commence plan making:* noted.
- *SNDC planning department – to receive information regarding implementation of a neighbourhood plan:* advice had been received regarding the work required to implement a neighbourhood plan. The financial implications of the neighbourhood plan, in light of the existing issues within the parish discussed earlier during the meeting, was discussed. It was agreed to ask County Councillor Elmer whether funds could be set aside before going ahead with the plan. The item would be added to the next agenda. **ACTION CLERK**
- *SNDC – to note information regarding food waste collections – commencing 27th July 2026:* noted. The leaflet had been put on the website. The Clerk would put a copy on the noticeboard. **ACTION CLERK**
- *To consider any correspondence which has been received since distribution of the agenda:* N/A.

2026/49. Finance:

- *To receive a bank reconciliation up to 30th June 2026:* the bank reconciliation was circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting and had been published on the website.
- *To receive an expenditure against budget report up to 30th June 2026:* the report was circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting and had been published on the website.
- *To agree invoices for payment in accordance with the budget:* the following invoices were agreed for payment by online bank transfer: Clerk Expenses (£57.60); HMRC PAYE (£177.60); HR Payment (£16.56); 101 Paston – annual email accounts (£480.00). MW and MR agreed to log on to unity trust to authorise the payments.

- *To discuss a proposal for installation of a bench along Mill Lane:* The proposed bench discussed under item 2026/45 and it was agreed that the Parish Council would pay for the bench and installation up to £800.00.
- *To receive quotes for acoustic experts to comment on the impact of a battery energy storage system:* quotes had been received for consideration. It was agreed to await further comment from the planning department regarding application 2025/75, before going ahead with the employment of a consultant.
- *To discuss quotes received for a bus shelter along the B1113:* AS had contacted several companies, however only one had provided quotes for the supply and installation of different types of bus shelter along the B1113. AS agreed to have an onsite visit with the company to discuss the suitability of the location. **ACTION AS**

Councillor Russell left the meeting.

2026/50. Reading Room:

- *To receive an update regarding the return of the Reading Room lease:* the owner of the Reading Room had contacted the Clerk to inform the Council that the Charity Commission was still in the middle of agreeing amendments to the charitable objectives of The Friends of Intwood and Keswick, and suggested that if the Parish Council wished to end its lease sooner then it could surrender it back to Keswick Estate. It was agreed that the Parish Council would send a signed letter agreeing to relinquish the tenancy lease. **ACTION CLERK**

2026/51. Items for the next meeting:

- Neighbourhood plan

The meeting closed at 21:09.

Signed: