

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL,
7.30pm 14th JULY 2025.**

PRESENT - Mr P. Mortimer, Mrs C Pryce, Mr B Lee-Harwood, Mr J Gadsdon, Mr P Smith, Mr P. Schwier, Mrs D Fowler, Mr C Osborne, Cllr Lloyd (SCC), Cllr Hadingham (MSDC).

Clerk- Mrs L Duckett

No members of the public were present.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Mr D Hall,

2. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETINGS HELD 12th MAY 2025.

The minutes were agreed and approved.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES –

Following the Clerk's resignation the vacancy was advertised and the applications received reviewed at the meeting. It was agreed that as the candidates had very different backgrounds, but could probably all do the job, it would be best to conduct interviews. The clerk will arrange for interviews to take place on Thursday 24th July 2025. A set suite of questions will be prepared to allow a fair comparison of the candidates.

Following further dialogue with the road safety team further photos had been submitted for the siting of an SID on B1123 at the Halesworth end of the village on 26th June. No response had been received to date. The clerk will provide details to Cllr Lloyd to chase as we have now been waiting almost 8mths for the posts to be installed. The time taken to remove the broken Give-Way sign in Fressingfield Rd was also raised again. Although the sign has now been removed the metal stump still remains. The clerk has also reported this via the SCC highways reporting tool.

Following a locality grant from Cllr Lloyd a new laptop has now been purchased. The clerk expressed her gratitude.

The clerk had passed on the Parish Council's preference for a recycled plastic bench for the Wareham's memorial, but the family had responded by saying they wanted wood. They will submit the details of the bench they have chosen for approval (or not) prior to purchase.

4. REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR HADINGHAM (as provided)

The MSDC monthly report was circulated prior to the meeting and can be found at the end of these minutes. Cllr Hadingham highlighted the Pride in your Place scheme – see item 11.

5. REPORT FROM SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL (as provided)

The SCC monthly report was circulated after the meeting and can be found at the end of these minutes. Cllr Lloyd highlighted that the public reform survey would close on 4th August; the Government is looking to scale back community engagement on large infrastructure projects; a new electric vehicle lending scheme is being set up in the west of the county; there has been an £8 million investment in buses, but still a lack of stops/transport in our area. Mrs Pryce raised the issue of lack of high-speed car chargers in the county.

6. MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The leader of the recent Duke of Edinburgh expedition, where students camped on St John's Meadow, had contacted the clerk to express their thanks and added how welcome they had felt. All had had a very enjoyable time.

7. FINANCE

i) Payments approved between meetings:

The insurance renewal had been paid based on the lowest quotation which was from Community Action Suffolk (CAS), as agreed at the May meeting £536.84
Suffolk Garden Services – Grass cutting £150 x 4 (No further approval required whilst within budget)
Neville Riseborough – single cut of the meadow £175.00
121 Computer Services – new laptop. Funded via SCC locality grant £536.84
Mrs L McEvoy – provision of wreath for VE day 80th anniversary service £40.79

ii) Payments approved at the meeting

Reimbursement to Clerk for gratuity for auditor £8.85 (approved at May meeting but not yet paid)
Clerk quarterly salary £680.48
HMRC Tax £161.40

8.PLANNING – TO REVIEW ANY CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS

DC/24/00579 - Retention of change of use of 2no existing farm buildings to a commercial use under Class B8 of the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended) Location: Vale Farm, The Common, Metfield, IP20 0LP

This application has now gone to the appeals office. There was no decision at the date of the meeting.

DC/25/01425 - Construction of 5No solar panels to the south facing roof slope. The Dairy Lodge Fressingfield Road Metfield Harleston Suffolk IP20 0LL

This application has been approved.

Neighbourhood planning update

The Chair and Clerk were invited by Cllr Hadingham to meet with Robert Hobbs, the Head of Strategic Planning (Planning Policy and Infrastructure) in response to the new government proposals for more housing. (Total for Metfield over the next 20yrs is currently 68 new dwellings). The focus was should you rethink the idea of a Neighbourhood Development Plan, with a chance to ask for advice and catch up with other local Parish Councils, especially as all funding to assist with this has now been withdrawn by central government. The general consensus of all those present (Weybread, Mendham, Syleham and Metfield) was that it is unaffordable even if we were to combine efforts into a regional plan, however there are other options such as a “Community Plan” or “People and Place Plan”. There was much debate on the topic when it was established that nothing was jeopardised without one, and that devolution/government could change everything. However, it was agreed that it should be put to the residents as to what they felt necessary, so a presentation would need to be prepared to explain the options and understand the views of the village. No date was agreed but the idea will be discussed again at the next meeting. A further meeting between the 4 Parish Councils might also be beneficial to see if ideas/resources could be pooled at any stage.

9. UPDATE TO A .gov.uk DOMAIN

Cllr Hadingham has confirmed that up to £2000 could be made available from her locality budget to assist with the setup of a Parish Council website and .gov.uk domain and email addresses. The clerk had obtained quotes from 3 of the 29 recommended providers which varied from £260 to £1023. It was also established that there would be ongoing annual costs of something in the region of £350. The clerk will investigate with the two cheapest providers if there is any possibility of front loading these costs to take the best advantage of the funding available.

10. PLAYGROUND REPORT

Mrs Fowler reported that the playground was in good order and that the grass cutter was doing a good job at keeping everything looking tidy. The fort still needs some attention – the Chair will action. There were some weeds coming through the rubber chippings but not as many as previously.

11. PRIDE IN YOUR PLACE FUNDING

The Mid Suffolk District Council Pride in Your Place Grant can be applied towards projects which improve the appearance, cleanliness, and environment of communities. A discussion took place as to what might be a suitable project to take advantage of this funding, and it was agreed that the village sign could do with renovation. The clerk will obtain quotes as to how much this is likely to cost.

12. MATTERS RAISED BY COUNCILLORS

The hedge at Pear Tree cottage on the corner of The Street/Fressingfield Rd. is overgrown again. The clerk will write a letter, but as this is a holiday home it is not known how often the owner visits. It was agreed that a time frame of 28 days should be allowed and if nothing happened further action would be investigated. A similar letter is required for The Red House as the hedge is encroaching onto the carriage way.

13. CORRESPONDENCE

The clerk had received a letter from the BMSDC Emergency Planning Support Officer offering to visit to go through what a community emergency support plan is and how to set one up. It was agreed that it would be a good idea to invite her, but for a date later in the year – possibly coinciding with the Annual Parish Meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING Monday 8th September 2025

MSDC Report – as provided.



[Mid Suffolk's £3m funding for scheme to link villages – latest for 'trailblazing' network](#)

Elmswell and Woolpit are to be connected by a new footpath and cycle way thanks to £3m of funding from Mid Suffolk District Council.

[Council considers £1m grant for Food Museum to take 'major leap forward'](#)

The Food Museum in Stowmarket could receive a £1million boost from Mid Suffolk District Council for a major new project.

[Last chance to complete our LGR survey](#)

Our Local Government Reorganisation runs until 26 July. We are keen for as many people as possible to have their say, so please continue to share it with your networks and communities.

[District and Borough Councils' clear message to communities: "Let's shape the future of Suffolk together!"](#)

Suffolk's five district and borough councils are launching a county-wide survey asking people for their views on the future of vital local government services. Make sure you [take the survey](#) yourself and share it with your community.

[Let there be light... and heat!](#)

Residents in Rattlesden can now look forward to an extra warm welcome – thanks to £33k of funding for a new heat and light chandelier system from Mid Suffolk District Council.

[Pride in Your Place grant returns](#)

Applications for Mid Suffolk District Council's Pride in Your Place grant have reopened, offering funding to projects that bolster community pride and celebrate the heritage of towns and villages across the district.

[Chance for motorists to have their say in Stowmarket car park review](#)

Motorists are being invited to have their say on council-owned car parks in Stowmarket, ahead of a review later this year.

[Thousands of listed building owners could benefit from innovative planning change](#)

Thousands of listed building owners could find it easier to make windows more energy efficient under innovative proposals from Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils.

[Stowmarket shop closed for selling illegal tobacco and vapes](#)

A Suffolk store has been ordered to close for three months following a joint operation by Suffolk Trading Standards and Mid Suffolk District Council

[Rentable electric cars arrive in Babergh and Mid Suffolk](#)

Six electric vehicles have arrived at three locations across Babergh and Mid Suffolk for communities to use as part of the Plug In Suffolk Car Club.

[Football club scores new stand after £100k awarded](#)

Work to build a new stand at Needham Market Football Club's stadium will soon be underway thanks to a £100,000 award from Mid Suffolk District Council.

'Trek, treat, repeat' – Beautiful walks and foodie gems celebrated in new project

Stunning walks and fantastic places to eat are showcased across Babergh and Mid Suffolk in a new initiative.

Public Switched Telephone Network

Landline phones are switching to digital, which could stop telecare alarms working.

This means that all landline providers need to know which of their customers use telecare, so they can keep them safe.

The switchover is already happening, so you need to act now. If you, a resident, or someone you know uses a telecare alarm, make sure to contact the landline provider for support. Visit the [digital phone switchover website](#) for more information.

Community Fun Days July 2025

Community Fun Days are returning to the districts at the end of July, providing families with a series of free days out packed full of activities. Events are taking place between 10am and 2pm at:

- Thurston, New Green – Thursday, 24 July
- Stowmarket, Recreation Ground – Monday, 28 July

Each event is free attend and has activities for all ages - people just need to turn up on the day. However, children that receive means tested free school meals are able to pre-book some activities and order a free lunch by [visiting the Abbeycroft website](#) - our partners for this year's fun days.

Feel Good Suffolk

The Feel Good Suffolk team will soon be delivering free weekly face-to-face sessions in Stowmarket, helping a dedicated group of smokers to kick the habit.

The sessions are free to attend, but spaces are limited. The group will be meeting at 6pm each Thursday in the garden room at Red Gables - and there's still time to sign up.

If you know of a resident in the Stowmarket area that would benefit from being part of the group, encourage them to [email our health referrals mailbox](#) to get involved.

Additionally, please continue to signpost Feel Good Suffolk to anyone looking to make a healthy change in their life. [The website contains a wealth of free information and resources](#) to help people prioritise their health and wellbeing.

Rural Housing Week event

Parishes across the districts are being invited to a Rural Housing Week event, hosted by Community Action Suffolk, from 10am to 3pm on **10 July** at the John Peel Centre.

SCC JULY REPORT (As provided)

New Strategy Launched to Tackle Violence Against Women and Girls in Suffolk

While Suffolk remains a safe county in which to live, work, and visit, the reality is that Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence continue to affect too many people. These crimes are often driven by harmful attitudes and gender-based stereotypes that disproportionately impact women and girls. However, the strategy recognises that anyone, regardless of gender identity, can be a victim and that support must be inclusive and far-reaching.

The new Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy places the experiences of victims and survivors at its heart. Shaped through extensive engagement with victim-survivors, support services, and frontline professionals, the strategy sets a clear and ambitious vision:

For everyone in Suffolk to play their part in preventing and identifying Violence Against Women and Girls, creating the safety we all deserve.

To achieve this vision, the strategy is built around four key ambitions:

- Stop the abuse before it starts
- Support every survivor
- Hold abusers accountable
- Build a united front

In March 2025, the Suffolk Safer and Stronger Communities Board formally endorsed the strategy, marking an important milestone in the county's coordinated response to Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

Councillor Philip Faircloth-Mutton, Cabinet Member for Environment, Communities and Equality and Chair of the Suffolk Safer and Stronger Communities Board, said:

"These are complex issues that require a joined-up approach, with action across all parts of our community. This strategy provides a shared vision and a plan for how we can work together to create lasting change in Suffolk."

Help is available, whether you are currently experiencing abuse, have recently left an abusive relationship, or are concerned about someone you know, you are not alone. A wide range of local, specialist support services is available [Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls \(VAWG\) | Suffolk Constabulary](#)

For more information, and to read the full strategy, visit: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/Suffolk-VAWG-Strategy-2025-28.pdf>

Council reorganisation affects us all - so have your say today

A new survey giving residents the opportunity to shape the future of councils and public services in Suffolk has been launched.

It's part of the Government plan to reshape and streamline councils in Suffolk to save money, reduce confusion and improve public services for residents.

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for devolution, local government reform and NSIPs, said:

"It's fairly well known that we strongly believe that replacing Suffolk's six local authorities with a single new council would be smarter, simpler and better for our county.

"We've arrived where we have because early figures show it's the only way to save money, improve services and keep your council tax as low as possible.

"But that doesn't mean our proposal is the finished product. We want our plan to improve residents' connection with their local council and we'd like their help to ensure that's the case.

"A key part of this work is finding out what people think about the state of local government in Suffolk – and what their hopes are for the future.

"After all, it's their council tax and services so what they think is vitally important.

"This survey will help us to develop our plan so that we can be confident it addresses the issues that matter most to you. I'd therefore encourage all Suffolk residents to take a moment to have their say."

The survey only takes about 10 minutes to complete, and can be done online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/devolution, by emailing devolution@suffolk.gov.uk or by calling 0345 603 1842 where a member of Suffolk County Council's customer services team can help residents to complete the survey.

People can also visit any of Suffolk's 45 libraries to complete the survey online.

It asks questions about local democracy – such as how you raise issues that need addressing, local decision making – such as how you might want to get involved and about the specifics of council reorganisation itself.

The survey is open for eight weeks – until 4 August 2025.

The survey will play a part in helping Suffolk County Council to develop a comprehensive business plan that looks at the best way to organise councils and deliver public services in Suffolk – so that the Government has all the information it needs to decide which proposal(s) to put out to public consultation.

From best practice elsewhere in the country to the costs of various options currently on the table, no stone is being left unturned.

Whilst a final proposal is still to be developed, Suffolk County Council believes that a new single local council is the smartest, simplest, and best option for the whole of Suffolk which will deliver the biggest savings and most sustainable service improvements.

The council argues that any alternatives will have to work hard to justify the risks of breaking up critical services like social care, creating new council boundaries and smaller population sizes.

Early analysis by financial consultants PwC suggests that establishing a single new local council could cost around £19 million but that this could be repaid quickest through the significant financial savings achieved by having one council.

Alternatively, the cost of breaking Suffolk into two or even three – as proposed by Suffolk's district and borough councils - would cost £7 million to £13 million more and, in the case of three new councils, that investment would never be repaid as there would be no savings to be found.

Councillor Rout said:

"If we want our new structure to retain key local services and to be truly accessible, then the new council or councils needs to be able to afford to do so.

"Breaking Suffolk up would place such financial pressure on new councils that those small, discretionary local services we all value would be at risk from day one.

"To create a truly sustainable and effective council structure for Suffolk, one new council is not just the only viable option, but also the best one."

Suffolk challenges Government on Planning reform at a National Infrastructure Conference

The Council and other speakers raised concerns that proposed changes to the NSIP regime were not suitably robust to manage the significant changes which NSIPs can bring to host communities, particularly with the proposed replacement of a statutory duty for pre-submission consultation with statutory guidance.

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Devolution, Local Government Reform and NSIPs, said:

"I'm proud that Suffolk County Council continues to lead the way with its NSIP expertise and influence and can bring together colleagues and speakers from around the country. "Suffolk has one of the greatest concentrations of NSIPs in the UK, and for me it's important to ensure that local communities are considered first-and-foremost by local authorities, project promoters and government. "Today there were some robust discussions around government's proposals to scrap the statutory duty to consult for NSIPs. "This is something that the county council fundamentally disagrees with - our communities need more and better consultation, not less. "We welcome any opportunity to further engage with Government to share our expertise as to what meaningful engagement should look like."

Delegates from across the country attended the Conference to hear speakers from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), legal experts, and industry leaders discussing the emerging

Planning and Infrastructure Bill, effective communication with project promoters, and the importance of local impact reports.

The conference further cements Suffolk County Council's recognised role as a Centre of Excellence for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) for its expertise when engaging with projects, such as Sizewell C, the Gull Wing, National Grid upgrades, solar farms and offshore wind farms.

The conference was sponsored by Cornerstone Barristers, Howes Percival, National Infrastructure Planning Association and Sharpe Pritchard.

Following the success of this year's conference, it will take place again in June 2026.

Plug In Suffolk Car Clubs have arrived!

Two cars with a range of over 200 miles have been placed at each of the following locations:

- Girling St Car Park, Sudbury
- Maiden Way Car Park, Hadleigh
- Station Yard Car Park, Needham Market

With the average vehicle parked 96% of the time, the Car Club gives residents the opportunity to simply book a car for the minutes, hours or day that they need, cutting out the expense of car ownership. Suffolk are receiving free membership to the Car Club as well as credit on their account so they can start using the cars straight away.

Car Clubs have been trialled in other areas of the country and can improve air quality, reduce congestion and parking pressure and increase mobility to those without access to their own car. Residents can also experience driving an electric vehicle without the cost of owning one.

The Plug In Suffolk Car Club is just one way that Suffolk's local authorities are helping to create a net zero Suffolk. This project delivers on two of the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan's goals; a reduced number of cars on the road and an increased proportion of vehicles on the road that are low or zero emission. You can find out more about the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan at greensuffolk.org.

Over the next few months, two car club vehicles are due to be delivered to each of the following further locations:

- Norfolk Road, Ipswich
- Crown Street, Stowmarket
- Cannon Street, Bury St Edmunds
- Ann Street, Ipswich
- Granary Road, Newmarket
- Norwich Road, Lowestoft
- Castle Street, Woodbridge

An initial 18-month trial of the Car Club will determine the appetite for a wider scheme across the county so we could see electric community vehicles rolled out to more locations in Suffolk in the future.

To join the car club, visit co-wheels.org.uk/Suffolk. Suffolk residents can use promo code Suffolk15 to get free membership and £15 credit on their account. After becoming a member, vehicles can be booked via the website, Co Wheels app or over the phone.

This innovative project is funded by Suffolk's public sector organisations and managed by Suffolk County Council with additional charge point funding provided by the Department for Transport's On Street Residential ChargePoint Scheme (ORCS). On the ground, the Car Clubs themselves will be delivered by Co Wheels and the chargepoints provided by Connected Kerb, with Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils managing the chargepoints located in their car parks.

Councillor Gerald Kelly, Chair of the Suffolk Councils' Environment Portfolio Holders' Group, said:

"It is so exciting to see the delivery of the first batch of Plug in Suffolk Car Club electric vehicles. As a largely rural county where private transport is heavily relied on, this scheme helps people access a more sustainable method of private transport that is also cost effective and better for the environment.

I encourage everybody in the surrounding areas to use the Plug In Suffolk Car Club whether to transport their families or for work. Once the scheme has been up and running for several months, we will welcome feedback on this trial to see if there is an appetite for Car Clubs to become a permanent part of Suffolk."

Richard Falconer, Head of Mobility at Co Wheels, said:

"We are delighted to be expanding our network of Co Wheels cars across Suffolk, offering a smarter, greener alternative to car ownership. With each Car Club vehicle taking up to 20 private cars off the road, Co Wheels is helping residents reduce congestion, cut emissions and enjoy more flexible, sustainable travel."

£8m funding for Bus Service improvements

The funding from the Department of Transport's Local Authority Bus Grant can be used to create new bus services or enhance existing routes.

Following on from previous grants from the Department for Transport to improve bus services, totalling £3.7m of revenue funding between 2023 and 2025, the new grant which has been allocated for 2025/26 comprises of:

- £2,805,076 revenue for delivering new or enhanced services.
- £5,229,805 capital for new and improved bus stops, bus stations, bus priority measures or vehicle upgrades.

This money will enable Suffolk County Council to invest up to £5 million in capital projects to increase bus priority on congested streets, make improvements to bus stops and gain a better understanding of the journeys people are taking, paving the way for more innovative fare offers in the future. The council also plans to upgrade the current Real Time Passenger Information system, giving live updates on when buses will arrive at stops across the county.

The remaining £2.8 million will be spent supporting the existing services on the county's bus network and working with bus companies to finalise a number of route improvements and new services, set to launch later this year.

The previous funding has created and enhanced more than 15 routes across the county, through the council's Bus Service Improvement Programme (BSIP). These included the first Sunday and evening service between Sudbury and Bury St Edmunds for more than 20 years and direct links from Haverhill and Mildenhall to the West Suffolk Hospital.

Successful bids will be contacted in the coming days with new and enhanced services coming online later this year.

"We have seen the positive impact from the previous BSIP funding and our close work with parish councils and local community groups, to enhance and set up new bus links – in many cases the first links in many years allowing people to access goods and services using public transport."

Cllr Chris Chambers, Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste

"This new round of funding will enable us to continue to improve bus journeys in the county and support our ambition to help make public transport a viable alternative to the car for more Suffolk residents.

"We are also aware of the recent cancellations of services in Newmarket and Marham Park, and we are working with local providers and the community to find solutions, utilising the funding from Department for Transport. We have an excellent track record of supporting services when needed and hope to reach a solution soon."

A full list of enhanced and new services funded with the previous BSIP funding can be found at: [Bus Service Improvement Plan - Suffolkonboard](#) including videos from services who received BSIP round 1 funding.

Details of successful bids for the latest round of funding will be posted on Suffolk On Board.

UPDATED: Cllr Henry Lloyd on the 482 Bus Service for Stradbroke and Eye

"I pledged to deliver cross-border bus services during my campaign last year, and so nine months on from my election, I thoroughly welcome the funding approved by Cllr Chris Chambers for the 482 service connecting Eye and Stradbroke to Diss and Framlingham."

"Providing low-cost, low-emission bus travel for our residents, especially those who are unable to drive, is an important priority for the us, and so I really hope that residents of Eye and Stradbroke take up the new 482 service when it becomes operational later this summer."
