

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL,
7.30pm 8th September 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, Mr D Hall, Cllr Lloyd (SCC), Cllr Hadingham (MSDC).

Clerk- Mrs L Duckett, Mr S Blackburn

No members of the public were present.

1.APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - none

2. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETINGS HELD 14th JULY 2025.

The minutes were agreed and approved.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES –

A new Clerk – Mr Stephen Blackburn has been appointed. A handover will take place between the two clerks over September.

The locations of the SID posts have now been confirmed with the Community Speed and Safety Engineer. It is believed that they have now been ordered, but the Clerk will provide details to Cllr Lloyd to chase on the Parish Council's behalf.

The metal stump from the broken Give Way sign still remains, the Clerk has reported this via the Suffolk Highways reporting tool, but the job has disappeared off the app. Again, Cllr Lloyd will chase.

The Wareham family have submitted details of the bench they would like to purchase as a memorial to their parents. The Parish Council approved its purchase.

The hedges causing concern in Fressingfield Rd and The Street have both been cut back.

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. There were no further questions.

5. REPORT FROM SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL (as provided)

The SCC monthly report was circulated prior to the meeting and can be found at the end of these minutes. Cllr Lloyd highlighted that Suffolk County Council have just published the official business case for a move to a single council. There will be an extraordinary general meeting to discuss it next week. There is currently a discussion around options for the Suffolk pension pool with the Government.

6. MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Over the summer months there has been concern over noise disturbance in and around the village. The Clerk will raise via Six Sense

It has been noted that the school bus no longer goes to Fressingfield Primary School, but that individual pupils are being picked up by taxi. This was considered inefficient use of resources but is outside the Parish Council's jurisdiction.

7. FINANCE

i)Payments approved between meetings:

Suffolk Garden Services – Grass cutting £150 x 3. The next invoice will be the 10th payment this financial year. It was agreed that no additional approval was required whilst invoicing remained

within budget. Less has been spent on St Johns Meadow with Mr Hugo Pryce taking over the job. The clerk would continue to monitor the spend and highlight to the Parish Council if approaching the budget limit.

BMSDC – Public Bin emptying £236.23

ii) Payments approved at the meeting

There were no outstanding payments

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/25/03185 - Construction of single storey side extension. Lodge Cottage, Skinners Lane Metfield Harleston Suffolk IP20 0LH

This application was reviewed between meetings; no objections were raised. The application has been approved.

DC/25/03231 – Reduction of tree canopy to achieve 3m clearance from ground. Metfield Stores, The Street Metfield Harleston Suffolk IP20 0LB

This application was reviewed between meetings; no objections were raised. The application has been approved.

Neighbourhood planning update

It was unclear what the impact of the changes in the Cabinet and move to a single council would have on how neighbourhood plans were viewed, so it was agreed that it would stay on the agenda, but no further action would be taken until the future was clearer.

9. UPDATE TO GOV.UK DOMAIN

The Clerk had obtained quotes for the transfer to a GOV.UK setup for single and multiple years varying from £156 for a single year to £1,700 for 5 years. Funding of £1,138 has been secured from Cllr Hadingham's locality fund to cover costs including any additional staff time needed. This needs to be spent this financial year. The Parish Council agreed to giving the Clerk a mandate to investigate the 3-year option with Parish Online to ensure there were no additional costs and to ensure the recent offer of a free GOV.UK mailbox was included. Provided the Clerk was happy with the answers the transfer should go ahead using this company.

10. PLAYGROUND REPORT

Mrs Fowler reported that the playground was generally in good order, and everything was looking tidy, but the fort still needs some attention. The Chair has purchased the materials required for the repair work – he will liaise with Mr Hall as to getting the work done.

11. CEMETERY REPORT

The Clerk had recently noticed a new flat memorial on the grave of Albert Barley which had not been granted permission. Further investigation has been unable to trace who placed it there. A full check of all memorials was subsequently conducted and six were found to have been erected without permission – the two most recent in 2010. It was agreed that due to the time elapsed no action would be taken. However, the action of checking the memorials raised the issue of six names on gravestones which do not appear in the burial records. It was thought that some these may be due to lost paperwork – Rev Schwier volunteered to check the church records, as service details would have been recorded if carried out in Metfield. It was also thought that some could be cremated remains interned by the family. It is illegal to bury remains without license, but it was agreed that this is impossible to police. Where names have been included on memorials a record of the details has been included in the Parish

Council records, but without evidence cannot be included in the official burial records. The Clerk will continue to issue the regulations via undertakers when funerals take place.

Mr Pryce has cut the rear area of the cemetery, a few of the tree stakes need some attention. The newly planted hedge is now well established; some plants need the tops taken off as they are turning into small trees. Two conifer branches need cutting back off the driveway.

12. PRIDE IN YOUR PLACE FUNDING

The Clerk contacted Mendham Parish Council for quotes on their village sign refurbishment. These varied between £1350 -1600. A quote for £800 has been received from Mr J Schwier. The Clerk has been in contact with the Pride in Your Place team and this project is eligible, and funds are still available. The Parish Council agreed to giving Mr Schwier the work. The Clerk will investigate how to apply for the grant.

12. MATTERS RAISED BY COUNCILLORS

The bus shelter near the church needs repair, the Chair will investigate.

A complaint has been made about the brambles around the post box in Christmas Lane. The landowner has been asked to tidy up the area.

The road sign indicating the oncoming corner has been knocked on entry to the village on the B1123 from Halesworth. The Chair will look to see if he can re-position it.

Judy Game has invited all to drinks and nibbles in the Church on 11/9/25 to celebrate the granting of a bronze eco award.

13. CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk had received an email from BMSDC offering the loan of thermal imaging equipment to from the Suffolk Climate Action Team to carry out heat loss surveys for residents. The Parish Council were concerned that this would identify problems, but offer no solutions so were unwilling to take this forward at the present time. Cllr Hadingham was unaware of the scheme; the Clerk will forward her the email.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING Monday 10th November 2025

MSDC Report – as provided.



[Three Councils For Suffolk: Big enough to deliver, local enough to care](#)

The five district and borough councils of Suffolk, Babergh, East Suffolk, Ipswich, Mid Suffolk, and West Suffolk, have launched their joint Three Unitary Councils for Suffolk proposal, a locally led plan to reshape local government and deliver stronger, more responsive services to communities across the county.

[Suffolk routes revealed for opening stages of Lloyds Tour of Britain Men](#)

The two stage routes that will open this year's Lloyds Tour of Britain Men in East Suffolk and Mid Suffolk and Babergh, have been revealed, that will see the world's top cyclists pass through dozens of communities and cover more than 300 kilometres of Suffolk roads.

[New emergency temporary accommodation for those most in need](#)

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils are to invest in additional temporary accommodation – helping those at risk of homelessness.

[Twelve new electrical recycling banks installed in Babergh and Mid Suffolk](#)

Residents can now recycle their broken electricals at one of 12 electrical recycling banks located in the districts

SCC JULY REPORT (As provided)

From Parish Pews to Pixels

More than 400 years of the county's rich historical heritage will be at your fingertips from 8 August. Millions of records dating back to 1538 will be available online for the first time, with more additional local-interest records to follow. Records digitised include full-colour, high-quality digital images of parish registers from across the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. They include key historical moments like the 1776 baptism of the artist John Constable and the 1846 burial of abolitionist Thomas Clarkson.

Until now, these baptism, marriage, confirmation, and burial records were only available on microfiche or in-person. Access will be free at The Hold in Ipswich – the home of Suffolk Archives and at Suffolk Community Libraries. Viewing from home will require an Ancestry subscription. Royalties will be used to support archive services. The project has helped preserve fragile historic documents by reducing wear and tear. Suffolk Archives were also able to carry out conservation checks during the scanning process.

Councillor Philip Faircloth-Mutton Cabinet Member for Environment, Communities and Equality said:

"This project is a fantastic step forward in making Suffolk's rich history more accessible. Whether you're overseas, have mobility challenges, or simply prefer to research from home, these records are now just a click away.

"By digitising these documents, we're not only preserving them for future generations but also helping people reconnect with their heritage. I hope this sparks even more interest in the stories held by Suffolk Archives."

Ancestry is known for its expertise in digitising genealogical records and its global reach, processing over one billion searches monthly. It's successfully partnered with numerous UK local authority archives over the past 15 years.

Simon Pearce, family history expert at Ancestry said:

"Ancestry's digitised collections now exceed 65 billion records, meaning the possibilities to research ancestors around the globe continue to expand. Collections such as this important set of records from Suffolk will help us discover more information about the key events in our ancestors' lives and help to fill in the gaps in many family trees with connections to Suffolk. The collection is of huge importance to both the community in Suffolk and people with connections back to this county scattered all over the UK and the globe."

Gary Peverley, Diocesan Secretary, Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich said:

"I am delighted that Suffolk's parish registers and transcripts have been professionally digitalised with Ancestry. Suffolk Archives is the official record office for the diocese, and they store a huge amount of material. This service makes it easier to draw on the archives and ensure they are readily available to everyone."

There will be online and in-person how-to use Ancestry beginner sessions following the launch. These will be bookable online at www.suffolkarchives.co.uk

New council boundary proposals mean 3 councils, 3 sets of salaries and the same old story for Suffolk

- District and borough councils' new boundary proposals criticised as costly and unworkable
- Creating 3 new councils in Suffolk would lead to increased costs and carry safeguarding risks
- One new unitary council for Suffolk is best for county

The proposed map comes following repeated calls from Suffolk County Council for clarity on how their suggested 3-council model will be formed. The map is essential information for Suffolk residents to ensure they fully understand the proposals being put forward.

Under their suggested boundaries, Ipswich would form a unitary council with Hadleigh, Kesgrave and Felixstowe (known as South Suffolk); Bury St Edmunds would be grouped with Sudbury, Haverhill, Newmarket and Brandon (known as West Suffolk) and Lowestoft would find itself with Woodbridge, Eye and Stowmarket (known as East Suffolk).

Alongside the map, the districts and borough have not released any information of what impact these proposed boundaries would have on council tax rates – with Ipswich residents currently paying the highest rate of district or borough council tax in the whole country.

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

"We have been asking the district councils for their proposed council boundaries since March. Given what they've released today, I can see why they've kept them secret for so long. Their proposals are chaotic, confusing, and ultimately unworkable. They will mean higher council tax across the county, but particularly in places like Felixstowe, Hadleigh, Kesgrave the villages south of Ipswich and the Shotley peninsula, more money spent on senior staff and administration and less money going on frontline local services in Suffolk.

"The financial figures that the districts and borough are putting forward are optimistic to the point of being dangerous. We must never lose sight of the fact that the key care services we deliver support some of the most vulnerable people in our community. Spurious assumptions to support an argument to protect their perceived political fiefdoms have no place in this debate.

"Breaking up key expensive care services, that are currently delivered county wide, won't just cost more as they employ new senior teams, it will put the most vulnerable in our community at risk. They will create a postcode lottery for care, drive up costs and create boundaries where they don't currently exist.

"The districts and borough have finally given into pressure to publish their plans, but what they have brought forward just means three sets of salaries and the same old story from local government. I remain as convinced as ever that One Suffolk is the only solution with the best interest of Suffolk's residents at its heart."

Residents are being encouraged to have their say on the future of councils and public services in Suffolk by [completing Suffolk County Council's survey](#). You can also complete the survey by visiting a Community Library or by calling **0345 603 1842**. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete.

Responses will inform the One Suffolk business case, which will be submitted to Government in September.

Guide published to support developers in Suffolk

Suffolk County Council has updated its "[Developers Guide to Infrastructure Contributions in Suffolk](#)", following a consultation over the summer.

It has been updated and redesigned in line with the feedback and takes account of legislative and policy changes.

The guide is there to support developers appreciate the myriad ways which a new project will affect local communities and its financial implications on local authorities.

Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste

The guide sets out what developers should consider, including financial contributions, to help reduce the impact of new projects on communities and the county council.

For example, new housing would have a knock-on effect on things like the local environment, education, waste services, local amenities, highways, and flooding, and therefore cost implications for local authorities.

Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste, said:

"When a major planning application is proposed, it will have an impact on local infrastructure, services that local authorities provide, and associated costs.

"The government's National Planning Policy Framework outlines that developers will financially support local authorities, allowing infrastructure to support the new project and allow for growth.

"We have been regularly updating our guide since it was originally published in 2011. It's there to support developers appreciate the myriad ways which a new project will affect local communities and its financial implications on local authorities."

The "Developers Guide to Infrastructure Contributions in Suffolk" can be found on the [Suffolk County Council website](#).

Council remains opposed to pylon project, as application submitted

Primarily, the county council maintains that offshore and undergrounding solutions should be priorities for the scheme, not 114 miles of pylons cutting through countryside, sensitive landscapes and communities in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex. Previously, SCC has formally and strongly requested that National Grid pauses the Norwich to Tilbury proposals, to allow for effective consideration of offshore alternatives.

"When the full details of National Grid's application are published next month, we hope they reflect many of the concerns raised by us, and local communities, from consultations and discussions."

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

The application for the Development Consent Order - essentially planning permission - was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) by National Grid on Friday 29 August.

PINS has 28 days to determine whether or not to accept the application. Should it be accepted, full details of the project will then be published, with the six-month Examination period likely to begin in early 2026. If consent was then granted, construction could begin in 2027.

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

"In its current guise, the Norwich to Tilbury pylon project is not suitable. The less damaging alternatives, such as offshore transmission or high voltage direct current undergrounding, have never been fully considered.

"Such a significant and impactful project should not be determined simply for being the cheapest and fastest solution. The Hiorns Report concluded that proposals were premature and would not be needed until the mid-2030s.

"When the full details of National Grid's application are published next month, we hope they reflect many of the concerns raised by us, and local communities, from consultations and discussions. We have highlighted the need for numerous local mitigations, issues around airfields, construction traffic, public rights of way, removal of existing pylon lines, the list goes on.

"For example, we consider there to be a robust case for undergrounding where the line crosses the Waveney Valley – only to be told earlier this year, that this was not going to happen, and that was that without any alternative mitigation proposed."

Suffolk County Council's response to previous consultations for the Norwich to Tilbury project can be found at [suffolk.gov.uk](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk)