

Metfield Parish Council

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
Held at Metfield Village Hall on 11 November 2025 at 7.30 pm**

Present: Councillors P Mortimer (Chair), Mrs D Fowler, Mr D Hall, Mr B Lee-Harwood, Mr C Osborne, Mrs M Pryce, Mr P Schwier, Mr P Smith and District Councillor Mrs L Hadingham

In attendance: Mr S C Blackburn (Clerk), no members of the public.

1 **Apologies for Absence:** County Councillor H Lloyd, Cllr J Gadson (later).

2 **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations:** None.

3 **To sign as an accurate record the minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2025 be signed as a correct record.

4 **Matters Arising:** None.

5 **Reports from County and District Councillors:** Reports had been circulated to Councillors as and when received.

6 **Matters raised by members of the public:** None.

7 **Finance**

(a) To confirm payments made since the last meeting

RESOLVED: that the payments listed in Appendix 1 be confirmed.

(b) To approve payments due: None.

(c) To receive a budget and bank reconciliation as at 3 November 2025

The Clerk presented a summary showing the budget and variance to date, the current summary of payments, an estimated outturn for the current year and the possible effect of inflationary increases of 5% and 8% on known expenditure. This latter information is for initial consideration and further discussion at the January meeting.

The Clerk explained that a 'prior year adjustment' of net £30.34 had been included. After a review of accounts since 2018 it had not been possible to identify when this arose, but it was felt likely that it mostly related to the reclaiming of VAT on cemetery-related expenditure. The final figures now reconcile to the bank statements.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

The Chair thanked Cllr Hadingham for her help in obtaining grants for various projects.

(d) To consider donations to be made from Council funds

The Chair explained the history of the support for car parking in Harleston. The following payments from the previous year were considered, it was agreed that next year, the effect of inflation would be considered in this context.

SARS £50.00

Citizens Advice Bureau £50.00

Harleston Parish Council for car parking £50.00

Royal British Legion for wreath £30.00 (bi-annual)

Metfield Parochial Church Council £200.00 for churchyard upkeep

Chair _____ Date _____

RESOLVED: That these payments be authorised.

Discussion took place on an appeal letter from East Anglian Air Ambulance. It was felt that this should be a matter for individuals and that a number of local residents supported the charity.

(e) Review of Cemetery charges for 2026/2027

Cemetery charges were only reviewed in April 2025. The clerk is in contact with the Clerk at Laxfield with the intention of comparing local practice and the matter will be considered again in the new year.

(f) Initial consideration of the Council's budget for 2026/2027: See 7(c) above.

8 Planning

(a) Current applications

DC/25/04179 – Works to trees

No objections were raised between meetings, the proposals were supported and have since been approved.

DC/25/04729 – Change of use of annexe/holiday let to permanent residential dwelling (retrospective), Rose Farm

RESOLVED: to support this application.

(b) Neighbourhood Plan

Noted that a call for development sites could include previously submitted sites.

9 General Power of Competence

Proposed by Cllr Mortimer, seconded by Cllr Smith and RESOLVED: that, as Metfield Parish Council now meets the criteria, the power be adopted.

10 Persistent closures of B1123 by utility companies

Cllr Smith reported that a claim by Metfield Stores for loss of income due to closures had been agreed, but there was no idea of long-term damage to trade or the loss of stock. Noted that co-ordination of planned works, e.g. potholes with emergency repairs, e.g. burst water mains, was likely to be impossible.

11 Re-nomination of Mr Nicholas Rudge as one of the four Parish Council representatives to Metfield United Charities

RESOLVED: that Mr Nicholas Rudge be re-appointed to Metfield United Charities for a further three-year term.

12 Update on transfer to a .gov.uk domain and email addresses and adoption of an Information Technology policy

The Clerk updated the meeting on progress towards having .gov emails and a .gov website. It was generally agreed that most correspondence with the public would be conducted through the Clerk; the use of personal emails could potentially cause completeness issues in the event of a Freedom of Information Request and compliance with GDPR requirements.

A template IT Policy was strongly recommended for guidance in email and computer use and a template from government sources was presented. RESOLVED: that an IT policy be adopted.

13 Playground report

Cllrs Mortimer and Hall will replace a leg on the fireman's hoist.

Mid Suffolk Council have offered their Annual Playground Inspection service at a basic cost of £59.57 plus VAT. It was agreed that this would provide professional support to the regular local inspections and their written report would form a basis of work to be done. RESOLVED: that the Council accepts the offer of an annual inspection.

14 Matters raised by Councillors

Work on the restoration of the village sign is under way but has proved more problematic than envisaged. It has been sandblasted and powder coated and a new wooden post has been sourced from a local fallen tree. It was agreed that the word 'Metfield' would be painted in gold and that Mrs Christine Brennan would be asked about its creator, Charlie Hubbard and the origin of the sign. RESOLVED that a further £800 be applied for from Pride in your Place funding, Cllr Hadingham indicating that funds were still available.

Cllr Mortimer had attended a presentation on the plans to improve water supply in East Anglia; a consultation stage is under way with building of pipelines expected to start in 2029.

It was agreed that an offer of a speaker on the subject of emergency planning would be taken up, if possible, at the Annual Parish Meeting in April.

15 Correspondence: Nothing further for discussion.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

Date of next meeting: Monday 12th January 2025.

Appendix 1 – Payments Confirmed

To	For	Net	VAT	Gross
L Duckett	Final salary	495.68	-	495.68
HMRC	PAYE collected	115.00	-	115.00
Suffolk Garden Services	Grass cutting	150.00	-	150.00
Suffolk Garden Services	Grass cutting	150.00	-	150.00
Parish Online	Web and email service	260.00	52.00	312.00