

Ilketshall St. Andrew Parish Council

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of 8 December 2025, 7.30 pm.

The Chair of the Parish Council (Gerald Godfrey) welcomed those present at the meeting, which included all 5 Parish Councillors (Gerald Godfrey (GG), Ian Braid (IB), Colin Ward (CW), Penny Ward (PW) and Rod Apps (RA). There were 11 members of the public present.

1. Statement regarding application of Standing Orders and conduct during the meeting.

GG made the following statement:

Following the experience of the Parish Council meeting on 3 November 2025, I am serving notice that this meeting will be maintaining strict adherence to the Standing Orders of the Parish Council.

In particular, I would remind everyone here present that this is a Parish Council meeting that is open to the public. It is **not** a meeting where anyone can say what they want at any point; it is a meeting for Councillors (including County and District Councillors) to discuss matters.

There is an opportunity for members of the public to participate (Item 5 on the Agenda) during which individual members of the public may individually speak for a maximum of 3 minutes, with a time limit of 15 minutes applying to that Item.

In relation to Item 5, I would draw the attention of the meeting to Paragraph 3 (h) of the Standing Orders, which says:

In accordance with standing order 3(e), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.

In summary, therefore, no member of the public will be permitted to speak at any point during the meeting except for the time allocated to Item 5 on the Agenda. Under Item 5, Parish Councillors will not be under any obligation to respond to anything said by a member of the public, nor to allow for the debate of an issue raised by a member of the public.

I, and the other Parish Councillors, very much regret having to take this stance. We have tried to adopt an inclusive and constructive style to the meetings in the past, but that approach failed on 3 November. The Parish Council owes it to the majority of the villagers to ensure that the business of the Parish Council is conducted in a timely fashion, and there is a substantial agenda to be covered this evening.

2. Appointment of Parish Clerk.

IB proposed, and PW seconded, the re-appointment of RA as Parish Clerk. The Parish Council unanimously agreed to this re-appointment, with RA not voting.

RA noted that he did not want to be the Parish Clerk. He repeated his statement made at the meeting of the Parish Council of 3 November 2025 that he was seeking to stand down from the role, that the other Parish Councillors were aware of that intention prior to the meeting of 3rd November, and that he intended to facilitate the smooth transition to a professional Parish Clerk.

Following his resignation as Parish Clerk at the meeting of 3rd November 2025, it had become apparent that getting the Parish Council up and running again, paying outstanding invoices to village residents and others, getting grant applications processed before the end of the year, getting the defibrillator operational again, getting a new Parish Clerk appointed, submitting a Parish Precept request, etc., etc., was going to be difficult. Given that a Parish Clerk must be

either a paid employee or a Parish Councillor, the meeting decided that the pragmatic approach was to re-appoint RA until a new Clerk could be appointed.

3. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Anthony Speca & Toby Hammond (District Councillors). Judy Cloke sent apologies for the first part of the meeting, and arrived later.

4. Declarations – Pecuniary and Other.

There were no declarations.

5. Adjournment – Public Participation. [For information only: a total of 3 minutes per member, 15 minutes overall maximum.]

A member of the public asked what the arrangements were for the co-option of individuals onto the Parish Council. It was explained that this issue would be discussed under Item 7 of the meeting's Agenda.

A member of the public asked about a claim for adverse possession of a piece of Common which had been objected to by the Land Management Company, but that there was no mention of any discussion of the objection within the Minutes of the Land Management Company. The meeting was reminded that under the Standing Orders, Parish Councillors were not under any obligation to provide a response to any question, nor to start a debate in response to a statement made by a member of the public. Given that the question did not appear to be a matter pertaining to the Parish Council, GG advised the individual to contact the Land Management Company.

6. Minutes of previous meetings

The Minutes of the meeting of 3rd November 2025 were unanimously approved by the Parish Council, and signed by the Chair.

RA noted that the Minutes for 3rd November 2025 included a summary of the discussion held under "Any Other Business" at the meeting on 1st September 2025 relating to the Shipmeadow Solar Farm.

RA further noted that a summary of the discussion had not been included in the Minutes for 1st September 2025, for the reasons explained on 3rd November 2025; there was no decision, agreement or conclusion to that discussion of any kind. There could not be any formal decision since it was not an Agenda item. The Minutes are *not* verbatim transcripts but are much more extensive Minutes than is the norm. Nevertheless, the view had been taken that there really was nothing of any note in that discussion to record in the Minutes.

RA noted that he had listened again to the recording of the meeting of 1st September 2025, prior to the meeting of 8 December 2025, and confirmed that there really was no decision, agreement, or conclusion of any kind – which is what he and other Parish Councillors said on 3rd November. The Minutes of 1st September 2025 are – as was agreed by the Parish Council on 3rd November, and signed as such – "correct".

RA noted that a summary of the discussion would be included in the Minutes for 3rd November, and that this has been done.

7. Matters Arising from the Minutes of 1st September 2025, the Minutes of 3rd November 2025, and Parish Clerks' update.

[Item 5 of the Minutes of 1 September 2025 refers]: Village Hall car park adverse possession claim. RA noted that he was picking up this issue again, and that the hope was that the final

element would be put in place later that week, with the bundle of documentation then being sent off to the Land Registry.

[Item 5 of the Minutes of 1 September 2025 refers]: .gov domain name. RA noted that it looks **possible** that switching to a .gov domain name can all be done quite cheaply and simply, with the existing website manager retained. RA noted that he would also pick up that issue and try to move it forward.

[Item 5 of Minutes of 1 September refers]: RA noted that no further progress on the bus stop issue at the bottom of Top Road, but he would also try to move it forward. It was noted that the location of the bus stop was not within the parish boundary and therefore not within the purview of the Parish Council, but that with the co-operation of the Ilketshall St. Lawrence Parish Council, progress could perhaps be made.

[Item 9 of Minutes of 7 July refers]: RA reported that no further progress on Rural Exception Site initiative had been achieved.

[Item 5 of Minutes of 1 September refers]: 'Adverse possession' claim for a piece of Great Common. RA confirmed that he had written to the resident following the withdrawal of the claim, saying that the LMC would be in touch regarding the removal of the gates, fencing and posts originally associated with that claim.

[Item 10 of Minutes of 1 September refers]: RA noted that he had not yet written to Latitude concerning the traffic management at the Latitude Festival, primarily due to an incomplete understanding of the issue, but that he would endeavour to work with a resident more familiar with the matters to make progress on the issue.

[Item 12 of Minutes of 1 September refers]: leaning tree on Tooks Common Lane. GG noted that it had not been dealt with yet, but that it would be if the wind did not bring it down in the meantime.

[Item 14 of Minutes of 1 September refers]: Notice Board on School Road. RA reported that the renovation and relocation had now been completed, the invoice had been received, and would be paid now that the Parish Council is operating again.

UPDATES:

1. Redisham Hall Farm solar farm proposal, Ringsfield Road: RA reported that an email from the Planning Officer at East Suffolk Planning had noted that: "We have not agreed a revised determination date just yet but there are a lot of points to overcome so I wouldn't imagine it will be before the end of the year." RA also noted that the East Suffolk Planning website for the application now includes a comment from Suffolk Highways recommending a "deferral" and also noting that it regarded the cable-laying route as a significant factor for the success of the development and likely to have a significant impact upon the highway, and that it was therefore inappropriate for it to be considered separately from the solar farm itself.

2. Local Government reorganisation. RA noted that the campaign for "One Suffolk" had been active, and that – if it came about – there would be implications for the Parish Council. An email from the campaign had included the following:

A new deal which delivers on what you told us needed to change.

We took the time to listen and now we must take the opportunity to act with:

- New opportunities for parish councils to take control of things which really matter to local people, including setting speed limits, grass and verge cutting and planning.

- Putting parish councils at the heart of planning decisions, including new minor development control powers over things like house extensions and minor adjustments to existing buildings. Your voice and local knowledge must be respected and is considered key to getting planning right for Suffolk.
- Creating dedicated contact phone and email channels for parish clerks and chairs - so your concerns can be prioritised.

Creating a One Suffolk council that supports parish councils better

The new single authority will be able to offer greater support for parish councils, including:

- A new Parish Partnership Charter, a formal agreement recognising the vital role of parish and town councils – creating a new level of respect for the work you do.
- A range of bespoke training courses (both virtual and in person) which can help parish councillors with things like safeguarding awareness, Artificial Intelligence, and cybersecurity.
- Technical support to assist with town and parish website and digital engagement, as well as financial oversight to help with identifying and applying for new grants and funding.

3. Parish Councillor vacancies. RA noted that 4 people had indicated that they wished to become Councillors, but that there are only 2 spare places.

RA noted that he had taken advice from the Elections Office at East Suffolk District Council on the correct procedure to be followed when there are more people wanting to become Councillors than there are places available. Official guidance is that once the notices of vacancies requirements had been met and that the by-election route had been ruled out, the co-option process is::

Co-option process:

- The council can either advertise for expressions of interest or consider candidates from previous elections.
- The parish council votes on candidates at a meeting.
- The chosen candidate must receive an absolute majority of the votes cast by councillors present and voting.
- If no candidate receives a majority, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and the vote is held again. This process is repeated until a candidate secures a majority.

Post-co-option:

- The new councillor must sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office to take up their seat.

4. Defibrillator.

RA noted that a message had arrived to the effect that the defibrillator was not operational (probably due to it having been used), and that making it operational would therefore probably need a new set of pads. RA had duly purchased a new set of pads, and the defibrillator is now operational again.

5. Parish Clerk vacancy advert.

RA reported that, following discussions amongst the Parish Councillors, and with SALC, a job description for the Parish Clerk role has been agreed and the post is now listed on the SALC website.

SALC had suggested the possibility of also advertising the post on Suffolk Jobs Direct, with the standard package for doing so costing £75.00. Having taken a look at the Suffolk Jobs Direct website, however, RA noted that it was restricted to Suffolk County Council, and was dominated by vacancies for jobs in schools. The Parish Councillors therefore unanimously agreed to not go ahead with an advert with Suffolk Jobs Direct at this stage.

8. Opportunity for District Councillor and County Councillor to speak

The Parish Council noted the Reports from Judy Cloke for end-August, September and October which had been circulated to Parish Councillors previously. The Parish Council agreed that there were no particular issues or items emerging from those reports of concern to the Parish Council.

The Parish Council noted the “Top Ten” reports for June, July and August from the District Councillors that had been circulated to Parish Councillors previously. The Parish Council agreed that there were no particular issues or items emerging from those reports of concern to the Parish Council.

The Parish Council noted the Bulletins from the East Suffolk District Council Leader for August and September 2025 that had been circulated to Parish Councillors previously. The Parish Council agreed that there were no particular issues or items emerging from those bulletins of concern to the Parish Council.

9. To discuss the communication sent to Councillors by the Solar Farm Action Group

RA read the following statement, that had been previously agreed by all members of the Parish Council:

On 15th October 2025, the following email was received in the Parish Council email Inbox, with paper copies also being distributed to some Councillors:

Dear Parish Councillor

It has come to our attention that the Board of the LMC, on Monday 13th October, voted in favour of having a meeting and opening further discussions with the Solar Farm Developer, RES.

In March 2025, ISA Parish Council “unanimously agreed” to decline an invitation from Paurec McCloskey to “work with the Parish Council”. The Parish Clerk abstained from the vote and was instructed to write to RES with their decision. The issue was discussed again at the May meeting after further correspondence from RES, and again in September. The PC referred to the decision made in March and instructed the Parish Clerk to write and decline any meeting or further discussions.

It is very clear, therefore, that the desire of the Parish Council is that there should not be any further discussions with RES.

As the ISA Parish Council has legal authority, pursuant to Section 45 of the Commons Act 2006, over the protection of the Commons we believe that this vote goes against the overriding decision of the Parish Council. The LMC has no remit, outside of the management of the Commons, to autonomously engage in discussions that may affect the status or wellbeing of the Commons. The fact that there may be financial benefits to the LMC should not override the decisions of the Parish Council.

We believe that there is a conflict of interest between the Parish Clerk and his role as a Parish Councillor and his position on the LMC Board. Being very aware of the decisions and feelings of the Parish Council it would have been good practice to have advised other LMC directors of the PC’s stance and also abstained from any vote on the matter.

We request that the Parish Council stops any planned discussions or meetings between the LMC and RES.

Yours sincerely

Stop Solar Farm Action Group

The Parish Councillors agreed that the email/letter should be included on the Agenda for the meeting of the Parish Council scheduled for 3rd November 2025.

Due to the disruption at the meeting and its early curtailment, the Parish Council meeting on 3rd November 2025 did not reach that item on the Agenda. Given the content of the letter/email, and given the actions of some members of the public at the meeting on 3rd November, the Parish Councillors considered that it was important to obtain clarification from the Solar Farm Action Group as to the contents of that letter/email. Accordingly, the Parish Councillors sent the following email to the SSSFAG on 6th November 2025:

Dear SSSFAG –

One of the consequences of the foreshortened Parish Council meeting on Monday 3rd November was that the Parish Councillors were not able to obtain clarification from you regarding the content of the email/letter that you sent to Parish Councillors on Wednesday 15 October 2025. I and the other Parish Councillors regard it as very important that such clarification is received, and would therefore be very grateful if you would supply an early response to the following questions:

- 1. The LMC Board met on Monday 13th October, in the evening. The emails/letters from SSSFAG were sent at 10.00am on Wednesday 14th October. Following the receipt of information regarding the discussions at the LMC Board meeting, did the SSSFAG then arrange a meeting, discuss action it wanted to take, decide on an email/letter, draft and confirm that email/letter, all on Tuesday 14th October? The email/letter was signed “Stop Solar Farm Action Group” – who are “Stop Solar Farm Action Group”? Who actually wrote the email/letter?*
- 2. The email/letter included: “We believe that there is a conflict of interest between the Parish Clerk and his role as a Parish Councillor and his position on the LMC Board”. Would you please explain (and provide the evidential basis) for what you believe the “interest” of the Parish Clerk is, what the “interest” of the Parish Clerk’s role as Councillor is, and what the “interest” of the Parish Clerk’s position on the LMC Board is? Would you please explain (and, again providing the evidential basis) for why you believe there is a “conflict” in that “interest”?*
- 3. The email/letter included: “Being very aware of the decisions and feelings of the Parish Council it would have been good practice to have advised other LMC Directors of the PC’s stance and also abstained from any vote on the matter.” Why do you think that the other Directors of the LMC were **not** aware of the Parish Council’s stance? What is your evidential basis for believing that the LMC Directors were not aware of the decision by the Parish Council to not partake in discussions with RES?*
- 4. The email/letter included: “It is very clear, therefore, that the desire of the Parish Council is that there should not be any further discussions with RES.” Why, and what is the evidential basis, for you making that assertion? The Parish Council took the decision to not take up the offer from RES to have discussions with them due to the need for Parish Councillors to be open-minded (and to be seen to be open-minded) prior to any planning application being submitted by RES. The Parish Council never discussed, during any of its meetings, whether*

*the LMC should or should not hold discussions with the LMC, and never made any decision about whether to try to prevent the LMC Board having any discussions with RES. Would you therefore please confirm that you recognise that your statement: "It is very clear, therefore, that the desire of the Parish Council is that there should not be any further discussions with RES" **ONLY** applies to the Parish Council, and explicitly **NOT** to the LMC? If you are not prepared to confirm that your statement applies only to the Parish Council, please supply the evidential basis for that stance.*

5. The stance of the SSFAG is that neither the Parish Council nor the LMC should have any discussions with RES. Would you please confirm that RES will never hold any discussions with RES? Given that consultations with RES resulted in modifications to their initial intentions (with corresponding benefits to village residents, notably of Mill Lane), the stance of the SSFAG appears contrary to the objective of seeking to minimise the impact of any solar farm on the village – or is the purpose of the SSFAG solely to prevent any solar farm construction?

Rod Apps, and on behalf of the other Parish Councillors.

On 14th November 2025, the Parish Councillors received the following email from the SSSFAG:

To the Parish Council,

We note the comments from Rod Apps in the email dated 6th November. We would be happy to discuss the questions presented with ISA Parish Council if necessary.

*Best regards
Stop Shipmeadow Solar Farm Action Group*

On 17th November 2025, the Parish Councillors sent the following email to the SSSFAG:

To: The Stop Shipmeadow Solar Farm Action Group

We note the contents of your email of 14th November, and your suggestion of discussing the questions posed to the Stop Shipmeadow Solar Farm Action Group in our email of 6th November.

We do not see any need to discuss the questions put to the Stop Shipmeadow Solar Farm Action Group. We simply require a full set of answers to those straightforward questions.

If we do not have a full set of answers to those questions by Monday 24th November 2025, we will assume that you are choosing to not provide them.

Gerald Godfrey, Ian Braid, Penny Ward, Colin Ward, Rod Apps

No response to that email of 17th November 2025 was received by the Parish Councillors by Monday 24th November 2025, and the Parish Councillors have therefore concluded that the SSSFAG has consciously chosen **not** to respond to the questions put to it.

The Parish Council therefore now details its conclusions relating to the letter/email from the SSSFAG of 15th October 2025 in the absence of any response from the SSSFAG to the questions put to it:

1. The Parish Council does not know who wrote the letter/email, and furthermore does not know who comprises the SSSFAG or what its organisational structure is. The Parish Council considers it disturbing that the SSSFAG is seeking to operate in a secretive and opaque manner.

2. The letter/email included the sentence: *“We believe that there is a conflict of interest between the Parish Clerk and his role as a Parish Councillor and his position on the LMC Board. Being very aware of the decisions and feelings of the Parish Council it would have been good practice to have advised other LMC directors of the PC’s stance and also abstained from any vote on the matter”*
 The SSSFAG was asked what it believed the “interest” of the Parish Clerk to be, what the “interest” of the Parish Clerk’s position as Councillor is, and what the “interest” of the Parish Clerk’s position on the LMC Board is. As noted, the SSSFAG did not respond. So, for clarification, the “interest” of the Parish Clerk is to meet the requirements of the role under the terms of the Local Government Act 1972 and to fulfil the requests of the other Parish Councillors. The Parish Clerk’s role as a Parish Councillor is – identical to all other Parish Councillors – to serve the interests of the villagers in the context of the Parish Council. The “interest” of the Parish Clerk in terms of his position as a Director of the Land Management Company are the 10 objectives for the LMC as outlined in the Annual Management Plan. There is no conflict of interest in these roles, and the Parish Council totally rejects and condemns the assertion that there are, and the inferences involved in the sentence written by the SSSFAG.

3. The letter/email from the SSSFAG suggested that the Board of the LMC were not aware of the decision by the Parish Council to not partake in discussions with RES. This is probably the result of the SSSFAG relying on hearsay of the proceedings of the LMC Board meeting of 13th October. The Board of the LMC **were** fully aware of the decision by the Parish Council to not partake in discussions with RES, and the reasons for that decision. Given that there was no conflict of interest involved (as noted in point 2 earlier), there was no reason for the Parish Clerk to abstain from any vote at the LMC Board meeting.

4. The letter/email from the SSSFAG included the sentence: *“It is very clear, therefore, that the desire of the Parish Council is that there should not be any further discussions with RES.”*
 The **Parish Council** decided that it did not want to take up the offer of discussions with RES, but never sought to restrict the ability of any other organisations (including the Land Management Company) to hold discussions with RES. The letter/email from the SSSFAG also included the sentence: *“We request that the Parish Council stops any planned discussions or meetings between the LMC and RES.”* The Parish Council declines this request, and regards the authority of the LMC devolved from the Parish Council to manage the Commons to include any discussions that the LMC might wish to hold with organisations such as RES, and does not wish to limit the autonomy of the LMC.

The Parish Council therefore concludes that the letter/email from the SSSFAG of 15th October included a number of incorrect statements and assertions, which this summary has sought to correct. The Parish Council also concludes that the letter/email made a number of wholly invalid suggestions and inferences, which it totally rejects. The Parish Council hopes that the SSSFAG will publicly withdraw the letter/email.

The Parish Council now regards the matter as closed, in recognition of the wishes of the villagers that it has other worthwhile issues to focus on.

With the permission of the Chair, the Parish Clerk made the following personal statement to the meeting:

*Having just detailed the **Parish Council's** response to the letter/email from the SFAG, I would like to make a brief personal statement regarding that.*

The SFAG letter/email inferred, by referring to "conflicts of interest", that I was somehow benefiting, on a personal basis, from my Parish Clerk role, my Parish Councillor role, and my role as Director of the LMC. For the purposes of clarity, I would like to state the following;

- 1. I do not consider that I have derived any measurable personal benefit from the actions or initiatives undertaken by the Parish Council since I became a Councillor in May 2019. Like all the Parish Councillors, I devote considerable time and effort to activities and projects that – collectively – the Parish Council considers will benefit the community. The personal benefit of those activities and projects is extremely small.*
- 2. I have undertaken the Parish Clerk role on an unpaid, voluntary, basis for 5 years in total. The cost of employing a Parish Clerk (including expenses) would have been £5,000 per year, and therefore £25,000 over those 5 years. So; the residents of the village have benefited to the tune of £25,000, resulting from a lower parish precept element to the Council Tax.. That translates (in approximate terms) to £250 for each of the Band D-equivalent properties in the village. Over the period, the average residence has benefited to the tune of £250.*

Correspondingly, I have turned down opportunities for paid work because of the time that has been taken up by the Parish Clerk role. That foregone work and income has probably constituted around £5,000 per year (£25,000 over the 5 years), so it comes out broadly equivalent to the £25,000 that the village has saved through not having to employ a paid Parish Clerk. So, undertaking the Parish Clerk role has cost me £25,000. I'm fine with that. I have always taken the view that it is important to "give something back" to the community within which I am working and living, whether in the UK or abroad.

- 3. I recognise that some people in the village are dissatisfied with my work as Parish Clerk. OK – "you can't keep all of the people happy all of the time."*

However, those people are nevertheless the beneficiaries of £250 for the 5 years that I have acted as Parish Clerk. I believe that it is incumbent on those individuals to forgo that £250. They should not criticise my work as Parish Clerk and call for my resignation – but nevertheless hold on to the £250 that my work as Parish Clerk has given them. I therefore call on those people to make a donation of £250 to my preferred charity. If they pass a cheque to me for £250, I will pass it on to my preferred charity, and provide confirmation of those payments to the Parish Council.

- 4. In case anyone thinks that I regard my contribution to village institutions as being in any way exceptional, let me here say that I emphatically do **not**. The Parish Precept, while I have acted as Parish Clerk, has been (in approximate terms) £50 less per property, per year, than if a professional Parish Clerk had been employed. But that is just **one** reason for why the Parish Precept for this village is so low. The major reason is that other parishes subsidise their Village Hall. With the exception of a minor contribution from the Parish Council in the form of insurance, the Village Hall is self-sufficient. Which is testament to the massive amount of work that the Village Hall Management Committee pour into Village Hall across all the activities that happen here. That contribution leads not only to an outstanding set of amenities at the Village Hall, but it*

also, directly, leads to a significant financial benefit to all residents in the form of a lower Parish Precept. My contribution as Parish Clerk is **minor** in comparison to that. Equally, of course, credit needs to be given to all the other contributors to the various institutions in the village – the other Parish Councillors, the Parochial Church Council, the Land Management Company, the Commoners' Association and the Town Trust.

5. *For purposes of clarification; I have not claimed any expenses for any costs I have incurred relating to Parish Council business since March 2023. I reserve the right to claim such expenses, the proceeds of which will be paid to charity. For even greater clarity, there is a distinction between reimbursement of invoices that I have paid personally, and costs that I have incurred as a consequence of Parish Council business. So; I am not gaining financially from the Parish Council either in my role as Councillor or as Parish Clerk.*
6. *For further clarification; I have never claimed any expenses from the LMC as a consequence of costs that I have incurred as a Director of the LMC, and do not intend to do so. So I have, in reality, subsidised the LMC. Correspondingly, I have not benefited from any actions and initiatives that the LMC has undertaken while I have been a Director to any greater extent than any other resident. Which emphasises the point that there is no conflict of interest, contrary to what the SSSFAG has alleged.*
7. *I entirely accept that I have made errors and omissions while I have acted as parish Clerk. I have apologised for those. Equally, I have been subject to constructive criticism for the work that I have done as Parish Clerk – and I welcome that. What is singularly unhelpful is what has been demonstrated to be criticism, allegations and inferences that are wholly without foundation and based on factual errors. As has been seen, it undermines the operation of Parish Council (which, as I have noted, parishioners are angry about), and it undermines the willingness of individuals to actually give their time and effort for the benefit of the whole range of village institutions. That is the real consequence of the recent actions of the SSSFAG and those that appear to be associated with it. That needs to stop, and to be replaced by a more constructive and co-operative engagement.*

10. To discuss any Planning Applications

- a. DC/25/3877/FUL Conversion of existing Outbuilding to form a 'Granny Annexe' residential accommodation. Old Butcher's Arms, Tooks Common Lane.

The Parish Council noted that it had not been possible to submit comments by the deadline due to the suspension of Parish Council on 3 November 2025.

- b. DC/25/3603/FUL Construction of a detached 3 bedroom eco house (self build) Willow Farm, Top Road

The Parish Council noted that it had not been possible to submit comments by the deadline of 13 November 2025 due to the suspension of Parish Council on 3 November 2025.

- c. East Suffolk Council: Local Plan – call for sites.

The Parish Council noted that it had received a “call for sites” in relation to the new East Suffolk Local Plan, and at this stage the preparatory work included undertaking a “Call for Sites”, through which it would invite submissions of land to be put forward for consideration for allocation in the Local Plan. Although an element of such sites would be for housing, the Parish Council noted that all developments requiring land would be involved.

The Parish Council concluded that there were no particular implications of the initiative for the Parish Council to address.

11. To discuss and agree the finances:

a. Confirmation of payments made since last meeting of the Parish Council, and of payments due.

The Parish Council noted that, given that the meeting on 3rd. November 2025 was ended before the Finance item was reached, this discussion involved going back to payments made since 1 September 2025.

1. Reimbursement to RA of £3,380.94 made on 4th September 2025. This had been approved at the 1st September 2025 meeting.
2. Payment of insurance premium for the Parish Council made on 4th September 2025. This had been approved at 1st September 2025 meeting.
3. 30th September 2025, 31 October 2025, and 30 November 2025; payments of £6.00 on each occasion as service charges for the Unity Trust bank account. The Parish Council unanimously confirmed approval of these payments, with RA not voting.
4. Payment of £45 subscription to Open Spaces Society. Direct debit. The Parish Council unanimously confirmed approval of this payment, with RA not voting.
5. Payment of £66.00 for new pads for the defibrillator. RA paid for these (given that Parish Council not functioning at the time), and hence requires reimbursement. The Parish Council unanimously confirmed approval of this payment, with RA not voting.
6. Payment *IN* of £779.00, representing a refund of VAT. Tina Newby had not submitted any VAT repayment claim while she was Parish Clerk. RA was able to establish invoices for most of the payments involving VAT since the last VAT claim, but this was not perfect. Tina Newby had made a number of payments for paper, printing and some other expenses, but these were shared with *other* Parish Councils that she acted as Clerk for, and hence the claim was not totally complete, but that the amounts involved did not amount to very much. The Parish Council noted that it was now up-to-date, as at end-November 2025, regarding VAT refunds.

Payments to be made:

1. Phil Greener, £308.00 for renovation and relocation of School Road notice board, and replacement of gate closures to Play Area. The Parish Council unanimously confirmed approval of this payment, with RA not voting.
2. Andy Ward, £60.00 for grass cutting and of Play Area. The Parish Council unanimously confirmed approval of this payment, with RA not voting.

The Parish Council noted that the only other significant payment to be made prior to end of financial year (end-March 2026) is website maintenance of £180. The exception to this was the possibility of purchasing a basket-type swing for the Play Area, to be discussed under Item 13.

S106 funds. The issue of Section 106 funds had been discussed previously (Item 9 of 1 September meeting). RA did eventually get a response from the administrator responsible for the Section 106 funds (she had been assigned to the Tour of Britain Cycle Race – but no message came to him to that effect). Her response said that actually, the money was allocated to Ilketshall St. **John** – contrary to what she had written in an email to Tina Newby – but that if the St. John Parish Council was in agreement, it could be reallocated to St. **Andrew**. The Parish Council noted that St. John doesn't have a Parish Council, and in addition, it doesn't have a bank account, and has no public area or facility that any money could be spent on. RA contacted Paul Birkin, and he supported the transfer of the allocation to St. Andrew. The administrator also sent the form for submitting an application for Section 106 funds, running to 17 pages plus requirements for maps/plans, photographs, quotes, etc. RA completed and submitted it on 4th October 2025 for reimbursement of £940 for the replacement gates to the Play Area.

Being mindful of the deadline for applications to be submitted by the end of the year, RA submitted a **further** application form, photographs, etc. for the remaining £391.71 left to claim on 14th November 2025, on the basis that it would contribute to the cost of a basket-type swing for the Play Area. RA also enquired as to progress of the claim for £940.00.

RA received a response on 18th November. Both applications had been accepted. An acceptance form had to be completed and submitted, which GG signed as Chair, and was duly returned. The Parish Council should now get the £940 without any further action, although will need to send photographs, etc., etc. of the installed basket-type swing to gain the remaining £391.71.

b. Update on Parish Council finances for 2025-2026.

RA circulated summaries of the financial position of the Parish Council. The overall position is that the Parish Council has **£8,417** as at 1 December 2025.

Of that £8,417, £2,035 are CIL funds that have to be spent on “infrastructure”. Taking off those means that the Parish Council currently holds around **£6,400** of “unconstrained” funds.

Barclays accounts. RA noted that there are three of these in total – one current account, two savings accounts. The decision had been taken previously to close them and transfer the funds to the Unity Trust Bank a/c, and then create a savings account with Unity Trust Bank. RA phoned Barclays in October to find out how to close the accounts, but Barclays said that it could not speak to RA about that, since he not on the mandate – despite the fact that the accounts were in his name as Parish Clerk, the statements come to his address, and he was recognised as the manager of the accounts. The only person left on the mandate is now GG, so have had to ask him to phone Barclays to try to take it forward. GG kindly did so, was then sent a Mandate Change form for himself and RA to complete, which was sent back to Barclays once completed. Now waiting for Barclays to respond. Hopefully, will soon be able to access the funds, transfer them to the Unity Trust Bank account, and close the accounts.

Unity Trust Bank: Charges are being increased from 1 February 2025. Monthly charge increases from £6.00 to £7. Other increases also, but of limited consequence for the Parish Council.

c. Budget for 2026-2027.

RA circulated summaries of the Budget for 2026-2027. The Parish Council noted that recurrent and non-recurrent expenditures were forecast to be around £3,200, in addition to an allowance of £6,000 for employing a professional Parish Clerk.

Parish Precept: The Parish Council unanimously agreed (with RA not voting) to the submission of a Precept request of £9,000 for 2026-2027. The Parish Council noted that it was due to meet again prior to the deadline for submitting the Precept request, and therefore that it might amend this request in the light of additional information regarding possible expenditures obtained prior to that meeting.

12. To discuss and agree any highways issues

- a. To receive an update on Speedwatch on Top Road

The Parish Council noted that in September 2025, there had been 3 sessions of 1 hour each, during which a total of 3 vehicles had been recorded as overspeed, all in the high 30s/low 40s

Due to adverse weather conditions in October, the team were only able to carry out 2 Speedwatch sessions, with one driver being over the speed limit at 36 mph, which was was an articulated HGV.

- b. To receive any data from the Speed Indicator devices
No new data from the Speed Indicator devices were available for this meeting.

13. To discuss and agree action relating to the Play Area.

- a. To discuss and agree action relating to play equipment.

RA noted that David Bracey, in his safety inspection report of July 2025, had recommended Action Play & Leisure (based in Norwich) as a supplier of basket-style swings..

RA had contacted Action Play & Leisure, and they recommended a particular basket-type swing, with a price of £3,126.53 including delivery, installation, and matting, excluding VAT. This is of galvanised steel construction, and an appropriate size for the Play Area. RA had looked at a number of other suppliers and their basket-style swings, but was not able to identify any with a better combination of specification or price. The Parish Councillors had been provided with details of these other possibilities (by email), and had agreed to go ahead with the one from Action Play & Leisure at that stage.

It was noted earlier in the meeting (Item 11) that an application had been submitted for the remaining S106 funds (£391.71) to contribute to this, which had been successful. A further £2,035 would come from the CIL funds being held by the Parish Council, which would leave around £700 to come from Parish Council reserves.

The Parish Council unanimously agreed (with RA not voting) to go ahead with the purchase of a basket-style swing from Action Play & Leisure costing £3,126.53 as soon as possible. RA undertook to contact Action Play & Leisure to take it forward.

14. To discuss the Suffolk Water Recycling, Transfer and Storage Project.

The Parish Council discussed and noted some features of the Suffolk Water Recycling, Transfer and Storage Project, details of which had been notified to residents that would be affected by directly or as a consequence of close proximity. The Parish Council noted that

there were a number of alternative routes being considered at the current time, and that it could therefore be the case that no elements of the project would involve the village. The Parish Council agreed that in the light of the current status of the project, and the fact that residents who might be affected had already been contacted, that there was nothing the Parish Council could usefully do at this stage.

15. To receive and discuss Minutes from other Village institutions

a. Village Hall Committee

Minutes for 19th September, 6 October, 4th November & 1st December had been circulated to Parish Councillors previously. The Parish Council noted that the Village Hall continues to be in robust financial health, with – it would appear – nearly £15,000 in total.

b. Land Management Company

The Minutes for 14 July 2025 had been circulated to Parish Councillors previously. The Parish Council concluded that there were no particular issues to note.

16. To discuss the possibility of the Parish Council purchasing a projector and screen.

RA explained the rationale for such a purchase:

1. use at Parish Council meetings in order to display finance spreadsheets, AGAR stuff, planning applications, etc. Members of public cannot see the paper copies that Parish Councillors have, or the electronic copies of documents previously sent to Councillors.
2. Might allow virtual attendance (by Zoom/Teams) of Parish Council meetings at some point in future, dependent on internet connection.
3. Could be used at events arranged by Parish Council, or by other village organisations (LMC AGMs etc.)

Cost: The indication is that a reasonable projector for the purpose would cost around £500. Screen would perhaps be around £150, and therefore a total of around £650.

The Parish Council agreed that the possibility was worth looking at further, and RA undertook to do this, including contact the VHMC to obtain their views, including on whether a ceiling-mounted screen might be appropriate.

The meeting closed at 9.36pm.

Signed

Date