

Ilketshall St. Andrew Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of 7 July 2025, 7.30 pm.

1. Welcome.

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 27 members of the public present. GG noted that there were two vacancies for Councillors, and that the Parish Council would welcome additional people volunteering to join the Parish Council, including from those present at the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Judy Cloke (County Councillor) Anthony Speca (District Councillor) and Toby Hammond (District Councillor).

3. Declarations – Pecuniary and Other.

There were no declarations of pecuniary or other interest in the items on the agenda.

4. Minutes of previous meetings

A member of the public pointed out that a number of items appeared to be missing from the Minutes of the meeting of 12 May 2025. The Parish Clerk pointed out that the Minutes of the meetings were not intended to be verbatim transcripts of the Parish Council meetings, but were intended to provide a summary of the discussions leading to meaningful decisions by the Parish Council. The Parish Clerk also pointed out that the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting were separate from the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the same evening.

The member of the public identified that a brief discussion during the meeting held on 12 May 2025 regarding the arrangements for the appointment of a professional Parish Clerk had not been minuted. For clarification; the appointment of a Parish Clerk (whether a paid professional Parish Clerk or someone undertaking the role on a voluntary basis) would be the decision of the Parish Council. Applications for the role would be invited, and selection and appointment made accordingly.

The member of the public also pointed out that the Parish Clerk had undertaken to contact Pauric McCloskey of RES to ascertain if he was willing to permit the publication of an email that he had sent to the Parish Council, a significant element of which was read out at the Parish Council meeting on 12 May 2025. RA explained that the issue would be discussed under the next item (Matters Arising) of this meeting, and reiterated that the Minutes of the Parish Council meetings were not intended to be verbatim transcripts, but that only the significant outcomes and actions would be recorded.

The Minutes of the meeting of 12th May 2025 were unanimously approved by the Parish Council, and signed by the Vice-Chair.

5. Matters arising from the Minutes of 12th May 2025, and Parish Clerk's update.

[Item 6 of the Minutes of 12th May 2025 refers]: Shipmeadow Solar Farm. RA noted Pauric McCloskey of RSS had provided an edited version of the email discussed at the meeting of 12 May 2025, and that this had now been added to the Parish Council website. Pauric McCloskey

did not give permission for the circulation of the presentation made to the LMC in November 2023, and therefore this will not be added to the Parish Council website. RA observed that it was unclear how RES is intending to proceed, and if/when a planning application may be submitted. Pauric McCloskey was now on leave until September.

[Item 6 of the Minutes of 12 May 2025 refers]: Standing Orders. RA noted that some progress had been made on these, and that he hoped to have an initial draft to circulate to Councillors soon.
Action: RA

[Item 6 of the Minutes of 12th May 2025 refers]: Village Hall Car Park. RA reported that a collection of documents had been prepared for submission to the Land Registry, and that it was currently with a reviewer for comments prior to being circulated to the rest of the Parish Council and to the LMC for signing off.

Action: RA

[Item 6 of the Minutes of 12th May 2025 refers]: Resignation of Jacqui Harrison from the Parish Council. RA confirmed that he had delivered a letter to Jacqui Harrison thanking her for her contribution to the Parish Council over the years.

[Item 10 of the Minutes of 12th May 2025 refers]: AGAR. RA confirmed that:

- the exemption certificate had been sent to the External Auditor;
- the appropriate documents had been posted on the Parish Council website;
- that a letter had been delivered to John Bedwell thanking him for his time undertaking the internal auditing of the Parish Council accounts;
- that the documents relating to the “Exercise of Public Rights” regarding the inspection of the Parish Council accounts had been posted on the Parish Council website;
- the SACL membership of £180.38 had been paid;
- that documentation relating to the addition of Ian Braid as a signatory to the Unity Trust Bank account had been prepared and submitted.

[Item 11c of the Minutes of 12 May 2025 refers]: RA confirmed that he had contacted Judy Cloke regarding another traffic survey on Top Road, with the hope that the timing could coincide with the Latitude Festival. Subsequent communication with Highways had confirmed that it would be installed on 17 July and collected on 4 August, and therefore that it would be in place for two weeks to include the Latitude Festival. The cost to the Parish Council would be £465 plus VAT, totalling £558.00, but that the VAT would be recovered.

[Item 12 of the Minutes of 12 May 2025 refers]: RA confirmed that he had contacted Judy Cloke regarding the issues at the plot of land at the junction of Ringsfield Road and Becks Green Lane. One issue was the apparent unapproved business activity happening at the site; Judy Cloke had not yet heard back from the authority involved. The other issue was the footpath positioning and width; this had now been confirmed, to Judy, that it was all satisfactory, and therefore that issue is now closed.

[Item 13 of the Minutes of 12 May 2025 refers]: RA noted that he had replaced 3 of the cross-bars and associated fixings on the “Play Tower” at the Play Area, and that he would submit a claim for the costs of materials in due course.

Action: RA

OTHER ITEMS/UPDATES:

1. RA identified the need for use of the “.gov” domain in relation to the Parish Council website, and also for the Parish Council email address to be linked to the website, implying that there will need to be a change to the email address. RA undertook to contact the website manager to take the issues forward. RA noted that there may be some additional fees payable to website manager to action this, and the Parish Council unanimously agreed (with RA not voting) to pay any such fees.

Action: RA
2. Annual Parish Meeting. RA noted that he had contacted Judy Cloke about an issue/possibility that arose at the last Annual Parish Meeting, on 12 May. RA had been asked by a member of the Village Hall Management Committee whether we wanted to have the Village Hall bar open for the meeting, and RA had responded that it was not allowed – but did then check to make sure that this was the case for Annual Parish Meetings **as well as** regular Parish Council meetings. RA reported that it turns out (through checking the 1972 Local Government Act) that there is actually no restriction on serving alcohol at either Parish Council Meetings or Annual Parish Meetings; the restriction is on the use of licensed premises, which can only be used if no other premises are reasonably available. RA sought advice from Judy Cloke regarding whether it would be acceptable to have the Village Hall bar open at Parish Council meetings. Judy Cloke’s advice was that, in summary, one needs to abide by the spirit of the legislation, and therefore **not** serve alcohol when the Annual Parish Meeting is in progress – but before and after would be acceptable. The issue is therefore whether the format of the Annual Parish Meeting can be developed to get more people to attend and contribute, which would include opening the bar. The Parish Council agreed that it would be worth a try, and therefore ideas regarding the format that activities for the next Annual Parish Meeting (due in May 2026) would be welcome.
3. RA reported that the Solar Panel/Battery Storage session on 19th May *did* happen although there was a rather disappointing turnout despite the availability of interest-free loans, the opportunity to therefore get free electricity with no outlay, and quite apart from climate change considerations. Nevertheless, it was a valuable session for those that did attend.

6. Adjournment for public participation.

Given the Planning Application for the Redisham Hall Farm solar farm later in the Agenda, it was agreed that members of the public would be permitted to participate in those discussions, and therefore that this item would be restricted to the discussion of any **other** issues.

A member of the public identified the possibility of attaching “County Wildlife Site” signs to (at least some) of the existing poles exhibiting the “Quiet Lanes” signs. The view was that this would be a worthwhile thing to do, although that it might require approval from Highways to do so. RA undertook to contact Judy Cloke to seek her advice on the issue.

Action: RA

A member of the public raised the issue of the bus stop at the bottom of Top Road, near the junction with the A144. It was noted that while there was no physical “bus stop” sign, the website identified it as a formal bus stop; the issue is therefore whether the company can be persuaded to instal a “bus stop” sign. It was noted that the site at the bottom of Top Road was **not** within the Parish boundary, and therefore not something for the Ilketshall St. Andrew Parish Council to deal with directly. RA undertook to contact the County/District Councillors to see if they would progress the issue.

Action: RA

7. Opportunity for District Councillors and County Councillor to speak.

RA noted that Judy Cloke's monthly and annual report had been circulated to Councillors previously. It was noted that the May 2025 report did include mention of a proposed 250-megawatt/1500 acre solar farm around Eye, as an indication of the proliferation of solar farm proposals in the area.

RA noted that the reports from the District Councillors had also been circulated to Councillors previously. There were no particular items for the Parish Council to note.

8. Planning Applications

DC/25/2109/FUL Solar Farm, Redisham Hall Farm, Ringsfield Road

There was a substantial discussion, involving members of the public present at the meeting, regarding this Planning Application.

A significant number of grounds for objecting to the Planning Application by the Parish Council were identified, and notably that while the application identified a route for an underground cable to be laid from the solar farm on Ringsfield Road to the site of the substation on Clarkes Lane, this was in direct conflict to the statement made at the public exhibition that transmission would be by means of an overhead cable. Furthermore, no information or detail regarding the laying of the cable was included within the application. It was also noted that OPD Energy appeared to be unaware of the existence of a residence adjacent to the proposed solar farm, and had not been in contact with the residents in any way. In total, the meeting concluded that the Planning Application was half-baked with many aspects not being thought-through anything like adequately. All those present at the meeting (including both Parish Councillors and members of the public) unanimously took the view that the Planning Application should be rejected. RA undertook to submit a response to East Suffolk Planning articulating those issues.

Action: RA

9. To discuss and agree any action in relation to the East Suffolk Rural Exception Site initiative.

An email to the Parish Council of 24 June 2025 previously circulated (along with attachments) had identified the possibility of parishes making use of "Rural Exception Site" and "Community-Led Housing" protocols as a means of obtaining planning permission for affordable housing. The meeting noted that it was (in effect) almost impossible for any new housing to be built in the village (given its "countryside" status) despite the national shortage of housing and very high average age of properties in the UK in comparison to other countries. It was also noted that it was probably the case that younger people were leaving the village (and, correspondingly, not coming into the village from elsewhere) due to a lack of affordable housing. While it was clear that there were some reservations about the initiative, it was noted that there would be multiple points at which the village could decide not to proceed. It was agreed that RA would be asked to investigate the possibilities further, but only in relation to the "Rural Exception Site" initiative, since the "Community-Led housing" initiative would be beyond the resources of the village. RA undertook to also post the leaflet relating to the "Rural Exception Site" initiative on the Parish Council website.

Action: RA

10. To discuss and agree the finances:

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

RA noted that two payments had been made, each of £6.00, representing the monthly service charge for Unity Bank.

RA further noted that a payment of £47.00 had been made to the Information Commissioner's Office. This represented the new fee of £52.00, less £5 for paying by Direct Debit, and had been paid on 27 June 2025, from the Barclays current account [Tina Newby had previously set up the Direct Debit.]

RA noted that one payment would be now due as a consequence of Traffic Survey, constituting £558.00. If the Unity Bank mandate changes have not been sorted out by then, RA undertook to pay and then seek recompense later. The Parish Council currently owes RA £540.38, as confirmed at the last Parish Council meeting.

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

RA circulated a sheet to Councillors summarising the Parish Council finances for the financial year to date. It was noted that the total balance, across all bank accounts, was currently £11,446.

CiL and S106 funds: RA reported that he was currently investigating these. As at end-March 2024, Parish Council had £1,055.15 in CiL funds, but it was unclear whether any had been spent since that date; the Parish Council did purchase a traffic sign, but it appears that was re-imbursed and therefore no net payment (which would have been eligible for use of CiL funds) had been made. £572.30 needs to be spent by 2027, £482.85 by 2028. These funds are held within the Parish Council bank accounts.

S106 funds: RA reported that the Parish Council appears to have £1,331.71. This money is *not* within the Parish Council bank accounts – have to apply for it to be released. The money has to be spent by 2026 – so not a lot of time left. Given the need for renovation work on the Play Area, it was noted that this seems a suitable use for the funds, which would need to be actioned within the next few months.

11. To discuss and agree any highways issues.

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

It was reported that:

In May 2025, three sessions of 1 hour each had been held, with 13 vehicles being recorded as over the 30mph speed limit. 12 of those were due to have letters sent to the registered owners, but the 13th had the incorrect registration number recorded.

In June 2025, five 1-hour sessions had been held, with a total of 16 vehicles being recorded as over the 30mph speed limit.

b. To receive any data from the Speed Indicator Device.

Sewer Lane end, commencing 24 April 2025:

A total of 5,235 vehicles were recorded. The highest speed was 55mph at 5.32am on Friday 2 May 2025. The average speed for all vehicles was 28mph.

Main Road end, commencing 3 May 2025:

A total of 7,175 vehicles were recorded. The highest speed was 55mph at 9.15am on Monday 14 May 2025. The average speed for all vehicles was 26mph.

It was noted that the average speed, and also the maximum speeds, were falling, and it was concluded that the combination of the Speed Indicator Device, the Speedwatch initiative, and the additional signage had all served to lower the incidence of speeding on the road.

12. To discuss and agree any action relating to the Play Area.

- a. Gates. Phil Greener had expressed an interest in sorting out the gates, posts, and associated infill work. The Parish Council therefore agreed to arrange a meeting with him to discuss specifications (including child safety issues), and to then obtain an estimate/quote.

Action: RA

- b. The Parish Council noted that it had received an email from a member of the Village Hall Management Committee commenting upon the poor state of the grass surface of the Play Area (nettles, brambles in particular) and the overall unwelcoming state of the Play Area. The suggestion in the email was that the Parish Council should pay someone to properly maintain the area. It was reported that it appeared (earlier on the day of the meeting) that while the grass around the Village Hall had been cut recently, the grass in the Play Area had not, and the question was then posed as to why this had happened, and whether the person responsible for cutting the grass had been instructed **not** to cut the grass in the Play Area. A representative of the Village Hall Management Committee reported that the individual was contracted to cut both the area around the Village Hall **and** the Play Area, and that there had not been any change to that arrangement – but that she would investigate further at the meeting of the Village Hall Management Committee the following evening. The Parish Council agreed that it was necessary to make sure that the grass in the Play Area was adequately maintained, that the Parish Council was prepared to pay for the work, that it made sense (other things being equal) for one person to do all the work at the same time, and that notice needed to be provided to the Parish Council of any changes to arrangements in order that alternatives could be put in place.

13. To receive and discuss Minutes from other Village institutions.

a. Village Hall Committee

Minutes of the meetings of the VHMC held on 18 March 2025 and 15 April 2025 had been previously circulated to Councillors. The Parish Council noted those various Minutes.

b. Land Management Company

The Minutes of the LMC Board meeting of 14 January 2025 had been previously circulated to Councillors, and the Parish Council noted those Minutes.

14. Any Other Business

A member of the public raised the issue of a bench on Great Common. Another member of the public confirmed that the issue was in hand, and that the bench would be sorted out.

15. To agree the date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting of the Parish Council was confirmed as **Monday 1 September 2025, 7.30pm, Village Hall.**

The meeting closed at 9.23 pm.

Signed

Date