

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ONEHOUSE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
MONDAY 13 OCTOBER 2025 AT 7.30 P.M. IN TRINITY HALL

Present: Cllrs Copping (Chair), Boulter, Corker, Crissell, Goodwin, Nutman and Roberts.

In attendance: County Cllr Otton (in part), Mrs Swansborough, Clerk and 2 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence. There were none.

2. To confirm and approve the minutes of the meetings on 8 September 2025. These were approved.

3. To receive members Declarations of Interest on agenda items and to consider any dispensation requests. Cllr Roberts declared an interest in item 11.

4. Public comment. There was none.

5. Report from County Cllr Otton:

One Suffolk Business Case Approved at Council Meeting: On Tuesday 16 September, Suffolk County Council held an Extraordinary (additional) meeting to debate the business case produced by the council that one unitary council would be best for Suffolk after the two-tier system (county and district/borough councils) is abolished. Unitary councils run all services for a local area, and the government is planning for all remaining two-tier areas in the country to change to this model. The reorganization will also see the creation of a mayoral authority and mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk. The business case for One Suffolk was endorsed in the council meeting and was immediately afterwards tabled at a Cabinet meeting where the council's Cabinet voted to formally approve it. It will now be submitted to Government by the end of September. An alternative proposal for three unitary councils for Suffolk has been developed by the district and borough councils and will also be submitted to Government, who have said they will make a decision on the reorganization by March 2026 – this may be delayed though, as other parts of the process have been so far.

Forest Road Footpath; I have asked for the highways officer to give an update to the meeting on the 13th. I have sent message from Neil McManus to ask if this is this footpath or the one from the development in Stowmarket.

Paupers Grave; I have agreed to £250 from the locality fund towards a new mower.

Cllr Nadia Cenci; following the defection of Cllr Faircloth-Mutton, she will now be responsible for Libraries, Arts, Community Safety and Customer Service and Complaints among others.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy Approved: On 9 September, the council's Cabinet voted to approve the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which was produced following a public consultation on the draft strategy between April and June 2025. The strategy sets out priority species and habitats for nature conservation in the county, and gives advice on how different habitats can be improved by landowners to protect and encourage nature. Most of the area mapped out for Suffolk's nature priorities is private farmland. Landowners can use areas mapped in the strategy to produce 'units' of biodiversity for purchase by developers, as they will be required to meet the government's new

Biodiversity Net Gain requirements which state that all development should be increasing biodiversity by a minimum of 10%. The units of biodiversity do not need to be onsite or near the development.

The new strategy should also help Suffolk County Council to improve the land it owns in the county, and local planning authorities will have to take account of the strategy when development is considered. In the future, mayoral authorities like the one currently planned for Norfolk and Suffolk will be in charge of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for their area.

Financial Forecast at Quarter 1 of 2025-26 Financial Year: Cabinet on 9 September also considered the most recent financial reporting from the council, which aimed to give a better forecast of how the council's spending might look for 2025-26. The council is predicting that it will overspend by £13.3m by the end of the year, which it will balance by taking £13.3m from its Risk Reserve. This is extremely worrying, as is the prediction that the council's Designated Schools Grant debt will rise over the year by £63.3m to a total of £161.2m deficit.

Currently the government has agreed councils can hold this debt until March 2028, but a long-term plan needs to be made as many councils are now carrying a level of debt related to SEND costs which would bankrupt them if it was called in by the government.

Solar Together Scheme for 2025: The Solar Together Suffolk scheme, which has so far installed 32,000 solar panels at 2,651 Suffolk households, is now open for registration for 2025. Registering is free and there is no obligation to go ahead with the installation. The scheme also includes battery storage and EV charge points, and customers who have already invested in solar panels can get quotes for these too. The scheme requires householders to register online, and pre-approved solar PV suppliers then take part in a 'reverse auction' to bid for the work. After this, registered households will be emailed a personal recommendation which they can choose to accept or not. Telephone and email helpdesks are available to support residents in making an informed decision. The scheme is run by Suffolk's councils in partnership with iChoose, who have been working with UK councils on the Solar Together scheme since 2015.

Apply Now for a School Place for September 2026: Parents and carers can now apply for a place in the normal year of entry at a primary, infant or junior school and a secondary school for September 2026. The deadline for applications to secure a place at a secondary school is **Friday 31 October 2025** and for primary school places, including infant and junior schools, the deadline is **Thursday 15 January 2026**.

6. Report from District Cllr Matthissen:

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR): The main business of the September full council meeting was to debate and agree our bid to government, jointly with the other Suffolk districts and Ipswich Borough for the county to create three new unitary councils.

Mayor for Suffolk and Norfolk: At the September Council we also approved a motion calling for government to change back to supplementary voting before electing a mayor for Suffolk and Norfolk. The risk with a 'First Past the Post' vote is that with 5 parties all polling significantly, a mayor will be elected by a very small segment of the population – perhaps less than 10% - so most people will not feel the mayor belongs to them.

September cabinet meeting: The meeting approved community infrastructure levy payments including £133K to help our old depot in Creting Road,

Stowmarket last another couple of years, and cope with the additional recycling streams next year. Also, extension to Stowmarket High School £4.8 million and £100K towards a new household waste and recycling centre in Ipswich to be used by Mid Suffolk residents to a small extent.

Police Engagement: The Police & Crime Commissioner will be joining Suffolk Constabulary at an engagement/pop-up event on Thursday 16th October between 11 am and 1pm on Ipswich Street, Stowmarket to discuss policing issues with local residents.

There is also an online public meeting on Monday 3rd November 6- 7.30 pm.

Improving energy efficiency: As well as extending our Cosy Homes scheme for domestic properties we have introduced Solar for Business which offers free installation of solar panels for businesses.

Listed building energy upgrades made easier: council initiative, one of the first of its kind in the country, will help owners of Grade II listed buildings make their homes more energy efficient.

Practical work: Frustrated with poor SCC maintenance of walking and cycling routes, a group of councillors has been tackling sections between Needham and Stowmarket, and also towards Haughley.

Responding to complaints and injuries in Stowmarket, councillors are highlighting pavement trip hazards with warning tape.

Locality Budget: I would like to finalise this soon, but there are several large ideas which have not yet been submitted, and it is difficult to see how best to share the remaining money. Please get the forms submitted soon.

7 Planning Matters

a) To discuss and make recommendation to MSDC on any applications received prior to this meeting.

National Grid Norwich to Tilbury Development Consent Order S56 Notice. Councillors unanimously agree that there is no comment to make.

b) To receive MSDC decisions on previously considered applications.

SCC/0058/25MS Stowmarket High School, Onehouse Road, Stowmarket, IP14 1QR. Approved.

8. Finances

To ratify the following payment:

- a) £1378.45 - Mrs V Swansborough, September 25 Clerk's Salary
- b) £459.00 – Zurich, annual insurance renewal

To approve payment of the following invoices:

- c) £180.00 – LR Chaplin Greener Gardens, grass cutting
- d) £1071.70 – Rachel Leggett, Neighbourhood Plan Stage 1
- e) £211.70 – Emma Harrison, Neighbourhood Plan Stage 1
- f) £634.20 – Compass Point Planning & Rural Cons, Neighbourhood Plan Stage 1
- g) £227.00 – Installation of new defibrillator
- h) £433.00 – Gipping Press, July/Aug 25 OHSMag printing
- i) £510.00 – Gipping Press, Oct 25 OHSMag Printing
- j) £57.60, SALC, Payroll Services Apr 25-Sept 25
- k) £25.00 – Suffolk Cloud, Transfer or email data to new email for OHSMag
- l) £378.00 – PKS, annual external audit 2024-25
- m) £80.00 – Mrs P Fuller, Clerk Mentoring Sept 25
- n) £235.00 – OHS Village Hall & Playing Field Trust, garage rental

o) £15.12 – David Nicholson, Fuel for mower

Items a) and b) were unanimously ratified and items c) to o) were approved.

To receive monthly financial report from the Clerk:

The current account balance was £697.97cr and the savings account balance was £40,359.56cr. Payments for October total £3,625.32. A transfer of £5,000 has been made from the savings account to the current account to cover these payments and, after payments have been processed, a balance of £2,072.65cr remains on the current account and £35,359.56cr on the savings account.

Following agreement at the September meeting the Paupers Grave deficit in the earmarked reserve has been cleared. Reserves are in order but further transfers are likely to be required in future months to ensure sufficient funds remain in the General Fund.

Spending compared to budget has been reviewed with no major overspends identified. The Clerk is now working on the budget for 2026-27 and Councillors are reminded that spending on tree maintenance in Paupers Grave will need to be allowed for together with potential costs for the Neighbourhood Plan.

OHSMag invoices: 2 remain overdue for payment and the clerk is chasing.

Further invoices will be issued totalling £1,456.00.

To review external auditors report for 2024-25 and consider any necessary action: Councillors had received the report in advance of the meeting. It was noted that items raised in the audit have been addressed as necessary.

To consider request from clerk for additional hours to be paid: The clerk requested agreement for additional hours be paid for extra hours worked in September. This was unanimously agreed and it was also noted that additional hours may need to be paid to ensure the budget is completed on time.

9. To discuss the purchase of marquee/gazebo and take any necessary action. The Chair advised that Harleston are willing to contribute 13.5% and that she will contact Shellend to ask if they would like to be involved too. It was agreed at the September meeting that Onehouse contribution would be up to £1300. The number and size of gazebo required was discussed and it was agreed that the preferred option would be to buy one larger and two smaller gazebos. Cllr Goodwin will contact suppliers to see if a better price can be negotiated.

Action: Chair and Cllr Goodwin

10. To receive an update on the additional defibrillator and take any necessary action. The new defibrillator has been installed at the Lakehouse and registered. Councillors were pleased to note that it is well fitted and very visible. The Clerk is the guardian and will complete regular checks.

11. To receive an update on the cementing of benches/picnic table and take any necessary action. Materials have been purchased but this is not yet been completed. Cllr Roberts is arranging for this to be done. Cllr Roberts asked if any funding was available towards the cost of materials. It was unanimously agreed that the balance of £200 previously agreed for installation costs would be paid. Cllr Roberts will forward the invoice to enable the payment to be made to the OHS Village Hall Trust.

Action: Cllr Roberts

12. To receive an update on the Rural Caravan and take any necessary action. The Rural Caravan will be in Onehouse Trinity Hall on 10th November, 8th December & 12th January. A donation of £30 has been received towards the cost

of the hall and it was agreed at the September meeting that the Council would pay for the remaining hall hire cost. If it is a success and continues there will not be a need for hall hire in the summer months. Flyers advertising this facility will be put on noticeboards and in the OHSMag.

13. To receive an update on Neighbourhood Plan, including feedback from those who attended the workshop on 10th September, agree the terms of reference for the working group and take any necessary action. The Chair, Cllr Boulter, Cllr Crissell and the Clerk attended the workshop and feedback was positive on the value of the day and the benefits of a Neighbourhood Plan for Onehouse. All councillors have access to the slides from the day and copies of the handouts were provided to those who had not been able to attend. The merits of a Neighbourhood Plan were discussed together with the cost. It was unanimously agreed that it would be beneficial to proceed with the plan. The Terms of Reference were discussed and unanimously approved. The Clerk will include the cost in the budget preparations.

14. To receive an update on the Community Emergency Plan, including agreeing members of a working group, and take any necessary action. There was no further update on this and it was unanimously agreed that as the Neighbourhood Plan will now be going ahead it was not the right time to be progressing this plan as well. It was recognised that the winter months are approaching but it was unanimously agreed to postpone further discussions on this until the February 2026 meeting.

15. To receive an update on additional dog waste bins and take any necessary action. Cllr Boulter advised that final new bin has now been installed and all new bins are being used and emptied.

16. To receive an update on complaints received regarding the renaming of Church Walk and take any necessary action. There has been no further contact from MSDC regarding this. It was advised that the Church has applied to have the address updated and it was noted that MSDC have now waived the fee for doing this.

17. To review and adopt the IT and Email Policy. The policy was reviewed and unanimously adopted. The Clerk reminded Councillors to 'reply to all' when responding to emails so that everyone involved is up to date. The Clerk is looking into GDPR training for Councillors.
Action: Clerk

18. To receive an update on any events and take any necessary action. Oktoberfest was successful with 44 tickets sold and a total of £662 being raised. 50% retained for the Village Hall and 50% (£331) paid to OHSMag. The Chair advised that it has been agreed that the event will be run by the Village Hall Committee next year rather than the Parish Council.

The Halloween Party is to be held on 1st November. Only 7 tickets have been sold so far and Councillors were asked to help let residents know about the event.

There will be a Burns Night event in January with further information to follow. The Chair advised that OHSMag are planning an event to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the magazine. A bumper edition of the magazine is planned

together with an event to be held on 7th March. This will include craft stalls. It was unanimously agreed that this event would be supported. The Chair will create a flyer to advertise the event and Cllr Goodwin will investigate marketing avenues.

Action: Chair and Cllr Goodwin

19. To receive an update on changes to the entrance to Paupers Grave to improve accessibility and take any necessary action. The Chair, Cllr Boulter and Cllr Crissell attended the Paupers Grave on Friday 10th October to meet with the working group. The group agree that this improvement is necessary and it was agreed that there is room for the proposed kissing gate. A concrete base will be required as the ground becomes boggy in poor weather and the posts will need to be concreted. The working group are obtaining a quote for this work and the Chair will let the Clerk know which gate is preferred so that the application for locality funding can be made.

Action: Chair

20. To receive an update on the Paupers Graves and take any necessary action. An update was received from the working group that general tidying of hedges and fallen leaves was continuing and more work is planned to uncover the footings of the old infirmary. It was noted that it has recently been discovered that one of the oak trees next to the pond is likely to be approx. 450 years old. It was advised that the group is interested in having an information board in the area and will be investigating the likely cost of this for the Council to consider. Cllr Otton has agreed a locality grant of £250 for the purchase of a replacement mower for the area. The Clerk will complete the paperwork and the working group will locate a suitable mower.

Action: Clerk

21. To discuss any action necessary regarding the Forest Road to Chilton Leys Footpath. It was advised that there is still no proposed start date but that negotiations with the landowner was progressing. Councillors were concerned to note that a resident who is also a landowner owning a strip of land that will be required for the footpath has not been contacted at all. The resident confirmed they are happy for their details to be passed on and the Clerk will contact Julia Proctor with this information.

Action: Clerk

22. To receive an update on the replacement of the Onehouse sign. No update has been received. The Chair has emailed with no response as yet.

23. Environmental issues, including the flower barrels. Discuss and take any necessary action. Cllr Roberts was thanked for weeding the barrels. Cllr Boulter has had problems with his trailer and so has yet to move the final barrel but hopes to do so very soon. It was noted that some of the barrels will require maintenance in the spring and Cllr Goodwin volunteered to review what would be needed and carry out necessary repairs and varnishing. It was unanimously agreed that the Council are happy for Cllr Goodwin to carry this review out.

24. To discuss development of land around the parish, including an update on the SHELF project, and take any necessary action. No further contact or update on the Onehouse Meadow or SHELF project has been received. The Onehouse Meadow was discussed and Councillors are keen to see progress on an agreement with the developer. It was agreed that Cllr Goodwin and the Clerk will contact the developer to attempt to progress. Cllr Goodwin to provide some

wording to the Clerk.

Action: Cllr Goodwin and Clerk

25. To receive an update on email migration and discuss the Onehouse website, and take any necessary action. Cllr Crissell has now successfully migrated to the new email address and will assist Cllrs Corker and Goodwin to do the same. The new IT Policy will be uploaded to the website as the Clerk works towards ensuring compliance with Assertion 10. A review of the website is planned.

Action: Clerk

26. To discuss OHSMag, Onehouse website and Facebook page and take any necessary action. The OHSMag editor doing well and is seeing some success in attracting new advertisers for the magazine. It is expected that there will not be a deficit this year due to advertiser income and fundraising but more fundraising will continue to be required. It was noted that the editor has advised that a salary will no longer be required from September 25. The Facebook page now has 470 followers.

At 9.25pm it was agreed to continue to complete all items.

27. To receive correspondence/communications and to deal with any matters. The following communications were forwarded to Councillors by email:

SALC: Local Government & Re-organisation Update 9/9 & 16/9. News Bulletin 8/9, 15/9, 22/9, 29/9 & 6/10. Joint SALC & BMSDC Area Forum 3/10.

SCC: National Cycle Network Onehouse to Woolpit 9/9. Parish Council Update on Local Government Re-organisation 10/10.

NALC: Nominations for 2025 Governance Review 17/9.

BMSDC: Councils Publishing Plans to Revolutionise Council Services 16/9, Local Plan Review 23/9, Three Councils for Suffolk Business Plan Submitted 26/9, NSIP & Large-Scale Energy Development Update 3/10.

National Grid: Norwich to Tilbury Development Consent Order S56 Notice 13/10.

These communications were also delivered in hard copy to Cllr Corker.

The Clerk advised that a request from a resident had been received regarding a change of boundary on his property. The resident was advised to contact the relevant department at SCC so that the process for this kind of request can be followed and the Parish Council advised in due course.

28. To receive reports.

a) Report from the Clerk. The Clerk advised that work on the budget for 2026/27 had commenced. A draft budget is expected to be ready for the November meeting with a view to agreeing the budget and precept at the December meeting.

29. Questions to the Chair. There were none.

30. Items for next agenda.

Budget

Play equipment

31. To confirm date and time of the next Parish Council Meeting. The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 13th November at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 9.36pm

Signed.....

Dated.....