

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ONEHOUSE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
MONDAY 8 DECEMBER 2025 AT 7.30 P.M. IN TRINITY HALL

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

In attendance: Mrs Swansborough, Clerk and 3 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence. Apologies were received from Cllrs Boulter and Goodwin. Cllr Boulter provided apologies for non-attendance of meetings for an extended period due to personal matters. In accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council resolved to approve an extended leave of absence for Councillor Boulter due to personal circumstances, covering the period from 8th December 2025 to 9th March 2026. During this period, Councillor Boulter will be excused from attending meetings of the Council and its committees. This approval shall prevent disqualification under the six-month attendance rule. It was proposed, seconded and agreed that Cllr Crissell act as temporary Vice Chair in Cllr Boulter's absence.

2. To confirm and approve the minutes of the meetings on 13 November 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 10.

4. Public comment. A resident raised a concern that there was now a nasty drop off the tarmac alongside Forest Road near where the new footpath will be. The same resident also noted that the white lines on the bend and at the junction of Union Road need repainting to be clearly visible again. Cllr Roberts raised mud on the road which can be dangerous for cyclists and motorcyclists. Cllr Nutman commented that Star Lane could also be dangerous due to stones on the road caused by water running down the road and unable to flow down drains as they are blocked.

5. Report from County Cllr Otton:

Government Consultation on Council Reorganisation. The Government has postponed the elections for Mayor until 2028 but it is important to still do the consultations. On 19 November, the Government launched their consultation on the two proposals submitted for council reorganisation in Suffolk. Suffolk County Council developed and submitted a business case for the Government proposing one council for the whole county, and the districts and boroughs submitted a business case proposing three councils, Western Suffolk, Central and Eastern, and Ipswich and Southern Suffolk. The Government consultation is different from local consultations you may have filled out recently, and central Government will be making the decision on what councils will look like in Suffolk in future. This consultation is only available until 11 January 2026, a relatively short time for Suffolk residents to express their preferences.

Forest Road Footpath: I cannot believe they are still talking to the land agent. I am speaking to Julia Procter regarding this.

Road Closures: I have asked SCC highways and Network assurance to be more open and clearer as to the extent and time of all road closures.

Locality Budget: have agreed to allocate £1,000 to help with the cost of the new acoustic panels for Trinity hall.

Financial Pressures: On 4 November, Cabinet reviewed the council's financial performance for the first two quarters of the 2025-26 financial year. The council is now predicting an overspend for the year of £20.8m, which it will have to fund using its Risk Reserve. This is an increase of £7.5m as well as SEND, overspends at the council are mostly in adult and children's social care.

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: At Cabinet on 4 November, it was agreed that the council would object to National Grid's proposed Norwich to Tilbury grid reinforcement, which would see pylons and overhead electricity lines bisecting the county. Some undergrounding is planned in the Dedham Vale National Landscape area, with the council pressing for undergrounding in the Waveney valley too, and more generally objecting on the basis that offshore alternatives have not been fully explored, and that the grid reinforcement might not be necessary in the timescale asserted by National Grid Electricity Transmission. The council is also concerned about the impacts of the project and its construction on the environment and residents of Suffolk, and the possibility that the new lines might lead to an increased number of solar farm applications and energy projects along the route which would have a cumulative effect on the local area.

Planning for Emergencies: At Scrutiny Committee on 20 November, the council's business continuity arrangements were reviewed. Business continuity refers to how the council ensures it is able to continue providing essential services in situations of emergency, for example power outages, flooding, or pandemic illness like Covid-19. Members of the Joint Emergency Planning Unit joined the meeting to explain that all directorates at the council held plans for possible scenarios and incidents, with directors providing oversight and teams in each directorate reviewing and updating the plans as necessary. The council can also set up an Emergency Control Centre to respond to incidents and coordinate if multiple council directorates are affected. The council undertakes planned exercises to assess how its plans would work, and reviews processes after each incident or exercise to improve them. It also takes part in regional exercises, and uses a Home Office recording and planning system, Resilience Direct, to respond to emergencies. This means that it is not reliant on council IT systems in case of a cyberattack. Paper copies of all plans are kept in case of power outages.

New Project Celebrating Disability: Suffolk Archives has received a grant of £139,107 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver a new project called Beyond Labels: Celebrating Disability which aims to shine a light on the achievements and challenges of people with disabilities in Suffolk. Beyond Labels will collect and preserve personal stories - as well as the histories of organisations, schools, and charities that support disabled people - to create a record that celebrates disability whilst sparking conversations about inclusion, accessibility, and equality. As part of the project, Suffolk Archives will work with local schools and community groups to offer free workshops that teach skills in recording, organising, and preserving archives. There will also be workshops around the county that provide opportunities for participants to co-create projects that amplify disabled voices and educate others about the challenges faced in daily life. The project will also include cataloguing and selective digitisation of existing disability-related records, making them more accessible to the public and ensuring that Suffolk Archives reflects the diversity of the county. There will be a free public exhibition at The Hold in Ipswich which will run from February to May 2026 to celebrate the stories collected through the project and encourage greater awareness and empathy across Suffolk.

6. Report from District Cllr Matthissen:

Mayor Elections Postponed: For months the Mayoral Election in May 2026 has been a fixed point in an otherwise uncertain timetable for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Government have postponed the election for 2 years to May 2028, so it will be the last piece of the jigsaw, instead of the first.

LGR consultation for Suffolk and Norfolk: The Government has launched its consultation about the future of local government in Norfolk and Suffolk. Both proposals for Suffolk have been put forward—the One Suffolk option and the 3 unitary councils for Suffolk. The consultation is open to everyone. The Consultation ends on 11th January. We are expecting the Government to publicise the final decision by March 2026.

Biodiversity and Nature Recovery Scheme: Mid Suffolk District Council has committed £1.8 million over the next three years to accelerate work which enhances biodiversity and nature—in a bid to safeguard the environment for generations to come. The investment is a major step towards reversing habitat loss and supporting wildlife across the district. Details of the projects to be funded are available the Mid Suffolk website.

Council meeting November: The Council agreed to the formation of a **Youth Council** for Mid Suffolk. It is important to get young people engaged with local politics, and there was cross party support for this proposal. It is hoped to get this Youth Council formed by September 26, at the beginning of the next school year.

Rural Support Fund: A reminder that the Mid Suffolk Rural Support Fund is still open for applications. This is a fund created to support towns and villages outside of Stowmarket. More information can be found on the Mid Suffolk website.

Sustainable Communities Food Fund: This fund provides grants to small scale food initiatives such as community pantries, fridges and food pop-ups. Between £250 and £5,000 is available and can be used for anything from the purchase of equipment and revenue costs to delivering training and workshops. Funding is awarded on a first come, first served basis. More details are available on the Mid Suffolk website.

Locality Budget: All the money is allocated for the 2025/26 year, but I am open to discussions about possible projects for 2026.

Council grants: For information on Mid Suffolk council grants available to support community projects and organisations, please see the Mid Suffolk website.

7 Planning Matters

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

DC/25/04980-Erection of single storey front extension, single storey rear extension and first floor side extension to 24 Forest Road, Onehouse, IP14 3EW. It was unanimously agreed to object to this application.

DC/25/05073-Application for discharge/partial discharge of conditions for DC/23/01323 at Chilton Sports Club, Chilton Way, Stowmarket, IP14 1SZ. It was unanimously agreed that no comment would be made.

DC/25/04548-Erection of driving range building and associated parking, installation of solar panels and flood lighting to existing driving range facility. It was unanimously agreed that no comment would be made.

b) To receive MSDC decisions on previously considered applications.

There were none.

8. Finances

To ratify the following payment:

- a) £677.51 - Mrs V Swansborough, November 25 Clerk's Salary
- b) £16.33 – NEST, Clerk Oct pension direct debit
- c) £10.13 – NEST, Clerk Nov pension direct debit

To approve payment of the following invoices.

- d) £417.00 - Gipping Press, December OHSMag printing
- e) £160.00 – SLCC Membership for Clerk
- f) £52.65 – Mrs V Swansborough, Sept – Nov Travel Expenses
- g) £130.00 – Suffolk Cloud. Annual website & Email costs
- h) £20.00 – Mrs J Copping. Reimbursement of Clerks mobile phone costs
- i) Any additional invoices received since agenda produced
- j) £200.00 - Mrs P Fuller. Clerk Mentoring Oct and Nov.

Items a) to c) were ratified and items d) to h), and item j) were unanimously approved.

To receive monthly financial report from the Clerk, including approving transfers of earmarked reserves and approval of Clerk's extra hours worked:

The Clerk advised that the current account balance was £4,246.71cr and the savings account balance was £32,359.56cr. Payments for December total £979.65 leaving a current account balance of £3,267.06cr and total funds of £35,626.62cr. As discussed at the November meeting the Clerk requested approval for a transfer of £1,000 from the events earmarked reserve to the general fund and a transfer of £3,000 from the Onehouse Meadow earmarked reserve to the general fund. These were unanimously agreed. The Clerk advised that 12 additional hours had been worked and requested payment of these in December payroll. This was unanimously approved.

9. To discuss and approve the 2026/27 budget and precept. The revised draft budget and precept calculations were emailed to all councillor in advance of the meeting. The Clerk advised that the tax base had increased by 1.2%. The budget and calculations were discussed and it was noted that, taking into account the transfers from earmarked reserves approved above, and other cost saving measures, the budget and precept calculation had reduced significantly from the first draft discussed at the November meeting. A donation amount of £1500.00 has been included in the budget with a discussion on how this will be proportioned, and to which charities, to be at a later meeting. After discussion, it was proposed, seconded and carried to increase the precept to £43,000. This will result in an increase to residents of 57.43% or £1.52 per week for band D. The precept form for 2026/27 was signed by two members of the council and the Clerk. Full details of the precept are shown on folio 3332.

10. To receive an update on the cementing of benches/picnic table and take any necessary action. Cllr Roberts advised that there was no update.

11. To discuss increasing the collection frequency of the dog waste bin situated at the junction of Moore Road and How Walk, and take any necessary action. The Clerk advised that the District Council had received complaints that the bin was regularly overflowing despite weekly collection. The Clerk has contacted Hopkins Homes who are willing to consider providing an additional dog waste bin in the area, now that the development has more occupied homes. In the meantime, it was unanimously agreed that collections will

be increased to twice weekly. This will be reviewed once Hopkins Homes have responded further. Clerk to request increased collections. **Action: Clerk**

12. To discuss the Government Consultation to the Local Government Review in Suffolk, and take any necessary action. It was unanimously agreed that the Council will not respond to this consultation but it was noted that details have been shared on Facebook for residents to be able to respond individually.

13. To discuss ongoing water leaks and resulting road closures by Anglian Water on Forest Road, and take any necessary action. These were discussed but due to the recent wet weather it was noted that it is difficult to be certain whether recent remedial work has successfully stopped the ongoing water leaks. This will be further discussed at the February 26 meeting.

14. To receive an update on the Rural Caravan and take any necessary action. The second visit took place on 8th December. It was well attended with excellent feedback. The next visit will be on 12th January 26 and after that it is hoped that the event will be able to take place outside.

15. To receive an update on the Neighbourhood Plan and take any necessary action. Following approval of the budget and precept, which included costs for the Neighbourhood Plan, the Clerk will now contact Rachel Leggett & Associates to request commencement of Stage 2. It was noted that the first action will be a public event and Councillors requested that this be arranged for a Saturday to ensure as many residents as possible are able to attend.

Action: Clerk

16. To receive an update on crowd funding contribution for the new defibrillator from Liam Cross and take any necessary action. The Clerk advised that following provision of the requested information there has been no response as yet. The Clerk will continue to monitor.

17. To receive an update on any events take any necessary action. The Tree and Footpath Warden undertook an accompanied walk on 24th November. A further walk was scheduled for 9th December but has been cancelled due to the poor weather forecast. Further walks will commence in the new year. The Burns Night event was discussed and it was agreed there is not now time to arrange the event so it will not go ahead this year. Other possible events were discussed including a Beetle Drive which Cllr Roberts will investigate. It was unanimously agreed and that any future events will be held in aid of the OHSMag.

Action: Cllr Roberts

18. To receive an update on changes to the entrance to Paupers Grave to improve accessibility and take any necessary action. The Clerk advised that there is no further update as the locality funding has not yet been received. The Clerk is monitoring.

19. To receive an update on the Paupers Graves and take any necessary action. Cllr Corker advised that general tidying of the area continues. Work also continues to excavate further foundations. The pond now has 3 or 4 feet of water in it after clearance in the summer. There is a desire to ensure the biodiversity of

the area is maintained and Cllr Corker has spoken to the working group regarding leaving the central area to grow and attract wildlife.

20. To discuss any action necessary regarding the Forest Road to Chilton Leys Footpath. A site meeting with the land agent has now taken place and it is hoped that timeframes for commencement of work will be available soon.

21. To receive an update on the replacement of the Onehouse sign. No further update.

22. Environmental issues, including the flower barrels. Discuss and take any necessary action. The Chair is in contact with the resident of the property where the final barrel will be moved near to and is arranging for this to happen as soon as convenient for both.
Action: Chair

23. To receive an update on email migration and discuss the Onehouse website, and take any necessary action. Cllrs Corker and Goodwin are still to set up their compliant email account but this is expected to take place soon with the help of Cllr Crissell and Suffolk Cloud. The Chair advised that the useful links are still in the process of being updated and the Clerk reported that work is ongoing in ensuring the accessibility of the website.

Action: Cllrs Corker, Crissell & Goodwin

At 9.30pm it was agreed to continue to complete all items.

24. To discuss OHSMag, Onehouse website and Facebook page and take any necessary action. The Onehouse Facebook page continues to attract new followers. The Chair reported that OHSMag meetings may reduce in regularity and focus on finance with other matters resolved remotely.

25. To receive correspondence/communications and to deal with any matters. The following communications have been emailed to all Cllrs:
SALC: News Bulletins 25/11 & 1/12, Local Government Re-organisation & Devolution 25/11, NSIP's Bulletin November 25 25/11. **BMSDC:** Consultation under S25 Highways Act 1980-Proposed Bridleway at Onehouse 20/11, Town & Parish Update December 25 1/12, NSIP & Large-Scale Energy Developments Update December 1/2, Suffolk & Norfolk Mayoral elections delayed 8/12. **SCC:** Government Consultation on LGR in Suffolk 24/11, SCC News Release-Discover Suffolk Through Wonderlust by Bus 25/11, Delay to Suffolk & Norfolk Mayoral Elections 4/12.

In addition, the Clerk advised that an email had been received from a resident who had been litter picking. The email included photographs of rubbish collected in the parish. Cllr Roberts was aware and advised that the amount of rubbish seen seemed to be increasing.

26. To receive reports: a) Report from the Clerk.

The Clerk advised that the new Arnold Baker has been received and is available for reference, if required. The Clerk also advised that the latest electoral role information has been received and shows an increase in residents from 974 in February 25 to 1032 in December 25.

27. Questions to the Chair. Cllr Roberts asked if the SIDS were available from Cllr Boulter as there is a volunteer willing to maintain the charging of the batteries. The Chair will try and arrange access to the SIDS. The Clerk asked if there was an update on the damaged lock to the noticeboard on Forest Road. Cllr Crissell will contact Cllr Goodwin and see if the lock can be repaired.

28. Items for next agenda.

- Dog Waste Bin Update
- Rural Caravan
- Neighbourhood Plan
- Defibrillator crowdfunding contribution
- Email migration and website
- Footpath
- Safeguarding Policy
- Accessibility Statement

29. To confirm date and time of the next Parish Council Meeting as Monday 12th January 2026 at 7.30pm, and agree meeting dates for the remainder of 2026. The January meeting date was agreed and it was also agreed to continue to meet on the second Monday of each month, except for August, in 2026. Clerk to arrange hall bookings. **Action: Clerk**

The meeting closed at 9.50pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....