

MINUTES OF THE ONEHOUSE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2025 AT 7.30 P.M. IN TRINITY HALL

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

In attendance: Mrs Fuller, Acting Clerk and District Cllr Matthissen (in part).

1. Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Boulter and Nutman.

2. To confirm and approve the minutes of the meetings 13 January and 3 February 2025.

Both sets of minutes were approved and signed.

3. To receive members Declarations of Interest on agenda items.

Cllr Roberts declared a prejudicial interest in item 10 and 16 as a member of OHS Management Committee.

4. To consider any dispensation requests from councillors.

There were none.

5. Public comment. There were none.

6. Report from County Cllr Otton.

Following the publication of the government's White Paper on devolution in December, the council held an extraordinary meeting on 9 January to decide whether to pursue inclusion in the Devolution Priority Programme. Councils had to submit an application for this 'fast-track' devolution by 10 January, including a request for local elections in May to be cancelled if this would assist them to prepare for an accelerated process including mayoral elections in May 2026. The government has now agreed this should go ahead. However, it is unclear just when elections to the new unitary councils will be. A report has been received which states that SEND needs in the county are rising and expected to rise further, and that delays in EHCP assessment, ADHD and autism assessment and support, and access to mental health services for young people were unsatisfactory and, in some cases getting worse such as speech and language therapy. The report recommends engagement with families and young people, address inequalities in service provision and improve planning for future services. On 28 January, SCC Cabinet voted to approve the proposed budget for 2025-26. This included approving a maximum rise in council tax this year of 4.99%, including the 2% social care precept for adult care. The budget relies on delivering £28.4m of savings and mitigations across council services. Cost pressures for the council include care purchasing for adult social care, Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and placements for children in care. The government is yet to come up with a solution for this issue, which affects many local authorities, not just Suffolk. The DSG debt is largely down to the cost of services for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). At Cabinet on 28 January, the annual report was presented which details the council's progress towards its target of net zero carbon by 2030. The council is not on track to achieve this target. It has achieved a 2% reduction in emissions overall during 2023-24, but Scope 3 – the largest scope and the one the council has least control over, as it includes the emissions of council suppliers (for example home to school transport) – has increased by 2% this year due to an increase in the standard conversion factor for bus travel emissions, and a rise in staff travel due to increased demand for care services. The council is trying to reduce Scope 3

emissions, and currently 40% of the council's top 100 suppliers have a carbon reduction plan for their businesses. It is unlikely the council would be able to be completely carbon free in future as large vehicles like fire engines would require fossil fuels, but it is possible that the council could offset remaining carbon emissions by planting trees in the county.

The delays to the Forest Road footpath continue. Cllr Otton has provided the response from County Cllr Paul West, Cabinet Member for Highways Operations who advises he understands the concerns and frustration of residents and I have been provided with a summary of progress and what stage SCC is now at "The footpath scheme was designed by Kier and reviewed and changed by Milestone when their contract started. This change meant 1 smaller pipe 225mm under the ditch to take drainage. As SCC require land drainage consent, SCC had to reapply, and this was rejected. Following lengthy meetings, checks, and modelling, the Floods Team have agreed to a 300mm pipe. Before SCC can finalise a design, SCC needs to accurately locate a medium pressure gas main and to ensure the design and construction methods do not compromise this. Further trial holes have been requested, and the designer is chasing for a date. SCC will need an engineer from Cadent (gas) to be present as well."

7. Report from District Cllr Matthissen

A simultaneous extraordinary council meeting of both Mid Suffolk and Babergh, arranged for Monday 10 February, has been postponed due to Government's delay in announcing that Suffolk will be on the fast track for devolution and that our County Council elections, scheduled for 1 May, have been cancelled. It is looking increasingly likely that the term of current county councillors will be extended for 2 or 3 further years (i.e. serving a 6 or 7-year period in total). Furthermore, it is not clear that significant powers and responsibilities will be devolved from Government, whereas some powers seem likely to pass upwards from councils to mayors. A new date for the extraordinary meeting is awaited, at which each local authority will consider the same reports and undertake a common debate, but each Council will vote separately. The meeting will be available to view on YouTube, as is the County Council debate of 9 January. With the new NPPF published alongside new increased housing targets, MSDC and Babergh have no real option other than to review the Joint Local plan part 1 which was adopted in November 2023. The existing plan may become superseded by new national policies if they are not updated. The councils will now build on the work already done on part 2 of the plan alongside reviewing part 1. The Government has recently clarified that the timetable for reviewing our local plans must be sent to them by 17 March. The District Council is keen for any resident experiencing hardship this winter to check the Mid Suffolk website for a range of support that might be available. Anyone in receipt of state retirement pension should visit the 'pension credit' section to check their entitlement as this support is worth, on average, £3,900 per year. There is also a dedicated cost-of-living page which contains plenty of resources ranging from advice about boosting income to help with housing costs, energy, fuel and utilities. As always, I am pleased to be contacted should local issues arise regarding district council matters, including planning, street cleaning, bin emptying, licensing, and leisure centres. If you have concerns about local development being unauthorised or failing to work to agreed planning conditions, it can be quicker and easier to go direct to Mid Suffolk's Planning Enforcement team. Locality Budget is now spent for this year's grant period. However, it is due to re-open in June.

8. Planning Matters

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

There were none.

b) To receive MSDC decisions on previously considered applications.

There were none.

9. Finances

To approve payment of the following invoices:

- a) £364.00 Gipping Press February OHSMag
- b) £248.80 Laura Cross editing January and February OHSMag
- c) £109.99 Mrs Copping reimbursement for McAfee annual subscription
- d) £3750.00 N D Green tree work in Paupers Graves
- e) £680.00 Mrs Fuller Clerking services January
- f) £1745.98 Realise Futures Mill Grove noticeboard £1199.99, bench Paupers Graves £545.99
- g) £90.00 Suffolk County Council advert for part time clerk
- h) £120.00 Suffolk Cloud website annual fee for hosting/support
- i) £328.32 Starboard Systems Ltd Scribe accounts annual renewal
- j) £33.49 Mr M Smith reimbursement for compost & plants for tubs
- k) £27.10 Mr R Taylor Reimbursement for Gloves & Saw Paupers Graves working group

Items a)-k) were approved for payment and online payments will be authorised.

l) To receive monthly financial report from the Clerk

Total funds are £36,699.94 of which £13,547.38 is earmarked reserves, CIL £5295.12, General reserve £93,00.00 and general funds £8,557.44.

10. To consider the purchase of benches and picnic table for the playing field and to the front of the Community Centre and take any necessary action.

The Chair and Clerk had asked MSDC if the purchase would qualify for a Pride in our Place grant and were told to submit an application. This has resulted in an offer of £2186.97 to purchase 2 benches and picnic table which was unanimously accepted by Cllrs. The Clerk will accept the grant and order the benches and table from Realise Futures.

Action: The Clerk

11. To finalise interview panel and dates for interviews for the role of Parish Clerk and responsible Financial Officer. Also, to delegate responsibility to the interview panel to offer the post to the preferred candidate and take any necessary action.

Six applicants have been shortlisted for interview on 17 and 18 February. The interview panel will be Cllrs Copping and Boulter. The Clerk will be present to answer any practical questions. The interview panel was given delegated responsibility to appoint a Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer.

12. To discuss the People and Places Plan and take any necessary action.

There are concerns with the governments stand on housebuilding and the 5 parcels of land in the parish that have been submitted under call for sites. It may be better to consider producing a Neighbourhood Plan and Paul Bryant MSDC NP Officer has offered to come and speak to Cllrs at the March meeting to give an idea what is involved. Cllr Copping has drafted a questionnaire for the People and Places Plan which will be put on hold for the time being.

13. To consider the co-option of a councillor and take any necessary action.

The vacancy will be advertised in the next OHSMag.

14. To discuss the following and take any necessary action:

a) Tree and Footpath Warden – At the last meeting Mr Leek said that he would continue for now but not commit to the role. It was agreed to produce a job description and then advertise the voluntary post in OHSMag.

b) Safeguarding Officer – Cllr Crissell was appointed and will look for suitable training.

c) Safety Officer – Cllr Roberts will take on the role.

15. To receive an events update

a) Scotch Missed OHSMag fundraiser – 46 attended and £609.50 raised for OHSMag.

b) Oktoberfest 2025 – it was agreed to run this again in 2025. The hall and band will be booked for 27 September.

c) Further 2025 – ideas put forward are Village Fete, this will be run by OHSMC, it was agreed that OPC would offer to help with this. More things for children such as an activities afternoon, an Easter egg hunt, arts and crafts afternoon. Cllr Copping has been advised of a lady who will carry out a 2 hour craft session for adults costing £15.00 a head including refreshments. Classes are limited to 12 participants. It was unanimously agreed for Cllr Copping to find out dates when the lady will be available and if she would be able to run two sessions in the same day if numbers required it.

Action: Cllr Copping

Cllr Copping has resigned from the Village Show working group. There is no report from the working group and no outline of the event for council to approve.

16. To discuss and agree funding towards Playing Field ground maintenance for 2025.

OPC has previously agreed to pay for the grass cutting and also paid for work to clear the side areas around the field. Nothing has been done to clear the side areas this year and OPC is being asked to pay for this to be carried out now at a cost of £780.00: £300.00 for hire of equipment, £20.00 fuel and £460.00 labour, this includes disposal of wastage. It was unanimously agreed to pay for this with OHSMC dealing with the contractor.

17. To receive an update on the Paupers Graves and take any necessary action.

The tree work has now been completed. The working parties continue to clear overgrown areas. Some of the wood could be sold for fundraising.

18. To discuss development of land around the parish and take any necessary action.

No further information has been received from MSDC regarding Onehouse Meadow.

19. To discuss OHSMag, Onehouse website and Facebook page and take any necessary action.

OHSMag – the working group will be meeting this week. There has been no interest from the advert in OHSMag for an editor and the working group may ask to advertise in Suffolk Jobs. It was suggested to advertise as salary to be discussed. This will be put to the working group.

The Curry Masterclasses has already raised £100.00. This along with the sourdough sessions and Scotch Missed £1230.00 has been raised since June. **Website** – a calendar of events has been added and Little Owls has its own blog. **Facebook** – this is being well used.

20. To receive correspondence/communications and to deal with any matters. Resident new sign erected at top of the path to the church as “Church Way” when other side says Church Walk. Nobody knows who has erected the new sign, the Clerk was asked to find out who installed it. *Action: The Clerk.* **The following items have been circulated to Cllrs: MSDC** Mid Suffolk Town & Parish Liaison meeting 22 January and presentation, Town and Parish update February, Spring Litter picks 2025, half term activities programme. **SCC EP** Passengers Interest Group meeting 8 January and minutes. **SALC** devolution updates 20 January, 3 February, news bulletin 20 January, 3 February, Training bulletin 23 January, devolution SALC activities update 23 January, NSIPs Bulletin January. **Suffolk Tree Warden Network** winter newsletter. **National Grid** Norwich-Tilbury targeted consultation 30 January-3 March. County Cllr Otton Trading Standards News 16 January, SCC press release Suffolk on fast track towards complete council restructuring and devolution.

21. To receive reports

a) Report from the Clerk

Footpath 28 – warning signs put up to warn the public that it is slippery and uneven.

Mill Grove noticeboard – this has been delivered and we have emailed Hopkins Homes to see if they can help to install.

22. Questions to the Chairman There were none.

23. Items for next agenda

Update on Clerk appointment, Neighbourhood Plan discussions with Paul Bryant, Tree/Footpath Warden role and guidelines, Pauper’s Graves, development around the parish, OHSMag, website and Facebook page.

24. To confirm date and time of the next meeting as Monday 10 March 2025 at 7.30 p.m. Noted.

The meeting closed at 9.48 p.m.

Signed.....

Dated.....