

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ONEHOUSE PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD ON MONDAY 9 MARCH 2026 AT 7.30 P.M. IN TRINITY HALL

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

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

**1. Apologies for absence.** Apologies received and accepted from Cllr Boulter and Cllr Goodwin.

**2. To confirm and approve the minutes of the meetings on 9 February 2026.** These were approved.

**3. To receive members Declarations of Interest on agenda items and to consider any dispensation requests.** Cllr Nutman declared an interest in item 7(a) Onehouse Hall and Cllr Roberts declared an interest in item 16.

**4. Public comment.** A member of the public raised concerns regarding issues with residential rubbish being left out for several days causing a potential environmental health issue. It was agreed that this would be an agenda item for the April meeting.

**5. Report from County Cllr Otton:**

**Local elections in May 2026 reinstated:** At the end of January, the government announced that a number of local elections around the country would be postponed, where councils had written to them saying it would be helpful for delivery of Local Government Reorganization (LGR). This included Suffolk County Council's elections, which were due to be held on Thursday 7 May 2026. However, following legal challenge, the government has reversed its plans and has now announced that county council elections – as well as those due to be held by Ipswich Borough Council – will take place as originally planned. New councillors elected in May will hold office until the new unitary authority/ies are vested in 2028, with councillors for the new unitary authority/ies elected in 2027 and 'shadowing' the existing councillors for a year.

The government is due to make an announcement by the end of March on how many unitary councils will be set up in Suffolk.

**Flooding on Finborough Road;** this has been investigated and have sent the response to the clerk.

**White Lines; Star House Lane Junction;** have checked if these now done.

**Cutlers Lane;** Work on this is scheduled.

**Forest Road Footpath;** waiting today for comeback form Julia

**Libraries;** the scrutiny committee will look at how the new inhouse service is running

**Energy, Water, Transport, Commercial and Adaptive Infrastructure Policy;**

At Cabinet on Tuesday 24 February, revisions to the council's Energy and Climate Adaptive Infrastructure Policy were approved, including a change in the name of the policy to the Energy, Water, Transport, Commercial and Adaptive Infrastructure Policy. This policy details how the council will respond to large developments such as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), solar farms and data centres that may be attached to them, and changes to road systems in the county that may be needed following the projects. The policy also sets out that Suffolk County Council expects developers proposing projects to

fund Planning Performance Agreements – this means that responding to the all the proposals for these developments does not come out of the council's budget.

**Vehicle Removal Trial for Resurfacing Works;** Suffolk Highways have announced that they will trial removing vehicles that have not been removed for planned resurfacing works. The council plans to make sure that residents are made aware at least two weeks in advance of any works, with cards placed under windscreens and put through residents' doors. Two days before the works are due to begin, cones will be put out along with signage to say when the works are due to be begin. If there are still cars parked on the road on the day works are due to start, officers will knock on doors to try and find the owner to move it, but as a last resort, vehicles will be moved, ideally nearby where they are still in sight, but if this is not possible, they may be moved to a facility in Bury St Edmunds with a £70 fine issued. As with other Penalty Charge Notices, the amount payable is halved if the fine is paid promptly. Although it has long had the power to remove vehicles for planned works, until now Suffolk County Council has not exercised it – compared to Essex County Council, for example, who have been doing this for about a decade. This approach will be adopted by the council for a period between March to June 2026 initially, with a report prepared on the trial and making recommendations for the future.

**Changes at the Top;** On 13 February, it was announced that Nicola Beach, the Chief Executive of Suffolk County Council, would be leaving her role. Nicola has been Chief Executive since 2018 when she replaced Deborah Cadman, and will be stepping down at the end of March 2026. The council proposes to appoint two existing directors – Andrew Cook and Mark Ash – into new joint chief executive roles for the remaining two years of the council's existence. As these directors' existing posts would not be recruited into, the number of senior staff at the council will reduce by one, saving up to £92k a year. This decision must be ratified by councillors at the next meeting of full council on 19 March 2026.

**Suffolk Sustainability Initiatives Nominated for Awards;** Suffolk County Council has been nominated for a national award for its work on energy and sustainability. Only 24 local authorities in the UK have been shortlisted for the first APSE Energy Awards, which are held in partnership with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. The awards celebrate innovation and the role local authorities play in responding to the challenges of energy transition, climate change and long-term sustainability. The 'Accessing & Managing Finance' category recognises Suffolk County Council's Warm Homes Suffolk Loan Scheme (administered by Lendology CIC), and the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Group's Home Energy Efficiency Assessment Scheme (administered by Reed In Partnership). The loan scheme offers an interest-free loan to make energy efficient improvements, such as insulation, solar panels or heat pumps. Through countywide Sustainable Suffolk initiatives, the county is also up for a second award, in the 'Working in Collaboration' category which involves a range of projects such as a study into supporting taxi drivers to move to electric vehicles, and launching the Suffolk Sustainable Schools Network.

## **6. Report from District Cllr Matthissen:**

**Devolution and local government reform – election reinstatement;** The County Council elections planned for May 2026 have now been re-instated. The current plan is for: County Council elections 7th May 2026, Unitary elections in May 2027 for a shadow council to take control in 2028, Mayoral Elections in May 2028.

**Local Plan Call for Sites;** The Council has published a map of all sites submitted during these Call for Sites exercises which is available on the website. This is not a list of preferred development locations. Publication promotes transparency and ensures communities have early visibility of what has been proposed by landowners. No planning status is granted by submission. Sites do not benefit from any presumption of development. Submissions will now be assessed against planning policy, constraints, evidence and deliverability criteria, and reduced to sufficient area to deliver the Government target of 734 per year up to 2044. Assessment outputs will be published through the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) in Spring 2026.

**Locality Awards;** The fund is expected to re-open after the local elections – please contact John to discuss ideas.

**A14 Litter;** Concerns about Health and safety (including a fatal accident in Norfolk) have meant litter picking along fast routes such as the A14 have had to be re-assessed. Contractors are about to be employed to address the litter. The A14 and slip roads will get cleared within a few weeks. Ultimately, this problem is caused by an irresponsible minority of people who think it is acceptable to throw rubbish out of their car windows.

**Former HQ Site in Needham Market;** Mid Suffolk District Council has announced the sale of the remainder of its former office site in Needham Market to Hatch Homes – in a deal that supports the town’s regeneration and realises funds for reinvestment into council housing.

**Armed Forces Day, Stowmarket ;** Plans are beginning to take shape for Armed Forces Day, which will be held in Stowmarket on 27<sup>th</sup> June, supported by both Mid Suffolk District Council and Stowmarket Town Council. Armed Forces Day is a chance to show your support for the men and women who make up the Armed Forces community. There will be a number of attractions such as climbing wall, assault course, and hopefully a helicopter from Wattisham. It is shaping up to be a great family day out. Please support if you can.

**Recycling & Waste Collection;** The delivery of new bins ready for the rollout of Better Recycling has now started. This means the delivery of a new blue recycling bin and the new food caddy and food recycling bins.

**Mid Suffolk budget and Council Tax; Mid Suffolk Budget Scope**

In addition to the day-to-day provision of the current services and current activities the 2026/27 budget includes further funding for:

- Major implementation of food waste collection and better recycling
- Enhancements to our current depot in readiness for better recycling
- Further support for recycling education
- Cost of living support and Council Tax Support scheme
- Support for our towns and rural communities outside of Stowmarket in the wider District
- Support for sports and leisure facilities in the wider district
- Communities Infrastructure projects
- Leisure centre maintenance
- Stowmarket sports facilities - SHELF Project
- Support for Stowmarket regeneration
- Support for the Cosy Homes scheme which has been expanded to offer solar panels

- Funding for the Reach Retrofit Hub to be an advice centre for the district
- Grant funding for nature recovery and community biodiversity groups

3349

- Support for new footpaths and cycle ways
- Completing the build of the Stowmarket Innovation Gateway
- Developing the skills offering for the Stowmarket Innovation Gateway
- Funding for disabled adaptations and the disability action plan
- Expansion of temporary accommodation to avoid homeless residents being put into bed and breakfast accommodation and save on costs going to private providers
- Use of Land Transfers and/or Capital Receipts to alleviate the pressure on Council Housing finances.
- Support for planning such as neighbourhood plans
- Support for local food production
- Support for local energy production

About 8% of the total Council Tax bill is attributable to Mid Suffolk District Council and this % has been reducing. For context for a Band D property the increase attributable to Mid Suffolk is about £5.23 per year or 10p per week.

## 7 Planning Matters

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

DC/26/00620 – Erection of rear extension at 15 Drury Close, Onehouse, IP14 1FS. It was resolved to make no comment.

DC/26/00835 – Erection of single storey rear extension & internal alterations at 60 Ash Road, Onehouse, IP14 3HB. It was resolved to make no comment.

DC/25/05089 – Application for Listed Building consent to replace window, cill and door surrounds on south elevation at Onehouse Hall, Lower Road, Onehouse, IP14 3BY. It was resolved to make no comment.

### **b) To receive MSDC decisions on previously considered applications.**

DC/25/04980- Erection of single storey front extension, single storey rear extension & first floor side extension at 24 Forest Road, Onehouse, IP14 3EW. Planning permission has been granted. Decision received by Councillors.

## 8. Finances

### **To ratify the following payment:**

- £677.51- Mrs V Swansborough, February 26 Clerk's Salary
- £10.13 – NEST, Clerk's Pension DD Jan 26

### **To approve the following payments:**

- c) £455.00 – Gipping Press, OHSMag March printing
- d) £150.00 – Suffolk.Cloud, Updates to website re accessibility
- e) £37.35 – Mrs V Swansborough, Travel Expenses Jan-March 26
- f) £15.00 – Mrs J Copping, Reimbursement for Clerk's mobile phone
- g) £180.00 – LR Chaplin T/a Greener Gardens, grass cutting
- h) £523.86 – Tate Fencing Ltd, Kissing Gate for Paupers Graves

Items a) & b) were unanimously ratified. Items c) to g) were unanimously authorised. Item h) was discussed under item 14 and subsequently unanimously authorised.

**To receive monthly financial report from the Clerk, including review of bank account reconciliations:**

The Clerk advised that at the end of February the current account balance was £1,196.73cr and the instant access savings account balance was £30,049.73cr. The direct debit to NEST for Clerks March pension of £10.13 had been presented

3350

for payment since and payments for March total £1,361.21. The Clerk advised a transfer from the savings account to the current account for £2,000 had been set up to cover payments due and therefore the corrected balances were £1,825.39cr in the current account and £28,49.73cr in the savings account, giving total funds of £29,875.12. The bank account statements and Scribe reconciliations were reviewed by Cllr Crissell and confirmed all was in order. There remains one overdue OHSMag invoice owing for £110 and it was unanimously agreed that no more adverts for this advertiser would be placed in the OHSMag until full payment had been received.

**9. To consider Clerks request to purchase a new external hard drive to back up data on the Clerk's laptop, and take any necessary action.** The Clerk provided quotes ranging from £67.99 to £76.99 for a 2TB external hard drive. Councillors recognised the need have a back up of data on the Clerk's laptop and unanimously approved the purchase of a hard drive from Argos for £67.99. Clerk to purchase and reclaim the cost at the April meeting. **Action: Clerk**

**10. To review and adopt the revised IT and Email Policy, and take any necessary action.** The policy was reviewed and adopted.

**11. To receive the completed Internal Control Statement, and take any necessary action.** The statement was completed by Cllr Crissell and had been emailed to Councillors in advance of the meeting. The comments were noted. Councillors agreed that Cllr Crissell remain the Councillor responsible for previewing and checking information prior to audit. The Clerk reminded all Councillors of their responsibilities regarding GDPR. Councillors were reminded of the Data Protection and Data Retention policies. The Clerk advised that there is free GDPR training modules available on the ICO website and the link will be emailed to all Councillors following the meeting with the recommendation that they complete this training. Councillors are requested to let the Clerk know when any training is completed so a record can be kept. **Action: All Councillors**

**12. To review and adopt the Gifts and Hospitality policy and take any necessary action.** The policy was reviewed and adopted.

**13. To receive an update on website accessibility, review and adopt the Accessibility Statement, and take any necessary action.** The Clerk advised

that the website review by Suffolk Cloud was now complete with all errors and warnings remedied, with the exception of some PDF files. The Accessibility Statement was reviewed and adopted. Clerk to update the website with the statement.

**Action: Clerk**

**14. To receive an update on the purchase of gazebo's, including revised cost, and take any necessary action.** Gazebo quotes had previously been provided by Cllr Goodwin and the Clerk updated Councillors on the cost of the preferred Gazebo's from Rock Awnings. Councillors unanimously approved the purchase of two 3m x 3m gazebo's, colour green, at a total cost of £758.00 plus delivery and for one gutter costing £14.99. Clerk to order.

**Action: Clerk**

**15. To receive an update and further discuss the purchase of a laptop or tablet for community use, and take any necessary action.** This was further

3351

discussed and it was unanimously decided not to proceed.

**16. To confirm the donation of the 2 plastic benches and picnic table situated at the community hall to the OHS Management Committee, and take any necessary action.** These were previously purchased and are now in position after being donated to the OHS Management Committee who are responsible for maintenance.

**17. To consider any response to the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Review Sustainability Appraisal Consultation, and take any necessary action.** The Council resolved not to respond to this consultation.

**18. To discuss the future of the OHSMag and the editor position, and take any necessary action.** The Chair advised that the editor has resigned from their position but it was hoped would remain to complete the April edition. Filling the position was discussed and it was agreed to advertise the position as a voluntary role via OHSMag, Facebook and noticeboards in the first instance. Cllr Crissell agreed to draft an advert for the Chair to review. Councillors were keen for the position to be advertised as soon as possible and resolved that the Chair and Cllr Crissell be able to approve and advertise the advert without further reference to the full Council. Closing date for applicants agreed as 17<sup>th</sup> April 26. Applications to be sent to the Clerk.

**Action: Chair & Cllr Crissell**

**19. To receive an update on the Rural Caravan and take any necessary action.** The latest event took place on 9<sup>th</sup> March with 8 attendees. It is planned that this event will now be held outside but if the weather is poor the event will be held in Trinity Hall again. It was unanimously agreed that the cost of hall hire would continue to be paid by the Council.

**20. To receive an update on the Neighbourhood Plan including planning attendance and advertising for the community event, considering costs for flyers to advertise the event, agreeing dates for the steering group to meet and signing the revised agreement, and take any necessary action.** A quote from Gipping Press of £55 for 500 flyers to promote the event was received and unanimously approved. Clerk to advise Gipping Press. A quote of £99 from John E Wright for the display board material, arranged by the consultants, was also received and unanimously approved. Clerk to advise the consultants. The

Community Event on 28<sup>th</sup> March starts at 10am. All Cllrs requested to be there for 9.30am to assist with set up and to be available all day if possible. Steering Group to meet to discuss how the event went remotely on 1<sup>st</sup> April. The revised agreement was signed by the Chair, Cllr Nutman and the Clerk. **Action: Clerk**

**21. To receive an update on any events and take any necessary action.** The next event is the Neighbourhood Plan Community Event on 28<sup>th</sup> March to be held in the Community Hall. All welcome. Cllr Roberts advised that the date for the Summer Fete has been set and will be 4<sup>th</sup> July 2026.

**22. To receive an update on changes to the entrance to Paupers Grave to improve accessibility and take any necessary action.** Different options for an accessible gate had previously been discussed with Council and the volunteers. The preferred option was from Tate Fencing. Due to delays in receipt of the 3352 locality funding resulting in delays ordering, the total cost of the gate has now risen to £523.86, including delivery. The quote for cementing previously received was for £316 bringing total cost of purchase and installation to £839.86. Locality funding of £697.30 has now been received and Councillors unanimously agreed to pay the difference of £142.56. Clerk to confirm the gate order.

**Action: Clerk**

**23. To receive an update on the provision of storage facilities, first aid equipment and PPE for volunteers at Paupers Grave and take any necessary action.** A list of required PPE has not yet been received from the volunteers. Clerk to email. Cllr Roberts has not yet been able to update the risk assessment form. Cllr Goodwin had advised by email that smaller containers are more expensive than larger ones due to being more difficult to obtain. This was discussed and it was agreed that it is likely to be difficult position a larger container so Cllr Goodwin would be asked to find out the cost of a smaller one.

**Action: Clerk and Cllrs Goodwin & Roberts**

**24. To receive an update on the Paupers Graves and take any necessary action.** Cllr Corker advised that the volunteers continue to meet but there is not much to be done in the area at the moment. Extra chippings are needed and are being sourced and the memorial cross has been handwashed and is looking good. It was discussed that the Council could request a Biodiversity visit to help inform future projects.

**25. To discuss any action necessary regarding the Forest Road to Chilton Leys Footpath.** No update available from County Council.

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

**26. To receive an update on the replacement of the Onehouse sign.** The Chair advised that an email had been received from the Development Management Technical Manager at SCC advising that they had met with the Developer who were waiting for the contractor to send them the costs and then they would look to book road space. SCC confirmed that they were urging that this be completed as soon as possible.

**27. To receive an update on email migration and take any necessary action.**

Cllr Goodwin has now successfully set up and accessed his Council provided email account. As previously agreed, the Clerk confirmed that no Council emails will be sent to any Councillor's on their private email accounts. Councillors were reminded that they should not be using any other email accounts for Council business and Council emails should not be forwarded to private email addresses.

**28. To discuss Onehouse website and Facebook page and take any necessary action.** The Neighbourhood Plan page on the website has now been updated with the details of the Community Event. As detailed under item 13, the website accessibility check is now completed. The accessibility statement and updated privacy notice has been added to the website. The Facebook page continues to attract new followers.

3353

**29. To receive correspondence/communications and to deal with any matters.** The following items have been circulated to Cllrs:  
**SALC:** News Bulletins 10/2, 23/2, 3/3. SALC Joint Babergh & Mid Suffolk Area Forum 2/3, NSIPS Bulletin 4/3. **BMSDC:** Better Recycling Briefing Pack 10/2, Elections to go ahead notice 17/2, Town & Parish Update 2/3, NSIP & Large-Scale Energy Developments Update 2/3. **SCC:** Update of Finborough Road Investigation 16/2, Road Closure Notice 17/2, Joint Local Plan Review Consultation 4/3. **Suffolk Highways:** Advice of road closure 10/2. **Suffolk Police:** PCC Update 24/2.

The Clerk also advised that notice of price increase for litter and dog waste bins had been received from MSDC. The price will increase from £50 per bin per annum to £51.50 per bin per annum. It was noted that this service is still heavily subsidised by BMSDC.

Cllr Roberts advised she had been asked at a recent meeting of the OHS Management Committee whether the Council would consider purchasing the Trinity Hall car park and whether District CIL money could be applied for to fund the purchase of new playground equipment. Both items to be added to the April meeting agenda.

**30. To receive reports:** a) Report from the Clerk.

The Clerk advised that a review of benches had been completed and the asset register has been updated. Year end audit preparation is being completed and the Clerk is attending the SLCC Branch Meeting in Stowmarket on 10<sup>th</sup> March.

**31. Questions to the Chair.** There were none.

**32. Items for next agenda.**

Residents bins

OHSMag

CIL money for play equipment

Trinity Hall Car Park

Fete

Paupers Container

Community Emergency Plan

Forest Road water leaks

Completion of concreting of benches at Community Hall

**33. To confirm date and time of the next Parish Council Meeting as Monday  
13<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at 7.30pm**

The meeting closed at 9.45pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....