



EARL STONHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at the Village Hall on **Monday 3rd November 2025 at 7.30pm.**

Present:

Councillors: M Gillett (Chair)
D Turner
M Mann
H Stanford

In Attendance Mrs S Edgar – Clerk
Cllr M Hicks – County Council
Cllr N Hardingham – District Council
18 Members of the Public

ES79/25/26 – TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllr Barnet-Lamb, Cllr Baker and Cllr Budd

ES80/25/26 – TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

ES81/25/26 – TO RECEIVE APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION

None had been received

ES82/25/26 – TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9th SEPTEMBER 2025

It was AGREED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 9th September 2025 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

ES83/25/26 – PUBLIC FORUM

A resident from Angel Hill was present and requested an update on finding a possible SID location. The Clerk confirmed a site had been identified and supplied to Cllr Hicks, who would arrange for the suitability to be confirmed.

18 members of the public were present, the majority of which were representing “Debenham Road Residents Cut it to 40 Campaign” following a request from Simon Oldfield to present at the meeting. Mr Oldfield had provided a report and several items of supporting information, which had been circulated prior to the meeting and the main points were presented by Mr Oldfield. He also thanked Cllr Hicks for financing a survey in July 2025.

Cllr Hicks stated he believes 40 would be okay and we should get Highways to carry out an initial assessment, also including Blacksmiths Lane, to allow both to be considered at the same time. He stated the criteria for reducing limits to 20/30/40 would be simplified soon. The costs will be around £12k and how this is financed would need to be considered, if we do receive approval to progress to the next stage.

Cllr Gillett confirmed he was happy to support the proposal however fundraising would be needed to cover the cost as we only hold a small amount of Cil reserves.

Cllr Hicks confirmed he did have a budget, however this was £12k across 24 parishes, so other funding options would also need to be found.

Cllr Hardingham confirmed his support and willingness to make a contribution from locality funding.

A vote was held and **it was AGREED** unanimously to support the proposal. **Clerk to email Cllr Hicks confirming support to allow an initial review to be requested from highways.**

A member of the Public reported their concern with the new fencing erected at the end of Wicks Lane which is severely affecting visibility at the junction. Cllr Hardingham confirmed it meets planning guidelines but can be investigated if it is causing a Highways issue. Cllr Hicks and Cllr Hardingham volunteered to investigate whether the issue is a District or County one. **It was agreed the resident would provide photos to the Clerk to forward on to Cllr Hicks and Cllr Hardingham for investigation**

ES84/25/26 – TO RECEIVE THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT – CLLR HICKS

Cllr Hicks started by thanking Cllr Gillett for his letter of thanks received for supporting the funding of SID’s. Cllr Hicks read through his report which would be circulated following the meeting and published on the village website. The key points being:

Norwich to Tilbury - Suffolk County Council’s continues to object to the project. The belief is once approved it will open the area to more solar farms along the route. A delay in the deadline to 2035 would allow offshore options to be achievable.

Devolution – The case has been submitted and will now go through a 6-8 week consultation until end of 2025. A decision is expected around February 2026.

ES85/25/26 – TO RECEIVE THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR’S REPORT – CLLR HARDINGHAM

Cllr Hardingham briefly went through his report which had been circulated prior to the meeting and published on the village website.

Cllr Hardingham confirmed that the Shepherd & Dog had been removed from the Enforcement register as it is still set up as a pub and not being used for residential purposes. There are however still reminders on the case to check the expected submission of an application for change of use. Cllr Gillett and Cllr Turner requested that Cllr Hardingham apply pressure for a timescale on this.

Cllr Hardingham confirmed that Moat Farm had been provided with a further warning from Enforcement on out-of-hour working and the case closed.

Cllr Stanford expressed his thanks to Robert Wrinch for his work clearing the ditches along Fen Lane and asked if he could be approached to do the same along Mill Lane to help with the flow of water - **Clerk to write to request**

ES86/25/26 - TO RECEIVE THE CLERK’S REPORT AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) TO REVIEW THE ACTION TRACKER

The Clerk ran through any notable progress on active action points not covered elsewhere on the agenda including:

Enforcement Wicks Lane – A Planning Contravention Notice had been issued for the mobile homes sited and enforcement were awaiting a response

Allotments – These had now been advertised in the village and all surrounding parishes following no local uptake

Christmas Tree – Cllr Gillett and Tony Turner would be collecting on 27th November and it would be put up weekend of 29th.

b) **CLERK'S REPORT**

The Clerk reported that following on from the recent allotment inspections, all appeared to be in order and so invoices would be issued shortly for a total of £2,300.

The recent tree survey highlighted additional works in addition to the urgent tree removal required and we would need to consider the costs of these works when preparing the budget and also building reserves long term

The Clerk confirmed a blocked drain at the end of Mill Lane had been reported but almost immediately closed with the reason "the work does not meet the criteria for intervention". It was assumed they were confusing the request with the bigger works required. Cllr Hicks requested this be emailed to him for intervention – **Clerk to action**

b) **TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Clerk reported on the Council's current financial position and movements since the last meeting including receipt of the second instalment of the precept for £4,293. It was reported that the balance in the accounts on 29th October 2025 was £11,235.90.

Cllr Stanford asked how long we had left on the CiL monies and requested this is added to the Finance Report so we do not miss the deadline – **Clerk to action**

Cllr Gillett added in regard to CiL monies as the current Clerk is not CiLCA qualified this may affect how Cil Monies are held – **Clerk to investigate**

There was a credit due from MSDC for recycling of £254.29 which would be transferred to the Village Hall per the agreement made in September 2023. On processing the current credit, it was noticed that the instalment from March of £285.13 had been received from MSDC but not transferred to the Village Hall so this would also need to be paid.

c) **TO AUTHORISE PAYMENTS AND NOTE RECEIPTS**

The Clerk reported the following payments be authorised:-

BT Group PLC	Broadband for Village Hall	£38.57
Zurich	Insurance 01/10/25 - 30/09/26	£327.00
Earl Stonham Cricket Club	Donation	£450.00
ESVH	Hall Hire Meeting 09/09/25	£14.00
Susan Edgar	Clerks Office Allowance/Exp (September)	£62.57
Susan Edgar	Clerks Salary (September)	£368.95
BT Group PLC	Broadband for Village Hall	£38.57
B Heard	Village Walk Refreshments	£11.25
Susan Edgar	Reimbursement Poppy Wreath	£24.49
D Turner	Reimbursement Posts	£48.99
NALC	Training Course - M Gillett	£42.00
Susan Edgar	Clerks Office Allowance/Exp (October)	£26.00
Susan Edgar	Clerks Salary (October)	£318.85

It was AGREED: That payments totaling £1,711.24 be approved.

The following receipts were noted:

MSDC	Precept (2nd instalment)	£4,293.00
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e) **BANK RECONCILIATION**

Cllr Mann confirmed that he had checked the relevant documents in relation to the bank reconciliation.

It was AGREED: That the Bank Reconciliation be approved.

f) **TO NOTE RISK REGISTER**

A draft had been circulated prior to the meeting for the addition of Traveller Encampments to the Risk Register. Cllr Gillett requested we discuss along with item 12 on the agenda.

g) **DRAFT BUDGET 2026/27**

A general discussion took place where members stated that a separate Budget Meeting be held with 2-3 Cllrs and the Clerk taking part. The Clerk would then liaise via email with a Draft Budget proposal.

Volunteers were requested and **It was AGREED** that Cllr Gillett, Cllr Turner and Cllr Mann will form the Budget Committee with the Clerk.

ES87/25/26 – PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Ref: DC/25/04793 Full Planning Application - Erection of livestock (Pig Rearing) building and associated works including extended concrete pad/walls. Rookery Farm, Fen Lane, Earl Stonham, Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 5EF. This proposal had been received shortly before the meeting. **It was agreed for Cllrs to send comments via email and Clerk to respond to planning**

ES88/25/26 – PLANNING DECISIONS

The following decision was noted:

Ref: DC/25/03917 Householder Application - Construction of detached single-storey 3-bay oak-framed cartlodge, Willow Vale Farm, Fen Lane, Earl Stonham, Stowmarket Suffolk IP6 8PQ. **GRANTED**

ES89/25/26 – REGISTRATION FOR THE NATIONAL GRID PYLON APPLICATION

The Clerk informed that the deadline to register as an interested party for the application, which would allow us to comment, was 27th November 2025. The Clerk confirmed to register you had to state whether you were supporting/objecting/commenting and provide details of your reasons.

It was AGREED to register – Cllr Gillett to provide previous letter of objection to Clerk to use for registration

ES90/25/26 – NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

Following on from the September meeting the Clerk had circulated the details of the process and costings for creating a Neighbourhood Plan. The Clerk summarized the main points being:

- Timescale to produce is 2-3yrs
- Cost £15-20k
- It is a continual process to keep updated and aligned with policies higher up the chain
- In Mid-Suffolk there are 29 parishes/towns that have started plans but only 6 completed despite some of them being started some time ago

The Clerk confirmed the Neighbourhood Planning Team were keen to stress that the '80 houses' earmarked for Earl Stonham is a very rough number, created by allocating out the district number according to size of parish. Planning would still consider the suitability of applications under their usual framework.

Cllr Gillett confirmed he had attended a course on the New Planning Environment but it provided no insight on the way forward, just what was wrong with the current system.

IT WAS AGREED: Not to proceed with creating a Neighbourhood Plan

ES91/25/26 – TRAVELLER ENCAMPMENTS

The Clerk reported on the response received from Stowupland on the costs involved with both the removal/clear up costs they had incurred.

In summary it was stated that the likely legal costs involved with removing Travellers was around £1200. Stowupland had no clear up costs as this was carried out by volunteers each time. The Clerk was awaiting a response from Haughley as to their costs with clear up. The cost to Stowupland of digging the ditches around the green was £11,500 and that was with one side of the green already having posts in situ.

The level of risk is believed to be low and costs for a deterrent are prohibitive and not something we hold the reserves for.

It was AGREED: To add to the Risk Register as drafted and look to build the Village Green reserves to allow for legal/clean up costs should they arise

ES92/25/26 – VILLAGE GREEN AND TREES

The Clerk confirmed the receipt of the Survey which had been circulated. There was one tree highlighted for immediate removal with a further tree within the next year, along with some other more minor works.

The Clerk confirmed the Village Green Reserve stood at £1000 of which £780 would cover the survey cost. This leaves a residual of just £220 for any works. Cllr Gillett had confirmed that we would not require the full streetlight budget of £1,080, so some of this could be allocated to the works.

Several contractors had been approached in regard to the tree removal, but only two had responded to date, with quotes ranging from £520 to £1500.

Cllr Turner asked if the tree needed to be removed completely or whether we could reduce the canopy. The Clerk advised the survey had highlighted its need for removal and so for safety reasons we should proceed with this, rather than risk a future accident going against this recommendation. Cllr Stanford agreed the tree did not look in good health.

Cllr Gillett suggested we look at replanting and there was a discussion on the type of tree. Cllr Turner agreed to investigate whether there were any 'free tree' schemes we could use. Cllr Gillett suggested we could also look at a further bench for this location

IT WAS AGREED: To collate all quotes for removal received by 17th November and forward via email for a decision on who to appoint – **Clerk to action**

On a separate note Cllr Stanford noted the Coronation Oak that had been planted by Suffolk County Council was looking rather unwell and we may want to look at a replacement - **Clerk to investigate**

ES93/25/26 – UPDATES

- a) **Speeding** - Cllr Gillett confirmed an update had been included in the Recorder of the last download from the SID's which showed 90% of vehicles were within the 30mph limit. He confirmed that although he can download the data there is not an app compatible for Mac's. He also needed to investigate what happens with the data on the SID once downloaded. Cllr Stanford queried at what point is speed registered?

IT WAS AGREED: To start quarterly downloads at the end of December with Cllr Gillett liaising with the Clerk to process the data for submission to other relevant bodies

- b) **Footpaths** – Cllr Stanford reported another footpath sign and agreed to confirm the location with the Clerk to report
- c) **Village Hall** – It was reported the Broadband renewal for the Village Hall was due on 23rd November, the cost of which is covered by the Parish Council. Currently we pay £38.57 and are unable to reclaim VAT as it is invoiced to the Village Hall. Tony Turner had agreed a reduced price of £26.95pm +VAT with increases each April and was arranging for the invoicing to be updated to allow the reclaim of VAT. This would generate a saving of £115 in year 1 of the contract and £79.44 in year 2. **The renewal had been agreed unanimously via email**

ES94/25/26 - MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL

- Cllr Stanford confirmed the Remembrance Service would be held on 9th November. Cllr Gillett stated the Clerk had agreed to lay the Wreath on behalf of the Parish Council and he would provide the Roll of Honour to be read.
- Church Services – Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services to be held.

ES95/25/26 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday, 19th January 2025 with an earlier time of 7pm agreed.

The meeting finished at 9.25pm.

Chair: Dated: