

LEVINGTON AND STRATTON HALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING IN THE VILLAGE HALL HELD ON

Monday, 13th January 2025 7.15 pm

Present:

Cllr John Ross (Chairman)
Cllr Derek Dickerson
Cllr John Parrish
Cllr Neil Downing
Cllr C Yeo
Parish Clerk Angie Buggs
Cllr Mike Ninnmey East Suffolk Council
3 members of the public

VILLAGE FORUM

An opportunity for residents to give comments on any issues on the agenda. (As per standing orders max 15 minutes unless otherwise directed by the Chairman, a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes).

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT Cllr Patti Mulcahy Suffolk County Council – no report

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT Cllr Mike Ninnmey East Suffolk Council / Cllr Lee Reeves East Suffolk Council – written and verbal report

National Planning Policy Framework Briefing

A new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was issued by the Government on 12th December 2024 which will have major implications for our area and how planning decisions may be made in future. Below are the main points from the new NPPF and the individual requirements being imposed on East Suffolk Council.

The NPPF is the Government's main planning policy document, and whilst it does not have the same legal status as the "development plan" i.e. policies in the Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans, it will be a highly important material consideration in decision taking.

Sufficient Supply of Homes

The standard method for calculating housing need has changed resulting in significant increases in many places including East Suffolk. The new government has now set the housing need figure for East Suffolk at 1,644 homes each year which is significantly higher than the 916 homes per year within the current Local Plans and the average actual delivery of 830 homes per year over the past three years.

Preparation of the new East Suffolk Local Plan is due to commence this year with adoption anticipated in 2029. Both the current Waveney Local Plan and the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan had sufficient housing supply criteria for more than 5 years – Waveney about 5.5 years and Suffolk Coastal over six.

Given the increase in government requirements- which are mandatory- it seems very unlikely that we could demonstrate a five-year supply against the current Waveney Local Plan and not in the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan after last quarter of 2025. Until the next Local Plan is in place this does mean that

unplanned housing development is likely to be brought forward by developers. Whilst this may not lead to a free for all much greater weight must be given to the supply of housing in decision taking – a presumption in favour sustainable development.

Where unplanned sites are brought forward, they would still be required to be in suitable locations for development and follow local plan design and environmental policies. Protections will remain available for “Neighbourhood Plans” if they include enough site allocations to meet their new housing requirements.

Affordable Housing

The requirement to deliver 25% of affordable homes on sites as First Homes has been removed under the NPPF so a greater proportion of social rented housing will now apply.

Requirement to Build in Industrial Needs

There is now a requirement to meet the needs of the economy and identify locations for uses such as gigafactories, data centres and, importantly for our area, freight and logistics. This new requirement might well lead to planning applications for port activities to spread across the A14.

There are many other points made including a statutory obligation to consult with neighbouring authorities in relation to delivery of infrastructure and in meeting any unmet housing needs from neighbouring areas. This could have a real impact on East Suffolk from Ipswich.

The requirements of the new NPPF came into effect on the date of publication and so apply to all new planning applications moving forward.

Devolution and Local Government Re-organisation

At the time of writing, we are still awaiting confirmation from Suffolk County Council that they intend to sign-up for the fast-track devolution deal which would mean a single elected Mayor covering both Suffolk and Norfolk, the abolition of District and County Councils and their replacement by a unitary authority, taking on the responsibilities of both the district and county council. If SCC accept the fast track this would mean the cancellation of May’s County Council elections and the present administration would remain until 2027 when a new unitary would be elected.

The Government has indicated that they expect unitary authorities to take in a minimum of 500,000 residents. As the population of Suffolk is currently around 780,000 this would rule out more than one unitary authority.

This would suggest that each councillor may represent between 8,000 to 10,000 residents each compared with the current district level of 3,500 – 4,000.

A single authority controlled by an elected Mayor across both Suffolk & Norfolk will centralise decision-making and it remains unclear how parish and town councils would be able to influence any decisions relating to their communities.

Jet-Ski Consultation

The consultation closed at the end of November and a total of 377 responses were received. A decision on whether to license commercial operators hiring jet-skis will be made at the full Licensing Committee on 20th January. It should be noted that any decision will not affect privately owned jet-skis.

01.25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ann Wignall, Cllr Lee Reeves and Cllr Patti Mulcahy Suffolk County Council.

02.25 CODE OF CONDUCT & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

03.25 TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE 4TH NOVEMBER 2024

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 4th November 2024 which had previously been circulated, were approved, and signed as a true record by Cllr J Ross (Chairman).

04.25 MATTERS TO REPORT FROM THE LATEST MINUTES (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

All items arising from the previous minutes were covered as part of the agenda.

95.24 TO AGREE PARISH COUNCIL / ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DATES 2025

A copy of the list of meeting dates has been uploaded on to the Levington and Stratton Hall website. Noted.

99.24 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE THE ASSET REGISTER

To discuss the location of the Dell Vostro Laptop and the Logitech pointer and whether it is still functioning.

The laptop is being used by a resident for overhead photographic displays in the village. It was agreed that the laptop should now be written off due to being no longer viable and the asset register should reflect this. Cllr N Downing expressed concern about the data which is still held on the outdated laptop and said that the laptop should now be wiped of any data. It was agreed that Cllr J Parrish should arrange for the data on the laptop to be deleted. **Action: Cllr J Parrish / Clerk**

103.24 VILLAGE FORUM

To identify the whereabouts of the piece of porcelain presented to Levington and Stratton Hall as a result of winning the Village of the Year competition.

The piece of porcelain is currently stored at Stephen Rackham's. It was agreed that Cllr J Parrish should arrange to pick the porcelain up from Stephen and stored in the Parish Council cupboard in the Village Hall. **Action: Cllr J Parrish / Clerk**

05.25 FINANCE

a. Income

None

b. Expenditure

Mrs A J Buggs Salary & Expenses November / December 2024 £971.95

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| SALC Payroll | £27.00 |
| Seale Printers Newsletter | £160.00 |
| HMRC Tax and NI | £463.14 |

Cllr N Downing proposed, seconded Cllr D Dickerson that the above expenditure is approved – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

c. Bank Balances

| | |
|--|------------|
| Current Account as at 30 th November 2024 | £26,357.38 |
| Deposit Account as at 30 th November 2024 | £8,990.25 |

The Parish Council noted the balances as at the 30th November 2024 for both the Community Account and the Premium Account.

06.25 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE THE FORMAT OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2025

The Annual Parish Meeting 2025 is scheduled for Wednesday, 21st May. At the 2024 meeting it had been advocated that the Annual Parish Meeting should be a celebration to say “Thank You” to the village organisations. It was agreed that the village meeting should be a joint venture by the Parish Council and the Church. Cllr J Parrish suggested that village organisations should talk about what they envisaged for the future year. Although the Parish Council cannot purchase alcohol it would be pleasant to make the meeting a Cheese and Wine evening. It was noted that the Parish Council could make wine available from another source. **Action: Clerk / Cllr J Ross**

The Chairman closed the meeting to enable members of the public to speak.

A member of the public said that the previous Parish Council had tried something similar which had not been totally successful but agreed that anything to make the Parish Meeting more attractive would be worth a try. Cllr M Ninmeyer said that Cllr L Reeves and himself would be prepared to attend and talk about Devolution in Suffolk. **Action: Clerk**

The Chairman reopened the meeting.

Cllr J Parrish proposed that the Parish Council organise the 2025 Parish Meeting along the lines indicated, seconded Cllr D Dickerson – all in favour.

It was agreed that Cllr J Ross would speak Ian Angus regarding whether the Church would agree to a joint venture. **Action: Cllr J Ross / Clerk**

07.25 TO DISCUSS THE LEVINGTON AND STRATTON HALL EMERGENCY PLAN

An appeal for volunteers to take part in the Emergency Plan initiative had been placed in the Levington and Stratton Hall Newsletter but unfortunately the article had received little response. It was noted that Parish Councillors could form the initial group.

The collection and storage of data has been investigated with the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO). With the consent of individuals involved data can be gathered and stored.

Cllr N Downing proposed that the plan can then be sent to Suffolk County Council for approval. This was agreed. It was agreed that the plan could then be reviewed at the July Parish Council meeting for sign off. **Action: Cllr N Downing / Clerk**

08.25 TO DISCUSS THE RESIGNATION OF A LEVINGTON PARISH COUNCILLOR AND DISCUSS CO-OPTION OF NEW COUNCILLOR

The Parish Council has received the resignation of Cate Last. Unfortunately, due to personal commitments Cate felt she was unable to continue. The Parish Council are actively seeking to co-opt a councillor and it was agreed to publish a notice in the Levington and Stratton Hall newsletter. **Action: Cllr A Wignall / Clerk**

Cllr J Ross gave a vote of thanks to Cate for her commitment and hard work on behalf of the Parish Council and residents and wished her well for the future. **Action: Clerk**

09.25 TO RECEIVE AND AGREE THE CELEBRATION ARRANGEMENTS TO MARK VE DAY 80 – 8TH MAY 2025

The following VE Day Celebration proposal had been received from Cllr A Wignall.

The 80th anniversary of VE Day is Thursday, 8th May 2025. Through the Pageant Master, 'a shared moment of celebration' is being encouraged nationally.

Proposal

9.00 am

- Raise VE Day Flag
- Service at St Peter's Church

During Day

- Use of Village Hall / St Peter's Church for displays relating to WW11 and VE Day, prepared by Village Recorder Louise Mann.
- Village Hall – WI to be asked to put on a display relating Food Rationing, Ration Books and related recipes. WI and others encouraged to make WI VE Celebration Cake for competition, the results then shared on Church Field during village celebrations and get together.
- Gardening Club to be asked to put on a display related to 'Dig for Victory'.
- Community Hub to be asked to put on a display relating to 'Make Do and Mend'.

6.30 pm

- Ringing out of Celebration of Peace.
- Village Celebration on Church Field, A Sing Along of War Time popular songs (possibly led by Filomena) Otherwise using recordings.
- Fish and Chips / Burgers / Pie and Mash on the Church Field – mobile caterers to be identified.

9.30 pm

- Lighting of the Beacon and the Lamp of Peace by Cllr J Parrish (Beacon Warden).
- Singing of the patriotic hymn: 'I vow to thee my country'

Other

Celebration mugs to be available for villagers (£8 each cost). Sold for £10 to adults, children of the parishes to be gifted one each. Underwritten by the Parish Council - £160 maximum. Expected to result in NIL cost.

Costs

| | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Village Hall Hire | £75.00 |
| VE Flag | £113.50 |
| Lamp of Peace | £55.00 |
| PA System Hire | £100.00 |
| VE Day Booklet | £100.00 |
| VE Cake Ingredients | £50.00 |
| Total Cost | £493.50 |

Councillors agreed to delete the purchase of celebration mugs as they thought this was something more in keeping with Royal events.

Cllr J Parrish proposed that the Parish Council accept the proposal, seconded Cllr D Dickerson – all in favour.

The Clerk reported that she had spoken to Cllr P Mulcahy Suffolk County Councillor who had indicated that she would support the village with a financial contribution towards the event. Councillors agreed to underwrite any remaining funding. **Action: Clerk**

10.25 APPOINTMENT OF PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE/TRUSTEE TO THE SIR ROBERT HITCHAM'S ALMSHOUSES

Cllr J Ross reported that the Parish Council appoints a Trustee to the Sir Robert Hitcham's Almshouses. The current Parish Council Trustee resigned recently therefore the Parish Council placed a notice in the Levington and Stratton Hall newsletter outlining the criteria for eligibility to become a Trustee. Jane Timmins responded to the request expressing a wish to represent the Parish Council.

Following discussion Cllr J Ross proposed that Jane Timmins be appointed as the Parish Council's Trustee on the Sir Robert Hitcham's Almshouses, seconded Cllr C Yeo – all in favour. **Action: Clerk / Cllr J Ross**

11.25 TO DISCUSS THE DEVOLUTION DEAL FOR SUFFOLK

Background information to Devolution from the Government.

“England is one of the most centralised countries in the developed world. Devolution across England is fundamental to achieving the change the public expect and deserve: growth, more joined-up delivery of public services, and politics being done with communities, not to them. These are all key aspects of this government's Plan for Change. We believe it is only by redistributing political, social and economic power that we will rewire England and allow everyone everywhere to realise their full potential.

The foundation of modern devolution began in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and London in the late 1990s. Since then, and despite austerity and insufficient funding for local government over the past 14 years, mayoral devolution has shown that it can be a vehicle for the change the public expect.

Mayoral devolution works because Mayors can use their mandate for change to take the difficult decisions needed to drive growth; their standing and soft power to convene local partners to tackle shared problems; and their platform to tackle the obstacles to growth that need a regional approach. It works because they have skin in the game and are accountable to their citizens. The White Paper initiates the biggest transfer of power out of Westminster to England's regions this century.”

Suffolk County Council Cabinet decided on the 9th January 2025 their commitment to deliver both reorganisation and devolution to the most ambitious timeframe (with inaugural Mayoral elections in May 2026) and have requested that Suffolk is included in the Devolution Priority Programme.

It was agreed that information being provided by East Suffolk Council via District Councillors Cllr Mike Ninnmey / Cllr Lee Reeves should be sent to the Clerk and Cllr J Ross for dissemination to councillors and residents. **Action: Clerk / Cllr J Ross**

12.25 PLANNING

a. General – Updated Planning List for January 2025

The Parish Council noted the contents of the Planning List.

b. Discharge of Condition No 25 of DC/23/1138/OUT – Erection of 18 x No. dwellings (including 6 affordables) with garaging, parking, accesses and landscaping – Written Scheme of Investigation

In accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under Condition 25 and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition.

Reason: To safeguard archaeological assets within the approved development boundary from impacts relating to any groundworks associated with the development scheme and to ensure the proper and timely investigation, recording, reporting and presentation of archaeological assets affected by this development, in accordance with Policy SCLP11.7 of Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (2020) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Department recommended Discharge of Section 25 – noted.

DC/23/4699/OUT – Land Opposite Seven Hills Roundabout Felixstowe Road Nacton

There is no further news about this application other than National Highways have asked for a decision to be further delayed until at least 27th June 2025 as they would like further time to access the impact on the Strategic Road Network and the changes to the local road network proposed by SCC Highways. SCC Highways have also asked for more information about walking and cycling access to the site and the siting of traffic lights along the A1156 – noted.

13.25 CORRESPONDENCE

All relevant correspondence has been forwarded to councillors.

14.25 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

a. Church Field Warden

Report from Cllr Derek Dickerson

It had been reported that a resident had been pruning the trees in Pilots Way. It was agreed that Cllr A Wignall would discuss the report with Neil Bixby Tree Warden when she discusses Trickers Wood. **Action: Cllr J Ross / Cllr A Wignall**

b. Village Hall

Report from Cllr John Parrish

Village Hall Trustees meeting to be held on the 14th January 2024.

c. Sir Robert Hitcham's Almshouses

Nothing to report.

d. Public Transport

Report by Marian Rose

At the September 2024 Parish Council Meeting, I asked Councillors if the County and/or District Councils could be approached and asked to cut back the hedge and verge along Bridge Road between Red House Walk and White House Farm. The Clerk duly did this but she now tells me that having visited the site, Suffolk County Council Highways have declined to do the work.

This is disappointing as it is not possible to walk along this verge as the hedge growth extends across it, resulting in a dangerous situation for pedestrians as one cannot get off the road in many places. I raised this as a public transport matter as I fear the situation endangered those walking to the bus stops on the old A45. However, of course, it affects anyone walking along this road as many people do.

I feel it is impractical for us villagers to do this work ourselves as, in my opinion, it requires a mechanical hedge cutter rather than the domestic tools we are likely to have available.

There is no footpath on this part of the road which is likely to have influenced Suffolk County Council Highways comments. Following discussion, it was agreed that Cllr J Parrish should approach Mr H Brunt White House Farm to establish whether he owns the verge and hedge.

Action: Cllr J Parrish / Clerk

e. Footpaths

Report from Cllr John Parrish

Footpath sign at Levington Lagoon has still not been replaced. The gate at the bottom of Pilots Way has been repaired.

f. Port Liaison Group

Report by Cllr Derek Dickerson / Cllr John Parrish

Nothing to report.

g. Police / SNT / ASB

Nothing to report.

h. ESPA

Nothing to report.

i. Trickers Wood

Report by Cllr Ann Wignall

No report.

115.25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: MONDAY, 4th MARCH 2025 IN THE VILLAGE HALL

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.35 pm.

VILLAGE FORUM (Opportunity to raise issues not necessarily on this agenda)

A member of the public asked about the results of the residents' survey which had been undertaken. Cllr J Ross stated that the survey was carried out by Marian Rose and was not carried out on behalf of Parish Council. It was designed to gather information regarding usage of local clubs such as the WI and the Gardening Club.

Signed..... Date

Angie Buggs
Clerk to Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council