

## LEVINGTON AND STRATTON HALL PARISH COUNCIL

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

Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2026 7.15 pm

#### **Present:**

Cllr Chris Yeo (Chairman)  
Cllr A Wignall  
Cllr C Myhill  
Cllr S Adams  
Cllr J Parrish  
Cllr N Downing  
Cllr D Dickerson  
Parish Clerk Angie Buggs  
Cllr Patti Mulcahy Suffolk County Council  
Cllr Lee Reeves East Suffolk District Council  
5 members of the public

#### **Report from Pc Arlene Ell**

Arlene said that she had attended the Monday Coffee Morning recently to build a relationship with Levington and Stratton Hall residents and would continue to attend. If residents need support they should telephone 101 and a message would be passed to her. However, if an emergency occurs residents should always ring 999. A resident reported to Arlene that male activity in the first layby on the A45 has now moved to the end of Bridge Road in the second layby. Arlene said she would make a note of vehicle restrictions to run through the Police database and would monitor the activities in the layby.

#### **County Councillor's Report Cllr Patti Mulcahy Suffolk County Council**

Patti reported that the secondary school places have been awarded and 98% of children have gained their 1<sup>st</sup> choice. If any of the remaining 2% of children are unhappy with the place they have been awarded to contact Patti on [patti.mulcahy@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:patti.mulcahy@suffolk.gov.uk). The Suffolk County Council elections would take place on Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2026 but in the meantime council services will be carried out as usual. The Local Government Review is still awaited. The Chief Executive of Suffolk County Council has resigned and will be leaving at the end of March 2026. Duties will be split between other officers until the appointment of a new Chief Executive is announced. Patti said that the Suffolk County Council Highways budget is still very low. The priority at the moment is to fill in pot holes. Where work had been undertaken on previously flood areas these repairs have stood up well to the recent high rainfall.

Cllr D Dickerson said that Bridge Road outside the Research Station and also White House Farm are still flooding. The drains are caked with mud so that water cannot drain away. Cllr P Mulcahy said she believed it was due to tractors but Cllr D Dickerson didn't think this was the case. Cllr S Adams asked about the 20 mph speed limit. Patti stated that it is a simple process for parishes to request 20 mph speed limits however there is a cost implication. A traffic survey needs to be undertaken by Suffolk County Council. The cost of a Traffic Regulations Order is approximately £10,000. Patti stated she would send information to the Clerk to pass on to councillors. **Action: Clerk**

#### **District Councillors' Report**

### Brand New Fund to Support Smaller Parishes

At the Town Councils conference on 26<sup>th</sup> February the new Thriving Places fund was introduced which will strengthen the long-term resilience and sustainability of the district's smallest communities. The total amount available to parishes and towns outside Felixstowe and Lowestoft is £1.5 million.

Leader of East Suffolk Council, Cllr Caroline Topping said: "We recognise the challenges our rural communities' face – such as declining infrastructure, reduced access to services and the impact of social isolation, and to address the historical lack of place-based investment in these smaller communities, we are prioritising this funding support to meet each communities' specific needs. The Thriving Places Fund aims to address these challenges and empower each locality to develop projects that will have a lasting and positive impact on the lives of local people."

Communities can apply for grants of up to £50,000 to support local projects which aim to reduce inequalities in the area, help people to adapt to changes, help to protect important local assets like buildings or spaces, improve access to services, skills, wellbeing activities and local facilities and support long-term local growth.

Capital grants of between £10,000 and £50,000 will be available for purchasing or improving physical assets, while revenue grants between £5,000 and £25,000 can be utilised to cover project-specific activities and operational costs. Up to 60% of project costs will be covered by the new grants and up to 80% for successful applications from community and not-for-profit organisations. Each year communities can apply within four funding rounds, with the final decision made by a grant panel consisting of senior East Suffolk councillors and officers.

Full details will be coming shortly with the first round of funding beginning in April. We would urge parishes who have limited or no access to Neighbourhood or District CIL funds to consider applying for funding from this source. Unfortunately this funding does not apply to church buildings.

### 2026-2027 ESC Budget Passed

On Wednesday 25 February, Full Council gave approval to a balanced Budget for 2026/27 supporting vital everyday services as well as the delivery of programmes to improve the quality of people's lives.

Over £58m from the Council's General Fund revenue budgets has been allocated to pay for services such as planning, leisure, housing and environmental services, waste collection and parking.

The General Fund also allows for projects to help improve the lives of people in East Suffolk, such as supporting the most vulnerable residents through the Community Help Hub and the 'Ease the Squeeze' programme as well as funding the mobile community pantry and advice hubs until 2027/28.

The increase in the portion of council tax East Suffolk Council receive (based on a Band D property) equates to just £5.67 extra per household for the entire year – meaning residents paying only an additional 11 pence per week. However, this will enable the Council to deliver a balanced Budget which protects core services in the face of significant ongoing cost pressures from pay, service demand and inflation - which year-on-year continues to outstrip any increases.

### Proposed 70 Place Lorry Park at Stratton Hall Defeated

A proposal to build a 70-place lorry park on the old A45 at Stratton Hall was rejected by 7 votes to 2 at Planning Committee South on 24<sup>th</sup> February. The committee heard from officers who had recommended acceptance as well as the applicant and representations from objectors including Levington & Stratton Hall Parish Council. After listening to all sides, the committee found that there

was no public benefit to build on the countryside which could lead to coalescence between Ipswich and Trimley St Martin, contrary to the Local Plan.

In general, it is very helpful for the planning committee to hear from parish councils or other objectors in order that we understand local feelings on applications.

#### County Council Elections Back on After Labour U-turn

The Government have now advised that the Suffolk County Council elections will go ahead on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May after having been postponed last year and again earlier this year. Luckily the arrangements such as booking polling places and hiring polling staff had been continued by Suffolk's district councils. We should all know how many unitary councils for Suffolk there will be within the next two weeks.

To summarise county councillors elected in May will sit in that role until April 2028 when Suffolk County Council will cease to exist. In May 2027 there will be elections to the new Shadow Authority which will take over from both the current District and elected County councillors in April 2028.

The Mayoral election for both Suffolk and Norfolk will take place in May 2028.

#### Ease the Squeeze on Cost of Living

Are you, or someone you know, worried about the increasing cost of living? We understand the pressures faced by many people today and we are working closely with key partners to ensure support is available to help ease the squeeze for households in East Suffolk.

To make it as easy as possible for you to access the services and support available, locally and nationally, we have gathered information about them in one place: [www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/squeeze/](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/squeeze/)

For the most up to date information regarding East Suffolk Council, please visit: [www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk)

**View the Well Minds East Suffolk booklet:** [tinyurl.com/9xhka624](https://tinyurl.com/9xhka624).

#### 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.)

Sally Long said that the adult defibrillator pads became out of use by date on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2026. She said that Andrew Timmins who is the lead for the defibrillator is going to contact the defibrillator circuit organisers and inform them of the situation. He will also find out whether the defibrillator needs to be taken out of commission until new pads are available. Sally Long also said that it would be advantageous for some residents to have training on CPR. The Clerk agreed to contact Andrew Timmins. **Action: Clerk**

#### **16.26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mike Ninnmey East Suffolk Council.

#### **17.26 CODE OF CONDUCT & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

#### **18.26 TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE 12<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2026**

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2026, which had previously been circulated, were approved, and signed as a true record by Cllr C Yeo (Chairman).

#### **19.26 MATTERS TO REPORT FROM THE LATEST MINUTES (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)**

There were no matters arising.

#### **20.26 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE ADOPTION OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SCHEME**

The Co-ordinator of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme Cllr S Adams reported that 43 residents have now joined the scheme which she has been advised by both the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and Pc Arlene Ell is a very good result. Cllr Adams said that she was still hoping that more residents will join the scheme. Posters have been displayed throughout Levington and Stratton Hall villages. An article is being posted in the Parish Magazine to highlight the benefits of joining the scheme.

#### **21.26 TO DISCUSS CREATING A COMMUNITY HUB FROM MARCH 2026**

The Chairman stated that a request had been received from the Helen Kingston-Ross and Sally Long to extend the funding of the Community Hub from April 2026 to September 2026 twice month ie 12 sessions and if it continues to be successful to extend the funding further from October 2026 to March 2027 if it continues to be successful. Another review to take place at the September 2026 Parish Council meeting. Organisers report that the support from volunteers has been good and they have managed to recruit a volunteer for each session. The use of the Hub by residents is averaging 8-9 per session and that service users would welcome the continuation of the Hub. The cost for the 6-month period from April to September 2026 (6 months) would require the Parish Council to commit funding for 6 months x 2 sessions per month x £25 per session (ie 12 sessions) £300.

The organisers are confident that they can provide on-going support and commitment from volunteers and that residents will continue to support and gain benefit from the Hub continuing to open twice a month.

The Parish Council discussed whether the Community Hub should continue funded by the Parish Council. Cllr J Parrish stated that he believed the Parish Council should fund the initiative for 6 months but not fund indefinitely. Several councillors expressed differing views about the continuation of the Community Hub. It was suggested that the Parish Council should seek funding from the District Council Enabling Budget. Cllr Lee Reeves stated that the coming year would be the last year of ESC funding. Cllr J Parrish proposed that the Clerk be asked to complete an Enabling Budget application form to request funding for 6 months, seconded Cllr C Myhill – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

#### **22.26 TO DISCUSS AND PLAN SECURITY IN LEVINGTON AND STRATTON HALL PARISHES**

Cllr J Parrish reported that he had been investigating security in the parishes of Levington and Stratton Hall and in particular options for slowing down the speed of traffic through the villages. Cllr Parrish said he would highlight the pros and cons of each method of speed reduction.

**ANPR** - Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras use specialised, high-speed cameras and Optical Character Recognition (OCR) to automatically read and digitalize vehicle license plates in

real-time. They are extensively used by police for crime detection, and by operators for parking management, tolling, and access control.

### **Example of Costs**

These are purely indicative costs based on what has been seen with previous police installations. Actual costs can vary quite a bit depending on things like street lighting column strength, whether traffic management is needed, power availability and similar factors.

- A straightforward single-camera installation onto an existing suitable street lighting column is usually in the region of at least £7,500.
- More complex single-camera installations, especially where civil work or a new power supply is needed, can go up to around £40,000.
- On-going annual costs are typically about £500 for support and maintenance, plus roughly £240 per year for the mobile data connection per camera.

Levington and Stratton Hall would be 3 cameras.

**SIDS** – A SID is a battery operated or solar powered radar device that detects speed of vehicles up to 150m from its position. It indicates speed of vehicles travelling towards the sign with an appropriate message to drivers. It also detects speed of vehicles travelling in the opposite direction away from the sign.

No costing has been sourced until the Parish Council decides whether it's a viable option due to the many variables.

Councillors discussed the likely significance of whether SIDs work.

**SPEED BUMPS** – This option was discounted due to its likely unpopularity with village residents.

Councillors discussed the three options available however it is likely that the only viable option would be SIDs.

Cllr J Parrish was asked to investigate SIDs further and report back his findings to the May 2026 Parish Council meeting. **Action: Clerk / Cllr J Parrish**

Security cameras were discussed by the Parish Council however it was felt that due to GDPR it was unlikely that cameras would be allowed on the Village Hall.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a comprehensive EU law, also enacted as UK GDPR, regulating how personal data is processed, stored, and protected. It mandates that data be handled lawfully, transparently, and securely, while granting individuals rights like access, erasure, and portability. Non-compliance risks significant fines.

### **23.26 TO DISCUSS DELIVERY ISSUES REGARDING THE DEFIBRILLATOR ADULT PADS**

The Clerk reported that unfortunately the adult set of defib pads ordered in December 2025 have still not been received from the suppliers; The Defib Store. Unfortunately there is a national shortage and no firm date for receipt of the adult pads is available. The adult defib pads reached their expiry date on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2026 and it is likely that the defibrillator circuit organisers will take the defibrillator

out of commission until new pads are available. It was agreed that a notice should be placed on the Levington Together WhatsApp Group and on the Defibrillator on the Village Hall. **Action: Clerk / Andrew Timmins / Sally Long**

#### **24.26 ADOPTION OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES 2025/2026**

- a. **Risk Assessment**
- b. **Code of Conduct**
- c. **Mission Statement**
- d. **Freedom of Information**
- e. **Asset Register**
- f. **Data and Information Protection Policy**
- g. **IT Policy**
- h. **Biodiversity Policy**

Cllr A Wignall proposed that the Policies and Procedures 2025/2026 a. to h. above, which had previously been circulated to councillors, should be approved with the following amendment to the Data and Information Protection Policy (Page 9 Users will not use their device to store Council emails, files and data) **delete** the word emails, seconded Cllr J Parrish – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

#### **25.26 FINANCE**

- a. **Income**  
None

- b. **Expenditure**

Mrs A J Buggs Salary & Expenses Jan/Feb	£934.83
St George's Flag (Paid to Clerk)	£178.80
Seale Newsletters	£124.00
Native Garden and Forestry Trickers Wood	£900.00
Community Action Suffolk One Suffolk Hosting	£66.00

Cllr A Wignall proposed, seconded Cllr J Parrish that the above expenditure is approved – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

- c. **Bank Balances**

Current Account as at 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2026	£9,553.95
Deposit Account as at 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2026	£24,608.61

The Parish Council noted the balances as at the 31st January 2026, for both the Community Account and the Premium Account.

- d. **To discuss appointment of Internal Auditor 2025/2026**

The Clerk reported that Trevor Brown had been the Parish Council's Auditor since 2019 and provided sound advice and support. Cllr C Yeo proposed, seconded Cllr S Adams that Mr Trevor Brown be appointed as Internal Auditor for 2025/2026 – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

#### **26.26 PLANNING**

- a. **General – Updated Planning List for March 2026**

The Parish Council noted the contents of the Planning List.

**b. Planning Applications**

**i. DC/23/2930/OUT Outline Application (Some Matters Reserved) - Construction of lorry park comprising up to 70 no. lorry parking spaces inclusive of ancillary office, driver's building, staff parking, landscaping and associated CCTV and lighting apparatus (with access and layout) Land South of Felixstowe Road Stratton Hall Suffolk**

The Chairman reported that a Planning Committee Meeting had been held on Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026 and the Planning Application submitted by Prologic had been refused. The Chairman offered a vote of thanks to both District Councillors for their support. A copy of the Refusal Notice has been posted on the Levington and Stratton Hall website. Prologic has 6 months to Appeal the Decision.

**ii. DC/26/0241/FUL Unit B Walk Farm Old Felixstowe Road Stratton Hall Ipswich Suffolk IP10 OLR Change of use of building from Class E(g) to mixed use Class E(g)/Class B8 – Lead Councillor Chris Myhill**

Cllr C Myhill reported that he had consulted with near neighbours of the site who did not raise any objections. However, concerns had been raised that the change of use will allow for a retail outlet. In order to be used for retail the usage class must be either E(a) – display or retail sale of goods or F2(a) – shops selling essential goods. One neighbour had a slight concern around a retail outlet called Lumberjacks which he has heard a rumour were looking at Unit B as a possibility. The concern being the amount of extra traffic. Lumberjacks are currently in Bramford Road and are suppliers to the fencing, landscaping and timber trade.

SCC Highways – Ben Winton stated “notice is hereby given that Suffolk County Council Highways does not wish to restrict the grant of permission due to the application not having a detrimental effect upon the adopted highway”.

Environmental Protection – “we have no comments to make regarding this application”.

The Groundsure Report does not highlight any adverse effects of the change of use.

There may be some concerns that the change of use could increase traffic and noise. However, I feel the Design and Access Statement addresses this point. In the Statement the applicant notes the following about their proposed operational hours. The current operating hours for Unit B are 08:00 – 18:00 Monday – Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 on Saturdays. It is therefore proposed that the same hours are used for this proposed change of use. They go on to state that they do not propose any fixed plant or machinery.

I would recommend that the Parish Council seeks for continuation of the conditions regarding working hours and noise machinery that currently exist and as set out in the applicant’s Design and Access Statement Clause 4.1.

**The Chairman closed the meeting to allow members of the public to speak.**

No member of the public wished to comment.

**The Chairman reopened the meeting.**

Following discussion the Parish Council agreed not to object to the Planning Application.  
**Action: Clerk**

All relevant correspondence has been forwarded to councillors.

## **28.26 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS**

### **a. Church Field Warden**

Report from Cllr Derek Dickerson

A request had been received from the Flower Show Committee and Garden Club to use Church Field for a summer fete type event Summer 2026. Date to be decided. It is anticipated that the event will be a small low level village gathering including flowers and produce displayed on the field, kids games and a refreshment stand. It will be self-funded with no financial liability to the Parish Council. The Flower Show Committee has its own insurance policy although the Clerk stated such an event would be covered under the Parish Council Public Liability Insurance. The Parish Council welcomed the use of Church Field for such an event. Discussions took place regarding entry on to the field and cutting of grass however these aspects will be agreed nearer the time. **Action: Cllr D Dickerson / Clerk**

### **b. Trickers Wood**

Report from Cllr Ann Wignall

Cllr Wignall reported that the piles of logs are still in Trickers Wood.

### **c. Village Hall**

Report from Cllr John Parrish

A new amplification kit has been trialled tonight and appears to be adequate for the Parish Council's requirements. The new bookshelves are in place and appear to have been well received.

### **d. Sir Robert Hitcham's Almshouses**

Report from the Parish Council appointed trustee Cllr Sarah Adams

The work on the new roofs should be started on the 28th March. The Trustees will be informing local residents in area of the almshouses and letters have been distributed. The work will take approximately 15 weeks to complete but if the weather is good it could be less.

### **e. Public Transport**

Report from Marian Rose

Nothing to report.

### **f. Footpaths**

Report from Cllr John Parrish

The railings leading up to the foreshore at the end of the boardwalk are still a major hazard to any person reliant upon them for stability when going up or down the steps. The footpath sign is still propped up on entry to Levington Lagoon carpark. No new updates regarding dog fouling thus "no change". I understand the dumped rubbish on the bridle way from Redhouse to Nacton has been removed.

### **g. Port Liaison Group**

Report by Cllr Derek Dickerson/Cllr Chris Myhill

We are still waiting for the last set of minutes to be issued. Cllr C Myhill said he would distribute the minutes to councillors once they are received. **Action: Cllr C Myhill / Cllr D Dickerson**

**h. Police / SNT / ASB**

Nothing to report.

**i. ESPA**

Report from Cllr Neil Downing

Unable to download documents due to not having sufficient permission on Google Drive.

**j. Cross-Parish Boundary Group**

Report by Cllr Chris Yeo

The findings of the lorry park Planning Application will be used by the Cross-Parish Boundary Group for subsequent planning applications.

**29.26 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

**Annual Parish Council Meeting Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

**Annual Parish Meeting Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

**The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.50 pm.**

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

A resident said that the Flower Show Committee may require some of the fencing around Church Field to be taken down to gain access to the field for the summer event. It was noted that access could be gained via Pilots Way. Details to be discussed nearer the time. **Action: Cllr D Dickerson**

A resident mentioned that the wall around the Cannon has been hit by a vehicle and is in need of repair. **Action: Cllr C Yeo**

A resident requested that a "tidy up" day be organised in the Spring. Cllr N Downing said he would organise. **Action: Cllr N Downing**

Signed..... Date .....

Angie Buggs

Clerk to Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council