

## LEVINGTON AND STRATTON HALL PARISH COUNCIL

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

Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025 7.15 pm

#### **Present:**

Cllr John Ross (Chairman)

Cllr Derek Dickerson

Cllr John Parrish

Cllr Neil Downing

Cllr C Yeo

Cllr A Wignall

Parish Clerk Angie Buggs

4 members of the public

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

No report.

#### **District Councillors' Report Cllr Mike Ninmey East Suffolk Council / Cllr Lee Reeves East Suffolk Council**

##### **Litter Clearance on A14**

At the end of April, clearance of litter from the verges of the A14 between the Dock Spur roundabout and Seven Hills was undertaken by Highways Assurance contracted by East Suffolk Council. This necessitated several overnight lane closures for the safety of workers. The overall cost for this project was over £ 28,000.

It is hoped that following a safety review it will be possible for East Suffolk Services Ltd to undertake twice- yearly litter picks along this stretch of the A14 together with a regular programme of emptying of bins and clearance of lay-bys. This new approach will maintain a litter-free network of laybys and help reduce the risk of littering in future.

The easiest way to reduce the need for costly litter-picking and lane closures is for people to dispose of their litter properly when travelling on our roads, by using one of the many roadside litter bins or taking their rubbish home with them.

To report any concerns over roadside litter, or any matters relating to refuse or cleansing please contact our Customer Services team on 0333 016 2000 or [customerservices@eastsoffolk.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@eastsoffolk.gov.uk)

##### **Trimley Water Tower**

The water tower in Sriteshall Lane Trimley St Mary was built in 1934 and is the tallest surviving tower of its type in the UK at 210ft. It ceased to be used as a water tower many years ago and since 2005 has been owned by a management company in London and is used to host telecommunications equipment.

There have been recent reports of concrete falling from the structure into gardens below. We have contacted Environmental Protection at ESC and subsequently Building Control who are now taking up the matter with the owners. Whilst this issue is not new the netting which had been previously fitted

by the owners has perished and needs replacement and for some remedial work to parts of the tower to ensure the safety of residents at the base of the tower and to preserve this iconic landmark.

### **Local Government Re-organisation**

ESC has now heard back from the Government following the submissions made to them by the District & Borough councils of Suffolk for multiple unitary authorities. They have not provided any guidance as to whether a three unitary authority comprising around 270,000 each would be accepted against the indicated target of 500,000 residents per unitary.

Councils have been advised that all transition costs (currently estimated to be between £12 and £ 20 million) would need to be met from existing council budgets pending the anticipated “savings” that would be made.

We had a briefing from the leader of Westmoreland and Furness unitary authority which was one of two unitary authorities created in Cumbria in 2023. Like Suffolk it is a largely rural area with several major towns. The transition took them more than three years to achieve and a full bedding in of services is not expected for several years with no real savings yet.

### **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).

A member of the public asked whether the Clerk had contacted the Parish Council’s insurance company regarding volunteers carrying out litter picking on the highway. The Clerk reported that the Parish Council is insured for volunteers carrying out work on their behalf however a Risk Assessment would need to be completed. Councillors expressed concern about volunteers picking litter on the Old A45 due to the speed of traffic and the danger posed to workers on the dual carriageway. The resident pointed out that the road which goes to the Marina is just as dangerous. The resident said that he has five volunteers who work on different areas in the villages. Another resident said that she supported the work of the litter pickers who have done a wonderful job over the years. She said the residents also have a day when villages volunteer to clean signs and bus shelters.

**The Parish Council held a minute’s silence in memory of May who passed away last week. May was 100 years old and had lived in the village of Levington all her life. The Chairman said that May will be greatly missed by all who knew her.**

### **133.25 TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN AND RECEIVE HIS/HER ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

Cllr J Ross (retiring Chairman) asked for nominations for the office of Chairman of the Parish Council. Cllr J Ross stated that he would not be standing for re-election. Cllr J Parrish proposed that Cllr C Yeo be elected as Chairman, seconded by Cllr A Wignall – all in favour. As there were no other nominations, Cllr C Yeo was duly elected for year 2025/2026 and signed the Acceptance of Office form countersigned by the Parish Clerk. **Action: Clerk**

### **134.25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies were received.

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

No declarations of interest were received.

#### **136.25 TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE 3<sup>rd</sup> MARCH 2025**

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025 which had previously been circulated, were approved, and signed as a true record by Cllr C Yeo (Chairman).

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

##### **119.25 Deletion of Data on the Old PC**

Cllr N Downing confirmed that the data had been removed from the Parish Council old laptop. It was agreed that the laptop which can be used with the projector should be placed in the Parish Council's cupboard in the Village Hall. **Action: Cllr J Parrish**

##### **122.25 Discuss and agree the Celebration Arrangements to Mark VE Day 80 – 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

Cllr C Yeo reported that the VE Day 80 Celebration had been very successful and offered a vote of thanks to Cllr A Wignall.

#### **138.25 TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF CLLR JOHN ROSS**

Cllr C Yeo reported that as of today's date Cllr J Ross has resigned from the Parish Council. The Chairman offered a vote of thanks for all the hard work John had undertaken during the time he had served on the Parish Council and also as Chairman. Cllr C Yeo presented John with a card and gift on behalf of the Parish Council. **Action: Clerk**

#### **139.25 TO DISCUSS AND APPOINT A NEW COUNCILLOR**

The Chairman reported that Sarah Gregory had put herself forward to become a Parish Councillor and the Clerk had checked her eligibility. Cllr C Yeo proposed that Sarah Gregory be co-opted on to the Parish Council, seconded Cllr J Parrish – all in favour. As Sarah Gregory was not present at the meeting it was agreed that the Clerk would arrange for Sarah to sign her Declaration of Acceptance of Office form, and the Clerk said she would arrange for the completion of the Register of Interests with East Suffolk Council. **Action: Clerk / Cllr S Gregory**

#### **140.25 TO ELECT A VICE CHAIRMAN**

Cllr J Ross asked for nominations for the office of Vice Chairman of the Parish Council. Cllr C Yeo proposed that Cllr J Parrish be elected as Vice Chairman, seconded by Cllr D Dickerson – all in favour. As there were no other nominations, Cllr J Parrish was duly elected. **Action: Clerk**

#### **141.25 TO ELECT COMMITTEES, OFFICERS AND LEAD COUNCILLORS**

The Parish Council agreed to elect the following committees and officers for the year 2025/2026. **Action: Clerk**

<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>LEAD COUNCILLOR(S) / CONTACT</b>
Chairman	Cllr Chris Yeo
Vice Chairman	Cllr John Parrish
Parish Clerk / RFO	Angie Buggs
Internal Auditor	Trevor Brown
External Auditors	PK Littlejohn
<b>SUB GROUPS</b>	

Planning Committee	Full Council (3 quorum)
Finance and Advisory Group	Full Council (3 quorum)
<b>PC REPRESENTATION</b>	
Church Field Warden	Cllr Derek Dickerson
Tree Warden	Neil Bixby
Public Transport	Marian Rose
Emergency Plan	Cllr Neil Downing
Newsletter Editor / Producer	Cllr Ann Wignall
Newsletter Delivery	Full Council
SALC	Vacant
Website / PR Communication	Cllr Neil Downing
Remembrance Day Organisation	Angie Buggs
Notice Board	Cllr Ann Wignall
Almshouses Trustee	Jane Timmins
Statutory Notices	Cllr Ann Wignall / Angie Buggs
Village Hall Trustee	Cllr John Parrish
Village Beacon	Cllr John Parrish
Footpath Warden	Cllr John Parrish
Councillor for Road Safety	Full Council
<b>EXTRNAL ENGAGEMENT</b>	
Neighbourhood Watch	Vacant
Port Liaison Meetings	Cllr John Parrish / Cllr Derek Dickerson
ASB / SNT Policy Tasking Mtgs	Vacant
Nacton Primary School	Angie Buggs
Cross Boundary Group (Innocence Lane)	Vacant

Cllr N Downing proposed that the list of roles and responsibilities be agreed, seconded Cllr J Parrish – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

#### 142.25 FINANCE

##### a. Income

Warm Room (Final Payment)	£500.00
Precept 1 <sup>st</sup> Half	£6,439.30

##### b. Expenditure

Mrs A J Buggs Salary & Expenses March / April 2025	£853.15
Mrs A J Buggs – Gift to Councillor	£110.49
Friends of St Peters – Repair to fence Church Field	£100.00
SALC Payroll	£27.00
SALC Subs	£167.67
Ann Wignall – VE Day Costs	£292.72

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

##### c. Bank Balances

Current Account as at 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2025	£12,894.23
Deposit Account as at 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2025	£24,180.83

The Parish Council noted the balances as at the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025 for both the Community Account and the Premium Account.

The Parish Council noted that £15,000 had been transferred from the current account to the deposit account on the 20<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

Cllr C Yeo reported that the Clerk was still working on the banking arrangements for the Parish Council.

#### **143.25 TO DISCUSS AND APPROVE THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2024/2025**

The Clerk had previously distributed a copy of the year-end accounts to each councillor and presented the accounts for 2024/2025 to the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr J Parrish, seconded Cllr A Wignall that the year-end accounts 2024/2025 be accepted – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

#### **144.25 TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE AGAR PART 2 – 2024/2025**

**a. Section 1 Internal Control**

Section 1 Internal Control of the AGAR had been circulated prior to the meeting and the Chairman asked for any comments. Cllr J Parrish proposed that the Chairman sign Section 1 Internal Control on behalf of the Parish Council, seconded Cllr D Dickerson – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

**b. Section 2 Accounting Statement**

Section 2 Accounting Statement of the AGAR had been circulated prior to the meeting and the Chairman asked for any comments. Cllr J Parrish proposed that the Chairman sign Section 2 Accounting Statement on behalf of the Parish Council, seconded Cllr D Dickerson – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

**c. Certificate of Exemption**

Certificate of Exemption of the AGAR had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Clerk reported that to qualify for exemption of an external audit the Parish Council's income or expenditure for the year must be below £25,000. Cllr J Parrish proposed that the Chairman sign the Certificate of Exemption on behalf of the Parish Council, seconded Cllr D Dickerson – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

#### **145.25 TO CONFIRM WHETHER THE PARISH COUNCIL CONTINUES TO MEET THE GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE FOR THE YEAR 2025/2026**

The conditions for eligibility are set out in the Statutory Instrument, Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012. They are:

##### Electoral Mandate

At the time the resolution is passed, at least two thirds of the members of the council must hold office as a result of being declared elected. This means they should have stood for election, whether at an ordinary or by election, even if unopposed, rather than co-opted or appointed. If the two thirds number is not a whole number, then it must be rounded up. For example, if the total number of councillors is 8, then two thirds is approximately 5.3, then the number of councillors that must be elected is 6.

### Qualified clerk

At the time the resolution is passed the clerk must hold the certificate in local Council Administration, the Certificate of Higher Education in Local Policy, the Certificate of Higher Education in Local Council Administration or the first level of the foundation degree in Community Engagement and Governance (or successor qualifications) awarded by the University of Gloucestershire. The clerk must also have completed training in the exercise of this power as part of one of these qualifications or as separate exercise.

If the council loses its qualified clerk or has insufficient elected councillors, then it must record its ineligibility at the next 'relevant' annual meeting of the council (after the ordinary election). If it has already started an activity, it can finish that but not start anything new.

Cllr C Yeo reported that the Parish Council no longer has sufficient councillors to meet the electoral mandate criteria therefore it no longer meets the General Power of Competence. Noted by the Parish Council. **Action: Clerk**

### **146.25 TO DISCUSS PROGRESS OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2025**

Cllr J Parrish reported that the arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting were progressing well. A notice has been placed on the Parish Council website, the notice board and WhatsApp Group and that a flyer would be distributed to every household in the villages. Cllr J Parrish has arranged for a Guest Speaker Mark Middleton and colleagues from Orwell Park School to talk about "Astronomy and the Observatory at the School" and village organisations have been requested to provide a resume of what they are hoping to achieve over the next year. Cheese and Wine are being organised by Cllr J Parrish and Clerk. In the absence of the Chairman Cllr C Yeo, Cllr J Parrish will Chair the meeting and act as host for the evening. **Action: Cllr J Parrish / Clerk**

### **147.25 TO DISCUSS AND AUTHORISE THE WORK RE TRICKER'S WOOD BY A TREE SURGEON**

Cllr A Wignall reported that the £550 plus VAT authorised by the Parish Council at their meeting in March had been allocated for Neil Bixby to carry out the necessary work in Tricker's Wood. However, because all the trees have TPOs East Suffolk Council require that the work is carried out by a qualified Tree Surgeon. Cllr A Wignall has contacted Seth Lord of Native Gardens & Trees and received a verbal estimate of £1,100 plus VAT. Once Planning Permission has been agreed with East Suffolk Council Seth Lord will provide the Parish Council with a detailed estimate of the work to be undertaken. Following discussion, Cllr C Yeo proposed that the Parish Council accept Seth Lord's verbal estimate of £1,100 plus VAT subject to a final estimate being submitted, seconded Cllr N Downing – all in favour. **Action: Cllr A Wignall / Clerk**

### **148.25 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE LITTER PICKING**

The Parish Council discussed both litter picking and the cleaning of signs and bus shelters. Concern was expressed by some councillors about litter picking taking place on the Old A45 Dual Carriageway.

Following discussion Cllr N Downing proposed that the Parish Council support the litter picking and cleaning of signs and bus shelters in the villages, seconded Cllr C Yeo – all in favour.

Cllr N Downing agreed to work with Ian Angus to produce a Risk Assessment. **Action: Cllr N Downing**

It was agreed that litter picking should be discussed at the Annual Parish Meeting on Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025. **Action: Cllr John Parrish / Clerk**

#### **149.25 PLANNING**

**a. General – Updated Planning List for May 2025**

The Parish Council noted the contents of the Planning List.

**b. DC/25/1568/FUL 1-2 Gun Hill Cottages Church Lane Levington Ipswich Suffolk IP10 0LQ  
Installation of roof windows and rebuilding of existing garden store – Lead Councillor Cllr  
Chris Yeo**

The application relates to the rebuilding of the storage shed attached to the side elevation of 1-2 Gun Hill Cottage Church Lane Levington IP10 0LD.

The shed length is being extended by a metre into the rear garden but is reduced in width so that it will no longer be right against the boundary of the next-door cottage, 3 Gun Hill Cottage. Additionally, it will have a pitched roof with the inclusion of 2 windows set in the new roof for additional light and this will be tiled in similar material to the main house roof.

Cllr C Yeo said that he had visited the property and spoken to the applicant. The end elevation of the shed can be seen from the road but the only change that will be visible is that there will be an increase in pitch to the roof line and the new shed will be slightly narrower than the existing.

Cllr C Yeo consulted with neighbours in both 3 and 4 Gun Hill Cottages, neither of which had any objections to the proposals. They will not be overlooked as a result of the inclusion of the roof windows and number 3 in particular appears to benefit by the side of the shed being moved in from the boundary of their property and a close board fence installed.

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

No comments were received.

**The Chairman reopened the Parish Council Meeting.**

Cllr C Yeo proposed that that the Parish Council do not object to this application, seconded Cllr J Parrish – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

**c. DC/25/1509/FUL Almshouses Bridge Road Levington Suffolk Listed Building Consent Re-roofing works, new loft hatch, minor chimney and brick repair works – Lead Councillor Cllr  
John Parrish**

The work to be carried out consists of stripping off the old roof and completely replacing it with new materials in the same style as the old one. This project is long overdue, as it has seen many “make do and mend” projects in the past. In addition, the chimneys will be repointed and new loft hatches installed. The Almshouse lay-by will be used by the workmen with minimal road disruption.

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

No comments were received.

**The Chairman reopened the Parish Council Meeting.**

Cllr J Parrish proposed that the Parish Council do not object to this application, seconded Cllr N Downing – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

- d. DC/25/1668/FUL Cedarwood Bridge Road Levington Ipswich Suffolk IP10 0LZ Erect car port and shed. Convert lean-to greenhouse to store. Extend driveway to carport – Lead Councillor Cllr Neil Downing**

Cllr N Downing stated that the application relates to several minor changes to the outbuildings as part of the property.

Currently the site, located to the front of the house contains a garage, small greenhouse and to the rear a larger greenhouse. The proposal is to convert the smaller greenhouse into a store, add a carport between the existing garage and the boundary hedge and add another shed to the rear of the carport. Once completed the driveway will also need to be widened to allow vehicular access to the new carport.

Both neighbours were consulted and neither of which had any objections to the proposals.

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

No comments were received.

**The Chairman reopened the Parish Council Meeting.**

Cllr N Downing proposed that the Parish Council do not object to this application, seconded Cllr J Parrish – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

**150.25 CORRESPONDENCE**

All relevant correspondence has been forwarded to councillors.

**151.25 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS**

**a. Church Field Warden**

Report from Cllr Derek Dickerson

Church Field was used for VE Day celebrations which had been very successful. Cllr A Wignall stated that Tom Bixby is now cutting the field and he has completed the first major cut.

**b. Village Hall**

Report from Cllr John Parrish

Nothing to report.

**c. Sir Robert Hitcham's Almshouses**

Report from the Parish Council appointed trustee

Nothing to report.

**d. Public Transport**

Nothing to report.

**e. Footpaths**

Report from Cllr John Parrish

Cllr J Parrish reported that the following two issues have not been resolved.

- Footpath sign at Levington Lagoon has still not been replaced.
- The loose post at the end of the Boardwalk section where it rises to join the sea wall and the Charlies III Walk has still not been dealt with.

The Clerk was requested to write to Martin Williams Suffolk County Council Footpaths Officer.

**Action: Clerk**

**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.

It was agreed that the Clerk would send details of ESPA's meetings to Cllr N Downing with a view to him attending future meetings. **Action: Clerk / Cllr N Downing**

**i. Trickers Wood**

Report by Cllr Ann Wignall

Discussed Item 147.25 of the agenda.

**152.25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 Annual Parish Meeting / Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025 IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

**The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.40 pm.**

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

Cllr D Dickerson asked whether TPOs had been applied for on the trees on the edge of Pilots Way; 16 Beech Trees, 2 Chestnut Trees, 1 Laburnum Tree and 1 Hawthorne Tree. Cllr A Wignall replied she was in the process of applying for TPOs. The question was asked whether the Police had taken any action regarding the vandalism of the trees. The Police had investigated and decided to take no further action.

A resident asked about the Annual Parish Meeting reports from organisations being about the coming year rather than reporting on what had already happened. He stated that the two organisations he represents had not been approached. A member of the public stated she had received a request from the Parish Council for a report.

Thanks were expressed to Cllr A Wignall for the brilliant organisation of the VE Day celebrations.

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

Angie Buggs  
Clerk to Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council