

LEVINGTON AND STRATTON HALL PARISH COUNCIL

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

Monday, 29th June 2026 7.15 pm

Cllr Chris Yeo (Chairman)
Cllr A Wignall
Cllr C Myhill
Cllr S Adams
Cllr D Dickerson
Cllr J Parrish
Cllr N Downing
Parish Clerk Angie Buggs
Cllr L Reeves East Suffolk Council
Cllr M Nimney East Suffolk Council
Cllr P Mulcahy Suffolk County Council
1 member of the public

District Councillors' Report

Cllr L Reeves apologised for the problems associated with the current poor waste collection service and the affect it is having on many residents particularly in the more rural areas. Officers are working closely with East Suffolk Services to understand the causes of the underperformance in certain collection rounds. Some of the issues have been as a result of the extreme temperatures which has caused high levels of staff absence, primarily affecting loaders and drivers. The Cabinet met with Strategic Directors and senior staff on the 24th June and a statement was sent out to all councillors on the 26th June. Unfortunately ESC, in common with many councils, has only received a proportion of the additional costs for the national roll-out of this scheme from Westminster. In our case the shortfall is roughly £1 million which we have to find from other budgets or reserves. The Parish Council were reminded to apply for bulbs for planting in the autumn which had been advertised in the previous District Councillors' report.

County Councillor's Report

Cllr P Mulcahy stated that it is important for Suffolk County Council to seek energy efficiency as much as possible and that they have recently changed their energy tariff. SCC is seeking to achieve net zero by 2030. Suffolk County Council is challenging the decision to split Suffolk into three local authorities and in fact the whole of the reorganisation. The reorganisation will continue although Suffolk County Council is seeking a judicial review. It is envisaged that the reorganisation will be in place with shadow elections in May 2027.

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.)

No comments or questions were received.

51.26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received

52.26 CODE OF CONDUCT & DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

53.26 TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 6TH MAY 2026

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 6th May 2026, which had previously been circulated, were approved, and signed as a true record by Cllr C Yeo (Chairman).

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

There were no matters arising.

55.26 FINANCE

a. Income

None

b. Expenditure

Mrs A J Buggs Salary and Expenses May/June	£908.94
HMRC NI/Tax	£549.46
Fulcher Repairs to Cannon Wall	£177.60
HMRC NI/Tax	£276.15
Mrs A J Buggs Food etc APM	£103.08
C Yeo Drinks etc APM	£79.12
Seale Newsletters	£124.00
Trevor Brown Audit Fee	£200.00
HMRC NI/Tax	£278.31

c. Bank Balances

Current Account as at 31st May 2026 £11,442.84

Deposit Account as at 31st May 2026 £24,770.90

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

d. Audit Report 2025/2026

1. To discuss and accept the contents of the Internal Audit Report

The Clerk had previously circulated the Internal Audit Report 2025/2026 to all councillors. The Internal Auditor Trevor Brown highlighted two areas on which the Parish Council should take action:

Recommendation 1: Whilst it is considered that the Council is overall demonstrating proper governance of its digital presence, the Council is advised to test the Council's Website as soon as practicably possible to determine how far the website is compliant with the latest accessibility standard WCAG 2.2 AA. Following the review, action can be taken to address any areas not in compliance with the latest standards, if it is practicable to do so.

Recommendation 2: The unpresented cheques 101142 (£20.00) and 101306 (£16.34) should be written back into the accounts as a deduction from payments in accordance with accounting practice.

On behalf of the Parish Council Cllr C Yeo thanked both the Clerk and the Internal Auditor for their efforts in achieving a successful audit. **Action: Clerk**

2. Confirmation of Exemption of External Audit

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council had received formal notification of its exemption status for an External Audit for the year ended 31st March 2026. It was noted that the Parish Council's income or expenditure was required to be less than £25,000 to be exempt from an External Audit. **Action: Clerk**

e. To note the increase in mileage rates

The Parish Council noted the increase in mileage rate from the 1st April 2026 from .45p per mile to .55p per mile which is in line with NALC / NJC guidelines. **Action: Clerk**

f. Moving the Parish Council's bank accounts to Unity Trust Bank

Cllr C Yeo reported that he and the Clerk had attended an on line presentation by Unity Trust Bank. Unity Trust Bank is completely electronic. In line with their recommendations and ease of transfer, initially only the existing signatories will be logged on the new accounts. Once all the existing bank transfers have been successful the remaining Parish Councillors will be logged as signatories. **Action: Clerk / Cllr C Yeo**

56.26 TO DISCUSS AND NOTE THE TIMETABLE FOR THE LOCAL PLAN AND DEADLINE TO SUBMIT THE LOCAL PLAN QUESTIONNAIRE

Cllr C Yeo reported that the Local Plan timetable is as follows:

May 2026	Publication of the Local Plan Timetable and Notice of Commencement
June to July 2026	Scoping consultation
May to June 2027	Consultation on the proposed Local Plan content and evidence
February to March 2028	Consultation on the proposed Local Plan
September 2028 to March 2029	Examination
April 2029	Adoption

A poster advertising the consultation has been posted on the Notice Board and the Clerk confirmed that a copy of the Local Plan briefing slides and a copy of the questionnaire have been placed on the Parish Council website. It was agreed that a notice should be placed on the Levington Whatsapp Group. **Action: Clerk / Cllr A Wignall / Cllr C Yeo**

Cllr C Yeo stated that a completed questionnaire should be submitted by the Parish Council and asked that councillors submitted their comments to him by the Friday, 17th July so that he would be in a position to incorporate the views of all councillors and submit to East Suffolk Council by the deadline which is the 29th July 2026. Cllr N Downing agreed to endeavour to produce a MS Word document based on the pdf document. **Action: Cllr N Downing / All Councillors / Clerk**

Cllr C Yeo suggested that in addition to the submission by the Parish Council councillors should submit individual responses. **Action: All Councillors**

57.26 UPDATE ABOUT LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

The Government made the decision to split Suffolk into three unitary authorities and they have submitted the proposed initial Ward boundaries.

Suffolk County Council is challenging the decision to split Suffolk into three local authorities and in fact the whole of the reorganisation. The reorganisation will continue although Suffolk County Council is seeking a judicial review. It is envisaged that the reorganisation will be in place with shadow elections in May 2027.

58.26 TO DISCUSS AND CONFIRM THE NALC FINANCIAL REGULATIONS 2025

The NALC Financial Regulations 2025 had previously been circulated to all councillors. Cllr C Yeo proposed that the Parish Council accept the NALC Financial Regulations 2025 for the year 2026/2027, seconded Cllr A Wignall – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

59.26 TO DISCUSS AND CONFIRM THE NALC STANDING ORDERS 2025

The NALC Standing Orders 2025 had previously been circulated to all councillors. Cllr C Yeo proposed that the Parish Council accept the NALC Revised Standing Orders 2025 for the year 2026/2027, seconded Cllr C Myhill – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

60.26 TO DISCUSS THE ESC PATHWAY CLEARANCE SCHEME

Cllr Sarah Adams, Cllr Chris Yeo, Cllr John Parrish and the Clerk will be meeting with Aimee McLachlan Sustainable Travel Officer in the village on the 16th July 2026 to discuss how the pathways could be made more accessible in Levington and Stratton Hall.

Various options for pathway clearance will be discussed with Aimee as follows. Suffolk County Council Highways operate a self-help scheme which is very useful to enable qualified leadership skills (and insurance) plus freebies from SCC to lead volunteer groups for basic clearance in and around villages. This in combination with more difficult or areas close to busy roads Aimee has a small budget to clear pavements using an external grounds maintenance team who will clear mud / creeping bank (skirting). There could be areas for clearance that Aimee could involve the ESSL if it's a case of tree or hedge clearance (after the nesting season). They are good at clearing away this kind of vegetation as well as litter picking scheme too. Some areas in the villages will be highlighted by the Parish Council as being very difficult for residents to negotiate on foot and Aimee will be happy to investigate whether these areas are actual footpaths and could be cleared for accessibility or whether they were part of the verge / bank.

61.26 PLANNING

a. General – Updated Planning List for July 2026

The Parish Council noted the contents of the Planning List.

b. Planning Application DC/26/1725/FUL 1 Seabridge Cottages Stratton Hall Drift Stratton Hall IP10 0LW

The proposal is for change of use for no.3 glamping plots comprising two cabins and on shepherd's hut

Lead Councillor – Cllr C Yeo

PC Comment: No objection

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 6th May 2026, which had previously been circulated, were approved, and signed as a true record by Cllr C Yeo (Chairman).

c. Planning Application DC/26/1866/FUL Research Station Levington Park Bridge Road Levington Ipswich IP10 ONE

3 new window to south-west elevation. Insertion of new glazed entrance screen & doors to existing loading door opening to north-west elevation. Partial change of use from use class B8 (storage or distribution) to use class E (commercial, business & service)

Cllr C Myhill presented his report as follows.

I completed a location visit on Thursday, 18th June and spoke to Elaine Gotts whose name appears on the application details. She very helpfully explained the idea behind this application. They currently have office spaces located in one of the original buildings of this site and the layout of the office space is quite chaotic. The building is a single skin construct with what looks like an asbestos corrugated roof and as Ms Gotts confirmed is very cold in winter. The store building across the driveway is a much newer construct and energy efficient. Therefore they wish to move office space into that building. This idea can be clearly seen from the plans (Patrick Stephenson Architects - drawing 1353-02 B) submitted. The change of use then follows on from this, currently B8 (storage) change to E (commercial, business and services). In the interview it was confirmed that the company are not looking to employ extra staff if this application is successful and do not expect an increase in traffic to the site. Outside of business hours the existing roller shutter will be brought down and the new entrance screen and doors will not be visible to Bridge Road. No neighbours have been consulted and I do not see any private dwelling within the immediate area being affected by this planning application. The applicant commissioned Joe's Blooms Ltd to ascertain the biodiversity impact. Their document finds no biodiversity issues with this application and they point to the government guidelines. A detailed description and reasons appears in the document 'Regulation 4 Exception Report' on the East Suffolk website for this planning application. East Suffolk environment protection has posted 'no comment' for this application on 18th June. Suffolk County Council Rights of way responded 17th June with 8 Informative Notes. The only Note that I think needs to be addressed and that would be between applicant and SCC is that the public right of way (PROW) is kept open during and construction. In fact SCC have asked in this document that the applicant produce a construction plan of how they intend to manage construction in respect of the PROW that runs between the two buildings mentioned above. SCC in this document also state that as Highways Authority they have no objections once the Informative Notes have been answered by the applicant. I propose that this application should not be contested by the parish council. The only condition which we may consider is around keeping the PROW open during construction but this will be answered by the applicant to SCC before approval.

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 Cllr C Myhill proposed that the Parish Council do not object to the Planning Application, seconded Cllr C Yeo – all in favour. **Action: Clerk**

62.26 CORRESPONDENCE

All relevant correspondence has been forwarded to councillors.

63.26 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

a. Church Field Warden

Report from Cllr Derek Dickerson

Church Field was cut by Tom Bixby immediately before the start of the hot weather and it looks very well maintained

b. Village Hall

Report from Cllr John Parrish

There was a small electrical issue with the smoke and heat detectors which is now sorted. However, these will need replacing as they have come to the end of their shelf life. These have been booked in for exchange in October 2026. Some discussions have taken place regarding external water supply for the flowerbeds. A resident has set up an irrigation system.

c. Sir Robert Hitcham's Almshouses

Report from Cllr Sarah Adams

The work on the Almshouses' roofs is near completion. Properties 1 and 2 are completed and look superb.

d. Public Transport

Report by Marian Rose

Nothing to report.

e. Footpaths

Report from Cllr John Parrish

The rail at the steps leading to the foreshore at the end of the boardwalk is still a hazard to any person elderly or reliant upon it for stability when negotiating the steps. The footpath sign is still held up by the tree creeper at Levington lagoon car park. Dog fouling; no one has mentioned this so nothing to report. A meeting has been agreed with Aimee McLachlan from East Suffolk Council. The purpose is to evaluate our pavements and footpaths and to discuss the part, if any; East Suffolk Council can assist with. The site visit is booked for Thursday, 16th July 2026.

f. Port Liaison Group

Report from Cllr C Myhill

Strong performance: The port ended 2024 strongly and has maintained positive volumes in 2025 despite the loss of the Gemini service to London Gateway.

New shipping services: Growth has been supported by new Premier Alliance, MSC and South American services.

Record recruitment: Nearly 300 new employees were recruited in 2025; the port directly employs around 2,500 people.

Economic impact: The port supports approximately 12,000 direct jobs and 32,000 indirect jobs.

Automation and technology: Investment continues in remote-operated cranes and autonomous trucks, improving efficiency but reducing future recruitment needs.

Skills challenge: Competition for skilled workers is expected from major projects such as Sizewell C.

Rail: Rail freight volumes have recovered following Maersk's departure. Rail now accounts for 27% of traffic and continues to grow. The port remains supportive of the Ely rail enhancement project, which would increase freight and passenger capacity and reduce carbon emissions.

Development and Investment: New high-voltage substation and additional power capacity are being developed to support electrification and net-zero ambitions. Progress continues on

the Logistics Park development. A new staff office building is planned. Four new cranes for Berth 7 will arrive in 2027.

Sustainability: The port remains on track towards its 2035 decarbonisation target. Currently operating 34 autonomous electric trucks, with another 34 due in 2026. A Biosecurity Plan for the Stour and Orwell Estuary is due for publication in 2026. • Climate change adaptation planning has identified high winds as the greatest operational risk. ISO 14001 environmental certification has been renewed.

Community Engagement: The Port Community Fund awarded £27,000 to local charities and community groups. The port continues to support environmental volunteering and local community initiatives.

Key Issues Raised: Hydrogen projects remain paused due to market and infrastructure constraints. Electricity supply and grid capacity are becoming critical challenges for future development and decarbonisation. The proposed sale of CK Hutchison's ports business is on hold, but the port reports "business as usual." Summary: The report highlights a strong operational performance, significant investment in infrastructure while identifying future challenges around workforce availability, energy supply and transport infrastructure.

Bidwells Update for the Trimley Estate: Land shortages continue to restrict business growth around Felixstowe, driven by demand from the port, logistics sector and Sizewell C. London Gateway remains the port's main competitor, while limited road infrastructure remains a concern. More employment land and facilities for battery-powered HGVs are needed to support future growth and net-zero ambitions. Trinity Distribution Park is almost fully occupied. Government pressure for new housing means difficult decisions will be needed on future land use. Trinity is investing in decarbonisation and energy efficiency across its estate. A lack of electricity grid capacity is a major constraint on development and sustainability projects. Around 10km of new hedging has been planted, with further tree planting planned. Farming operations continue to expand, particularly for vegetable and salad crops. Improvements to the Trimley Managed Retreat seawall are planned for 2025/26. Trinity continues to support local charities, community groups and environmental projects through the Port Community Fund and other initiatives.

g. Police/SNT/ASB

No report.

h. ESPA

No report.

i. Cross Boundary Group

Report from Cllr C Yeo

There is another meeting at the beginning of next week therefore I will report to the next Parish Council meeting. **Action: Cllr C Yeo**

64.26 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday, 7th September 2026

The Chairman closed the meeting at 20.19 pm.

VILLAGE FORUM (an opportunity to raise items not necessarily on this agenda)

No comments or questions were requested.

Signed..... Date

Angie Buggs
Clerk to Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council