

Draft

STOKE ASH & THWAITE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held Thursday 17 July 2025, 7.30pm at Stoke Ash Village Hall

Present: Cllrs T Pulham (Chairman), G Leggett, R Kember, Mrs V Lane, Mrs C Maisey, R Maisey and G Tancred.
County Cllr A Stringer, District Cllr T Weller and one member of the public

1. **Apologies and Consent to Absence** were received Cllrs J Rosling, Mrs J Wright and G Wright
2. **To receive declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda** – none.
3. **PUBLIC FORUM:** to receive the following reports:

Police – report available online at <http://suffolk.police.uk>. No queries were raised.

County Councillor – Cllr Stringer presented his written report (copy attached to the Minutes). Additional items discussed included the Church Street, Thwaite bollards. Cllr Stringer added he would provide funding for these. Regarding the Stoke Ash internet issue. The fibre optic broadband roll-out work was now being managed at a national level by central government department [Building Digital UK \(BDUK\)](#) under their [Project Gigabit](#) programme.

The [contract for Suffolk](#) to CityFibre. SCC's role in this is focussed around supporting CityFibre to undertake the builds by facilitating access / highway consents etc.

CityFibre had a website with further information, FAQs, contact details and a postcode checker to enable Suffolk residents to check if plans exist as yet for their postcode, and sign up to be notified when builds in their area were planned at [Project Gigabit Suffolk | CityFibre](#)

The white lines at Huggins Lane, Stoke Ash – these had been re-reported to Highways.

Deadman's Lane water gauge signs – it was reported two signs had now been installed although not in the position nor visibly obvious as originally requested.

There had been no work on clearance of ditches west of Deadman's Lane. Cllr Stringer was asked to progress the clearance via the formal process.

District Councillor – Cllr Weller presented his written report (copy attached to the Minutes). Cllr Weller added he now had a response regarding the Thwaite allotment issue and would report under that item below.

Parishioners and Public (meeting open for 10 minutes)

A parishioner raised concerns that rabbits on the Thwaite Meadow were being fed lettuces by parishioners. This was encouraging the rabbits on to the meadow and into adjoining gardens. There was a request that the Parish Council put out a message to discourage this. The Chairman thanked the parishioner for bringing this concern to the attention of the council.

The Chairman proposed that item 13 on the Agenda was brought forward – proposal carried.

13. **Thwaite Meadow** – request to stop feeding rabbits
Parish Council members supported the concerns raised in the public session that it was not good practice to encourage rabbits onto Thwaite Meadow and adjoining properties. The following action was suggested in the order listed:
 1. Attach a 'Please Do Not Feed the Rabbits' sign on the meadow gate for three weeks and monitor.
Proposed Cllr Kember, seconded Cllr Mrs Lane – proposal carried.
 2. If the feeding continued after three weeks the long grass would be cut. Five councillors in favour, one against – carried.
 3. The above action would be monitored. If the feeding continued after 9 weeks pest control would be used.
Proposed Cllr Tancred, seconded Cllr Mrs Lane – proposal carried.

4. **To consider Health and Safety items for report**

Maintenance of the footbridge on the Thwaite permissive path – Cllr Pulham was dealing with this.

5. **To consider for approval Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held 15 May 2025**

Cllr Leggett proposed approval of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Mrs Maisey – unanimously agreed.

6. **Matters arising from the Minutes for report only**

17.5.18	Storage of PC documents at Ipswich Record Office	TP
18.5.23	Thwaite Comm Projects	See Agenda item below
18.5.23	Allotment plots	TP preparing plots
	Prune Fruit Tree on allotment land/coppice hedge	TP/GL
21/11/24	St George's Hall – solicitor investigating covenants	Agenda item
	OSR – Improvement Project	Pending St George's future.

	Grant funding for fruit trees on allotment land	TP
18.6.20	Review Emergency Plan	Working Group progressing with MSDC assistance. Stoke Ash Baptist Church available as a rest centre.
16/11/23	Stoke Ash: 1. Deadman's lane – provide double-sided High-Water Sign at the ford to give warning from both directions. 2. Clear pipes under road at the Ford and Bridge 3. Ditches Wetheringsett side of Deadman's Lane ford	Complete. Pending s.19 letters to landowner/s Cllr Stringer progressing As above
16/11/23	Thwaite: 1. River Dove clearance from Deadman's Lane bridge to Thwaite 2. Resolve flooding at A140/Wickham Road junction during rainfall	TP/AS Reported to Suffolk CC via website. TP offered to undertake ditch clearance Wickham Road subject to a meeting with Highway officer. If dredging work a success Willow tree to be left in situ. TP/AS
18/7/24	Replace 6-8 reflective bollards Church Lane/Wickham Road junction	AS to provide funding for 6/8 reflective bollards from locality budget
21/3/24	Thwaite Allotments – investigate whether covered by Allotment Act	Cllr Weller – see agenda item
16/1/25	St George's Hall	GL – agenda item
20/3/25	Draft dog fouling letter	Agenda item
20/3/25	Roman Way/Huggins Lane white lines	Re- reported by AS.
15/5/25	Fibre to Property – Stoke Ash	See County Councillor report above.
15/5/25	White Elm Solar Farm Open Day	Proposed Solar Farm application had been withdrawn. It was understood the majority of the land proposed for the solar farm was grade 2 agricultural land.

7. **Parish Website** – to consider and agree website editor arrangements. Deferred to September meeting.

8. **To consider Planning Application/s for recommendation to MSDC**

1. DC/25/02719: Hill Farm, Grasshopper Lane (also known as Huggins Lae) Stoke Ash - Application to determine if Prior Approval is required for a proposed Change of Use of Agricultural Buildings to Dwellings (C3) and for building operations reasonably necessary for the conversion. Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 (as amended) Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q - Change of use of agricultural barn to form 2 no dwellings.

Objections to the above had been sent to the Parish Council from two Stoke Ash parishioners. One objection related to Highway Safety and Traffic Generation and the proposal being out of character for the Farmstead. The second objection related to the lack of an asbestos survey report for the disposal of asbestos material on the roof of the barn buildings. The parishioners had requested their objections be considered prior to the Parish Council making its recommendation to MSDC.

Parish Council members considered the objections put forward it was however believed the

application for change of use of the agricultural barn to two dwellings could be good use of the building . Subject to a request that passing places were provided on the access road to the site and that the two dwellings were not let as Air B&B's, a recommendation in support of the application was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.
It was understood the issue of any asbestos removal would be a matter for Building Control at MSDC.

9. Planning Decisions received from MSDC

- DC/25/01984: Great Hallows, Church Lane, Stoke Ash - Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/24/00855 - Conditions 3 (Archaeological Works), 4 (Archaeological Recording), 5 (Bat Licence) and 6 (Biodiversity Enhancement Measures). Approved with Conditions.

10. **Planning correspondence** – White Elm Solar Farm withdrawal – see matters arising above.

11. Dog Fouling Report

It was reported the dog fouling issue on the permissive path at Thwaite continued. It was understood MSDC had a new Roving Waste Team which involved two trained MSDC officers who could be contacted to deal with responsive issues. District Cllr Weller would also provide anti dog fouling signs for areas in both villages affected by dog fouling.

12. Neighbourhood Watch report

No items to report. Cllr Kember continued to publicise scams to those parishioners on the NW list.

13. **Thwaite Meadow** – request to stop feeding rabbits – see item above.

14. Thwaite Community Projects Group

- Allotment Lettings – Cllr Weller confirmed the Thwaite allotments would be subject to the Allotments Act 1950. Cllr Weller would provide the latest version and would update the terms and conditions attached to it.
- Pruning fruit tree and coppice hedging on allotment land – The Chairman stated the pruning/coppicing work would take place during September-November. The Willow Tree/s would be taken down September/October.
- Report on grant application to fund planting fruit trees on community/allotment land – The Chairman was progressing.
- St George's Hall – report on English Heritage and Diocesan advice on sale of the property. Awaiting advice from Diocesan Solicitor regarding covenants. It was reported the Old School Room gutters were in need of maintenance. Cllr Leggett would make an inspection and report at the next meeting.

15. Finance

1. To consider s.137 donation requests

Funding requests had been received from Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice Bureau and St Elizabeth Hospice. These were declined at the present time, Councillors having agreed to offer support locally.

2. To consider and ratify Parish Council funding of Summer 2025 Solstice event

Subject to confirmation the Parish Council had previously considered a contribution to the cost of the Summer Solstice event on 21 June 2025 up to £1000. Costs for the event had now been received, these totalled £540.41, well under the anticipated expenditure. Reimbursement was due to Cllr Tancred, he having funded the cost to date. Cllr Mrs Maisey proposed payment of that amount to Cllr Tancred, seconded R Maisey – unanimously agreed.

Huge thanks were recorded to Cllr Tancred for planning the event and thanks were recorded to the team of helpers. The event had been well received and much appreciated by parishioners, some 65/70 having attended.

Cllr Tancred added a community Xmas event was planned and he asked the Parish Council to consider a contribution towards the cost. Item to be included on the September agenda.

3. Accounts for Payment/receipts received

Date	Payee	Purchase/Service	Amount	Vat	Total	Agreed/Decld	Ch no.
17/7/25	Stoke Ash VH	Hire of Hall for Solstice event	£80.00	-	£80.00	Agreed	100597
17/7/25	SALC	Internal audit fee 24-25	£230.00	£46.00	£276.00	Agreed	100598
17/7/25	Clerk	sal expen May-July 25	£783.70	-	£783.70	Agreed	100599
17/7/25	G Tancred	Summer Solstice expenses	£540.41	-	£540.41	Agreed	100600

17/6/25	E.On	OSR electricity 1/5/25 – 31/5/25	£18.57	-	£18.57	Agreed	100328
17/7/25	E.On	OSR electricity 1/6/25 – 30/6/25	£18.29	-	£18.29	Agreed	100329

Cllr Kember proposed payment of the above, seconded Cllr Leggett – unanimously agreed.

Receipts: 2/6/25 – interest 3 March – 1 June: £76.82

Bank Balances: Stoke Ash & Thwaite PC Business Premium a/c £23,885.14

Stoke Ash & thwaite Community a/c £1,020.30

Thwaite Projects Group Community a/c £5,522.25

4. **Finance Report** including review of Internal Audit Report for year-end 31.3.25

The Internal Audit report had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

The following items had been raised by the auditor:

Ensure key budget figures were recorded in the Minutes for avoidance of any dispute

When setting precept disclose the resulting Band D charge for the parish, in pound and pence as well as any percentage change.

Re-declaration of pension duties

Provide link from the Parish Council website to the MSDC Register of Members Interests information

The Council look to obtain official gov.uk email addresses directly linked to the council

The Finance Working Group agreed to meet to progress the items highlighted in the report.

5. **To consider declaration of compliance** with The Pensions Regulator – deferred.

16. **To consider for adoption the following policy documents:**

LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct

General Data Protection Regulation documents (GDPR)

Asset Register 25-26 – it was suggested the Parish Council owned bench located on the Village Hall green was transferred to the ownership of the Village Hall. Item to be included on next agenda for consideration.

Policy item deferred to next meeting to enable new councillors to comment on the policy documents above.

17. **Clerk's report/correspondence** – none.

18. **Chair's report** – Cllr Pulham reiterated thanks to Cllr Tancred on the huge success of the Summer Solstice event.

19. **Any other business for information exchange/agenda requests**

The accumulation of unwanted furniture on private land at the rear of Roman Way was raised. The pile was growing and now unsightly. It was suggested that two councillors would speak to the householder concerned in an attempt to arrange its removal.

20. **Date of next Parish Council meeting: Thursday 18 September 2025, 7.30pm at Stoke Ash Village Hall**

Meeting closed 9.45pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

Summary of Action Points

17.5.18	Storage of PC documents at Ipswich Record Office	TP
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	OSR – Improvement Project	Pending St George's future.
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18/7/24	Replace 6-8 reflective bollards Church Lane/Wickham Road junction	AS to provide funding for 6/8 reflective bollards from locality budget
21/3/24	Thwaite Allotments subject to Allotment Act 1950	TW to provide up to date version and terms & conditions
16/1/25	St George's Hall	GL – agenda item
20/3/25	Dog fouling	Item in parish magazine. TW to provide 'No Dog Fouling' notices.
20/3/25	Roman Way/Huggins Lane white lines	Re- reported by AS.
17/7/25	Thwaite Meadow – action re. rabbits	TP
17/7/25	Footbridge – Thwaite permissive path	TP
17/7/25	Old School Room, Thwaite – gutters	GL
17/7/25	Furniture rear Roman Way	GT

County Cllr A Stringer's Report – July 2025

Funding for Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution On Tuesday 17 June, Cabinet approved allocating £1.9m from council reserves towards the cost of work the council needs to undertake to set up the new mayoral authority with Norfolk County Council and to prepare its business case for a single unitary council, which needs to be submitted to the government in September. Mayoral elections are due to be held in May 2026, with the mayoral authority set up a few months earlier, in February. The government has provided £1m towards the costs of the mayoral authority, which Suffolk County Council and Norfolk County Council have agreed to split between them. The government has also allocated £290k for Suffolk towards Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), which is to be shared with the other councils who are also preparing their proposals for the government to consider in September. The council is not planning to use all of the £1.9m from reserves, which it is allocating as the financial outturn for 2024-25 was better than expected – it just wants to put aside some money it can use if necessary. The costs of setting up the mayoral authority and reorganising local councils is more likely to be tens of millions; it is the potential long-term savings that makes the process worthwhile to the government, who provide council funding.

Raising Educational Attainment in Suffolk On Tuesday 24 June, the council's Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee considered the educational attainment of children in the county and how to improve it, as Suffolk is currently below national attainment figures at Key Stage 2 (year 6) and at Key Stage 4 (year 11). The council works closely with headteachers and the leaders of multi-academy trusts (MATs) so that schools can learn from each other via the Suffolk Education Partnership, which was established in January 2023. The Department for Education's RISE (Regional Improvement in Standards and Excellence) programme also undertakes targeted work with schools to help

them improve grades, and council officers in the education team also provide support to all local authority-maintained schools, with mentoring and advice for governing bodies. Support is also offered to academy schools, although they do not have to engage with it; while the council still has statutory responsibility for school improvement for all of Suffolk, academies receive their funding directly from the government and not from local authorities. The meeting also noted that Suffolk still receives a low level of funding compared to other counties, and council leaders regularly lobby the government for fairer funding.

Suffolk Libraries Changes to Suffolk Community Libraries From the 1 June, libraries across the county were taken back in-house by Suffolk County Council at the end of the contract with Suffolk Libraries, who had been running the libraries since 2012. This was a controversial decision which attracted a lot of public and press interest, including a petition against it which was signed by over 20,000 people. The new name for the service is Suffolk Community Libraries, with new branding, but the council's political administration has given assurances that all libraries will remain open, with no reduction in opening hours.

Local Businesses Celebrate Carbon Reduction On 11 June, the council held its annual Carbon Charter event to recognise local businesses for their efforts at carbon reduction. The awards were set up by the council in 2010 and since that time more than 500 businesses of all sizes have been given Carbon Charter awards for taking action on climate, reducing their carbon emissions or developing green spaces. Speakers at the event included CNH Tractors, Groundwork East and Home Farm Nacton, and prizes were given to Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, Shepherd Engineering, Kelling Heath Holiday Park and Woodhill Park. If you are a business owner and want to find out about how to reduce carbon and make your enterprise more environmentally friendly, please visit www.carboncharter.org where you can find advice, tips and webinars/local events.

Council Gains £8m for Bus Service Improvements

Suffolk County Council has been awarded a grant of £8m from the Department for Transport to fund new and enhanced bus services across the county. The new funding from the government's Local Authority Bus Grant can be used for the following:

- £2,805,076 revenue funding for new or enhanced services
- £5,229,805 capital funding for new and improved bus stops, bus stations or vehicle upgrades

The council plans to use the money to improve bus priority on congested streets, upgrade the Real Time Passenger Information system (giving live updates in bus arrival times), and improve bus stops and routes. It will also use some of the money to look into the journeys people take with a view to creating more innovative fare offers in future and get more people to use bus services. Previous funding has been used for projects such as the first Sunday and evenings service between Bury St Edmunds and Sudbury in over 20 years, and direct links from Haverhill and Mildenhall to West Suffolk Hospital. Details of successful local bids for the funding will be posted on the Suffolk on Board website, and if you are interested in putting forward a bid for future funding, you can find information on how to do that here:

<https://www.suffolkonboard.com/news/2024/06/bus-service-improvement-plan-where-should-the-money-be-spent/>

Flood Team Wins Local Government Chronicle Award

The council's Flood Investigations and Grants Team are celebrating after winning a national award for its work supporting the communities affected by flooding caused by Storm Babet in October 2023. The team, which was set up in the immediate aftermath of the storm to help flood victims to apply for grants, won the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) award for Small Team of the Year at a recent awards ceremony at Grosvenor House in London. Over 900 homes and businesses were affected by Storm Babet, which caused the worst flooding in Suffolk for more than 70 years.

District Councillor Report – Stoke Ash & Thwaite July 2025

Motions to Full Council: OMPH Zones and Disability Champion.	Two motions gained cross-party support at MSDC Full Council on 26 June. The first motion called upon Suffolk County Council to review its criteria on speed limits and to make the process for applying for 20mph zones simpler and more cost effective in areas where they have community support. The motion highlighted the benefits of speed reductions, including safer roads and an
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	easier transition to active travel. A second motion to appoint a disability champion for Mid Suffolk was unanimously supported. The role will seek to raise awareness and improve accessibility to public buildings and services.
CIL Spending Review	Community Infrastructure Levy is a charge that planning authorities can levy on new developments to help deliver community infrastructure in the district. MSDC annually review the guidelines on how CIL is spent to ensure it continues to meet the evolving needs and priorities of our communities. The new changes make for more agile CIL applications by ceasing the 'bid round windows' and enabling all-year CIL bids. The scope for CIL spending has also been broadened to include community farming projects and community run pubs and cafes.
Evolution and Local Government Re-organisation	District and Borough Councils in Suffolk have published their joint proposal on how local government in Suffolk should be re-organised. The joint proposal is for two or three unitary authorities across the county, the exact boundaries for these authorities are yet to be determined. Full Council in July will be debating this matter The survey (on behalf of the Borough and all four districts in Suffolk) for residents to express their views on the future of local government is still available on the Mid Suffolk District Council website: https://midsuffolk.govocal.com/en-gb/projects/have-your-say-suffolk
Pride in Your Place	The fund which originally launched in 2023 to promote local identity promote local ownership of community space projects is now open for applications. Parish Councils, voluntary and community groups can apply for grants between £250 - £5000. The fund can be used for community planting schemes, local heritage and cultural initiatives, new signage, benches and seating areas for public use, equipment for litter picks and community clean-up among other supported initiatives. For more information please visit our Community Funding page - https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/community-funding
EcoPower Suffolk	The informal public consultation phase has closed and the developer is considering feedback received in drafting its substantive planning application. The developer has had an initial meeting with parish and district councillors/clerk representatives of relevant town and villages. This meeting discussed extending membership of the liaison group to community action groups and the terms of reference of the group. Details of the proposed project are available on the developer's website: EcoPower Suffolk - Solar Farm and Battery Energy Storage .
By-election Haughley, Stowupland & Wetherden	At a by-election on 12 June, triggered by the death of Cllr Rachel Eburn RIP, Dr Agnes Watson (Green Party) was elected to represent Haughley, Stowupland & Wetherden.
Locality budget 2025/26	The next round of locality funding has now launched. The total amount available per councillor in Mid Suffolk has increased to £10,000.

Tim Weller
Ward Member Palgrave
Cabinet Member Environment, Culture & Wellbeing