

STOKE ASH & THWAITE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held Thursday 19 September 2024, 7.30pm at the Village Hall, Stoke Ash

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

1. **Apologies and Approval of Absence** - none
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)
 - District Councillor – Cllr Weller presented his written report (copy attached to the Minutes). The meeting discussed the new waste collection service due to be introduced in 2026 which would include a weekly food waste collection, three weekly increased recycling opportunities to include glass and three weekly paper and card collection.
 - Parishioners and Public (meeting open for 10 minutes) – no comments.
4. **To consider Health and Safety items for report**

Cllr R Maisey reported the wall at the Old Post Office on A140 at Thwaite had been rebuilt and the notice board reinstated.

The footpath from The Walks to A140 was inaccessible and had been reported to Suffolk CC. The overgrown weeds and brambles at the bus stop on the A140 had been cleared.

Following reports of another wet autumn/winter Cllr Kember raised the following items due for remedial action:

 - Enlarge the ditch between The Walnut Tree and last/first house Norwich Road – Cllr Stringer would discuss with Walnut Tree owner.
 - Remove Willow tree roots at the Walnut Tree from the nearby pipe – Cllr Stringer to discuss with Walnut Tree owner.
 - Dig gully to allow overflow from Suffolk CC lake at rear of bus stop on A140. Cllr Stringer stated Suffolk CC permission would not be required to dig the gully – Cllr Stringer/Cllr Pulham to investigate.
 - Debris trap to protect outlet pipe at Frogs Farm – Cllr Stringer to discuss with landowner.
 - Clear Frogs Farm ditch of debris to prevent flooding at A140/Wickham Road junction – Cllr Stringer to discuss with Frog Farm owner.
 - Deadman’s Lane flood gauge and flood warning at The Street/Deadman’s Lane junction – flood warning sign was obscured by overgrown hedge. Cllr Tancred would speak to the householder to discuss cutting back hedge.
5. **To consider for approval Minutes of the meeting held 18 July 2024**

Cllr R Maisey proposed acceptance of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Mrs Masey – proposal carried.
6. **Matters arising from the Minutes for report only**

6. 7.5.19	Stoke Ash PC vacancies	3 vacancies continue to be advertised in parish magazine.
17.5.18	Storage of PC documents at Ipswich Record Office	TP liaising with Record Office.
17.5.18 18.5.23 18.5.23 21.9.23 18.1.24 16/5/24	Thwaite Comm Projects Hardstanding at OSR Tree/s on Allotment land Prepare allotment land for letting Prune Fruit Tree on allotment land Request to donate Conifer tree to plant next OSR, Thwaite Four Willow Trees -Prune/remove OSR – improvement Project	See Agenda item below Deferred pending work at OSR. Would be reported to Sept 2024 meeting. RM GL/TP preparing plots Deferred to Sept 2024 meeting - RM Deferred until the autumn. TP/GL RK convening meeting with parishioners
18.6.20	Review Emergency Plan	GL, TP, RK & GT. RK reported on a useful meeting with the Local Emergency Planning Officer at MSDC. An emergency plan template had been supplied. The

		Village Hall had been mentioned as a focal meeting point and rest centre. The draft plan had been sent back to the MSDC emergency officer. Pending - RK
21/9/23	Availability of grant funding – Stoke Ash VH & Thwaite OSR	Agenda item
16/11/23	Stoke Ash: 1. Provide a double-sided High-Water Sign at the ford to give warning from both directions. 2. Provide Flood Warning sign at Stoke Ash Street/Deadman's Lane junction 4. Clear pipes under road at the Ford and Bridge 5. Ditches Wetheringsett side of Deadman's Lane ford	Awaiting Highway officer report on funding. As above. Awaiting s.19 report. Awaiting s.19 report.
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 3. New manhole drain in Wickham Road at dip between Church Lane and OSR 18/7/24 Replace 6-8 reflective bollards Church Lane/Wickham Road junction	Reported via Suffolk CC reporting tool Roadside ditches partially cleared. Cllr Stringer speaking to adjoining landowner. Report to Suffolk CC via website. RK/AS
18/1/24	Clear ditches adjacent Church Lane	Water level was down. Remove item from agenda.
18/1/24	Reinstate Church Lane SA 30mph speed sign/s	Cllr Stringer to provide replacement. Remove item from agenda.
21/3/24	Thwaite Allotments – investigate whether covered by Allotment Act	Cllr Weller
18/7/24	Trees – Church Lane, Thwaite – concern raised by parishioner re. height and stability of trees near residential	GL to obtain report on condition and height of trees from Rishangles tree surgeon
18/7/24	Draft letter to Holiday Let owner re. disturbances	Complete.
18/7/24	Meeting with Thwaite parishioners to discuss future of St George's Hall and OSR	RK
18/7/24	Obtain cost/s for Village Gateways	Deferred pending further investigation into costs.

7. To consider Planning Applications for recommendation to MSDC - none received

8. Planning Decisions received from MSDC

1. DC/24/02925: Petrol Filling Station Brockford Garage, Norwich Road, Thwaite - Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/23/05056 - Condition 7 (Biodiversity Enhancement Measures) – approved
2. DC/24/-2399: Brookside, The Street, Stoke Ash - Application under S73 for Removal or Variation of a Condition following grant of PP DC/23/00385 dated 12/05/2023 Town & Country Planning

Act 1990 (as amended) - (Reserved Matters following approval of Outline PP DC/21/02447 – Severance of garden and erection 1 dwelling including creation of new vehicular access and works to ditch - Submission of details for Layout, Scale, Appearance & Landscaping.) To vary condition 2 (Approved Plans and Documents) in order to allow alterations to approved elevations following the proposed increase of the roof pitch to 45 degrees – PP Refused.

3. DC/24/01942 & DC/24/01651: The Stables, Annex to Barn Field House, The Street, Stoke Ash - Conversion of attached double garage to additional living accommodation and insertion of rooflights into living room, kitchen and bathroom. Planning Permission and LBC Granted.
4. DC/24/00855: Gt Hallows, Church Lane, Stoke Ash - Conversion of existing outbuilding to annexe use ancillary to main dwelling. Installation of sewage package treatment plant. Increase height of eaves and ridge line of roof to allow insulation to be installed over existing rafters. Planning Permission Granted.
5. DC/24/03602: The Stables, The Street, Stoke Ash - Discharge of Conditions - Application DC/24/01942 Condition 3 (materials for infill of garage), Condition 4 (rooflight details) and Condition 5 (external vents, soil pipes and downpipes). Approved with conditions.
9. **Planning correspondence** – none.
10. **Neighbourhood Watch report** – Cllr Kember was pleased to report there were no issues since the last meeting. Scamming was however still on ongoing problem.
11. **Stoke Ash Village Hall – report on grant funding application** - to confirm Parish Council assistance pending receipt of grant monies
Following confirmation of grant funding from MSDC for refurbishment work at the village hall, Cllr Tancred reported the funding would not be available until completion of the work and paid invoices were available to submit to MSDC. The cost of the work would total approx £8,500. Advice had been obtained from SALC as to whether the Parish Council could loan the village hall the funding to be reimbursed when the grant monies had been received. SALC had confirmed this was possible. £3000 had been spent on refurbishment work to date, this sum had been covered by the Parish Council. After completion of the work it was hoped the hall would attract new bookings, ie fitness classes and digital training classes.
12. **Church Lane, Thwaite** – report on condition of trees and to consider quotation for any works required
Item deferred pending Cllr Leggett’s meeting with the tree surgeon to inspect the trees.
13. **Thwaite Community Projects Group report**
 1. Report on Allotment Lettings – deferred to next meeting.
 2. Report on Willow trees on Allotment land – these had been dealt with. Remove from agenda.
 3. Report on pruning fruit tree on Allotment land/ hedge trimming. Work on the tree was pending. The Chair to coppice the hedge to ground level.
 4. St George’s Hall and Old School Room report including planting conifer next OSR.
The Conifer tree to be removed from agenda pending further contact with the parishioner.
Consultation with parishioners regarding St Geroge’s Hall was to be held 12 October 2024.
14. **Wickham Road, Thwaite** – report on provision of new surface water drain. Further request to be made to Suffolk CC via website.
15. **Deadman’s Lane** – report on providing a double-sided High Water sign and Road Liable to Flooding plate Deadman’s Lane/The Street. Awaiting report and quotation from Suffolk CC Highways Officer.
16. **To consider providing Village Gateway signs**
The quotation received ranged in price from £400 - £700 for one gate depending on the size, this would not include the speed sign. Three would be required for Stoke Ash and two for Thwaite. Cllr Stringer stated he would be able to provide an alternative quote. Item deferred to next meeting.
17. **Public Transport – Bus Service Improvement Plan – submission of suggested improvements by 15/11/24**
Cllr Stringer stated the majority of public transport funding from the Government for Suffolk went to Ipswich and there had been one or two schemes where a service had been returned to villages. Cllrs Mrs Maisey and R Maisey offered to complete and return the survey document.
18. **Finance**
 1. To consider s.137 donation requests
Two requests had been received, one from Suffolk Accident Rescue (SARS) and the other Marie Curie. Cllr Mrs Maisey proposed a donation of £50 to SARS, seconded Cllr Mrs Lane, 5 in favour 2 against – proposal carried.
Marie Curie was declined at the present time.
 2. Accounts for Payment

Date	Payee	Purchase/Service	Amount	Vat	Total	Agreed/Decld	Ch no.
12/9/24	Clay Tunnicliffe	VH refurbishment work	£3,000.00	-	£3,000.00	Agreed	100548
19/9/24	SALC	Annual Internal Audit fee	£233.00	£46.60	£279.60	Agreed	100549
19/9/24	Clerk	Sal/expen July-Sept 24	£752.00	-	£752.00	Agreed	100550
19/9/24	R Maisey	Notice Board repair	£31.14	-	£31.14	Agreed	100551
19/9/24	Zurich Insurance	Annual PC insurance premium	£759.93	-	£759.93	Agreed	100552
3/9/24	Anglian Water	OSR water rates 27/3-30/7 2024	£43.63	-	£43.63	Agreed	100314
3/9/24	E.on Next	OSR electricity 1/9-39/9 2024	£18.22	-	£18.22	Agreed	100317

Insurance renewal – Cllr Kember proposed accepting the 3 year fixed rate above, seconded Cllr Leggett – unanimously agreed.

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

3. Finance Report

A six-month summary of expenditure against the budget had been circulated to councillors. This showed expenditure was within budget with a net balance at the half year of £7174.00. No queries were raised.

19. To consider for adoption the following policy documents 2024/25:

Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

A copy of the Council’s Standing Orders had been circulated for review prior to the meeting, no queries were raised. Cllr Tancred proposed adoption of the standing orders, seconded Cllr Kember – unanimously agreed. Review of Financial Regulations deferred to the next meeting.

20. Clerk’s report/correspondence

MSDC – notification of Town & Parish Councils Liaison Meeting 17 October 2024 at Elmswell - noted.
Mid Suffolk CAB – notification of the AGM 25 October 2024 at Stowmarket Community Centre - noted.
Gov.uk domain name – details of the cost of changing to a gov.uk domain name had been obtained from Community Action Suffolk and circulated to councillors. Cllr Tancred proposed this was deferred at the present time, seconded Cllr Leggett – unanimously agreed.

21. **Chair’s report** – the Chair recorded thanks to councillors for their work on behalf of the council and Community to date.

22. Any other business for information exchange/agenda requests

Cllr Tancred reported he had been in contact with neighbouring residents of the B&B properties in Stoke Ash to reinforce the importance of recording dates and times of any nuisance incidents as evidence of any complaints that may occur. If there was sufficient evidence this would enable the District Council to take the complaints to court. Cllr R Maisey stated Air B&B had conditions for use and he understood checks were made at the booking stage.

23. **Date of next meeting: Thursday 21 November 2024, 7.30pm at Stoke Ash Village Hall**

Meeting closed 9.55pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

Summary of action points

6. 7.5.19	Stoke Ash PC vacancies	3 vacancies continued to be advertised in parish magazine.
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18.5.23 21.9.23 18.1.24 16/5/24	Willow Tree/s on Allotment land Allotment plots for letting Prune Fruit Tree on allotment land/coppice hedge Request to donate Conifer tree to plant next OSR, Thwaite St George's Hall consultation – 14 October 2024 OSR – improvement Project	Complete. GL/TP preparing plots TP Remove from agenda pending contact with parishioner. RK Thwaite Working Group
18.6.20	Review Emergency Plan	GL, TP, RK & GT.
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18/7/24	Meeting with Thwaite parishioners to discuss future of St George's Hall and OSR	RK – 14 October 2024
18/7/24	Obtain cost/s for Village Gateways	Cllr Stringer to provide alternative with costings
19/9/24	Item 4 above actions	Various
19/9/24	Bus Service Improvement Plan	CM & RM to complete

Ofsted Inspection of Children's Social Care

On Wednesday morning the inspection report for Suffolk County Council's social care services for children was published, following a visit from Ofsted at the end of May. The report found that social care services for children, which include fostering and adoption, safeguarding, child protection, youth justice and corporate parenting (children in care), 'require improvement to be good.' My group are concerned by this as children's services were rated as 'Outstanding' the last time they were inspected in 2019, and the remarks on leadership – that leaders do not have 'sufficient grip' on all the services provided – are especially worrying. A new director for children's services started in July 2024, and more information will be available on the plans for improvement in September when the inspection report is tabled at Cabinet. Here is a summary of the findings of the report:

- The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families – Requires improvement to be good
- The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection – Requires improvement to be good
- The experiences and progress of children in care – Good
- The experiences and progress of care leavers – Requires improvement to be good
- **Overall effectiveness – Requires improvement to be good**

This inspection is separate from the recent inspection into services for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

You can read the full Ofsted inspection report here: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80565>

Warmer Homes Grant Returned to Government

The government gives the county council grants to assist residents with improvements to their houses, to allow them to be more fuel efficient, and therefore cost less to heat. Since Government has agreed to cut the winter fuel allowance this issue is increasingly vital.

The quarter 1 outturn budget papers for The County Council are predicting that the Council will return over £5,000,000.00 of unspent grant back to the government later this year, With over 40,000 homes in fuel poverty in Suffolk, this funding could have helped insulate hundreds of homes and bring down energy costs.

If you know anyone that could benefit from similar help, the District Councils "Cosy Homes" initiative is still running..

Electric Vehicles

Over 60 new community venues across Suffolk will have new electric vehicle (EV) charge points, as Suffolk County Council's 'Plug In Suffolk' project continues to grow.

Fast charging facilities will be installed at 63 new sites, including community centres, village halls, scout huts and other community hubs, and 25 existing charge points from an early iteration of Plug In Suffolk will be adopted under a new contract.

The county council has successfully bid for £7.3 million from the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund, which supports local authorities to plan and deliver EV charging infrastructure for residents without off-street parking.

£1.4 million of the LEVI funding will go towards the community charging infrastructure, with a further £5.9 million allocated for on-street charging, which will be developed later this year.

In addition, a trial of electric community vehicles is set to launch next summer in Suffolk, with the council's tender process for this beginning this month.

Plug In Suffolk Car Clubs will be placing 16 electric vehicles across eight locations in Suffolk which local residents can book by the minute, hour or day. Planned locations include Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket, Sudbury, Needham Market, Stowmarket, Lowestoft and Woodbridge.

Launch of Solar Together Suffolk

Residents of Suffolk can come together to invest in renewable energy sources through a group-buying scheme for solar panels and battery storage. Solar Together Suffolk helps homeowners feel confident that they are paying the right price for a high-quality installation from qualified installers.

Suffolk residents can join the group-buying scheme, which offers solar panels with optional battery storage and EV charge points, as well as retrofit battery storage for residents who have already invested in solar panels and are looking to get more from the renewable energy they generate. The scheme allows homeowners to increase their independence from the National Grid.

It is free to register at www.solartogether.co.uk/suffolk, and there is no obligation to go ahead with an installation.

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Website - [Suffolk Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Group – The GLI Group at Suffolk County Council \(suffolkqli.wordpress.com\)](#)

Cost of Living help and advice:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>

Benefits advice and support:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>

Flood preparation advice: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-and-rescue-safety-advice-in-the-community/preparing-for-flooding>

Flood recovery advice and support: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>

District Councillor Report – September 2024

Survey of residents	Mid Suffolk Council are conducting an informal survey to find out how residents want it to invest to improve facilities in our communities. This is an informal survey so if you have any ideas, please get in touch with your district councillor or visit the Council's website: Project: Tell us what your community needs Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils (govocal.com)
Annual Canvass of electors	The statutory annual canvass of electors is currently in progress. All properties in the district are being contacted to confirm who is registered to vote.
Future waste collection – Simpler Recycling	Mid Suffolk Cabinet discussed the new waste collection service on Tuesday 10 September 2024. The adopted proposals include weekly food waste collections from 2026 as well as accepting more recyclable waste with the addition of a second recycling bin for every household. Residual waste 'black bin' will be collected every three weeks, with greater recycling opportunities (e.g. for film, glass and Tetrapak) residual waste capacity in bins is expected to remain as is currently the case. All changes to the collection cycle will be explained to residents as a Suffolk-wide communication ahead of the 2026 roll-out.
Innovation Awards	Businesses across the district will be recognised for fresh thinking and new ideas in the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Innovation awards this autumn. Winners of the nine category of awards offered will be announced at an event on Thursday 7 th November.
Development of Chilton Fields sports facilities	Work has now been completed on the first part of the first phase of sports facilities at Chilton Fields in Stowmarket. The new trim-trail opened to the public on 9 September. Work on further development will continue over the coming weeks as part of the larger project aimed at addressing Health Inequalities in Stowmarket and the wider district.

Needham Market old HQ building	The old HQ building in Needham Market is to be sold for development, in order to deliver the regeneration plans and funds for re-investment back into social housing. MSDC has already developed housing on the old Middle School site and part of the old office site behind the older building facing the high street.
EV scheme for MSDC residents	A trial of electric community vehicles is set to launch next summer in Suffolk. Plug In Suffolk Car Clubs will be placing sixteen electric vehicles across eight locations in Suffolk, which local residents can book by the minute, hour or day. Two of the proposed locations are in Mid Suffolk – Needham Market and Stowmarket. More information by subscribing to the Plug in Suffolk mailing list .
Eye Airfield Development	MSDC Planning Committee heard an outline planning proposal for development of a petrol station, drive through food outlet, retail, lorry park etc. on Wednesday 28 August 2024. As your Ward Member, I represented the views of residents (notably relating to potential for exacerbated flood risk) as well as highlighting procedural irregularities with the application and its management. It was noted that an Environmental Impact Assessment was absent from the application being considered. The decision of the Committee was to defer a decision until further evidence is sought from the developer. The opportunity was used to spotlight concerns regarding wider development on the airfield and the impact of this on flooding. Further action between flood (SCC) and planning authorities (MSDC) and partner agencies to address this is being pursued.
Thurston By-election	Cllr Austin Davies has resigned from the Council and a by-election will be held in Thurston Ward on 24 th September.
Land Acquisition by MSDC.	In accordance with the Council's Biodiversity Action Plan, to promote maintenance of existing green space for wildlife, ecology and public access, the Council has acquired 2.5 acres of largely undisturbed riparian woodland in Palgrave. The site is being audited to document species, make safe deceased and diseased trees and discussions are in progress to provide open access for the community.

Cllr Tim Weller – email: tim.weller@midsuffolk.gov.uk – X cllr_tim – te