

**STOKE ASH & THWAITE PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held Thursday 21 November 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, District Cllr T Weller and three members of the public

1. **Apologies and Approval of Absence** – none. The County & District Councillors would arrive late due to a prior MSDC meeting.
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’s written report had been circulated prior to the meeting (copy attached to the Minutes). No queries were raised.  
District Councillor – Cllr Weller’s written report had been circulated prior to the meeting (copy attached to the Minutes). No queries were raised.  
Parishioners and Public (meeting open for 10 minutes)  
 One parishioner was in attendance to observe the meeting pending his application to join the Council.
4. **To consider Health and Safety items for report** – none for report.
5. **To consider for approval Minutes of the meeting held 19 September 2024**  
 Cllr Kember proposed acceptance of the Minutes, seconded Cllr R Maisey – unanimously agreed.
6. **Matters arising from the Minutes for report only**

7.5.19	Stoke Ash PC vacancies	The vacancies continued 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 Allotment plots for letting Prune Fruit Tree on allotment land/coppice hedge St George’s Hall consultation – 14 October 2024 OSR – improvement Project	<b>See Agenda item below</b> Deferred pending work at OSR. TP preparing plots  TP  Agenda item RK/Thwaite Working Group – agenda item
18.6.20	Review Emergency Plan	RK reported the plan was progressing
21/9/23	Grant funding – Stoke Ash VH	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	Confirmation received from Suffolk Highways that a double-sided sign had been ordered.  This was a mobile sign and could be used as and when needed. Complete.  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	Reported via Suffolk CC reporting tool. Awaiting s.19 report The roadside gulleys from Wickham Road junction to the pond on the south would need to be cleared. Roadside ditches had been partially cleared.

18/7/24	3. New manhole drain requested in Wickham Road at dip between Church Lane and OSR Replace 6-8 reflective bollards Church Lane/Wickham Road junction	Reported to Suffolk CC via website.  RK/AS
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 properties	Pending report from GL following meeting with Rishangles tree surgeon
18/7/24	Meeting with Thwaite parishioners to discuss future of St George’s Hall and OSR	RK – agenda item
18/7/24	Obtain cost/s for Village Gateways	Agenda item

#### 7. To consider Planning Applications for recommendation to MSDC

- DC/24/04378: Eastwick Farm, Clay Lane, Stoke Ash – re-construction of agricultural building (following & 04379 storm damage). Councillors agreed to recommend support of the proposed work.
- DC/24/04493: Iris Cottage, The Street, Stoke Ash - Application under S.73 for Removal or Variation of a Condition following grant of Planning Permission DC/23/00385 dated 12/05/2023 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) - (Reserved Matters following approval of Outline Planning Permission DC/21/02447 - Severance of garden and erection 1No. dwelling including creation of new vehicular access and works to ditch - Submission of details for Layout, Scale, Appearance and Landscaping.) To vary condition 2 (Approved Plans and Documents) by increasing the ridge height by 300mm from 8.1m to 8.4m. Supported.
- Planning Inspectorate: White Elm Solar Farm, Mendlesham/Thwaite/Wickham Skeith/Cotton – to consider information that should be provided in the Environmental Statement of the Scoping Report. Councillors unanimously agreed they categorically did not agree with use of the identified agricultural land as a solar farm.

#### 8. Planning Decisions received from MSDC

- DC/24/03602: The Stables, The Street, Stoke Ash – Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/24/01942 – Condition 3 (materials for infill of garage), Condition 4 (rooflight details) and Condition 5 (external vents, soil pipes and downpipes). Conditions Approved
- DC/24/00855: Great 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.
- DC/22/06380: Willow Hall, Norwich Road, Thwaite - Conversion of and extension to existing building to form 1No. dwelling; and erection of 2No. new dwellings and garaging. Planning Permission Granted with conditions. A query was raised as to why permission had been approved without further consultation with the Parish Council. Item to be raised with District Cllr.

#### 9. Planning correspondence - none

- Neighbourhood Watch report** – Cllr Kember was pleased to report there had been no activities since the last meeting. Online scamming was still a prominent issue. Cllr Kember would remind parishioners to remain vigilant. An email had been sent to all contacts reminding them to padlock oil tank caps with lock alarms.
- Stoke Ash Village Hall** – report on refurbishment work and refund to parish council following receipt of grant Cllr Tancred was pleased to report the refurbishment work with the aid of the current grant was complete. Receipted invoices had been forwarded to MSDC - the grant funding would be transferred to the VH bank account within 14 days.  
Thanks were recorded to Cllr Tancred for his work on the project and for obtaining the grant monies to fund it. Cllr Tancred stated he hoped the work would encourage increased use of the hall.
- Church Lane, Thwaite** – report on condition of trees and to consider quotation for any works required – deferred to next meeting.
- Thwaite Community Projects Group report**

1. Allotment Lettings – deferred.
2. Pruning fruit tree/coppice hedging - allotment land

The Chair reported the coppicing would be carried out during the winter months. Details had been received of grant funding available for planting fruit trees on community land. The Chair would look into making an application for a mixture of 10 – 12 apple, pears, plums and heritage apple trees on part of the allotment land for personal use by parishioners. Thanks were recorded to Mr David Briggs for his excellent work in tidying the parish field.

3. St George’s Hall and Old School Room, Thwaite - report on consultation with parishioners 12 October 2024  
Cllr Kember reported the meeting had been attended by parish councillors and parishioners (nine of the sixty households in Thwaite had been represented). The consensus of the meeting was that everyone liked the building but it was currently only used twice per year and the meeting recognised the large amount of funding that would need to be spent on the building to stop it deteriorating and to bring it up to the standard required for use as a community building. There was a very limited amount of funding available from the village, that being courtesy of the Lottery Fund. The general view of the meeting was that the property should be sold for the best price with covenants to restrict use so as not to be disruptive to local residents. With any sale proceeds it may be possible to consider work to the Old School Room; the provision of a kitchenette, WC’s and any other essential work. A business plan would need to be prepared for that project.

It had been agreed the next stage would involve a meeting with David Wymark the Diocesan architect for advice on engaging an estate agent specialising in redundant churches. Cllr Leggett would contact Mr Wymark.

Cllr Kember stated he had written to Ed Sheeran regarding the possibility of a donation towards the project.

Cllr Mrs Maisey reminded the meeting of the Carol Service at St George’s at 4pm on 21 December next.

Cllrs R and Mrs Maisey would look into obtaining a parish council card machine.

The asbestos stored next the OSR had been removed.

**14. Wickham Road, Thwaite** – report on provision of new surface water drain

No response as yet had been received from Suffolk CC Highways.

**15. Deadman’s Lane** – report on providing double-sided High Water gauge sign and Road Liable to Flooding plate - Deadman’s Lane/The Street junction.

County Highways had agreed to fund and install the double-sided high-water gauge sign.

**16. To consider Village Gateway signs**

It was agreed not to pursue these, it would be too expensive to provide for both villages

**17. Finance**

1. To consider s.137 donation requests

Requests for funding donations had been received from Headway Suffolk, Mid Suffolk CAB and East Anglian Air Ambulance Service. These were declined at the present time, the Council would continue its support of the Coffee Caravan providing the opportunity for parishioners from both parishes to meet over coffee, in addition Caravan helpers were able to offer advice on a wide range of topics if required. The Finance Working Group had suggested quarterly donations to the Coffee Caravan.

2. Accounts for Payment/Receipts received

Date	Payee	Purchase/Service	Amount	Vat	Total	Agreed/Decid	Ch no.
16/10/24	Clay Tunnicliffe	VH refurbishment work	£3,000.00	-	£3,000.00	Agreed	100553
12/11/24	G Tancred	Poppy Wreath	£50.00	-	£50.00	Agreed	100554
12/11/24	Clay Tunnicliffe	VH refurbishment	£2460.00	-	£2460.00	Agreed	100555
21/11/24	SARS	Donation	£50.00	-	£50.00	Agreed	100556
21/11/24	CAS	Annual Website Hosting fee	£50.00	£10.00	£60.00	Agreed	100557
21/11/24	Clerk	Sal-expen Sept-Nov 2024	£859.35	-	£859.35	Agreed	100558
12/11/24	E.on Next	OSR electricity 1/10/24 – 31/10/ 24	£26.47	-	£26.47	Agreed	100318
12/12/24	E.on Next	OSR - 1 – 30/11/24	£27.34	-	£27.34	Agreed	100319

12/12/24	Zurich Insurance	St George's annual insurance premium	£309.23	-	£309.23	Agreed	100320
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Cllr Tancred proposed payment of the above, seconded Cllr Mrs Maisey – unanimously agreed.

### 3. Finance Report including consideration of draft Budget/Precept 2025/26

Minutes from the Finance Working Group meeting held 20.11.24 and the proposed budget and precept figures had been circulated to councillors. The Minutes provided an explanation of the figures which gave a total precept figure for 2025-26 totalling £11,660, slightly less than last year. Cllr Leggett gave an explanation of the funding allocated for flood, gully and highway maintenance. Cllr Tancred proposed acceptance of the figures and total precept of £11,660 for 2025-26, seconded Cllr Kember – unanimously agreed. Cllr Tancred recorded thanks and appreciation to the Finance Working Group for their work on the council's finances.

#### *8.50pm – District and County Councillors arrived at the meeting*

County Councillor – Cllr Stringer stated it was hoped the s.19 report would be published shortly. He understood the report had identified work was required on the A140 at Thwaite, the highway verge gully's at the Wickham Road junction towards the pond would need to be cleared, the adjoining landowners were aware. The Walnut Tree ditch would need to be cleared and the walnut tree could be replaced. The owner was aware.

Further items raised included the blocked ditches at Deadman's Lane, the flooding was causing the road surface to break up.

The Planning Permission granted for new dwellings at Willow Hall was raised. The Parish Council had objected to the development due to Highways concerns it was queried as to why the Parish Council had not received any new notification of the application.

Cllr Stringer stated Willow Hall already had permission granted for 7 new dwellings. The number of dwellings had now changed from 7 to 3. Although the Parish Council had objected the principle of dwellings at the site had already been established.

District Councillor – Cllr Weller gave details of grant funding of up to £5,000 available for village enhancement schemes – application forms were available via the MSDC website. Cllr Weller provided details of the planning application for a fuel station at Eye and water restrictions relating to commercial applications.

Locality funding was also available, applications should be made direct to Cllr Weller. The District Council was also looking into providing equipment to parish councils to enable planning officers to virtually attend parish council meetings to offer any advice on significant applications.

#### **18. To review and consider for adoption the following policy documents 2024/25:**

- Financial Regulations
- Financial Internal Controls
- Risk Assessment
- Asset Register
- Multicultural and Inclusivity
- Equality and Diversity

The above policy documents had been circulated to councillors to peruse prior to the meeting. No queries were raised. Cllr Kember proposed all documents were adopted on block, seconded Cllr R Maisey – unanimously agreed.

#### **19. Clerk's report/correspondence**

Notification of MSDC Cil meetings via Teams had been circulated.

SALC – notification of the mid Suffolk Area meeting to be held 5 December 2024 had been circulated.

#### **21. Chair's report**

The Chair thanked County Cllr Stringer and District Cllr Weller for their attendance at parish council meetings and for their guidance over the last year. The members of the public were thanked for their attendance at the meeting.

#### **22. Any other business for information exchange/agenda requests – none.**

#### **23. Date of next meeting: 16 January 2025, 7.30pm at Stoke Ash Village Hall**

Meeting closed 9.45pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

## Summary of action points

7.5.19	Stoke Ash PC vacancies	The vacancies continued to be advertised in parish magazine.
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18.6.20	Review Emergency Plan	RK reported the plan was progressing
21/9/23	Grant funding – Stoke Ash VH	Complete
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	Confirmation received from Suffolk Highways that a double sided sign had been ordered. This was a mobile sign and could be used as and when needed. Complete.  Awaiting s.19 report.  Awaiting s.19 report.
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18/7/24	Trees – Church Lane, Thwaite – concern raised by parishioner re. height and stability of trees near residential properties	Pending report from GL following meeting with Rishangles tree surgeon
18/7/24	Meeting with Thwaite parishioners to discuss future of St George's Hall and OSR	GL – meeting with David Wymark to discuss sale and identify specialist estate agent.
18/7/24	Obtain cost/s for Village Gateways	Complete.

## **Protection from Flooding**

You may have seen in the press that Suffolk County Council have announced an extra £1.5m of funding to deliver the first phase of works identified in the flood investigations following Storm Babet. The council is also writing to the government requesting £20m for flood protection to help prevent future flooding in the county, as it is likely extreme weather will become more likely due to the effects of climate change. At Cabinet on 8 October, a £2m financial contribution was agreed from the council towards flood protection at Benacre, south of Lowestoft. It was predicted that without the new measures, the A12 would be flooding at that location at nearly every high tide within a couple of years. The Environment Agency are also committing over £30m to the scheme, and Sizewell C agreed to make up the rest: the total cost of the works is £59m. My group raised concerns about other areas of flooding along the coast and whether the council had a strategy for dealing with the problems caused by coastal erosion and climate change, or a list of priorities when it comes to protecting local infrastructure.

Finally, at Scrutiny Committee on 24 October, a report was presented on highways flooding and the responsibilities held by the council, water companies and the Environment Agency. Suffolk County Council is the lead flood authority for Suffolk and although it has responsibility for surface water flooding, it does not have the capacity to manage it all and has to prioritise its response. Priority is given to works to address internal flooding to five or more properties, or flooding to major infrastructure for 10 hours or more.

If you have a stream or watercourse on your land, you have responsibilities to mitigate against flooding. You can find information about this in the council's guide to riparian ownership: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/flooding-and-drainage/maintenance-of-ditches-and-other-watercourses/riparian-ownership-in-suffolk>

There are also some links at the bottom of this report on how to protect your property from flooding and advice on how to deal with the aftermath of flooding.

## **Extension of the North Falls Windfarm**

Cabinet on 8 October also included the council's response to the proposed wind farm extension at North Falls. This will be off the coast of Essex with no onshore infrastructure in Suffolk, although it still has the potential to affect transport routes, Suffolk ports and the local workforce. It will be visible from Suffolk but the impact of this has been judged as less than significant. The connection for this scheme to the National Grid is planned to be at Lawford, which will only be possible if the planned Norwich to Tilbury grid reinforcement goes ahead. My group pointed out that consent should not be granted for schemes that depended on other projects which were not yet approved, but it was noted that this was not unusual for the National Grid, which often granted grid connections for projects where there was no guarantee they would proceed.

## **Improving Access to GPs**

At October's Health Scrutiny Committee, we heard from the NHS Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) about what they were doing to improve access to GPs in the county. Low numbers of GPs and a high demand for appointments has caused problems recently with many people unable to make appointments to see their doctors. The committee heard how practices were switching to cloud-based telephony to decrease the reliance on a limited number of phone lines (which contributes to the chaos of the 8am rush for appointments each morning), and digital booking so that AI can prioritise the urgency of appointments based on symptoms (it is still possible to book appointments by phone and in person if patients are unable to book online). The ICBs are also making an effort to train GPs and other practice medical staff locally as this means they are more likely to stay in the area. Some services, like blood pressure checks and contraception, can now be accessed at pharmacies. Members of the committee expressed concern that community pharmacies are also under pressure currently, and also that GP surgery buildings were in a poor state, with some plans for new surgeries abandoned due to cost, such as the Cardinal Practice in north west Ipswich. It was agreed that the physical buildings of the NHS – their 'estate' would be looked at in Health Scrutiny at a later date.

## Cuts to Winter Fuel Payment

At Full Council on 17 October, a motion was passed that the council would write to the government and ask them to reverse the decision they have made to cut the eligibility for the winter fuel payment for pensioners. It is estimated that this will affect thousands of pensioners in the county. The council also announced a new £3m fund for interest-free loans to residents wishing to undertake energy efficiency upgrades such as insulation, solar panels, batteries, glazing, or heat pumps. The loans (up to £15,000) to be repaid over a maximum of seven years at 0% interest. The scheme will be open to homeowners across Suffolk from November, but you can register your interest now at <https://www.lendology.org.uk/warm-home-suffolk-loan>. Our group are obviously in favour of retrofitting homes to make them more energy efficient, although as the council will be returning an unspent £5m to the government in March from their previous retrofitting scheme, we would urge people to apply if they are eligible - to make sure we are reducing as many energy bills as possible across the county.

## Pavement safety and preventing trips and falls

At Council on 17 October our group brought forward a motion that the county review its priorities for repairing pavement defects. Currently, if there is a difference in the surface level of the footway of 20mm or more, this will be repaired, but we argued that in areas of high footfall or where a trip or fall had been recorded, this threshold was too high. Most members of the public who trip or fall are over 65, and in areas outside GP surgeries or opticians it would make sense for the repair policy to be more flexible. The administration at the council did not vote to pass our motion, but reported that a review of their highways processes was being undertaken. Councillors from my group will be taking part in the review to try and ensure that poor quality footways are made safer for pedestrians to use.

## Suffolk Local Transport Plan

A newly-developed plan which details the long-term vision for transport in Suffolk has been launched for public consultation. Local communities helped shape a new draft of the Suffolk Local Transport Plan by sharing their views back in February of this year and the council is now asking for feedback on the final proposed document. The plan details activity between 2025-2040 and sets out a long-term vision for transport in Suffolk, including decarbonisation of transport, strengthening the local economy, promoting health, wellbeing and social inclusion, and creating better-connected places that encourage a range of transport choices.

The council has also produced fifteen 'Area Transport Plans' and a 'Suffolk Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan' which are the funded implementation plans for the wider Suffolk Local Transport Plan. These plans outline how the Local Transport Plan's vision and objectives will be delivered in key locations across the county. The consultation is available via [www.suffolk.gov.uk/LTP](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/LTP) and will close on Monday 25 November 2024. The Local Transport Plan and its associated plans will then be presented to Suffolk County Council Cabinet in 2025.

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**Website** - [Suffolk Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Group – The GLI Group at Suffolk County Council \(suffolkqli.wordpress.com\)](http://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: Stoke Ash & Thwaite Parish Council

November 2024

Affordable Housing on former Stowmarket Middle School site	38 new affordable homes have been constructed on the site previously occupied by Stowmarket Middle School, which closed in 2015. These houses comprise a range of sizes and rents.
Full Council Meeting	The monthly council meeting due to take place on the 31 <sup>st</sup> October was cancelled due to agenda items being deferred. Full Council took place on 21 <sup>st</sup> November. The Treasury Management Report was considered along with two new Supplementary Planning Documents.
New Progress Power Community Benefit Fund	Mid Suffolk District Council has opened applications for a new fund which makes £270,000 available to community organisations and projects over the next three years. The Progress Power Community Benefit Fund has been provided by power generation business Drax as part of the development of the Progress Power Station on the former Eye Airfield site. £90,000 has been made available by the company each year to support local projects in the vicinity of the power station, with the fund and grant applications administered by Mid Suffolk District Council.
Stowmarket Town Centre revitalisation	At October's cabinet meeting, funding was agreed for several new measures to help revitalise Stowmarket Town Centre. These include a £400k grant scheme to assist existing retailers, £100k to increase sustainability from the Wayfinding Project, and £16k aimed to develop overnight accommodation within the town.
Pride in Your Place	This grant (with a 'light touch' application and approval process) will be launched again in December. The upper value of the grant will be increased to £5K to allow more meaningful projects to progress. Further information will be published on the website soon.
Living Well in Winter Grant	The annual Living Well in Winter Grant was launched this year to support communities through the winter months. This includes assistance with financial management, improved accessibility for recreational activities and the creation of new connections to allow community ties to flourish.
Eye Airfield Development	I will be joined members of MSDC Planning Committee, invited representatives of Thrandeston Parish Council and others at a site visit to the Airfield regarding application DC/22/00416 (the development of filling station and associated retail, drive through restaurant, lorry park and start up business units. The outline planning application was approved at Planning Committee yesterday (20/11/2024)

[District Councillor Tim Weller](#)

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