

Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 1 December 2025, 7pm at the Village Hall, Wetheringsett.

Present: Cllrs D Howard (Chairman), T Alston, S Dodgson, B Lacey, Mrs R Leech and S Wyse. County and District Cllr A Stringer.

1. **Apologies and Consent to absence** – apologies had been received from Cllrs S Alderton, Mrs L Drury, N Lingard, Mrs J Weir and Mrs K van Zyl. Councillors approved the apologies received.
2. **Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda** - none
3. **Reports**
 1. Police available online at <http://suffolk.police.uk> – no queries were raised.
 2. County Councillor – Cllr Stringer presented his written report (copy attached to the Minutes)
 3. District Councillor – Cllr Stringer presented his written report (copy attached to the Minutes)
Cllr Stringer went on to update councillors on the enforcement proceedings relating to the Mendlesham Road Caravan Park. The appeal public enquiry to be held at Wetheringsett VH on 16/17 December 2025 was open to the public. The land in question being in a flood plain, some of the pitches were in serious danger of flood.

Cllr T Alston arrived 7.15pm

 4. Footpaths - no report.
 5. Trees – no report.
 6. **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC** – no comments
4. **To consider for approval Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held 3 November 2025**
Cllr S Wyse proposed approval of the Minutes, seconded Cllr S Dodgson – unanimously agreed.
5. **Matters arising from the Minutes for report** – none.
6. **Planning Applications for recommendation to MSDC**
 1. DC/25/05060: 1 Church Street, Wetheringsett – notification of works to trees in a Conservation Area
A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.
 2. DC/25/05156: The Old Forge, Mendlesham Road – replacement of a non-compliant oil tank situated within the curtilage of a listed building. A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.
7. **Planning Decisions received from MSDC**
 1. DC/25/04371 – Manor Bungalow, 1 Church Street, Wetheringsett – works to trees in a Conservation Area – fell 2 sycamore trees. MSDC no objection.
8. **Planning correspondence**
 1. National Grid - Norwich to Tilbury Electricity Transmission – correspondence noted.
 2. Planning Inspectorate: Appeal No: APP/W3520/X/25/3370693
Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for an Existing Use or Operation or Activity including those in breach of a Planning Condition.
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) - Continued use of land as a residential caravan site (21 caravans and bungalow) without compliance with Condition No 1 of Planning Permission 121/85.
Public Enquiry for the above appeal – the Caravan Park, Mendlesham Road, Wetheringsett – 16 and 17 December 2025, 10am at Wetheringsett Village Hall – noted.
9. **Report on Wetherup Street flood remedial work**
Cllr Wyse reported the last remaining ditch was due to be cleared shortly. Two other firms had been contacted with regard to quotes for the potential work to the parish pond. Despite making repeated requests for the quotes there had been no response from the two firms. The original quotation totalled £1700 plus vat. In addition, Cllrs Wyse and Lacey had carried out some of the work required to the pond which would have totalled some £400-500. The remaining work involved repairing the collapsed wall and replacement pipe into the pond. Cllr Lacey proposed the quotation of £1700 to complete the remaining work was accepted, seconded Cllr Alston – unanimously agreed.
10. **Wetheringsett Village Hall**
 1. Management Committee report – a report from the VH Chairman had been circulated to councillors. This covered review of management and governance of the Hall, building maintenance, development for future sustainability, the Village Fete, Food Truck visits, overflowing play area bin and management of the play area.
Cllr Dodgson offered to take over emptying the play area bin. Thanks were recorded to Cllr Dodgson.

The last item, management of the play area, would be included on the next agenda for discussion.

2. Report on School Licence Agreement and Diocesan Lease

A new occupational Licence had been drafted and submitted to the School. This had been agreed in principle but awaiting formal confirmation from the School.

Additional discussions had included the Village Hall taking over management of half of the playing field and taking over the lease of the old school kitchen.

Drainage and sewage issues were partially resolved and awaiting further discussions with the Diocesan Buildings Officer.

3. Report on storage of Parish Council files at Village Hall

Items that would need to be retained indefinitely, ie Minute Books, would be stored in plastic boxes and stored in the Hall loft. Items that could be disposed of would need to be identified and approved for disposal by the Council.

11. **Cemetery and Play Area Grasscutting report** – no report

12. **Play Area report**

Thanks were recorded to Cllr Stringer for the £685 award for the new play area picnic bench.

13. **Speed Equipment Report**

1. Proposed solar speed sign Park Green – the chair reported a response from highways with regard to the location of the sign at Park Green was as yet to be received.

2. Data report November 2025 – the speed data report had been circulated. A report on use of the data by Suffolk Police was being investigated.

3. Concerns had been raised with regard to speeding from the south, particularly in the area of the Mendlesham Road junction following a further recent road traffic accident, moving the 30mph speed sign further south or average speed cameras was raised. This would need to be an item for the next agenda. In the meantime the chair would ask Cllr Stringer for his comment on these suggestions.

4. Overgrown hedges at junctions was raised. The Chair stated he would ask Cllr Stringer for his input.

14. **Finance**

1. To consider s.137 donation requests – none received

2. To consider support of a Duck's Crossing sign – Wetherup Street

A request had been made to County Highways – awaiting response.

3. Accounts for payments

Community Heartbeat Trust – replacement battery £429.60

Wetheringsett Townland Trust – annual loan repayment (previous payment not met by bank) £2108.67

Wetheringsett Townland Trust – Power Networks - paid in error to parish council a/c £38.72

D Burge – Cemetery grasscutting 2025 £950.00

Clerk – sal/expen Nov 2025 £363.27

Cllr Alston proposed payment of the above accounts, seconded Cllr Mrs Leech -unanimously agreed.

4. Finance report including consideration of draft budget and precept proposals 2026-27

Draft budget proposals had been circulated to councillors. The estimated budget for 2026-27 stood at £13522. The sum did not include any potential cost for a Ducks Crossing sign at Wetherup Street nor the £1700 for the Wetherup Street pond clearance although these two costs could be covered from the parish council reserve or an application for funding made to county councillor locality fund . The item was deferred for further consideration and decision at the January 2026 meeting.

15. **To consider for adoption the following documents:**

Parish Council model Standing Orders and Risk Assessment 2025-26

The above documents had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Wyse proposed adoption of both documents, seconded Cllr Mrs Leech – unanimously agreed.

Financial Regulations deferred to next meeting.

16. **Clerk's report/correspondence**

Meeting Dates: The regular first Monday of the month meeting dates were changed to the following for the months of March, April and May only. These would be held as follows:

Monday 9 March 2026, Monday 13 April 2026 and Monday 11 May 2026.

17. **Chair's Report**

The chair stated he would be unable to attend the January meeting and hoped the Vice Chair would be available to take the meeting.

18. Any other business for information exchange/future agenda requests

All Saints Church Carol Service 14 December 2025 – a parish councillor had been asked to take a reading on behalf of the Council at the Carol Service. Cllr Mrs Leech would be attending and offered to do the reading. Thanks were recorded to Cllr Mrs Leech.

19. Date of next meeting: Monday 5 January 2026, 7pm at Wetheringsett Village Hall

County Councillor Report – December 2025

Government Consultation on Council Reorganisation

On 19 November, the government launched their consultation on the two proposals submitted for council reorganisation in Suffolk. Suffolk County Council developed and submitted a business case for the government proposing one council for the whole county, and the districts and boroughs submitted a business case proposing three councils, Western Suffolk, Central and Eastern, and Ipswich and Southern Suffolk. The government consultation is different from local consultations you may have filled out recently, and central government will be making the decision on what councils will look like in Suffolk in future.

This consultation is only available until 11 January 2026, a relatively short time for Suffolk residents to express their preferences. You can find the consultation here: <https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/norfolk-suffolk/>

If you want to read through the business cases proposed for the changes, there are links to them on the consultation page above, or they can also be found here:

Three Councils for Suffolk:

<https://threecouncilsforsuffolk.org/wp-content/uploads/Three-Councils-For-Suffolk-Case-for-Change-1.pdf>

One Suffolk:

<https://onesuffolkcouncil.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/HI-RES-WEB-FINAL-LGR-BUSINESS-CASE-Compressed.pdf>

Financial Pressures On 4 November, Cabinet reviewed the council's financial performance for the first two quarters of the 2025-26 financial year. The council is now predicting an overspend for the year of £20.8m, which it will have to fund using its Risk Reserve. This is an increase of £7.5m compared to the prediction at the end of quarter one. Council financial reserves are forecast to reduce by £37m overall during the year, which is extremely worrying and unsustainable. The Dedicated Schools Grant 'negative reserve', a debt relating to Special Education Needs and Disabilities spend, is likely to be -£72.9m by the end of the year. The government allows local authorities to hold this debt via a 'statutory override' which is due to expire in March 2028. If the provision for this expires, it is likely that many councils in the country – not just Suffolk County Council - would be unable to balance their budgets. As well as SEND, overspends at the council are mostly in adult and children's social care.

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects At Cabinet on 4 November, it was agreed that the council would object to the Nation Grid's proposed Norwich to Tilbury grid reinforcement, which would see pylons and overhead electricity lines bisecting the county. Some undergrounding is planned in the Dedham Vale National Landscape area, with the council pressing for undergrounding in the Waveney valley too, and more generally objecting on the basis that offshore alternatives had not been fully explored, and that the grid reinforcement might not be necessary in the timescale asserted by National Grid Electricity Transmission. The council is also concerned about the impacts of the project and its construction on the environment and residents of Suffolk, and the possibility that the new lines might lead to an increased number of solar farm applications and energy projects along the route which would have a cumulative effect on the local area.

The council is also objecting to the Sea Link project, whereby cables would make landfall between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness, with a new substation and energy infrastructure built at Friston near Saxmundham. The grounds for objection include inadequate road access, impact of the scheme on the local landscape and the proposals for a new bridge being 'disproportionate' and damaging to the environment and local heritage including Grade II listed buildings nearby.

Planning for Emergencies At Scrutiny Committee on 20 November, the council's business continuity arrangements were reviewed. Business continuity refers to how the council ensures it is able to continue providing essential services in situations of emergency, for example power outages, flooding, or pandemic illness like Covid 19.

Members of the Joint Emergency Planning Unit joined the meeting to explain that all directorates at the council held plans for possible scenarios and incidents, with directors providing oversight and teams in each directorate reviewing and updating the plans as necessary. The council can also set up an Emergency Control Centre to respond to incidents and coordinate if multiple council directorates are affected. The council undertakes planned exercises to assess how its plans would work, and reviews processes after each incident or exercise to improve them. It also takes part in regional exercises, and uses a Home Office recording and planning system, Resilience Direct, to respond to emergencies, which means that it is not reliant on council IT systems in case of a cyberattack. Paper copies of all plans are kept in case of power outages.

New Project Celebrating Disability Suffolk Archives has received a grant of £139,107 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver a new project called Beyond Labels: Celebrating Disability which aims to shine a light on the lives achievements and challenges of people with disabilities in Suffolk. Beyond Labels will collect and preserve personal stories - as well as the histories of organisations, schools, and charities that support disabled people - to create a record that celebrates disability while sparking conversations about inclusion, accessibility, and equality.

As part of the project, Suffolk Archives will work with local schools and community groups to offer free workshops that teach skills in recording, organising, and preserving archives. There will also be workshops around the county that provide opportunities for participants to co-create projects that amplify disabled voices and educate others about the challenges faced in daily life. The project will also include cataloguing and selective digitisation of existing disability-related records, making them more accessible to the public and ensuring that Suffolk Archives reflects the diversity of the county. There will be a free public exhibition at The Hold in Ipswich which will run from February to May 2026 to celebrate the stories collected through the project and encourage greater awareness and empathy across Suffolk.

Social Media and Helpful Links

Follow us on:

Twitter - [Suffolk Green, Lib Dem & Independent Group \(@SuffolkGLI\) / Twitter](#)

Instagram – https://www.instagram.com/suffolkgli_group/

Facebook - [Suffolk GLI - Green, Liberal Democrat & Independent Group | Facebook](#)

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

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/what-to-do-in-a-flood>

<https://suffolkprepared.co.uk/get-prepared/risk-advice/flooding/>

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

District Councillor Report: December 2025

Mendlesham ward (Mendlesham, Thorndon, Wetheringsett & Rishangles parishes)

Local Government Reform	The government has launched its consultation on the future of local government in Norfolk and Suffolk. Two proposals have been put forward for Suffolk: the One Suffolk option (proposed by the County Council) and the three unitary councils option (proposed by the District and Borough Councils - details of which can be found here: https://threecouncilsforsuffolk.org/) The government's consultation on
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	these options is open to everyone and can be accessed here: https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/norfolk-suffolk/ . The Consultation closes on 11th January. We are expecting the Government to publicise the final decision by March 2026.
Biodiversity and nature recovery scheme	At its November meeting, Mid Suffolk District Council approved a package of funding of £1.8m over the next three years for nature recovery and biodiversity. The funding will be used to carry out the plans of the cross-party biodiversity working group, as well as meeting government proposals for biodiversity and nature recovery. Around half of the funding is going towards a new community Nature Recovery Grant fund. The fund will be split equally between both community-led projects and projects for the restoration of rivers and their catchments. The funds will support communities to create and manage habitat and nature recovery schemes, including natural flood management. For more on the new funding see: £2 million for Mid Suffolk biodiversity and nature recovery - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk The action plan can be found here: https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/biodiversity-action-plan
Upcoming changes to bin collections	Suffolk Recycles is currently running a social media campaign to prepare residents for the upcoming changes to bin collections in the area from 2026. It is important for us all to ensure that people get the correct information - please do direct residents to this website https://www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk/recycling-composting/recycling-at-home/better-recycling where the facts are clearly laid out.
New Youth Council for Mid Suffolk	The November Council meeting agreed unanimously to set up a new Youth Council for Mid Suffolk. The Youth Council aims to provide an avenue for young people to have their views heard, and to enable young people to better understand and engage with the political process. It is hoped the Youth Council will be operating by September 2026, the beginning of the next school year.
Essex and Suffolk Water consultation on major new water projects for the Eye area	Essex and Suffolk Water has launched a consultation on its plans to build new reservoirs and treatment plants, and install new pipelines, across northern Suffolk. The project is intended to tackle the growing water shortage in our area. One of the reservoirs is proposed to be located at Eye Airfield. As this is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), the government will have the final say on this project (not the local planning authority). Essex and Suffolk Water held a drop-in event in Eye Community Centre on November 12th with other events planned. The company has a consultation open until December 10th – please see: suffolkwaternetwork.co.uk/ They have a separate website for the reservoir project: https://northsuffolkreservoir.co.uk/#start

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