



## **EARL STONHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at the Village Hall on **Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 7.00pm.**

### **Present:**

Councillors: M Gillett (Chair)  
D Turner  
H Stanford  
M Mann  
S Budd  
J Barnet-Lamb

In Attendance Mrs S Edgar – Clerk  
Cllr M Hicks – County Councillor  
Cllr N Hardingham – District Councillor  
22 Members of the Public

### **ES96/25/26 – TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Baker

### **ES97/25/26 – TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Stanford declared an interest in item 9(g) on the Agenda.  
Cllr Turner and Cllr Mann declared an interest in item 10(a) on the Agenda.

### **ES98/25/26 – TO RECEIVE APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION**

None had been received.

### **ES99/25/26 – TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER 2025**

**It was AGREED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2025 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### **ES100/25/26 – PUBLIC FORUM**

Twenty-two members of the public were present in connection with speeding along Debenham Road to also include Blacksmiths Lane.

Cllr Hicks outlined the next steps of the process, which is an official report to give a recommendation on the speed limits. The cost of this is £700-900. If the recommendation is to reduce the speed limits the associated TRO to achieve this is a further £8-12k.

Cllr Hicks also reiterated he was supporting the group as their Local Councillor, not as the Head of Suffolk County Council, which had been referenced in a recent press release.

Simon Oldfield, resident, was present at the meeting and gave Members an update on the speeding issues along Debenham Road.

Cllr Gillett clarified the purpose of tonight's attendance was to ask for the cost of the report to be funded by ESPC.

Cllrs questioned whether Stonham Parva had been approached as the road also falls within their parish and whether they felt campaigners would be able to make any contribution.

Cllr Gillett confirmed the council were in full support of the proposals, but do not hold the funding to fully finance. Cllrs felt it was appropriate to contribute £300 to the project from the 2026/27 budget on confirmation that CiL reserves can be used for this purpose.

Cllr Hicks offered to contribute the balance of his 2025/26 funding which is circa £200.

It was confirmed the group would need to find the remainder of the funding prior to proceeding in addition to the cost of a Speed survey (approx. £400). Cllr Gillett confirmed the council would be willing to assist with the collection of funding.

### **ES101/25/26 – TO RECEIVE THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT – CLLR HICKS**

Cllr Hicks had to leave the meeting early. He had provided a report which had been circulated prior to the meeting and published on the village website.

### **ES102/25/26 – TO RECEIVE THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR’S REPORT – CLLR HARDINGHAM**

Cllr Hardingham read through his report which had been circulated prior to the meeting and published on the village website.

A question was raised regarding bottle banks and recycling areas following implementation of the new household collection scheme. Cllr Hardingham stated we would need to wait and see how they are used as these may remain. It was noted that the seasonality of use from the Cricket Club could affect the perceived need for them to remain. Cllr Turner asked what the plan was for the Village Hall, whether they would be issued with the new bins like domestic properties, but this was unclear.

### **ES103/25/26 - TO REVIEW THE PARISH CLERK ROLE**

Cllr Gillett asked the Clerk to leave the room for this item.

Cllr Gillett had prepared and circulated a paper with supporting information on the hours currently being worked by the Clerk, the additional tasks in the pipeline and various options with costings which were discussed.

**It was AGREED:** To increase the Clerk’s hours to 6 per week commencing from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026. The cost of this had been included in the proposed budget. **Cllr Gillett to arrange a new contract**

### **ES104/25/26 - TO RECEIVE THE CLERK’S REPORT AND FINANCIAL MATTERS**

#### **a) TO REVIEW THE ACTION TRACKER**

The Clerk provided an update on any items with notable progress that were not listed elsewhere on the agenda including:

School Lane Footpath - now cut back

Proposed SID location on the A140 – Initial response is that it looks ok and we now need to submit a formal request for this to be assessed which includes authorisation from the Landowner. No one was aware who owns the adjacent field. **Cllr Gillett to arrange a Land Registry search to confirm**

Fencing on Wicks Lane – SCC are assured it is not a Highways issue so now with MSDC to determine whether the fence height meets planning criteria

Fen Lane – More videos have been sent to Highways by both Cllr Gillett and the Clerk documenting the water flow, blocked drains and erosion of the road

The Clerk confirmed chasers had been sent on all other necessary ongoing items.

b) **CLERK'S REPORT**

The Clerk reported complaints had been received regarding speeding on the A140 and the resident had also sent these to Cllr Hicks. The area concerned is already 30mph, so this is more of an enforcement issue. Cllr Gillett confirmed Speedwatch have no safe locations in the area concerned and the initial offers from residents in this area to volunteer for Speedwatch had not progressed.

c) **TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Clerk reported on the Council's current financial position and movements since the last meeting. It was reported that the balance in the accounts on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025 was £9,362.

The Clerk confirmed SALC were available to conduct our audit for 2025/26 and a Letter of Engagement should be received to sign off at the March meeting.

A payment had been received of £375 from the PCC relating to a payment made to them in error by ESVH which was meant for ESPC. The PCC were unaware ESVH had already sent funds across to ESPC to rectify this error so funds would need to be transferred to ESVH to rectify. **Clerk to action**

d) **TO AUTHORISE PAYMENTS AND NOTE RECEIPTS**

The Clerk reported the following payments be authorised:-

BT Group PLC	Broadband for Village Hall	£34.75
ICO	Data Protection Renewal	£47.00
ESVH	Recycling Credit Transfer Feb-July 2025	£254.29
ESVH	Recycling Credit Transfer Aug 2024 - Jan 2025	£285.13
ESVH	Hall Hire 3rd November 2025	£16.00
Susan Edgar	Clerk's Office Allowance/Exp (November)	£26.00
Susan Edgar	Clerk's Salary (November)	£318.85
Eastwood Tree Services	Tree Survey	£780.00
BT Group PLC	Broadband for Village Hall	£32.34
SALC	Training Course - Clerk	£43.20
Seale Print & Direct Mail Ltd	Winter Recorder Printing	£199.60
Vertas Group Ltd	Grass Cutting 01/10/25-31/12/25	£463.36
Suffolk Cloud	Domain Renewal	£16.50
JD Tree Services	Tree Removal	£390.00
BT Group PLC	Broadband for Village Hall	£32.34
Susan Edgar	Clerk's Office Allowance/Exp (December)	£26.00
Susan Edgar	Clerk's Salary (December)	£318.85

**It was AGREED:** That payments totaling £3,284.21 be approved.

The following receipts were noted:

Lloyds	Savings Interest	£13.38
Kirsten's Care Ltd	Recorder Advert Winter 2025	£10.00
J Coward	Allotment Rent	£15.32
Katherine Hawkey-Smith	Allotment Rent	£202.15
MSDC	Recycling Credit Feb-Jul 2025	£254.29
Mr & Mrs Beckett	Allotment Rent	£151.10
A & RL Porch	Allotment Rent	£379.06

Lloyds	Savings Interest	£10.01
ESPCC	Transfer of SID payment from Village Hall	£375.00

e) **BANK RECONCILIATION**

Cllr Mann confirmed that he had checked the relevant documents in relation to the bank reconciliation.

**It was AGREED:** That the Bank Reconciliation be approved.

f) **PAYMENTS FROM CiL RESERVES**

The Clerk had received confirmation from the CiL Team that reserves could be used for the recent tree survey and removal costs. In doing this we would be able to maintain our Village Green reserve at £1,000 which would otherwise have been depleted from the works

**It was AGREED:** To transfer £975 from CiL reserves to cover the cost of the works. **Clerk to update cashbook and budget monitoring to reflect this**

g) **DONATIONS**

**It was AGREED:** That donations be made to – Forward Africa £100, ES PCC £600 and ES Cricket Club £400. The latter had previously been approved for payment. **Clerk to action remaining payments**

h) **FINAL BUDGET 2026/27**

**It was AGREED:** That the Final Budget for 2026/27 be approved with amendments to the recycling income that is received and passed to ESVH.

i) **PRECEPT FOR 2026/27**

**It was AGREED:** That the Precept of £9,453 for 2026/27 be approved. **Clerk to action.**

**ES105/25/26 – PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

**Ref: DC/25/05569** - Planning Application - Retention of change of use of land to enclosed dog walking area including associated vehicular parking – Land at Spong Farm, Stowmarket Road, Earl Stonham, Suffolk

The Clerk confirmed there was an individual objection logged against the application.

A resident had raised a point regarding the proposed parking area, which conflicts with the siting of a passing bay stipulated by Highways, in connection with the recently approved solar farm proposal.

Cllr Barnet-Lamb believed that the site had been cleared prior to the Environmental survey. Clearance was confirmed to have happened in May 2025 by Cllr Turner which was possible as her property had been damaged during the clearance works and work had been carried out to repair it.

Cllr Turner raised concerns over the hours of usage and increased traffic, with no benefit to the village to outweigh this.

Cllr Barnet-Lamb read through the details of his objection which included the environmental impact following the clearance of habitat, noise and poor access. He also stated there were nearby facilities owned by the applicant which already have sufficient availability.

**It was unanimously AGREED:** That the Parish Council objected to the application. **Clerk to draft and submit response to planning**

### **ES106/25/26 – PLANNING DECISIONS**

**Ref: DC/25/05091** - Lime Tree Cottage, Stowmarket Road, Earl Stonham, Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 5HN. Application for a Non-Material Amendment relating to DC/22/03632 - Replacement of front elevation with a traditional brick-and-block construction due to structural failure of the original timber frame **GRANTED**

### **ES107/25/26 – TREE STUMP ON VILLAGE GREEN**

Cllr Gillett gave an overview of the issues encountered with the tree removal and the metal works contained within the stump which are believed to be the remains of the protective cage sited around the tree when it was planted.

The Clerk had been in correspondence with the contractor and confirmed our options were as follows:

1. Leave the stump in situ
2. Stump Grinding which had been quoted at £400+VAT plus £16+VAT for replacement teeth as needed
3. To continue trying to remove with a chainsaw. The contractor would not charge labour for this just the cost price for replacement chains as needed (circa £30 per chain)

Although it was agreed leaving in situ was the cheapest option, Cllrs felt they would prefer for this to be removed.

Cllr Barnet-Lamb raised whether leaving could have an impact on neighbouring trees if the stump becomes infected for example with Honey Fungus.

**It was AGREED:** To delegate to Cllr Gillett, Cllr Turner and the Clerk to investigate a cost-effective solution for removal

### **ES108/25/26 – RECYCLING BINS**

The Clerk confirmed that since this item was added to the agenda correspondence had been received from MSDC confirming the proposals for the recycling bins with the new home refuse/recycling collections commencing in June 2026.

Payments would be made to the nominated payees for the period up until January 2026. Payments based on volume of recycling collected will then cease, but a payment of £1232 will be made in April 2026 to cover the periods 2026/27 and 2027/28. This amount had been calculated based on the average payments made over the last 3 years.

MSDC plans to leave the bins in situ to determine usage and as this dwindles are likely to remove.

Cllr Stanford asked if they could just reduce the frequency of emptying as use declines rather than remove them, given we must notify when they are full for collection anyway.

Cllr Turner stated the Village Hall are unlikely to want to keep the bins once payments stop.

Cllr Gillett asked for the budget to be amended to reflect the proposed changes albeit this would not alter the precept request as the payments are passed onto the Village Hall in full.

**ES109/25/26 – UPDATES**

- a) **Speeding** – Cllr Gillett confirmed there had been no Speedwatch since the last meeting. No further download of data from the SID’s had been carried out and a date was to be agreed with the Clerk to do this and then proceed with quarterly downloads
- b) **Footpaths** – None
- c) **Village Hall** – Cllr Turner highlighted there were still tickets available for the Pantomime and support was needed to ensure the theatre group can continue

**ES110/25/26 - MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL**

- Cllr Barnet-Lamb raised an issue with the tree at the end of Blacksmiths Lane which a large branch had broken off and fallen into the road. Cllr Turner confirmed she had spoken with the owner and passed on the details of a tree company
- Cllr Turner passed on details of an individual interested in the Councilor vacancies. Another individual was also present at the meeting. **Clerk to email Application Form to both interested parties**
- Cllr Stanford offered his apologies for the March meeting as he will be out of the country. He also added they the Church is yet to have any success in finding a Rector.
- Cllr Mann raised the issue with traffic funneling through the Village rather than using the official diversion in place for the A14 closures and the impact this is having on the road surface. **Cllr Gillett to write to Cllr Hicks to see if anything could be done**
- Cllr Gillett informed there was a meeting scheduled for the Pylons Examination process on 10<sup>th</sup> February which he would be unable to attend and asked if anyone else would like to attend.

**ES111/25/26 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 7:00pm**

The meeting finished at 8.40pm.

Chair: ..... Dated: .....