

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ONEHOUSE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
MONDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2026 AT 7.30 P.M. IN TRINITY HALL

Present: Cllrs Copping (Chair), Corker, Crissell, Nutman and Roberts

In attendance: Mrs V Swansborough, Clerk and 4 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence Cllr Boulter provided apologies for non-attendance of meetings for a further period due to personal matters. In accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council resolved to approve further extended leave of absence for Councillor Boulter due to personal circumstances, covering the period from 14th September 2026 to 11th October 2026, inclusive. During this period, Councillor Boulter will be excused from attending meetings of the Council and its committees. This approval shall prevent disqualification under the six-month attendance rule. District Cllr Matthissen provided apologies and Cllr Goodwin was absent.

2. To confirm and approve the minutes of the meetings on 13th July 2026. These were approved.

3. To receive members Declarations of Interest on agenda items and to consider any dispensation requests. Cllr Copping declared an interest in item 14 and Cllr Roberts declared an interest in item 17.

4. Public comment. Members of the public expressed their feelings and those of older residents of Onehouse who are unhappy that the OHSMag will now be an online publication. Access to the online version was discussed and residents were reminded that there will be some paper copies available at key locations in the village. A resident asked whether paper copies could continue if residents made a small contribution to the cost. This and the financial standing of the magazine was discussed, and the administrative cost of collecting small amounts of money was explained. A resident requested that a one-page calendar of events be included in future editions which Cllrs agreed was a good idea. A resident asked if private individuals could set up a publication independently of the OHSMag and was advised that anyone could do this if they wished. One resident advised that they had been asked to attend the meeting to speak on behalf of other residents on 3 matters. Firstly, concerns regarding the number of persons who have become incapacitated in Northfield Woods and required medical attention. Cllrs were not aware that there have been 4 occasions recently where the emergency services have needed to access the woods and have had difficulty due to the locked gate. The resident has also contacted the Woodland Trust who have advised that there is no designated key holder. The resident requested that Council consider how they could support residents and work with the Trust. It was agreed that this would be added to the October agenda. Secondly, the resident asked about the existence of a Community Emergency Plan and highlighted concerns held in view of the rural nature of the parish and surrounding farmland which could be a fire risk, as evidenced in other areas in Suffolk over the Summer. The resident was advised that discussions regarding a Community Emergency Plan have already been taking place this year and the Council is in contact with the Emergency Planning Support Officer at the district council who offer support in creating a plan. Work was on hold while the Council has been working on the Neighbourhood Plan and the emergency plan will be back on the agenda in October. Thirdly, the repeated water leaks on

Forest Road were raised and, in addition, the concern that fixing these leaks puts pressure on systems within adjacent residents' homes. It was requested that the Council join forces with neighbouring parishes, and the District Council, to engage with Anglian Water as a long-term plan is required. Discussion on this is an agenda item and The Chair advised that a Freedom of Information request to Anglian Water had already been made regarding repeated leaks as the Council have also been frustrated by the constant leaks and road closures required for repairs. Some information shared in the response to the request is privileged information and cannot be shared but residents were advised that a major project is now being looked at by Anglian Water.

5. Report from County Cllr Bentley:

Wildfire on Dunwich Heath: A wildfire recently broke out on Dunwich Heath in east Suffolk which took several days to get under control and has caused an enormous amount of damage to rare heathland habitat in one of the most beautiful and much-loved parts of the county. Suffolk Fire and Rescue worked with firefighters from all over the country to get it under control. At the height of the fire there were 120 firefighters tackling this blaze, with displaced residents needing shelter and support. The local community rallied to open up village halls to help, and local farmers helped to bring in water by tractor to terrain that could not be reached by fire engines. This is only one of many climate change-related incidents attended by blue light services over the summer, where intense heat and lack of rain have made the Suffolk countryside a tinder box for fires. Dunwich Heath is a traditionally managed nature reserve. The area that has been destroyed is the size of 210 football pitches. Following the fire, the Suffolk Fire Brigade Union wrote to the Prime Minister to explain that fire services need more investment in equipment in order to fight wildfires: systems to collect water and clothing that was less heavy and boots for outdoor terrain for when crews were required to walk for miles. He also highlighted the need to increase firefighter capacity in the light of the number of fires and that more 4x4 vehicles would be useful. Suffolk currently receives less than average funding from the government for its fire service, although it is one of the driest areas in the country and is therefore more likely to be hit by wildfires in our increasing hot, dry summers.

Changes to Councillor Policies: The new administration at the council have decided to spend around £18k to remodel the Leader's office at Endeavour House, claiming these works were needed as there was not enough room in the current Leader's office. The rationale given for this work is that there was not enough room for the group to work in the existing suite of rooms. The administration has 41 councillors compared to the previous administration with 54. The money is being spent to enlarge the Leader's office into the meeting room next door. Other changes prioritized by the new administration include a new policy on Pets in the Workplace, which enables the Leader to bring in their dog while making it clear employees of the council are not to do this, and a new dedicated carparking space for the Leader (since removed).

Help to Replace Ageing Heating Systems: Suffolk public sector organisations (including all Suffolk councils) are partnering with Switch Together, a community group-buying scheme, to make it easier for Suffolk residents to replace ageing gas, oil or LPG boilers with heat pumps. Through the government's Boiler Upgrade Scheme, eligible homeowners in England can receive a grant of £7,500 toward an air source heat pump, or £9,000 for households currently heating with oil or LPG. The grant is applied for upfront by the installer, so residents do not

need to claim it back or repay it. The scheme is open to homeowners and small business owners in England who are replacing a fossil fuel heating system and hold a valid Energy Performance Certificate with no outstanding major insulation recommendations. It is not means-tested, so there is no income threshold to qualify, and the scheme is currently scheduled to run until 31 December 2027. Switch Together works by bringing residents together so that installers compete to win their business which secures better prices than homeowners could negotiate individually. Once registered, residents receive a free, no-obligation personal offer, and their installer then handles the grant application on their behalf. Switch Together's group-buying savings apply on top of the government grant. Every installation is carried out by a Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) accredited installer. For more information about the scheme, please visit the Sustainable Suffolk website.

Energy Efficiency Loans: Homeowners across Suffolk can now apply for a loan to help fund energy efficiency improvements to their homes, thanks to a partnership between Suffolk County Council and Lendology. The Warm Homes Suffolk Loan scheme offers eligible homeowners' access to loans from £2k to £15k at a fixed interest rate of 2.2% Annual Percentage Rate (APR), with repayment terms of up to seven years. Borrowers may also repay their loan early without penalty, subject to eligibility and loan terms. The funding is designed to support residents who want to improve the energy performance of their homes while spreading the cost of installation over a manageable period.

The loan can be used for a range of energy efficiency measures, including:

- Solar photovoltaic (PV) systems
- Solar battery storage
- Solar thermal systems
- Ground source heat pumps
- Air source heat pumps
- Double and triple glazed windows and doors
- Loft, wall and floor insulation
- Ventilation systems when installed alongside insulation measures

The scheme aims to help residents reduce their energy bills and make their homes better insulated. For more information about the Warm Homes Suffolk Loan Scheme, please visit the Lendology website.

High Streets Matter: Support for Market Town: Suffolk County Council is offering extra support to small independent and hospitality businesses across the county via its new High Streets Matter programme. This will offer 75 businesses a package of one-to-one advice, funding opportunities and peer networking, with a view to help them become more resilient so high streets can thrive. Interested businesses can find out more and register here on the New Anglia Growth Hub website.

Public Consultation on Cuts to Healthy Child Service: Finally, Suffolk County Council's public consultation on proposed changes to its Healthy Child Service has been extended for an extra month. The proposed changes include cessation of the Young Person Pathway and Family Nurse Partnership, which provides specialist support to parents under the age of 21 after they have a baby. The proposals also include removal of the Community Staff Nurse role from Health Visiting teams, and the School Nursing service becoming term-time only. The consultation now runs until 18 October, with a decision likely to be made at Cabinet in November. You can read through the proposals and respond to the consultation online.

6. Report from District Cllr Matthissen:

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR): At the time of writing, the Secretary of State has very recently announced that the process of reorganising Suffolk's four districts, one borough & one county council into three Unitary councils is on indefinite 'hold' and will now be subject to further review. Huge amounts of work and investment have been involved in meeting Government's detailed requirements and tight deadlines in preparing for these changes. The result is a period of uncertainty ahead for all of us as residents, and disappointment and frustration for council staff and elected councillors. Unitary elections, due in May '27, are now on hold, but district elections (which Govt had delayed to May '28) are now brought forward, once again, to next year. As far as we know, parish elections will go ahead as planned. There may well be further changes we are not yet aware of, but as always Mid Suffolk District Council will remain focused on service delivery, and on support to communities and businesses across the district.

Pride in your place grants: Applications for Mid Suffolk District Council's Pride in Your Place grant have reopened, offering funding to projects that bolster community pride and celebrate the heritage of towns and villages across the district.

Progress with SHELF project at Chilton Fields: The new 3G sports pitch and athletic track at Stowmarket High School were completed recently as part of the SHELF project. This received funding from the FA, Premier League and Football Foundation as well as MSDC.

Waste collections: If anyone has any remaining issues with the new system of collections, please let me know.

Gateway 14 news: If you want to have a look in the Innovation Centre, the café is now open to the public from 9am - 4pm. This in addition to short- and long-term room hire and hot desking.

Locality budget: The 2026-27 Locality Budget remains open and I would love to receive applications for funding from any community group in the ward. Details can be found on the website. It is usually a good idea to contact me to discuss your application before submission.

Sports facilities in Stowmarket: A state-of-the-art 3G community football pitch and new athletics track have been completed in Stowmarket – opening up new sporting opportunities for the district's residents. Built in the grounds of Stowmarket High School, the 3G pitch and mini athletics track will be managed by Everyone Active and available for community use outside school hours through a booking system. The 3G pitch project was funded by the Government's Football Foundation with contributions from Mid Suffolk District.

A14 clean up on-going: The team from contractor Triplex conducted the clean-up operation over four nights, taking advantage of planned National Highways road closures to minimise disruption and avoid additional lane closure costs.

Financial assistance for heat pumps: Grants of up to £9,000 are now available for households to convert older oil or gas heating systems to Heat Pumps. Residents of Suffolk can check their eligibility and register their interest on the Switch Together website.

New Council Housing: The keys have been handed over for a batch of new affordable homes in a Suffolk village. The 67 properties have been built by Bellway in Bramford. The homes include a mix of one and two -bedroom flats , two - bedroom bungalows , and three - bedroom family houses , available for both rent and shared ownership.

7. Planning Matters

- a) To discuss and make recommendation to MSDC on any applications received prior to this meeting:
- b) To receive MSDC decisions on previously considered applications:
 DC/20/01110 – Discharge of condition 16 (sustainable drainage system) Land to the South of Union Road, Onehouse.
 DC/26/ 2764 – Non-material Amendment to Planning permission 4455/16 for condition 5 to be amended & allow for update to roof tiles on specific plots at Land on North Side of Finborough Road, Onehouse.
 The decisions were received by Cllrs.

8. Finances

To ratify the following payments

- a) £687.99 - Mrs V Swansborough, July 26 salary
- b) £687.79 – Mrs V Swansborough, August 26 salary
- c) £9.62 - NEST, Clerks Pension Direct debit
- d) £9.62 – NEST, Clerks Pension Direct debit
- e) £671.56 – Lloyds Bank Purchasing Card, direct debit (safety equip & fee)

To approve payment of the following invoices.

- f) £421.00 – Gipping Press, printing of July/Aug OHSMag
- g) £433.00 – Gipping Press, printing of September OHSMag
- h) £268.80 – Mid Suffolk Mobility, SIDS batteries
- i) £432.60 – MSDC, litter & dog waste bin emptying 26/27
- j) £39.58 – Mrs J Copping, exps for clerks' phone & online OHSMag sub
- k) Any additional invoices received since agenda produced.
- l) £252.00 – PKF Littlejohn, 2025/26 external audit fee

Items a) to e) were unanimously ratified and items f) to l) were unanimously approved.

To receive monthly financial report from the Clerk, including bank reconciliations to 30th September.

Current account balance is £25,712.05cr following receipt of the 2nd precept payment of £21,500 and locality awards of £750 for the Paupers lawnmower and £549 for PPE and first aid equipment in the Paupers Graves.

Savings account balance is £39,405.09cr giving total funds of £65,117.14cr.

Payments this month total £1,846.98 and a transfer from the current account to the savings account of £20,000 has also been set up.

This leaves corrected balances of: current account £3,865.07cr, savings account £59,405.09cr, total funds of £63,270.16cr.

The Clerk reminded Cllrs that although the balances are healthy at the moment, there have been no invoices for the consultancy work on the Neighbourhood Plan paid this financial year as yet.

Income from OHSMag invoices for the first 6 months of the year total £1,855.00.

There are 3 invoices outstanding and overdue which the Clerk is chasing. These total £220.00. One advertiser has withdrawn following a change in personnel and review of all marketing. There was one new advertiser with a one-off advert in the September edition.

Bank reconciliations as at 30th August were reviewed and signed by Cllr Crissell.

9. To discuss quotes received for annual renewal of insurance and take any necessary action. The Clerk provided details of the renewal quote for the existing insurers. Due to the increase in precept, this is now a tailored insurance

policy. The quoted cost for one year is £558.07 or for 3 years it is £518.78 per year. The Clerk had contacted two other insurance providers. One declined to quote and the other did not respond despite all requested information being submitted. Cllrs unanimously approved renewal with the existing insurers, Zurich, and agreed to the 3-year quote. The Clerk explained that this quote could still change if the precept changed. Cllrs noted this point. The Clerk will arrange renewal and payment of the premium ahead of the renewal date of 1st October.

Action: Clerk

10. To receive an update on the purchase of replacement SIDS batteries and take any necessary action. The Clerk advised that the new SIDS batteries have been received and installed by Cllr Boulter. It was noted that Cllr Boulter has also agreed to investigate why the LED lights on the SID near Northfield Road are not working.

11. To receive an update on potential site for additional dog waste bin near to the driving range on Lower Road, and take any necessary action. Cllr Crissell advised that the entrance to the Golf Club on the other side of the road would be a safer point for a new bin. He will visit the site and gain confirmation from the golf club that they are happy for the bin to be sited there and provide the clerk with the coordinates of the site so that collection suitability can be sought from BMSDC. A maximum budget of £400 was unanimously approved by Cllrs for the purchase of a new bin and fixing accessories, and any cost of installation.

Action: Cllr Crissell

12. To receive an update on OHSMag, including discussion on appointment of OHSMag editor, and take any necessary action. Cllr Copping left the meeting and Cllr Roberts provided feedback from the interview held with the candidate. This was positively received and Cllrs unanimously approved the appointment of James Buret as Editor of the OHSMag. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact the new editor to offer the role.

Cllr Copping returned to the meeting. The editor contract was reviewed and approved by Cllrs. It was noted that some printed copies will still be required and Cllr Crissell will contact printers to confirm cost and timescales. It was agreed that the copies would be black & white to minimise cost. It was further agreed that the first point of contact for the new editor will be the clerk and that the Chair would undertake proof reading of the publication. The Chair advised that a resident had made contact regarding the setup of a website domain for the OHSMag. For governance and security reasons the Clerk will respond with the aim of taking over ownership and related costs of the domain.

Action: Cllr Crissell & Clerk

13. To consider a request from Onehouse Parish Church to contribute towards the cost of laying a new gravel path to improve access, and take any necessary action. This was discussed and it was unanimously agreed that a contribution of £500 would be made to the Church towards the new path under S137. Clerk to contact the Church.

Action: Clerk

14. To receive an update on the Neighbourhood Plan, including the results of the survey and agreeing a date for the Design Plan meeting, and take any necessary action. The date of the next meeting to discuss the Design Plan

and survey results was agreed to be 5th October at 7pm and will be an online meeting. Cllrs were pleased to receive the news that the Council has secured funding of £8,000 towards the cost of the Neighbourhood Plan from BMSDC.

15. To receive an update on a meeting with the Paupers Graves volunteers regarding governance and future working arrangements. The Chair suggested that the meeting be postponed until after the risk assessment has been completed. Cllr Roberts agreed to try to complete the risk assessment in time for the October meeting. **Action: Cllr Roberts**

16. To receive an update on the purchase of a projector for use at Council meetings and take any necessary action. Following Council agreement to purchase a projector the Clerk advised that new projectors are priced in excess of the amount approved at the July meeting. The Chair advised she had acquired a second-hand projector which could be donated to the Council. The Chair will check that the projector will be sufficient for the Council's needs. **Action: Chair**

17. To consider a request from the Community Hall Management Committee to provide financial assistance to the cost of running Oktoberfest 2026, and take any necessary action. The Chair updated the Council that Oktoberfest 2026 is not now going ahead and financial assistance is therefore not required.

18. To discuss potential upcoming projects and purchases to be considered ahead of precept and budget setting. Cllrs agreed that costings for the following items be included in budget planning for 2027/28: Neighbourhood Plan, Elections, Paupers Graves area tree maintenance, play equipment at the community hall & new benches for the parish. Cllrs will consider the level of support for these and any other items for the October meeting. **Action: All Cllrs**

19. To discuss action plan for use in the event of an unauthorised encampment in Onehouse, and take any necessary action. Cllrs unanimously approved the action plan circulated to them and agreed to their contact details being made known to all Cllrs only. Potential areas of risk in the Parish were discussed and it was noted that it would be helpful as part of the planned Community Emergency Plan if contact details for these areas were collated. It was also agreed that a WhatsApp group be set up with all Cllrs and the Clerk as members. This method of contact would only be used for providing notice of required action by the Clerk or in the event of an emergency, such as an unauthorised encampment. **Action: Clerk**

20. To receive an update on Onehouse Meadow, and take any necessary action. No update has been received.

21. To receive an update on problems reported with the footpath on the Bloor development down to Finborough Road, and take any necessary action. Cllrs Copping and Crissell advised they walked this path recently and that the path had been swept and a hogging base was in evidence.

22. To receive any update on purchase of weights for the gazebos and take any necessary action. In Cllr Goodwin's absence there was no update.

23. To consider a request for a telephone box style community book library, and funding towards, and take any necessary action. The idea of a community book library was welcomed but as the Council does not own any suitable land or a container it was agreed to postpone further discussion on this until the October meeting.

At 9.30pm it was agreed to continue to complete all items.

24. To consider a requirement for and wording of a checklist for approval of events arranged and held in the Paupers Graves site. The checklist drawn up was discussed and unanimously approved.

25. To receive an update on the provision of storage facilities, first aid equipment and PPE for volunteers at Paupers Grave and take any necessary action. PPE & first aid equipment has now been delivered. The Clerk will contact a representative of the group to advise. The Chair advised that the Planning Department has been emailed to request a meeting to investigate the likelihood of agreement being forthcoming for a storage facility in the Paupers Graves site and will update Council at the October meeting.

Action: Chair & Clerk

26. To receive an update on the Paupers Graves and take any necessary action. Cllr Corker advised that, due to the extended heatwaves over the Summer, the area is extremely dry and the pond is empty. Volunteers have been busy raking the leaves which have fallen early due to the dry conditions. Cllrs were surprised to be advised that fencing had been erected, without consultation, around the area where the leaves had been heaped. This will now need to be included in the risk assessment. Locality funding of £750 has been received for a new lawnmower. The volunteers have been advised and are sourcing a suitable mower.

27. To discuss any action necessary regarding the Forest Road to Chilton Leys Footpath. No update has been received.

28. To receive an update on the Rural Caravan and take any necessary action. The latest meeting took place on 14th September with 7 residents in attendance. The PC provided by the Rural Caravan has now been set up and was available for residents to use. The next meeting will be on 12th October, everyone is welcome.

29. To receive an update on any events and take any necessary action. There are currently no events planned.

30. To consider setting up a Onehouse Instagram account and take any necessary action. This was discussed as another way of keeping residents up to date and encouraging engagement. It was approved that the Chair set up an account.

Action: Chair

31. To discuss Onehouse website and Facebook page and take any necessary action. The Clerk advised that the website will need to be re-checked for accessibility ahead of next years audit. The Facebook page continues to grow and gain followers slowly.

32. To discuss any ongoing concerns regarding water leaks Forest Road, and take any necessary action. The Council continue to be frustrated by the ongoing leaks and resulting road closures as repairs are required. The impact on residents in Onehouse and neighbouring parishes is noted. As previously reported, the Chair advised that following a freedom of information request made to Anglian Water regarding the ongoing leaks on Forest Road, it was made clear by Anglian Water that they were reviewing the situation and a plan for major work was being considered. The Council will continue to monitor the situation and liaise as necessary.

33. To receive correspondence/communications and to deal with any matters. The following items have been circulated to Cllrs:

SALC: News Bulletin 20/7, 25/7, 3/8, 25/8, 8/9. SALC Super Forum – LGR 24/7, 8/9. LGR Update 7/9. **BMSDC:** Wildflower meadow land management & reducing fire risk during hot weather 24/7. Town & Parish Update 31/7. NSIP & Large-Scale Energy Developments 4/8, 7/9. Town & Parish Council Meeting Presentation 18/8. 2026 Funding Summit for Voluntary , Charity, Faith & Social Enterprise Sector 7/9. Government announces review of LGR programme 7/9, Advice of broken dog bin 8/9. CIL Draft Charging Schedule examination notification 2026 8/9. **SCC:** Suffolk Police & Crime Panel 2026/27 Annual Report 13/8. **Suffolk Police:** PCC Update 6/9.

34. To receive reports:

a) Report from the Clerk: The Clerk advised that over the summer work on OHSMag invoices had taken place and further invoicing would be due soon. Budget work will also commence soon. A webinar on the new Practitioners Guide and the digital AGAR had been attended and Cllrs were advised that the AGAR will be digitally completed from 2028/29. The new purchasing card has been received and is in use.

b) Report from the Chair: The Chair updated Cllrs that following an accident at the junction to the Bloor Homes development, the hedging has been reduced to improve visibility.

35. Questions to the Chair. There were none.

36. Items for next agenda.

External Audit Report

Community Emergency Plan

S.137 Donations

Policies

Items for budget consideration

Northfield Woods emergency access

37. To confirm date and time of the next Parish Council Meeting as Monday 12th October 2026 at 7.30pm and consider clerks request for a change of day/date for the November meeting. The October meeting was confirmed as 12th October and it was agreed that the November meeting would now be 16th November at 7.30pm.

The meeting was closed to the public for items 38 and 39 at 10.08pm. The Clerk also left the meeting.

38. To receive feedback from the Clerk's annual review meeting. The meeting will be closed to the public at this point.

39. To confirm agreement to increase the Clerk's salary in line with the Local Government Pay Claim 2026/27 and backdating to 1st April 2026, as recommended, and take any necessary action.

The meeting closed at 10.13pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....