

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ONEHOUSE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
MONDAY 13 APRIL 2026 AT 7.30 P.M. IN TRINITY HALL

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

In attendance: County Cllr Otton (in part), District Cllr Matthissen (in part), Mrs Swansborough, Clerk and 7 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence. Apologies were received from Cllr Boulter. Cllr Boulter provided apologies for non-attendance of meetings for a further extended period due to personal matters. In accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council resolved to approve an extended leave of absence for Councillor Boulter due to personal circumstances, covering the period from 13th April 2026 to 8th June 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.

2. To confirm and approve the minutes of the meetings on 9 March 2026.

These were approved.

3. To receive members Declarations of Interest on agenda items and to consider any dispensation requests. Cllr Roberts declared an interest in items 15 and 16.

4. Public comment. Residents from the Caravan Site on Combs Lane expressed their thanks for the Council's support and advised the application to change the use of the site from a Travellers Site to a Residential Site had been approved. A resident speaking on behalf of the Onehouse PCC raised concerns regarding item 17 which was discussed. A resident raised the issue of repainting white lines at the junction of Union Road and Star Lane again as this has still not been completed.

5. Report from County Cllr Otton:

Unitary Decision Announced by Government; On 25 March the government announced that it had chosen a three unitary model for Suffolk following the Local Government Reorganization process which will see upper tier authority Suffolk County Council and lower tier authorities like districts and boroughs abolished in two years. Last year the government asked Suffolk councils to submit proposals on how many unitary councils they thought the county should have in the future. Suffolk County Council submitted a case for a single unitary council (One Suffolk) and the district and borough councils submitted one for three councils, which was the option chosen by ministers. These plans will see the county split into three areas: Western Suffolk, Central and Eastern Suffolk and Ipswich and Southern Suffolk, which includes the county town and Felixstowe. Elections for the new councils will be held next May, with the new councillors shadowing existing councillors until the new authorities are 'vested' from 1 April 2028. I have decided after 19 years to not stand again for election on May 7th. I believe, with all the new councils it is the right time. I have loved being your County councillor even when things seem to not go the way we might want. I hope I have been a help to you and wish you all the very best.

Forest road footpath; I cannot express just how furious I am to be told this is now being stopped by the landowner. SCC are now looking at alternative plans. I

was hoping to leave you with at least a spade in the ground.

Motion of Support for Survivors of Sexual Harm Passed Unanimously; At council on 19 March Ruth Leach, on behalf of my group, proposed a motion that the council release a statement of support for survivors of sexual harm and exploitation, on the basis that the near-constant media coverage of the 'Epstein files' was triggering for survivors of sexual harm of both genders, increasing the number of people seeking help. The motion also proposed that the council run a social media campaign signposting people to Survivors in Transition, a local charity which provides support and advice, and write to the government advocating for funding for support services. The motion was approved unanimously in the chamber.

Extra Funding for Public Rights of Way; On 24 March, Cabinet agreed to allocate an additional £3.9m of capital funding to repair structures on Suffolk's Public Rights of Way network. Structures such as bridges and boardwalks have a limited lifespan, and the council undertook a review to create a priority list of structures that need replacing or repairing in the next five years. The additional funding is needed because the amount of money usually allocated for these works is no longer enough due to the increased costs of building materials and labour, which have gone up 50% in the last five years. The priority list includes the Bailey Bridge between Walberswick and Southwold, the Fen Bridge over the Stour at Debenham and Hemyard Bridge at Ixworth. If structures become unsafe for walkers the council has to close the Public Right of Way, with each closure costing £1,200 for a six-month period (if a path was closed for a year, it would cost £2,400). The Cabinet also heard about the King Charles III Coastal Path, which contrary to national media reports is not yet fully open: sections between Manningtree and Shotley Gate, and north of Southwold, will not be open until later in the summer.

Libraries Decision Scrutinised; At Scrutiny Committee on 11 March, last year's decision by the council to move the library service back in house was reviewed. Libraries' Friends Groups remain in place, with the funds they have raised for individual libraries staying separate from Suffolk County Council's funding. The meeting heard how Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Libraries had worked together to make the transition seamless for library users, although the transfer into council employment had placed a burden on library employees to undertake staff training, including on council platforms for IT, HR and procurement. In addition, the council had undertaken a restructure which had saved £340k in the 'central team'. No redundancies of front-line library employees were made. During the meeting the council also laid out their plans to engage with library volunteers, governance systems for the new service and how the service would be celebrating the 2026 Year of Reading. The meeting also noted that borrowing of paper books was reducing, but that digital services such as eBooks and audiobooks were continuing to grow.

Support for Care Leavers; On 5 March, the council's Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee met to discuss services and support provided for young people in Suffolk leaving care. The council has to offer support to young people leaving care up to the age of 25, and at the most recent Ofsted inspection in June 2024 this was highlighted as one of the main areas where the council needed to improve. Since the inspection, the council has worked to improve planning with young people who are coming up to leaving care, making sure more young people knew what support was on offer, and making sure that support was accessible for them as they prepared for independence. In addition,

the council received a visit from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in April 2025 which focused on youth homelessness and found that the council needed to immediately review its pathways for care leavers who presented as homeless. In response to these findings, the council increased the number of advisors working with 17-year olds to prepare for leaving care, and making sure they are aware of the help they can get such as reduction in council tax, and the 'Family Business' model the council uses to provide apprenticeships and jobs for young people who have been in care. The council has also nearly halved the number of care leavers in unsuitable accommodation, although they are still planning more work in this area, particularly for care leavers in custody. More information on what help the council provides for young people leaving care on the website.

New Government Funding for Increasing Fuel Costs; Suffolk County Council has welcomed the additional £1.7m funding announced by the government to support households in the county facing increased oil heating costs. The council already provides cash payments to help residents with the cost of living through the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme, funded by the Household Support Fund. This scheme supports a range of essential costs, including utilities and energy, and has recently been updated to explicitly reference oil heating following the national announcement. From 1st April, Suffolk County Council will transition from the Household Support Fund to the Crisis Resilience Fund (CRF). This transition had already been planned prior to the new funding announcement, and will enable residents experiencing a financial shock or crisis - including sharp increases in oil heating costs - to continue accessing cash support via the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme, using the same application route as before. Residents can access information about this process on the website.

Parents Urged to Vaccinate Against Measles; The council is urging parents and carers in Suffolk to ensure their children are fully vaccinated against measles, mumps, rubella, and chickenpox, following a resurgence of measles cases nationally over the past two years. The country has seen a return of measles outbreaks linked to falling vaccination uptake, and as a result, the UK recently lost its World Health Organization measles elimination status. Vaccination rates remain below the 95% coverage needed to prevent outbreaks, with almost one in five children starting primary school not fully protected against serious diseases. Measles is one of the most infectious diseases in the world and can lead to complications including pneumonia, meningitis, and brain inflammation. Health leaders including the Public Health team at Suffolk County Council have advised that parents and carers will usually be contacted by their GP practice when their child is due a routine vaccination, but if a child has missed a vaccine and is over 18 months old, these can be scheduled at any time by contacting their GP practice to book an appointment. If a parent or carer is unsure what vaccinations their child has already received, they can check their Red Book, the NHS app or by speaking to their GP practice.

Vaccine for Meningitis; I have asked the director of public health what the situation is in Suffolk.

6. Report from District Cllr Matthissen:

Devolution and local government reform; The County Council elections are on 7 May 2026. The government has decided that there will be 3 unitary councils for Suffolk. While detailed boundaries and names are still being finalised, the three councils are planned to be in place from 2028. Our villages will be in the rural

central council. Elections for the new shadow authorities will take place in May 2027, with the new councils formally taking over responsibilities from April 2028. The idea of the transition period is to enable detailed work for reorganisation to take place, while services are delivered as usual throughout the process. The current plan is for Mayoral Elections to be held in May 2028.

Recycling & Waste Collection; The delivery of new bins ready for the rollout of Better Recycling is well under way. This means the delivery of a new blue recycling bin for glass, plastic and metal bottles, cans and containers, using the existing green bin for paper and card and the new kitchen food caddie and food recycling bins.

Funding for Neighbourhood Plans; Government funding for Neighbourhood plans has been withdrawn. MSDC has now introduced funding to support Parish Councils in the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans / Reviews, which seek to allocate sites for housing development that make an agreed contribution to meeting the district-wide housing needs. There is a limit of £20,000 for any specific Neighbourhood Development Plan. Details on the scheme and how to apply will be available on the website from 14th April 26.

£120k boost for art and culture in Mid Suffolk; This year, 10 organisations have received a share of £119,496 from the Mid Suffolk Culture Fund, for projects covering a wide range of areas and all age groups, including Stowmarket Culture Group, which has been awarded £15,000 for the delivery of the 'Jubilant' youth summer arts festival, and Orchestras Live, which will use a grant of more than £8,000 to facilitate an intergenerational orchestral project in Eye and the surrounding areas.

Works starting on 3G football pitch; Works to deliver a brand new 3G football pitch and mini athletics track in Stowmarket are due to start in the coming weeks. The project is being funded by contributions from Mid Suffolk District Council, the Premier League, The FA, the Government's Football Foundation as well as S106 developer contributions. Being built in the grounds of Stowmarket High School, the 3G pitch and athletics track will be available for community use with Everyone Active managing the facilities and associated booking system outside of school times.

Locality Awards; The fund is expected to re-open after the local elections.

7 Planning Matters

a) To discuss and make recommendation to MSDC on any applications received prior to this meeting.

DC/26/00996-Removal/Variations of condition under DC/24/00137-Erection of front & side extensions and re siting of oil tank. It was resolved to make no comment.

DC/26/00134-Erection of a single storey front extension, first floor rear extension and alterations to form first floor ensuite at 83 Northfield Road, Onehouse, Stowmarket, IP14 3HE. Due to the late receipt of this application, an extension will be requested to enable Councillors to discuss at the May meeting.

b) To receive MSDC decisions on previously considered applications.

Since the agenda was published MSDC decision to approve the application reference DC/26/00620 for erection of a single storey rear extension at 15 Drury Close, Onehouse, IP14 1FS. The decision was received by Councillors.

Councillors were also advised that the Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for an Existing Use or Operation or Activity, material change of use of site from a gypsy caravan site to a residential caravan site with no occupancy

restriction under DC/25/05543 had been approved.

8. Finances

To ratify the following payment:

- a) £677.51- Mrs V Swansborough, March 26 Clerk's Salary
- b) £10.13– NEST, Clerk Feb 26 pension direct debit
- c) £118.80-John E Wright & Co Ltd, NP Community Event Printing

To approve the following payments:

- d) £433.00 – Gipping Press, OHSMag April printing
- e) £55.00-Gipping Press, Flyers for NP event
- f) £32.00-Gipping Press, Flyers for NP event
- g) £57.60-SALC, Payroll services Oct 25 – March 26
- h) £310.00-OHS Village Hall & Play Field Trust, Garage Hire Sept25-Mar26
- i) £105.00-OHS Village Hall & Play Field Trust, Hall Hire for NP Event
- j) £67.99-Mrs V Swansborough, reimbursement for hard drive purchased
- k) £758.00-Rock Awnings, 2 x gazebo's
- l) £540.00-Onehouse PCC, room bookings April 25-March 26
- m) Any additional invoices received since agenda produced
- n) £180.00 - LR Chaplin T/a Greener Gardens, Grass cutting
- o) £432.19 – SALC, Annual membership subscription 2026/27
- p) £206.65-Viking Office UK Ltd, ink cartridges for clerk's printer

Items a) to c) were unanimously ratified. Items d) to l) and n) to p) were unanimously authorised. The Clerk requested that all payments be released with the exception of the payment to Viking as there was a delay in delivery. Payment to be released on delivery, clerk to advise.

To receive monthly financial report from the Clerk, including review of bank account reconciliations to 31st March 26: Balances at 31st March 26 were £1,132.08cr on the current account and £28,207.72cr on the savings account giving total funds at the financial year end of £29,339.80cr. Since then the pension payment direct debit of £10.13 has been paid and the first half of the precept payment for 2026/27 of £21,500 has been received. Therefore, corrected balances are £22,621.95cr on the current account and £28,207.72cr on the savings account. Total funds £50,829.67cr. Bank statements and bank reconciliations for both accounts at 31st March were reviewed and confirmed to be correct by Councillor Crissell. Payments this month total £3,177.43 and the Clerk has arranged a transfer of £15,000 to be made from the current account to the savings account. After payments have been made balances are £4,444.52cr on the current account and £43,207.72cr on the savings account, total funds £47,652.24cr. Prior to the meeting the Clerk had emailed all Councillors and provided the year end balances on earmarked reserves. The uncommitted balance on the CIL reserve of £723.46 was discussed and it was resolved that this be transferred to the Neighbourhood Plan reserve towards costs of the plan. An update on the actual costs compared to budget had also been provided to Councillors. All overspends were known and agreed and Councillors had no further comment. The Clerk advised that all OHSMag advertiser invoices were paid in full by the 31st March.

9. To consider Clerks request for payment of extra hours worked and take any necessary action. Payment for 21.75 additional hours worked was unanimously approved. Clerk to advise SALC Payroll. **Action: Clerk**

10. To consider clerks request to instruct Suffolk Cloud to migrate all emails and data from old BT clerk email address to current council email address, and take any necessary action. The cost of £25 for this work was unanimously approved. Clerk to contact Suffolk-Cloud. **Action: Clerk**

11. To consider request to purchase replacement SIDS batteries and take any necessary action. New SIDS batteries are required before the maintenance can be handed over to the resident volunteer. Quotes had been provided and eBay was cheapest at £185.29 for both plus postage. The cost was unanimously approved but as payment is required at the time of purchase and the Council has no debit/credit card, an alternative supplier will be sought. **Action: Chair**

12. To receive an update from the Tree & Footpath Warden, and take any necessary action. The Tree & Footpath Warden was unable to attend but had sent a report via the Clerk: Since the start of 2026 I have walked all our paths at least once. There are no incidences of any significant damage. Towards Harleston the Electricity company have cut back a lot of branches. The off-cuts are all neatly stacked alongside the paths and will rot down well over time. The repair to the footpath access opposite Charisma tHair on Forest Road has been well constructed and should solve the difficulties that were being experienced there. Footpath signage is generally poor with several national footpath signs damaged or missing in our area. I suggest a full review on a map at a future meeting. Accompanied walks are due to resume towards the end of June.

13. To discuss any action necessary regarding the Forest Road to Chilton Leys Footpath. This was discussed with Councillor Matthissen who advised that using District CIL for a compulsory purchase order was not possible but other solutions are being investigated. A meeting has been arranged and Councillors requested that the Chair be invited to this meeting. **Action: Chair**

14. To discuss any action necessary regarding the issue raised of resident's bins and general waste being left out. This was discussed and it was resolved that a request for a review of the refuse collection point on Northfield Road would be submitted by the Chair. **Action: Chair**

15. To receive an update on the purchase of play equipment for the playing field, consider funding opportunities, and take any necessary action. The Council are keen to support the playing field management committee in securing funds to support the purchase of new play equipment but are unable to investigate without a fully costed plan of equipment required. Councillor Roberts will advise the committee. **Action: Cllr Roberts**

16. To receive an update on the concreting of benches at the playing field, and take any necessary action. This has not yet been completed. Councillor Roberts speak to the management committee to progress. **Action: Cllr Roberts**

17. To discuss suggestion raised regarding Trinity Hall car park and take any necessary action. This item was also discussed under item 4. The Council do not consider purchasing the car park to be viable or necessary at this time. It was agreed that representatives of the Onehouse PCC and the Community Hall Committee would arrange a meeting to discuss and aim to resolve any issues.

18. To discuss water leaks on Forest Road and take any necessary action. It was noted that, despite rain, there were no obvious leaks on Forest Road. It was discussed that very dry weather could also lead to leaks and this will therefore be discussed again at the July meeting.

19. To discuss Emergency Plan, including setting up a working group, and take any necessary action. In view of the Neighbourhood Plan work there is not capacity for this project at this time. This will be reviewed again at the October meeting.

20. To consider any response to the Suffolk Highways Town, Parish Council & Parish Meeting Survey. Councillors resolved that the Chair would provide a response to the Clerk for submission. **Action: Chair and Clerk**

21. To receive an update on the Neighbourhood Plan, including output of the community event, and take any necessary action. The Community Event took place on 28th March. Councillors and consultants were pleased with attendance numbers and residents were thanked for their input. A further meeting is planned for 20th April at 7.30pm in Trinity Hall and all Councillors are encouraged to attend.

22. To receive an update on the purchase of gazebo's & purchase of weights, and take any necessary action. 2 new gazebos' have been delivered. Weights will be required in time for use at the fete. Councillor Goodwin is looking at options and will report back to the June meeting. **Action: Cllr Goodwin**

23. To discuss the future of the OHSMag and the editor position, including review of any applications to the volunteer editor role, and take any necessary action. There have not yet been any applications for the volunteer editor position. It was noted that the June edition is likely to be the last edition produced by the current editor. The Chair will contact the working group with a proposed way forward. It was resolved that, if necessary, an editor would be paid at a rate of £15 per hour. **Action: Chair**

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

24. To discuss a paid subscription for the provision of an online magazine and pricing review for advertisers, and take any necessary action. The cost of a paid online magazine was approved at around £10 per month plus set up cost. The Chair will provide details ahead of the May meeting. **Action: Chair**

25. To receive an update on the Rural Caravan and take any necessary action. The latest meeting was on 13th April and attendance was good with 12 people joining. The organiser donated a laptop for storing at Trinity Hall and for use at the Rural Caravan only. The Clerk advised that the laptop should be checked for virus protection and parental controls should be set up. The next meeting will be 11th May.

26. To receive an update on any events, including an update on the fete, and take any necessary action. The date of the summer fete has changed to 11th July to avoid clashing with the Buxhall fete. The fete committee are next

meeting on 6th May. 100 letters requesting raffle prizes are being delivered and Councillors were also asked for any raffle prize ideas.

27. To receive an update on changes to the entrance to Paupers Grave to improve accessibility and take any necessary action. The new 'Kissing Gate' at the entrance to the area has now been installed by the volunteer group. Councillors extended their thanks for the hard work on this. Photos are available and will be posted on Facebook and in the OHSMag to share the completion of this important project with the community.

28. 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. A list of required PPE has been received and cost obtained by the clerk of £147.12 which was unanimously approved. Safety boots are also required and details of how many and sizes are awaited. Payment is required at the time of order so this will be postponed while other payment methods are explored. A storage container of 20' by 8' is considered the best size provided delivery access can be arranged. Councillor Goodwin advised a container of this size would cost in the region of £1950 plus the cost of the work required to create a suitable base for the container. It was noted that the container needs to be in a discreet location to avoid it being unsightly in the area and an obvious target for vandalism or attempted theft.

29. To receive an update on the Paupers Graves and take any necessary action. Councillor Corker advised that the area, including the new gate, was looking really good and there had been a lot of visitors over the Easter weekend. Fortnightly meetings of the volunteers continue to ensure any maintenance of the area which is necessary can be completed.

30. To receive an update on the replacement of the Onehouse sign. Councillors were delighted to note that the new Onehouse sign has now been erected on Union Road.

31. To discuss Onehouse website and Facebook page and take any necessary action. The Clerk advised that the website has been tidied up with older items removed as appropriate. The 'Jump to a month' button on the What's On page had not been working but this has now been resolved. The Chair advised that the Facebook page now has 515 followers and continues to grow and reach more residents.

32. To receive correspondence/communications and to deal with any matters. The following items have been circulated to Cllrs:
SALC: News Bulletin 10/3, 16/3, 23/3, 30/3. Local Government Reorganisation Decision 26/3. SALC HR Advice Service 31/3. Suffolk Highways Town & Parish Survey 10/4. **SCC:** News Release re £3.9m Investment 18/3, Information on additional funding for increased heating oil costs 25/3, Message from leader of SCC 27/3, Notice of Election Agents 10/4. **BMSDC:** Local Government Reorganisation Decision 25/3, Town & Parish Update 1/4, NSIP Large Scale Energy Developments 1/4.

33. To receive reports:

a) Report from the Clerk. The clerk advised that year end work in preparation for internal and external audits were under way.

34. Questions to the Chair. There were none.

35. Items for next agenda.

Consideration of a credit/purchasing card

Grass cutting arrangements for 2026/27

Review of necessary policies, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Paupers Grave Container update

OHSMag online provider

Flower barrel maintenance requirements

36. To confirm the date and time of the Annual Parish Meeting as Monday 11th May 2026 at 7pm. This was confirmed and will be in Trinity Hall.

37. To confirm date and time of the next Parish Council Meeting as Monday 11th May 2026 at 7.30pm. This was confirmed.

The meeting closed at 10.08pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....