



Rushmere St. Andrew Parish Council

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Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 7th May 2026 at 7.30pm at St Andrew's Church Hall

CHAIRMAN: Cllr R Whiting

PRESENT: Cllr R Whiting, Cllr M Newton, Cllr J Wright, Cllr S Taylor, Cllr B Ward, Cllr R Nunn, Cllr M Odam, Cllr P Blundell, Cllr D Francis, Cllr R Silburn

APOLOGIES: Cllr M Brown, Cllr A Jeffreys, Cllr P Phillpot

OTHER PRESENT: Cllr Clery

CLERK: Mrs S Stannard

ALSO PRESENT: 3 Members of the public

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL & SIGNING OF DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE

Cllr Wright nominated Cllr Whiting and this was seconded by Cllr Nunn. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED: To elect Cllr Whiting as Chairman.

Cllr Whiting signed the Chairman's Acceptance of Office form, witnessed by the Clerk.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Cllr Nunn nominated Cllr Wright as Vice-Chairman. Seconded by Cllr Ward. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED: To elect Cllr Wright as Vice-Chairman.

3. APOLOGIES, APPROVAL OF ABSENCE, PROTOCOL & CONDUCT REMINDERS

RESOLVED: To approve the apologies for absence were received as above.

4. TO FILL THE VACANCY IN THE TOWER WARD BY CO-OPTION

A vacancy had arisen in the Tower Ward and East Suffolk Council has confirmed that the Council can co-opt. Two candidates were interested in being co-opted for the vacancy and they gave short presentations about what they would bring to the councillor role. The candidates left the room.

RESOLVED: To co-opt Mrs Sales to fill the vacancy in the Tower Ward; she signed the Declaration of Office, witnessed by the Clerk and joined councillors.

5. DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLOR INTEREST

Cllr Wright declared a non-pecuniary interest in SCL Landscape Management Ltd.

6. TO SIGN, AS A CORRECT RECORD, THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 26th MARCH 2026

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 26th March 2026 be signed by the Chairman as a true record and adopted by the Council.

7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

a. Members of Public/Parish Councillors may Raise Items Relating to this Agenda or any Matter Concerning the Parish

Cllr Nunn informed Councillors that one of the residents at Heathlands Park contacted him and asked if the Council can assist with the installation of bollards close to Bennetts and the entrance at the park as often the entrance to the park is blocked by cars parked in this location. This will be referred to the next Environment and Services Committee Meeting. He also informed Councillors that HGV restrictions have been introduced on The Street, Playford Road and Humber Doucy Lane. Cllr Wright provided more information regarding HGV restrictions to be introduced. Councillors noted this.

b. County Councillor Report

A County Councillor's report was not available for distribution.
Matters arising: None.

c. District Councillor Report

A District Councillor's report was circulated prior to the meeting and the contents noted.
Matters arising: None.

8. TO CONFIRM APPOINTMENTS OF THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

RESOLVED: Mrs S Stannard be confirmed as the Responsible Finance Officer

9. TO CONFIRM MEMBERS' AFFILIATION TO COMMITTEES & ADVISORY PANELS AND REPRESENTATIVES ON PARTNER ORGANISATIONS & BOARDS

RESOLVED: that the affiliation to committees, advisory panels and representatives on partner organisations and boards for the ensuing municipal year 2026-27 be made as follows:

a. Environment and Services Committee

Cllr Whiting, Cllr Francis, Cllr Newton, Cllr Nunn, Cllr Odam, Cllr Wright, Cllr Ward, Cllr Taylor (8 members).

b. Planning and Transportation Committee

Cllr Whiting, Cllr Francis, Cllr Phillpot, Cllr Newton, Cllr Nunn, Cllr Odam, Cllr Taylor, Cllr Wright, Cllr Ward, Cllr Jeffreys (10 members).

c. Community Engagement Committee

Cllr Whiting, Cllr Brown, Cllr Newton, Cllr Odam, Cllr Wright, Cllr Ward, Cllr Phillpot, Cllr Blundell (9 members).

d. Cemetery Management Panel

Cllr Whiting, Cllr Wright, Cllr Blundell, Cllr Phillpot, Mr Brazier (Registrar) (5 members).

e. Allotment Advisory Panel

Cllr Francis, Cllr Whiting, Cllr Wright, Mr J Squirrell (Allotment Manager), Mrs N Barber, Mr K Barber, Mrs A Sayles (7 members).

f. Forward Planning Working Group

Cllr Whiting, Cllr Wright, Cllr Newton, Cllr Taylor, Cllr Phillpot (5 members).

g. Representatives on Boards and Partner Organisations:-

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|--|-----------|
| i. Community Emergency Adviser | J Wright |
| ii. PC Representative on Broke Hall School | M Brown |
| iii. PC Representative on Parish Halls Management Committee | J Wright |
| iv. PC Representative Churches | R Whiting |
| v. Parish Council's Public Footpath Liaison Officer | B Ward |
| vi. PC Representative on Suffolk Association of Local Councils | R Whiting |
| vii. Parish Council Community Emergency Adviser | J Wright |
| viii. PC Contact for Safeguarding of Children & Vulnerable Adults | M Brown |
| ix. Public Transport Liaison Contact | J Wright |
| x. Parish Tree & Pond Warden | J Wright |
| xi. PC Representative on the Woodbridge SNT ASB Group | TBA |
| xii. PC Representative on Community Partnership Group
(including Rewilding forum and Road Safety Forum) | J Wright |
| xiii. PC Representative on Rushmere Commoners | R Silburn |
| xiv. Representative on Kesgrave Community Library | M Brown |
| xv. Representative on SAVID | J Wright |

10. FINANCE

a. To note expenditure authorised under delegated authority

NOTED: The following expenditure was authorised under delegated authority for safety reasons:

Removal of fallen tree at rear of Sandlings Crescent. It was blocking the path. SCL Landscape Management Ltd was appointed at a cost of £80 + VAT to remove the tree.

Removal of fallen trees on footpath and clearing path to the rear of allotments links to Playford Lane. It was blocking path. SCL Landscape Management Ltd was appointed at a cost of £95 + VAT for removing the fallen trees and at a cost of £145 + VAT for clearing of the footpath.

b. To consider and approve regular payments and note mobile phone contract increases

A list of regular payments in accordance with approved contracts and agreements as well as the increase in the mobile phone contract were made available at the meeting.

Regular Payments by BACS	Regular Payments by Direct Debit
Evolve - printer contract	Nest (pensions)
Rushmere St Andrew Parish Halls – Office rent	H3G (Mobile phone contracts)
PCC St Andrews – meeting rooms	T2K (office line and internet)
Sunskips – skips at cemetery	Anglian Water (water charges at allotments and cemetery)
Mr J Nicholls – parish handyman rounds	ICO (Information Commissioners Office)
Mr K Brazier – gardening at cemetery, registrar of burials and play area checks	Community Action Suffolk (CAS) - website
Mrs S Stannard – clerk & RFO - salary	

Mobile phone costs will increase by 4.5% from April 2026.

RESOLVED: To approve the list of regular payments by BACS and Direct Debit as listed above and the mobile phones contractual increase.

- c. **To approve renewal of subscriptions for Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC), Information Commission Office (ICO), Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM), Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and National Allotment Society (NAS)**

The following subscription fees are due:

SALC £1,316.79; ICO up to £52; ICCM £110 + VAT; SLCC £316 + VAT and NAS £84.

RESOLVED: To approve the above-mentioned subscription fees.

- d. **To approve the unaudited financial accounts for the year ending 31st March 2026**

The unaudited financial accounts had been circulated to all councillors in advance of the meeting.

INCOME:

Total receipts amounted to £252,328.08 – an increase of £27,708 on the previous year (£224,620.08). Key contributing factors included increases in grants and the precept.

- Grant funding increased by £37,696.98 compared to last year
- Interest received increased to £312.07 compared to last year
- The precept increased by £9,900 compared to last year
- No CIL funding was received compared to £2,2021.08 received in the previous financial year.
- Dowry land payments received from East Suffolk Council were £2,482 (£0 previous year).
- Cemetery income reduced by £20,708 compared to the previous year. Allotment income reduced by £153.97 compared to the previous year.

EXPENDITURE:

Total expenditure was £186,339.51 – a decrease of £52,284.53 from the previous year. This reduction was mainly due to a decrease in expenditure at the lawn cemetery (decrease in £33,616.40), staff costs with a decrease of £26,839.54 and a reduction in CIL expenditure of £12,146.34.

Notable projects and related expenditure in 2025/26 included:

- Completion of Kelvedon Sensory Garden
- Pre-application work on the parish office/ community hub
- Improvement in IT systems, website, councillor emails and moving to gov.uk communication systems.
- Work at the cemetery and allotments

As of 31st March 2026, the Council's total net assets stood at £398,245.30. Of this, £319,788.19 was held in earmarked reserves and the general fund balance was £78,457.11.

RESOLVED: To approve the unaudited financial accounts for the year ending 31st March 2026 as presented.

- e. **To note the annual internal audit report in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/2026 and approve the internal audit report for the year ending 31st March 2026**

The annual internal audit report in the AGAR was discussed at the meeting and the internal audit report was made available to councillors prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED: To note the internal audit report in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/2026. No adverse issues raised.

To approve the internal audit report for 2025/26, conducted by Heelis & Lodge. No adverse issues were raised. No recommendations were made.

- f. **To approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26 Part 3, Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement**

The document was distributed prior to the meeting and considered at the meeting.

RESOLVED: To approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2025/26 (Section 1 of the AGAR). The document was signed by the Chairman and Clerk at the meeting.

- g. **To approve the AGAR 2025/26 Part 3, Section 2 – Accounting Statements**

The document was distributed prior to the meeting and considered at the meeting.

RESOLVED: To approve the Accounting Statements for 2025/26 (Section 2 of the AGAR). The document was signed by the RFO prior to the meeting and by the Chairman at the meeting.

- h. **To consider and approve the statement of review and control of audit procedures; internal control policy**

The documents were distributed prior to the meeting and considered at the meeting.

RESOLVED: To approve the statement of review and control of audit procedures and the Internal Control Policy.

- i. **To confirm appointment of Internal Auditor for 2026/27**

The statement of review, control of audit procedures and internal control was considered and agreed. The documents concluded that Heelis & Lodge meet the necessary criteria for independence and audit capability.

RESOLVED: To appoint Heelis & Lodge as the Internal Auditor for the 2026/27 financial year, with the Council satisfied that Heelis & Lodge meet the necessary criteria for independence and audit capability as determined in the statement of review and control of audit procedures.

- j. **To confirm bank signatories**

RESOLVED: That the following individuals are confirmed as bank signatories: Cllr Phillpot, Cllr Blundell, Cllr Sayles and Mrs S Stannard (Clerk and RFO). Mrs Stannard is a signatory to enable her to initiate electronic payments.

k. To confirm existing Standing Orders and Direct Debits

RESOLVED: That the following direct debits be confirmed. They are monitored regularly by the Chairman.

- Standing Orders: None in place
- Direct Debits:
 - Mobile phone contracts (four devices: two officers, Chairman, Vice-Chairman)
 - Anglian Water (Cemetery and Allotments)
 - Information Commissioner's Office (Annual registration fee)
 - Community Action Suffolk (Website hosting)
 - Nest (Pension contributions)
 - T2K Voice and Data (Call transfers and internet)

l. To confirm S137 expenditure powers for specific financial commitments

RESOLVED: Section 137 expenditure for 2026/2027 be agreed as donations up to £2,000, the purchase of Remembrance wreaths and subscriptions as outlined in item 10c.

m. To note VAT reclaim submission for 2024/25

NOTED: That a VAT reclaim in the sum of £21,119.68 is to be submitted to HMRC for the 2025/26 financial year.

n. To note dates for public rights inspection and publication of annual accounts

NOTED: That the dates for the exercise of public rights and inspection of the 2025/26 accounts will be from 3rd June to 14th July 2025.

11. TO CONSIDER AND AGREE RELOCATION OF GATE AT ALLOTMENTS

Three quotes were requested for the relocation of the gate at the allotments. One quote was received from Luke Barker Home & Garden.

RESOLVED: To appoint Luke Barker Home & Garden to relocate the gate at the allotments at a cost of £1,140 + VAT to erect a 2m fence at the allotments as per his quote.

12. TO CONSIDER AND AGREE ERECTION OF FENCE AT ALLOTMENTS

Three quotes were requested for the relocation of the fence at the allotments. One quote was received from Luke Barker Home & Garden.

RESOLVED: To appoint Luke Barker Home & Garden to relocate the fence at the allotments at a cost of £2,990 + VAT to erect a 2m fence with concrete posts at the allotments as per his quote.

13. TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE NEWT SURVEY AT ALLOTMENTS

The Council considered a recommendation from the ecological consultants undertaking the ecological surveys in support of the planning application for the Parish Office/Community Hub. The consultants advised that a newt survey be undertaken at Chestnut Pond to assess its potential to contribution towards biodiversity net gain objectives associated with the development.

RESOLVED: To appoint Huckle Ecology Ltd to undertake a newt survey at Chestnut Pond at a cost of £480 plus VAT, in accordance with the quotation received, as part of the planning application for the Parish Office/Community Hub at the allotments. Other quotations were not requested as this consultant is best placed to complete the survey to inform existing ecological work he is undertaking for the parish office/ community hub application.

14. TO CONSIDER AND AGREE THREE YEAR MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

a. Allotments

Three quotes were sourced from SCL Landscape Management Ltd, East Suffolk Council and Greengrass Ltd. The most cost-effective quote was from SCL Landscape Management Ltd and they have done the maintenance work at the allotments for many years and have provided an exceptional service.

RESOLVED: To appoint SCL Landscape Management Ltd at a cost of £90.27 + VAT per cut up to a maximum of 12 cuts a year. Weed kill/ chemical application at £38.25 + VAT per application up to a maximum of 3 applications as per their quote. The need for weed kill/ chemical applications will be determined by the Vice-Chairman prior to any weed kill/ chemical applications. Annual hedge boundary cut at £504.90 + VAT.

b. Chestnut and Limes Ponds

Three quotes were sourced from SCL Landscape Management Ltd, East Suffolk Council and Greengrass Ltd. The most cost-effective quote was from SCL Landscape Management Ltd and they have done the maintenance work at the ponds for many years and have provided an exceptional service.

RESOLVED: To appoint SCL Landscape Management Ltd at a cost of £40.80 + VAT per cut at Chestnut Pond up to a maximum of 12 cuts a year and £20.40 + VAT per cut up to a maximum of 8 cuts at Limes Pond.

c. Lawn Cemetery

Three quotes were sourced from SCL Landscape Management Ltd, East Suffolk Council and Greengrass Ltd. The most cost-effective quote was from SCL Landscape Management Ltd and they have done the maintenance work at the ponds for many years and have provided an exceptional service.

RESOLVED: To appoint SCL Landscape Management Ltd at a cost of £61.20 + VAT per grass cut at Holly area; £141.27 + VAT per grass cut at Hazel and scrub bed maintenance £80.07 + VAT at Hazel; selective weed kill £163.87 + VAT at Hazel; grass maintenance at Hornbeam £67.87 + VAT; shrub bed maintenance £80.07 + VAT at Hornbeam; selective weed kill £163.20 + VAT at Hornbeam, hedge cutting £80.07 + VAT at Hornbeam. Boundary hedges £504.90; track grass maintenance - £20.40 + VAT; hedge cut £45.90 + VAT along track. Up to a maximum of 15 grass cuts and shrub bed maintenance per year; up to three track grass and hedge cuts, up to three weed kills a year and an annual hedge cut. The need for any weed kill/ chemical applications will be determined by the Vice-Chairman prior to any applications.

15. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS

a. Planning and Transportation Committee Meetings – 26/03/2026 and 23/04/2026

Minutes noted.

b. Allotment AGM – 14/04/2026

Minutes noted.

16. GENERAL PARISH MATTERS & CORRESPONDENCE

a. General Parish Matters

No matters arising.

b. Correspondence received

None

17. DETERMINATION OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

None

18. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chairman closed the meeting at 20.19pm

