

Swilland and Witnesham grouped Parish Council

Clerk: Alison Burrows

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Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday 18th March 2026 at

Witnesham Village Hall, 7:30 p.m.

Minutes

Present – Paul Sharples, Andy Dungey, David Roots, Tim Burrows, Susan Ross, Chris Collings, Jerry Hindle, Kim Shaw, Faye Ellis

Also present - members of public x 1, ESCllr Dan Clery SCllr Elaine Bryce

Clerk – Alison Burrows

126. **Chair's welcome and Introduction** – Chair welcomed all to the meeting with a reminder that councillors should be respectful to each other.

127. **To receive apologies from Councillors not attending** – Apologies with consent received from Richard Nicol and Jo Pratt.

128. **To Receive Councillors Declarations of Interest** – non received.

129. **To approve Minutes from the Parish Council (PC) meeting 21st January 2026** – minutes approved and signed by Chair.

130. Questions or comments on Reports from SCllr Elaine Bryce & ESC Cllr Dan Clery -

ESCllr Dan Clery reported that grants are now available towards providing cycle racks in parishes. He also advised that more information will be available soon regarding the new refuse collection system, with new bins/replacement bin lids being delivered ready for June 2026 when the new system starts.

SCllr Elaine Bryce reported that key elements of the budget agreed in February 2026 will result in that out of every £1 collected, 77pence is spent on adult and social care, the rest on highways etc.

SCC Elections are going ahead in May 2026; we can expect a decision next week as to whether the 'One Suffolk' model or 'Three Suffolk' model will be adopted.

She will continue to support 'Stop the Quarry' and played a big part in pushing through the request for an Economic Assessment of the quarry application to be completed. The quarry application will most likely be back to committee in June/July 2026. She has concerns that following the May elections any new councillors may not have the training to deal with the complex quarry application and any further problems raised during the approval process.

SCCllr Elaine Bryce has approved a 'Locality Award' for the PC following an application for funds towards giving the Coopers Close Allotments a refresh, she looks forward to seeing the results of this and being invited to visit once the work is completed.

131. The current Financial Situation – Clerks report

Unity Trust account balance as at 28/02/2026 £21,836.39

Suffolk Building Society balance as at 30/11/2025 £90,560.44

This balance is made up of CIL funds of £88,127.01 and interest of £2,433.43.

Unity Trust Bank statement and Suffolk B/Soc book checked against balances reported above and signed by Andy Dungey.

To date £26,178.56, excluding VAT, has been spent on the Village Hall(VH)Car Park, damp work and new flooring. A donation from St Marys Witnesham Church of £3,000 has been received towards the car park resurfacing leaving a balance of £23,178.56 to be transferred from the Suffolk Building Society account as this work is funded from CIL monies – withdrawal slip signed by authorised signatories.

Clerk advised that the 'field to fork' grant application was not successful.

132. To approve the following payments (including VAT if applicable):

Payment Reference	Payment to	Amount in pounds £
a	Harts Carpet World – VH flooring	£2,013.60
b	Wave – Allotment water bill	£11.87
c	Admin A Burrows Jan 2026	£491.18
d	CAS – Website Hosting Nov to Feb 2026	£16.50
e	Bank Charges Jan 2026	£6.00
f	AE White Surfacing Ltd VH car park	£26,176.80
g	A Burrows – printer paper	£8.80
h	Admin A Burrows Feb 2026	£491.18
i	REJB Rec play equipment repairs	£879.60
j	Greenman Tree Care Rec and Play area	£840.00
k	Caloo runway inspection rec ground	£852.00
l	Defib Store new pads play area defib	£189.60
m	Witnesham Baptist Church donation	£120.00
n	SALC payroll provision	£54.00

Approval of payments proposed by David Roots, seconded by Tim Burrows.

133. To consider and approve changes to budgets for 2025/2026 and 2026/2027

Clerk reported that following communications by email, the Finance Committee have considered and agreed the following budget changes which are now to be considered by full council:

2025/2026

Increase Play Equipment repair/maintenance from £1,000 to **£2450.00** to cover additional repairs -

Reduce Grass Cutting budget from £3,000 to £2,500 =500

Reduce Church Yard Costs from £750 to zero =750

Reduce training budget by £200 to £170 =200

total £1450

Increase Reactive Maintenance from £2,000 to **£2,200** to cover tree and hedge trimming additional costs

Reduce Communications budget from £500 to £300 **total £200**

Increase Auditing costs from £200 to **£700** to cover external audit fees

Reduce Defib Maintenance from £700 to £200 **total £500**

Remove £1000 STQ donation and move to budget for 2026/2027

2026/2027

Added STQ £1000

Added daffodils £200

Increase VH Hire fees to £350

Draw on reserves £1300.00 to balance at this stage

Revised budget sheet circulated by email prior to meeting.

Approval of above changes proposed by Paul Sharples, seconded by Jerry Hindle.

134. To Appoint Internal auditors for 2025/2026 –

Clerk advised she has contacted Heelis and Lodge and they are available to complete the internal audit for 2025/2026.

All council agreed the appointment.

135. To review and adopt the following policies:

Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities

Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct

Reserves Policy

Public Privacy Notice

Data Protection councillor and staff

Complaints

Website Accessibility Statement - new

IT, Cybersecurity and Communications – new

Susan Ross proposed we adopt all policies above, seconded by Andy Dungey.

The policies are to be further reviewed and scheduled throughout the year rather than all at same time.

Susan Ross advised that the Public Privacy Notice and Complaints policy should appear at bottom of the PC website page.

136. Flood Advisory Committee update and Unacceptable Off Site Flood Risk

A very positive meeting was held on 13th March 2026 where Susan Ross, Jerry Hindle and Dr Brian Wilson met with representatives from the SCC Flood Investigations team who were involved in the Section 19 report for Swiland and

Witnesham. The main focus of the meeting was on Natural Flood Management (NFM). Landowners, one from Witnesham and one from Swilland also attended and were very positive about working with the Flood Investigations team to identify areas where improvements can be made. While everyone acknowledged the difficulty in dealing with an exceptional event such as Storm Babet, all recognised the value in taking steps to reduce the risk of flooding in periods of heavy rainfall.

Updates to the Section 19 report actions are being collated and should be available around the end of March.

Jerry Hindle explained that the PC has been contacted by an individual who has gathered evidence regarding building development off-site flood risk.

The individual has visited the Wittens Way development and highlighted that there has been inadequate/improper installation of surface water drainage from the steeply sloping site access road to the swales and attenuation basin which causes water to drain out onto the main road.

PC have chased ESC Planning regarding the lack of enforcement, that the attenuation basin has not yet been verified as fit for purpose, this included the trees at Barley Mow which appear to have been felled in error.

137. Parking Restrictions on Road at Witnesham School

PC has received communications from a resident of Swilland requesting double yellow lines along the High Road outside the school entrance as buses and cars are parking in the restricted 'no parking' area causing obstructions to driveways. The Primary School have advised that buses are parked along the road for approx 10 minutes twice a day on a Wednesday for one term for swimming (12 weeks) and the last session for this term is 18/03/2026. Swimming then restarts in September with the same pattern. There are no other buses besides the ones used ad-hoc for school trips. These are once a term for each class and there are 4 classes. The school tries to avoid drop off and pick up time for any school trips.

The PC will revert to the Primary School and ask if the bus can reverse in the school entrance, a safer area for the children and could the bus park further down the road in the 'unrestricted' area.

Following consideration the PC report that as a PC we have no legal powers for parking and the enforcement of parking restrictions.

PC considered the request for double yellow lines and don't feel it will solve the problem. This has been considered previously in May 2025 and reached the same conclusion.

138. Playing Field Future Plans

Prior to the meeting Tim Burrows circulated the quote received from architect, Feasibility and Site Inspection fee in the region of £1,750 equates to 25hrs of the architects time – this includes:

- To source consultant quotations:
 - a. Quantity Surveyor to prepare a budget estimate
 - b. Civil Engineer to review sub-base design and surface water strategy
 - c. Arboriculture Consultant to review impact on nearby trees and prepare report.

d. Ecology Consultant to undertake a preliminary ecology assessment, to review Biodiversity Net Gain and advise on potential mitigation required
e. Highways Consultant (should visibility splay requirements not be able to be met)

- Sourcing of quotes for a topographical survey of the car park area, part of the playing field and part of High Road (43m in both directions, to establish visibility splays).
- To produce a site plan as existing (including visibility splays) and to develop an existing street scene and site section,

Before we can make any firm plans the new lease and transfer of land from SCC to the PC need to be signed and transfer completed.

As the proposed costs for the car park alone is estimated by the architect at £250,000 the question was asked whether it is still viable to proceed with the transfer of land, would the PC be able to maintain a larger car park and play area.

Jerry Hindle advised that there will be additional housing in the area, it is important to look at the long-term picture and that the land would be a good asset for the village. To look at the overall plan to take account of access to the site and to review the feasibility, possibilities for this site. He pointed out that SCC have reserved the area of land near the road and school entrance for future use.

It was noted that the costs of maintaining the car park whether the land was leased or purchased would be the same.

Clerk advised that East Suffolk Council will be publicising early next week a map showing submissions received during the Call for Sites – this will give an indication of land for building which may be included in the new Local Plan.

It was proposed by Tim Burrows that once the matters regarding the lease and transfer of land are concluded that we proceed with the Feasibility and Site inspection costing approx. £1750, paid from CIL (if allowable, clerk to confirm) – seconded by Jerry Hindle. The focus to be on access to the car park and lines of sight.

Tim Burrows also advised that it would cost approx. £4,000 to move the climbing frame to the new play area and that grants could be available for new play equipment.

139. Witlesham Village Hall

Richard Nicol provided a report which was circulated prior to meeting, presented by Paul Sharples:

It is requested that the PC support by:

1. Earmarking £2.5k of reserves for controlled drawn-down if insolvency is imminent.
2. Provision of an estimated £6k of CIL funds to modify the heating system
3. Holding all meetings at the Village Hall

Following consideration of the above points 1 to 3:

1. Proposal by Jerry Hindle that the PC earmark reserves of £2,500, for controlled drawdown if insolvency is imminent – seconded by Andy Dungey.

2. All agree that the heating system in the hall needs to be improved, costings need to be obtained for other options, before a decision can be made to earmark £6,000 of CIL for this purpose, we will consider again at the May 2026 PC meeting, for this we ask:

A, How much money will be saved by the proposed infra-red heaters and pre-pay system?

B, Will the pre-pay heating system put hall users off? Will current users continue if this is implemented?

C, Has a heat pump been considered with surface mounted pipes inside?

D, obtain costed proposals for other viable heating options.

3, All agreed to hold meetings at the VH where possible and if its available. PC. will adjust 2026/2027 budget to allow for additional expenditure on Hall Fees

Also to consider the Management structure for the VH at the May PC meeting, Should the PC take it on or be more involved for a year or two to assist?

The PC would like to express its thanks to Richard Nicol for stepping in and helping with the VH improvements and steering them towards financial viability.

140. Street Naming - Street Farm

Following a request from ESC, the PC have been asked to put forward a suitable road name for the Street Farm development. Suggestions to be put forward to ESC for discussion with the developer by the Clerk:

Addison Way, Fynn View Close, Fynn Close, Bridge Close

141. Parish Council Matters:

- Gov.UK email addresses - Chris Collings official email now set up – Clerk to send test message and amend distribution lists. After the APM in April no further PC emails to be sent to councillors personal email addresses.

- Coopers Close Allotments Update – Clerk has been in touch with Otley College who may be able to assist with the allotment refresh, a visit to be planned in the near future.

Details of recycled plastic benches with 25year guarantee were circulated prior to the meeting – proposal to purchase Captains Treble x 2 by Andy Dungey, seconded by Susan Ross.

- Annual Parish Meeting Wednesday 22nd April 2026 – Chair reminded councillors to provide him with details to include in his annual report for the meeting.

142. Councillor issues to be brought to the attention of the Parish Council

Each Councillor is requested to use this opportunity to report minor matters of information not included elsewhere on the agenda and to raise items for future agendas. **Councillors are respectfully reminded that this is not an opportunity for debate or decision-making.**

Cycle parking and grants – for next meeting

In future, all supporting information to be issued with agenda not after to allow time for review.

SWgPC/PC/02/26

Meeting closed 21:55