Swilland and Witnesham grouped Parish Council

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Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday 16th September 2026 at Witnesham Village Hall 7:30 p.m.

Minutes

Present: Paul Sharples (Chair), Richard Nicol, Chris Collings, Andy Dungey, Kim Shaw, Susan Ross, Faye Ellis, David Roots, Juliet Lillicrop, David Haynes, SCCllr Elaine Bryce.

175. **Chair to formally open meeting and introduce any members of the public**.
Chair opened the meeting; no members of the public were in attendance.

176. **To receive apologies from Councillors not attending** – Apologies with consent received from ESCllr Dan Clery, Clerk – Alison Burrows and Jerry Hindle. Absent without consent - Tim Burrows.

Susan Ross took minutes of the meeting on behalf of the Clerk.

177. **To Receive Councillors Declarations of Interest** - none

178. **To Co-Opt new Councillors and appoint as committee members if required –**
David Haynes provided a brief introduction and why he would like to join the Parish Council. Co-option was proposed by Richard Nicol, seconded by Paul Sharples.
David Haynes to join the Finance Committee and Juliet Lillicrop the Village Hall Management Committee.

179. **To approve Minutes from the Parish Council meeting 22nd July 2026** – all agreed a true record of meeting, minutes signed by Chair.

180. **Questions or comments on Reports from SCCllr Elaine Bryce & ESC Cllr Dan Clery, ESC Cllr Colin Hedgley**
Cllr Bryce summarised some of the items in her report including the recent cancellation of the local government reorganisation in Suffolk.
The Economic Impact Assessment for the proposed Westerfield Quarry is ongoing and it is expected that the Quarry proposal may go before Council on 20th October.
Cllr Bryce is attending a Cabinet meeting on 17th September regarding the options for easing the flow of traffic in/around Ipswich such as a Northern Bypass, tunnel, addressing the railway line at Haughley and Ely etc. The Department of Transport are already looking at issues at the Copdock roundabout.
Cllr Bryce agreed a grant of £500 for Witnesham Village Hall to purchase a stacking system for the tables.

No questions were raised on Cllr Clery's report. The Parish Council offered thanks to Cllr Clery, in his absence, for the grant for hand driers for the Village Hall.

Cllr Hedgley's report was not received until after the meeting.

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

Payment Reference	Payment to	Amount in pounds £ incl VAT
a	A Burrows Clerk July	£491.18
b	Information Commissioners Office	£47.00
c	Village Hall Hire fees	£210.00
d	WAVE Anglian Water business rates	£37.17
e	Bank charges July	£7.00
f	Birketts Land Reg VH	£794.40
g	A Burrows Clerk August	£491.18
h	Bank charges August	£7.00
i	Screwfix Barrier Tape reimbursement A Burrows	£11.01

Payment's approval - Proposed by Richard Nicol, seconded by Andy Dungey.

182. **Internal Control Statement and Report** - to appoint a councillor to take responsibility for completion of the above document annually in liaison with Clerk Andy Dungey was appointed.

183. **Clerks National Salary Award** – Chair outlined the National Salary Award of 49p per hour, backdated to 1st April 2026. Acceptance was proposed by Richard Nicol, seconded by Andy Dungey.

184. **TRU vehicles increased road usage** – Chair confirmed that this had been raised with Highways via SCCllr Elaine Bryce. It was noted that little can be done if the lorries are working in the area, but where villagers have concerns, they should be encouraged to raise directly to Suffolk Highways with evidence of damage to the curbs, if possible.

185. **Playing Field Future Plans update** – the update was deferred until the next meeting in November.
Chair led a discussion on the ongoing issue regarding lack of interest from the local community and organisations such as the school and WASPS football club. All agreed that ongoing regular engagement with the Parish Council was needed to help to shape and deliver changes.

186. **Parish Council as sole Trustee of Witnesham Village Hall**
Richard Nicol detailed the rationale and proposal for the management structure of the Village Hall to be changed and the Parish Council to become the sole trustee of the Village Hall. The Finance Committee had discussed the proposal and no significant financial risk to the Parish Council had been identified.
The 3 current trustees of the Village Hall are all in agreement and have resigned.

The proposal had been advertised and shared with the community at a Coffee Morning on Monday 14th September 2026, attended by over 50 people who were supportive of the proposal.
A vote to proceed was taken – all were in agreement.
Next steps are to be finalised, such as informing the Charity Commission.

Richard Nicol updated on other aspects of the Village Hall:

- Electrical work has been completed with lights repaired, wiring installed for the hand driers, and broadband installed.
- A number of successful initiatives are helping to improve the financial position such as
  - The coffee mornings / fundraising is going well with ~£2300 raised
  - Bookings are increasing and the new art class was very well attended. More regular bookings are required and day/time conflicts between existing and potentially new bookings need to be resolved.

  More work is required to make the Village Hall financially viable – income still does not meet costs.
- ESC has agreed a grant of 70% of the cost of new heating and new AV Display equipment. Cityfibre have also provide a grant towards the AV Display costs. A CIL contingency of £6k was previously agreed and most will likely be needed for the balance; agreement of the exact amount will be delegated to the Chair. All were in agreement to the drawdown of the balance from the earmarked CIL funds.
  The contract for the heating needs to be completed in the next few weeks to ensure that the heating can be installed before the Winter months.
- A joint role of caretaker / cleaner is required for an average of 2 hours per week, and all were asked to socialise this with friends and neighbours and on facebook, websites etc.

187. 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.**

- A cherry tree in Coopers Close requires attention. *Subsequent to the meeting, Clerk confirmed that the tree is not on Parish Council land and has already been reported to Highways.*
- The gate to the play area near the school needs repair.
- It had been previously agreed that the Parish Council would fund poppy wreaths for the Witnesham and Swilland war memorials. Clerk to arrange.
- The Flooding Advisory Committee had written to the SCC Flooding team for an update and requesting a further meeting.
- Susan Ross will be attending SCC's Emergency Preparedness and Building Community Resilience webinar on 1st October.
- Chair had received a request from Jerry Hindle to purchase bulbs.
- UKPN has agreed to earth the new cabinet next to the bus stop at the Lower Rec so that the fence can be removed restoring visibility from the bus stop.
- A car appears to have been abandoned in the Village Hall car park and this is being followed up by the Village Hall Management Committee.

Meeting closed 8.35pm