**Offton and Willisham Parish Council**

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at Offton & Willisham Village Hall on Tuesday 19th May 2025 at 7:30pm.

Present: Cllr T Wells (Chair) Cllr A Cox

Cllr B Wilcox Cllr S Bannister

Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh Cllr L Seddon

Clerk - T Davis 3 Members of the Public

**Action**

| **1.**  **a)**  **b)**  **c)**  **d)**  **e)** | **Meeting administration**  **The Chair welcomed everyone and opened the meeting**  **The Chair and Council formally noted the lapse in attendance of Cllr Kerry, Cllr Seddon and the Resignation of Cllr Frost**  **To Co-opt a Councillor** - The Chair invited those who wished to be co-opted to speak. It was unanimously **AGREED** for Cllr Seddon to rejoin the Council following a bout of ill health The Chair also confirmed that a piece in The Link would be done to ask for more volunteers to become Councillors.  **To consider & Approve Apologies for absence**  Apologies were given from Cllr Eves, Dst Cllr Pratt & Cty Cllr Oakes  **To receive Declarations of interest on agenda items**  None were declared |  |
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| **2.**  **a)** | **To Approve the draft minutes of 6th May 2025 and for the Chairman to sign as a true record**  The minutes were Unanimously **AGREED**  Matters arising from 6th May minutes  A question was asked in respect of when the new Taxibus would start, this question would be referred to Dst Cllr Pratt |  |
| **3.**  **Item 13. Iv**  **Item 15.** | **Public Participation Session** (To hear reports from the County Councillor, District Councillor and Comments from the Public)  The Chair invited residents to speak in turn.  The first resident was present to advise of the latest information in respect of the Offton & Willisham Pylon group volunteers (part of the councils working group). National GRid were now seeking a Development Consent Order (DCO) and this submission is being reviewed. Any individual/group or body can register as an interested party. It was suggested during discussion that neighbouring parishes may wish to join forces and submit a collective response on the current consultation adequacy. Item [**13.iv**](http://13.iv)was therefore brought forward for Council to discuss. It was AGREED that the Clerk will contact the parishes of Barking, Ringshall, Flowton, Somersham, Battisford and Little Blakenham to garner interest in coming together. Thanks were given from the Parish Council to the representative for all their hard work. The resident confirmed comments can be sent up to 28days after the DCO was submitted.  The second resident wanted to speak about speeding in the village and therefore item **15** was brought forward to discuss. Through discussion, it was identified by a number of residents that 3 particular cars are regularly speeding through the parish. It was Proposed, Seconded and **AGREED** that this needs to be reported to the police, especially if the number plates have been recorded at the Suffolk Safety Speed Portal and that Cllr Bannister will lead on a project to aim to gain a community speed watch team, liaise with Cty Cllr Oakes and follow up on the speed data. | **Clerk**  **Cllr Bannister** |
| **4.** | **Chair Report, reports from other Councillors not requiring a decision**  The Chair thanked everyone for their ongoing efforts and advised he will be unavailable for most of Sept due to personal reasons. No councillors had anything to report other than what was on the agenda. |  |
| **5.** | **Clerk Report, with details of emails and correspondence up to the period 14th August 2025**  Since the last meeting in May I have had a few contacts from residents.  The accounts are now advertised for public viewing in accordance with legislation, details can be found on the parish council website or the noticeboards.  We have had lapses in Councillor attendance and this has been notified to our District Council and vacancies have been created. The opportunity to co-opt is on the agenda this evening.  We had a surprise notice that our existing insurance company would not be renewing our policy as they had launched a new type of policy to replace it.  Therefore due to the urgency of the insurance needing renewal by 1st June I cancelled most of my holiday to ensure we had three quotes and best value, hence why this is again on the agenda this evening.  We remain with Zurich insurance with a higher premium due to our precept level (which has gradually increased over time and we had kept the old premium for over 6yrs) and other insurance companies could not match this or the level of cover.  I would also ask that councillors review and return their Register of Interest forms to both myself and Mid Suffolk District Council as soon as possible.  The latest Town and Parish Liaison meeting took place on 9th June mainly on Local Government Reform.  SALC held their annual general meeting on 1st July and I am hoping the recording will be distributed as I was unable to attend.  Further to this, normal duties have been ongoing, unfortunately the council was not quorate in July and the agenda’s business has been carried over to this EGM, along with new business. Over the end of July and beginning of August I have taken some annual leave to fit with holding a meeting to complete the business of the parish in good time. |  |
| **6.** | **To hear updates from Working Groups**  Noted |  |
| **7.**  **i)**  **ii)**  **Item 9** | **To review the standing items on the agenda:-**  **Road Erosion**  No updates have yet been given by Cty Cllr Oakes  It was at this point Cllr Pinson-Roxburgh advised of an ongoing problem with drains that he has reported to Cty Cllr Oakes  **Emergency Flood Plan**  Cllr Bannister & Cllr Seddon were invited to provide an update, item **9** is brought forward and included in this update. The plan of action is to get links and emergency information onto the website and have volunteers trained and dates agreed for this training. The flood plan can then be part of a wider county resilience plan once it is completed. Cllr Seddon and Cllr Bannister will be responding to the questions sent out by the JPEU team and the Chair will include the need for volunteers to undertake training as part of the regular Link Article. | **Cllr Bannister**  **Chair** |
| **8.** | **To review training needs for Councillors**  It was highlighted by the Chair the training that was available to all via SALC and encouraged Councillors to have a look and undertake some to refresh themselves. |  |
| **9.** | **To discuss Signing & Lighting Training for Volunteers**  As per item [7.ii](http://7.ii) above |  |
| **10.** | **To discuss Suffolk WIldlife Trust’s Wildlife in your Community Event 9th July Hadleigh (now taken place)**  It was noted that a summary had been sent on this item |  |
| **11.** | **Town & Parish Liaison Meeting (now taken place)**  This was noted and councillors advised that the details of them are sent via regular email for any councillor to attend. |  |
| **12.**  **a)**  **b)**  **c)**  **d)**  **e)**  **f)**  **g)** | **Finance**  **Current Bank Balances as at 30th June 2025:-**  **Current Account = £2,350.60**  **Savings Account = £16,449.17**  **Barclays residual = £00.04**  **To confirm payments made since 6th May 2025 meeting:-**   * + 1. **Zurich Insurance (following three quotes) - £300.00**     2. **Viking (ink & paper) - £84.74**     3. **Clerk Wages June - £421.94**     4. **SALC Councillor Training - £39.00**     5. **Clerk Wages July - £421.94**   **To approve payments for authorisation (Resolution required)**  **i. Suffolk Cloud (domain and mail storage) - £130.00**  **ii. Mid Suffolk Dog & Litter Bin - £235.03**  **iii. Clerk Mileage, Expenses & Office Allowance - £92.55**  The payments i-iii were Proposed, Seconded and Unanimously **AGREED** to be paid.  **To review and approve the 1st Quarter Accounts - Cllr Cox**  Cllr Cox introduced this item and confirmed the accounts had been checked and were all in order. It was Proposed, Seconded and Unanimously **AGREED** to approve the accounts for 1st April to 30th June 2025  **To review the CIL expenditure, current amount held £3,799.24**  A detailed discussion took place in respect of what infrastructure improvements to spend the CIL monies on. Examples such as replacing fireproof curtains, front doors, repair of benches or replacement of benches and new village signs were among items discussed as well as the current ringfenced amount for the WIllisham compost toilet facility. It was agreed that the Clerk would go and find out what CIL could be spent on from among these items.  **To note new NALC payscales used by the Parish Council and confirm related payrise to employee**  Council were happy and agreed this.  **To note backdated payrise from April totalling £66.70**  Council were happy and agreed this. | **Clerk**  **Clerk**  **Clerk**  **Clerk** |
| **13.**  **i)**  **ii)**  **iii)**  **iv)**  **v)**  **vi)**  **vii)** | **Planning & Governance Consultations**  **BMSDC - Local Government Reform - Closed** This was noted  **BMSDC Planning Consultation - DC/25/02554 - No Comment Submitted** noted  **BMSDC Planning Consultation - DC/25/02291 - No Comment Submitted** noted  **To discuss & agree on making an invitation to National Grid to discuss latest developments regarding Norwich To Tilbury Pylon Route**  This was already covered in Public Participation, item 3 see above  **BMSDC - Local Government Reform - 3 Unitaries covering Suffolk**  It was agreed that Councillors would make a comment individually  **SCC - Local Government Reform - 1 Large Unitary for all of Suffolk**  It was agreed that Councillors would make a comment individually  **BMSDC - Planning Application DC/25/03329 - 10 Fiske Pightle, Drop Kerb and Driveway (28th Aug)**  It was **AGREED** that No Comments were needed on this application | **Clerk** |
| **14.** | **To discuss plans for an Offton & Willisham Summer Celebration**  This was discussed at length following the project now having no lead. It was **AGREED** that there should be a family fun day for 2026 and that this item will be a standing item and Councillors will look for volunteers. | **Clerk** |
| **15.** | **To discuss Speed Watch with Cty Cllr Oakes**  This was covered in Public Participation, item 3 see above. |  |
| **16.** | ***item 25 to be heard without the public due to meeting exemption within the Openness of Local Government Bodies Act 2014 s.1.2.***  **To Discuss and Approve Clerk holiday**  The Clerk’s holiday was **AGREED** |  |
| **17.** | **Next Meeting, currently Tuesday 2nd Sept 2025 and 4th Nov respectively**  It was unanimously **AGREED** to cancel the upcoming meeting of 2nd Sept, the next meeting would be 4th November |  |

**Meeting Closed at 9:50pm**

**Addendum**

1. **Dst Councillor Report - Sept**

**District Council Report for Battisford and Ringshall Ward**

**Including Barking, Battisford, Great Bricett, Ringshall, Offton and Willisham**

**Local Government Reorganisation Update**

Mid Suffolk District Council released draft proposals on its proposed unitary council model for Suffolk, which included the formation of 3 unitary councils covering 3 areas – ‘West Suffolk’, ‘Central & East Suffolk’, and “Ipswich and South Suffolk”. Our ward, including the villages of Offton, Willisham, Barking, Great Bricett, Ringshall and Battisford would be placed within the Central and East Suffolk council which also includes the towns of Needham Market, Stowmarket, Eye, Debenham, Woodbridge and Lowestoft.

A full website on the 3-unitary model, including the proposed map effecting these changes, is available here: [Proposed Council Boundaries – Three Councils For Suffolk](https://threecouncilsforsuffolk.org/proposed-council-boundaries/)

There will be 2 public sessions about LGR where you are invited to come along and ask questions.

* Wednesday 10th Sept, 6-8pm, Food Museum Marquee, Stowmarket
* Monday 15th Sept. 6-8pm, Eye Town Council.

**Mid Suffolk District Council submits objections to National Grid pylons project**

Mid Suffolk has restated it’s concerns for the district’s heritage, environment and rural economy, calling for a pause to the scheme and consultation on alternative solutions, including a coordinated offshore grid approach. National Grid submitted it’s application to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on 29th August and the PINS now has 28 days to determine whether or not permission should be granted.

**Introduction of new electrical recycling banks**

Twelve new jazzy-pink recycling bins have been installed in Mid Suffolk and Babergh, where residents can dispose of their broken electrical items. This includes things like coffee machines, kettles, mobile phones, tablets, and anything smaller than a 4-slice toaster. This is part of a new scheme of just under £800k to help reduce e-waste across the district. The nearest one to our ward is at the MSDC car park in Station Yard, Needham Market. Please follow the link for more information: [Twelve new electrical recycling bins for Babergh and Mid Suffolk - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk](https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/twelve-new-electrical-recycling-bins-for-babergh-and-mid-suffolk)

**Mid Suffolk and Babergh hosts Tour of Britain Cycle race**

The UK’s largest professional cycle race is due to come through Mid Suffolk on 3rd September. The event started within East Suffolk, before running through Stowmarket, as well as visiting other parts of the district, including Debenham and Eye.

**MSDC secures 62-acre site at Thorndon for Nature and Flood Resilience**

The site which contains a mixture of habitats and permissive footpaths was previously owned by the Kerrison Trust, a charity supporting young people was recently put up for sale. MSDC recognised the potential to protect improve the site which contains habitats including enhancing wet grassland and grazing marshes, pond habitats, lowland meadows and pastures, and deciduous woodland. MSDC will develop a management plan for the site following an ecological survey and consultation with local residents. There will be no change to public access arrangements with permissive paths being preserved.

**Locality Awards**

The 2025/26 round of funding has attracted many early enquiries and applications. I welcome enquiries from local community groups. Please contact me for further information.

| **Dr Dan Pratt**  Ward Member for Battisford and Ringshall  Chair of Mid Suffolk District Council  **E:** [daniel.pratt@midsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:daniel.pratt@midsuffolk.gov.uk)  **T:** 07775389193 | Chief Executive's Office |  |
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1. **Cty Cllr Report - Sept**

**County Council report – September 2025**

# New council boundary proposals mean 3 councils, 3 sets of salaries and the same old story for Suffolk

* District and borough councils’ new boundary proposals criticised as costly and unworkable
* Creating 3 new councils in Suffolk would lead to increased costs and carry safeguarding risks
* One new unitary council for Suffolk is best for county

The proposed map comes following repeated calls from Suffolk County Council for clarity on how their suggested 3-council model will be formed. The map is essential information for Suffolk residents to ensure they fully understand the proposals being put forward.  
  
Under their suggested boundaries, Ipswich would form a unitary council with Hadleigh, Kesgrave and Felixstowe (known as South Suffolk); Bury St Edmunds would be grouped with Sudbury, Haverhill, Newmarket and Brandon (known as West Suffolk) and Lowestoft would find itself with Woodbridge, Eye and Stowmarket (known as East Suffolk).

Alongside the map, the districts and borough have not released any information of what impact these proposed boundaries would have on council tax rates – with Ipswich residents currently paying the highest rate of district or borough council tax in the whole country.  
  
**Cllr Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council’s cabinet member for devolution, local government reform and NSIPs, said:**  
  
*“*We have been asking the district councils for their proposed council boundaries since March. Given what they’ve released today, I can see why they’ve kept them secret for so long. Their proposals are chaotic, confusing, and ultimately unworkable. They will mean higher council tax across the county, but particularly in places like Felixstowe, Hadleigh, Kesgrave the villages south of Ipswich and the Shotley peninsula, more money spent on senior staff and administration and less money going on frontline local services in Suffolk.

“The financial figures that the districts and borough are putting forward are optimistic to the point of being dangerous. We must never lose sight of the fact that the key care services we deliver support some of the most vulnerable people in our community. Spurious assumptions to support an argument to protect their perceived political fiefdoms have no place in this debate.  
  
“Breaking up key expensive care services, that are currently delivered county wide, won’t just cost more as they employ new senior teams, it will put the most vulnerable in our community at risk. They will create a postcode lottery for care, drive up costs and create boundaries where they don’t currently exist.  
  
“The districts and borough have finally given into pressure to publish their plans, but what they have brought forward just means three sets of salaries and the same old story from local government. I remain as convinced as ever that One Suffolk is the only solution with the best interest of Suffolk’s residents at its heart*.”*

Residents are being encouraged to have their say on the future of councils and public services in Suffolk by [completing Suffolk County Council’s survey](https://onesuffolkcouncil.co.uk/residents-survey/). You can also complete the survey by visiting a Community Library or by calling **0345 603 1842.**The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete.

Responses will inform the One Suffolk business case, which will be submitted to Government in September.

# Guide published to support developers in Suffolk

Suffolk County Council has updated its “[Developers Guide to Infrastructure Contributions in Suffolk](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/planning-and-development-advice/section-106-planning-obligations/developers-guide-to-infrastructure-contributions-in-suffolk)”, following a consultation over the summer.

It has been updated and redesigned in line with the feedback and takes account of legislative and policy changes.

**The guide is there to support developers appreciate the myriad ways which a new project will affect local communities and its financial implications on local authorities.**

The guide sets out what developers should consider, including financial contributions, to help reduce the impact of new projects on communities and the county council.

For example, new housing would have a knock-on effect on things like the local environment, education, waste services, local amenities, highways, and flooding, and therefore cost implications for local authorities.

**Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste, said:**

“When a major planning application is proposed, it will have an impact on local infrastructure, services that local authorities provide, and associated costs.

“The government’s National Planning Policy Framework outlines that developers will financially support local authorities, allowing infrastructure to support the new project and allow for growth.

“We have been regularly updating our guide since it was originally published in 2011. It’s there to support developers appreciate the myriad ways which a new project will affect local communities and its financial implications on local authorities.”

The “Developers Guide to Infrastructure Contributions in Suffolk” can be found on the [Suffolk County Council website.](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/planning-and-development-advice/section-106-planning-obligations/developers-guide-to-infrastructure-contributions-in-suffolk)

# Council remains opposed to pylon project, as application submitted

Primarily, the county council maintains that offshore and undergrounding solutions should be priorities for the scheme, not 114 miles of pylons cutting through countryside, sensitive landscapes and communities in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex.

Previously, SCC has formally and strongly requested that National Grid pauses the Norwich to Tilbury proposals, to allow for effective consideration of offshore alternatives.

“When the full details of National Grid’s application are published next month, we hope they reflect many of the concerns raised by us, and local communities, from consultations and discussions.” **Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Devolution, Local Government Reorganisation and NSIPs**

The application for the Development Consent Order - essentially planning permission - was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) by National Grid on Friday 29 August.

PINS has 28 days to determine whether or not to accept the application. Should it be accepted, full details of the project will then be published, with the six-month Examination period likely to begin in early 2026. If consent was then granted, construction could begin in 2027.

**Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Devolution, Local Government Reorganisation and NSIPs, said:**

“In its current guise, the Norwich to Tilbury pylon project is not suitable. The less damaging alternatives, such as offshore transmission or high voltage direct current undergrounding, have never been fully considered.

“Such a significant and impactful project should not be determined simply for being the cheapest and fastest solution. The Hiorns Report concluded that proposals were premature and would not be needed until the mid-2030s.

“When the full details of National Grid’s application are published next month, we hope they reflect many of the concerns raised by us, and local communities, from consultations and discussions. We have highlighted the need for numerous local mitigations, issues around airfields, construction traffic, public rights of way, removal of existing pylon lines, the list goes on.

“For example, we consider there to be a robust case for undergrounding where the line crosses the Waveney Valley – only to be told earlier this year, that this was not going to happen, and that was that without any alternative mitigation proposed.”

Suffolk County Council’s response to previous consultations for the Norwich to Tilbury project can be found at [suffolk.gov.uk](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/major-infrastructure-projects-including-nsips/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-nsips/norwich-to-tilbury)