

ALPHETON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting

Held on Thursday 27th November 2025 at 7.00pm in Alpheton Village Hall

Attendance

Clrs M Gray (Chair), K Cullimore, J Moore, E Malvisi.
Also present: Sarah Headland, Parish Clerk

One member of the public was also present.

1. Apologies and approval of absences
Apologies were received from Clrs Richard Kemp, T Rix & J Nunn. Apologies were approved by the Council.
2. To receive any declarations of Interest
None
3. To approve that the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2025 are a true and accurate record – APPROVED.
Proposed by Cllr Moore and Seconded by Cllr Cullimore
4. Public Forum – Questions from members of the public for a maximum of three minutes duration per person (total time not exceeding 25 minutes)
5. To receive the Parish Clerk's report:
 - a. Approval of payments awaiting authorisation - APPROVED

Income			
BDC Recycling credit		£62.65	
	Total income	£62.65	
Expenditure (approved and paid)			
Babergh DC - Dog and litter bin emptying	£498.00		Litter Act 1983 s5.6
LM Groundcare - SID redeployment	£222.22		RTR Act 1984 s.72(1)
PKF External Audit	£252.00		LGA 1972 s.111
Clerks Salary (quarterly)	£867.98		LGA 1972 s.111
Clerks tax	£217.00		LGA 1972 s.111
Village Hall hire	£20.00		LGA 1972 s.111
	£2,077.20		
Expenditure to be approved			
SALC - Payroll Services	£22.80		LGA 1972 s.111
LM Groundcare - SID redeployment	£111.11		RTR Act 1984 s.72(1)
Village Hall Hire	£20.00		LGA 1972 s.111
Community Action Suffolk Website hosting	£66.00		LGA 1972 s.111
Defibrillator replacement battery (paid)	£346.80		PHA 1936, s.234
Grass cutting (final cut - paid)	£210.00		PHA 1875 s.164
Grass cutting around Bridge Street bus shelter	£105.00		PHA 1875 s.164
	£881.71		
	Total expenditure	£2,958.91	
	Bank balance as of 27 November 2025	£9,120.16	
	Net total funds	£8,900.25	

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- b. To approve the appointment of the internal auditors - Heelis and Lodge - for the year ending 31st March 2026 at a cost of £190. APPROVED. Proposed by Cllr Gray and Seconded by Cllr Moore

6. To receive District and County Councillors' Reports

District Cllr verbal Report – Cllr Malvisi

The rising costs associated with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision are a primary and significant driver of major deficits in UK local council budgets. Councils have a statutory duty to provide support for children with EHC plans, but central government funding has not kept pace with the soaring demand and complexity of needs, forcing local authorities into substantial annual shortfalls.

The district council has proposed three unitary councils as opposed to one unitary council as proposed by Suffolk County Council. It is strongly recommended that the public give their views on the consultation of the unitary council. The link to complete this is below:

<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/norfolk-suffolk/consultation/>

Alternatively written responses should be sent to:

LGR Consultation
Fry Building 2NE
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

It was suggested that a hard copy of the consultation would reach more residents as many do not use a computer or have access to the internet and are therefore missing giving their valuable opinions.

Once LGR is completed, it is the concern of the District Council that waste and planning management would then fall under one large unitary council who have no local connection. The Police Crime Commissioner will no longer exist. In parallel, it has been reported that some already existing unitaries in the country are having some problems following a similar reorganisation.

Regardless of whether it ends up as one or three unitaries, it is a fact that more responsibility is going to fall on Parish Councils, for example, speed sign maintenance, dog bin emptying. Parish Councils will certainly need extra funding from their precept for this.

Suffolk County Council report can be found at the end of these minutes.

A question was raised as to who might be responsible for digging the gullies on pavements for communal electric car charges. Again, if there is no District or County Council, then this may fall under the responsibility of the Parish Council, not forgetting the additional cost that will incur.

7. To receive status reports and updates on:

- a. SID devices redeployment and ANPR Data Report – Cllr Moore and Cllr Cullimore
One of the SID's may have a battery issue but this is being looked at. The ANPR data report and an update on the battery will be reported at the next meeting.
- b. Councillor vacancy – The Parish Council mail drop will be updated and then circulated by post and WhatsApp.
- c. Police and crime update – Clerk
One crime of shoplifting was reported and investigated in September in the area. This takes the annual rolling total to ten. It should be noted that only crimes that are reported **and** investigated will be shown on police.uk

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8. To approve the updated Signage policy - Cllr Moore and Cllr Gray
APPROVED with minor updates. Proposed by Cllr Cullimore and Seconded by Cllr Gray
9. To receive an update on the defibrillator that has gone missing from Tye Green and to approve the retrospective purchase of a replacement battery - Cllr Gray
The ambulance service has no record of anyone calling 999 to access the missing defibrillator. It can therefore only be assumed that someone has accessed the code, taken the defibrillator and not returned it. The Device itself has identifying features on it (post code, serial number) so therefore it should be possible for it to have been returned.
This has been reported to the police, and an insurance claim has been initiated.
It was agreed that Cllr Gray and Cllr Cullimore will be guardians of both Defibs going forward once a new one has been purchased. The purchase of a new battery for the Defibrillator at Alpheton Village Hall has been retrospectively approved (£289 ex VAT), this needed to be purchased urgently so the device could be put back into service since the other one is still missing. Cllr Malvisi and Cllr Nunn have both kindly offered £250 each towards the cost of two replacement batteries from their locality budgets.
10. To receive an update on Devolution - Cllr Gray
The election of the first mayor of Norfolk and Suffolk will take place on 7 May 2026. The mayor will then allocate 8-10 portfolio holders (who are not elected).
Further information on this can be found here: <https://www.norfolksuffolk-cca.gov.uk/>
11. To give an update on the Community Governance Review – Cllr Gray and Cllr Moore
Cllr Gray and Cllr Moore recently attended a meeting with someone from the CGR working group with regards to boundaries. It is understood that LGR will not alter Parish Council boundaries at this time. However, there is a concern regarding smaller Parish Councils not having enough Cllrs, and by grouping with other smaller parishes then this would mitigate the risk of becoming inquorate. It should be noted that grouping is different from merging, the Parish Council would retain its own identity in this way. It may be prudent to approach surrounding parish councils to find out their position on grouping, however this should happen after LGR and devolution, when the parish councils are more aware of what their new responsibilities will be.
12. To discuss the progress of moving the Alpheton website to a '.org.uk' or '.gov.uk' domain and obtaining a new email address for the clerk following the new guidance from NALC - Assertion 10 - Digital and data compliance. This is to ensure compliance with 2025/6 AGAR and internal audit – Cllr Rix and Clerk
One Suffolk at CAS have quoted £25 per year for the domain and £24 per year per email address.
It should also be noted that, although not mandatory, it is strongly recommended that Cllrs also have their own authority owned .gov.uk council email addresses. This helps to protect the need for sharing personal emails, should a freedom of information request arise.
Proposed by Cllr Cullimore and Seconded by Cllr Gray for the Clerk to move forward with this.
13. To consider and approve the newly updated Parish Council IT policy - APPROVED.
Proposed by Cllr Cullimore and seconded by Cllr Moore
14. To approve the annual pay award for Clerks, back dated to April 2025 (SCP 10) and the home working allowance payment of £6 per week (as per advice from SALC Payroll) to start from today – APPROVED.
Proposed by Cllr Gray and Seconded by Cllr Moore
15. To consider funding a contribution towards training for the CiLCA qualification for Clerk – APPROVED
The Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) provides significant benefits for both the clerk and their council, primarily by boosting professional competence and enabling the council to adopt specific powers and statuses. It was agreed that this would be an asset for the council. £400 will be added to the

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training budget towards half of the cost of the qualification (Clerk also works for another council who are contributing the other half).

Proposed by Cllr Cullimore and Seconded by Cllr Gray

16. To consider the draft budget and precept for 2026-27
The budget was discussed in detail but not finalised. The cost of emptying dog and litter bins is increasing significantly so extra money will be budgeted for that.
It should be noted the parish council needs to budget for extra funds to mitigate the extra responsibilities that may arise once Local Government Reorganisation has been completed.

17. To discuss the concerns raised by residents regarding speeding on Old Bury Road and in the village in general.

Recently, sadly, two cats have lost their lives along this road. The consensus is that it is down to lack of consideration rather than speeding since it is hardly possible to drive 30mph on some narrower parts. Lack of footpaths and lighting all play a factor and there is a general feeling that drivers do not drive according to the conditions of the roads. Delivery drivers and motorists are the biggest offenders.

Richard Kemp SCC has a 20mph campaign for which the PC would like to encourage support. Proposed by Cllr Moore and Seconded by Cllr Gray

Individuals may also support this directly here:

https://www.20splenty.org/parish_council_motion

18. To discuss the PC banking arrangements and consider moving to a different bank with less bank charges and better service.
Clerk has heard particularly good reports about Unity Trust Bank and will do some more research and report back at the next meeting.
Virgin Bank is being taken over by Nationwide. This should happen in Feb 2026 and means Nationwide will bring in their own terms and conditions so this may mean increased bank charges.
19. To consider any new planning matters and report on any decisions (up to and including any new applications received after 27th November):

For information:

DC/25/02888 and DC/25/02889 Tye Green Cottage Tye Green – GRANTED

DC/25/03879 - Elms Farm, Old Bury Road - GRANTED

DC/25/03412 - Woodhall, Bury Road – Awaiting decision

DC/25/02958 and DC/25/02959 Alpheton Mill, Bridge Street - Awaiting decision

DC/25/03918 & DC/25/039189 - New Maltings - Awaiting decision

DC/25/04102 - 6 The Glebe, Alpheton – prior approval is not needed

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Review: Publication of the Draft Babergh and Mid Suffolk Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Forthcoming Call for Sites.

Clarification is needed on the Alpheton call for sites; Cllr Moore will contact the planning officers for further information.

New applications:

None

20. To confirm the date of the next meeting – scheduled for 29th January 2026

Meeting closed at 21:49

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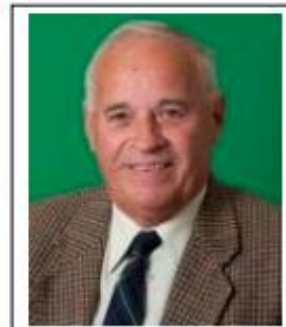
Date _____

Parish Report December 2025

Councillor

Richard Kemp

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New Road
Long Melford
Suffolk
CO10 9JY
01787 378149
richard.kemp@suffolk.gov.uk



Information Updates

Cost of Living help and advice:

https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family_page?familychannel=6

Benefits advice and support:

https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult_page?adultchannel=0

Flood preparation advice: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-and-rescue-safety-advice-in-the-community/preparing-for-flooding>

Flood recovery advice and support: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>

Government Consultation on Council Reorganisation

On 19 November, the government launched their consultation on the two proposals submitted for council reorganisation in Suffolk. Suffolk County Council developed and submitted a business case for the government proposing one council for the whole county, and the districts and boroughs submitted a business case proposing three councils, Western Suffolk, Central and Eastern, and Ipswich and Southern Suffolk. The government consultation is different from local consultations you may have filled out recently, and central government will be making the decision on what councils will look like in Suffolk in future.

This consultation is only available until 11 January 2026, a relatively short time for Suffolk residents to express their preferences. You can find the consultation here: <https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/norfolk-suffolk/>

If you want to read through the business cases proposed for the changes, there are links to them on the consultation page above, or they can also be found here:

Three Councils for Suffolk:

<https://threecouncilsforsuffolk.org/wp-content/uploads/Three-Councils-For-Suffolk-Case-for-Change-1.pdf>

One Suffolk:

<https://onesuffolkcouncil.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/HI-RES-WEB-FINAL-LGR-BUSINESS-CASE-Compressed.pdf>

Financial Pressures

On 4 November, Cabinet reviewed the council's financial performance for the first two quarters of the 2025-26 financial year. The council is now predicting an overspend for the year of £20.8m, which it will have to fund using its Risk Reserve. This is an increase of £7.5m compared to the prediction at the end of quarter one. Council financial reserves are forecast to reduce by £37m overall during the year, which is extremely worrying and unsustainable. The Dedicated Schools Grant 'negative reserve', a debt relating to Special Education Needs and Disabilities spend, is likely to be -£72.9m by the end of the year.

The government allows local authorities to hold this debt via a 'statutory override' which is due to expire in March 2028. If the provision for this expires, it is likely that many councils in the country – not just Suffolk County Council – would be unable to balance their budgets. As well as SEND, overspends at the council are mostly in adult and children's social care.

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Planning for Emergencies

At Scrutiny Committee on 20 November, the council's business continuity arrangements were reviewed. Business continuity refers to how the council ensures it is able to continue providing essential services in situations of emergency, for example power outages, flooding, or pandemic illness like Covid 19. Members of the Joint Emergency Planning Unit joined the meeting to explain that all directorates at the council held plans for possible scenarios and incidents, with directors providing oversight and teams in each directorate reviewing and updating the plans as necessary.

The council can also set up an Emergency Control Centre to respond to incidents and coordinate if multiple council directorates are affected. The council undertakes planned exercises to assess how its plans would work, and reviews processes after each incident or exercise to improve them. It also takes part in regional exercises, and uses a Home Office recording and planning system, Resilience Direct, to respond to emergencies, which means that it is not reliant on council IT systems in case of a cyberattack. Paper copies of all plans are kept in case of power outages.

New Project Celebrating Disability

Suffolk Archives has received a grant of £139,107 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver a new project called Beyond Labels: Celebrating Disability which aims to shine a light on the lives achievements and challenges of people with disabilities in Suffolk. Beyond Labels will collect and preserve personal stories - as well as the histories of organisations, schools, and charities that support disabled people - to create a record that celebrates disability while sparking conversations about inclusion, accessibility, and equality.

As part of the project, Suffolk Archives will work with local schools and community groups to offer free workshops that teach skills in recording, organising, and preserving archives. There will also be workshops around the county that provide opportunities for participants to co-create projects that amplify disabled voices and educate others about the challenges faced in daily life.

The project will also include cataloguing and selective digitisation of existing disability-related records, making them more accessible to the public and ensuring that Suffolk Archives reflects the diversity of the county. There will be a free public exhibition at The Hold in Ipswich which will run from February to May 2026 to celebrate the stories collected through the project and encourage greater awareness and empathy across Suffolk.

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

At Cabinet on 4 November, it was agreed that the council would object to the National Grid's proposed Norwich to Tilbury grid reinforcement, which would see pylons and overhead electricity lines bisecting the county. Some undergrounding is planned in the Dedham Vale National Landscape area, with the council pressing for undergrounding in the Waveney valley too, and more generally objecting on the basis that offshore alternatives had not been fully explored, and that the grid reinforcement might not be necessary in the timescale asserted by National Grid Electricity Transmission.

The council is also concerned about the impacts of the project and its construction on the environment and residents of Suffolk, and the possibility that the new lines might lead to an increased number of solar farm applications and energy projects along the route which would have a cumulative effect on the local area.

The council is also objecting to the Sea Link project, whereby cables would make landfall between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness, with a new substation and energy infrastructure built at Friston near Saxmundham. The grounds for objection include inadequate road access, impact of the scheme on the local landscape and the proposals for a new bridge being 'disproportionate' and damaging to the environment and local heritage including Grade II listed buildings nearby.

New Year Active Travel Improvements for Sudbury

Melford Road will see new crossings and a shared-use pedestrian and cycle path installed. Work is to start in the New Year on a new walking, wheeling, and cycling route in Sudbury to help people to get around safely and sustainably.

The scheme in Melford Road will see the replacement of existing zebra crossings with parallel crossings, and installation of a shared-use off-road pedestrian and cycle facility, with cycle priority across side roads. Works are scheduled to begin in mid-January 2026 and are expected to be complete by the end of March 2026. To minimise disruption to the local community work will be undertaken in three phases.

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- **Phase One:** This will require the **closure of the A131 northbound**, including Beaconsfield Road, and is expected to be around 25 days in duration.
- **Phase Two:** This will require the **closure of the A131 southbound**, including York Road. This phase will also take around 25 days.
- **Phase Three:** There will be a **full overnight closure of the A131 in both directions**, including Beaconsfield Road and York Road, to undertake resurfacing and install road markings. This closure is scheduled to be in place for three nights.

The exact dates of the scheme are still to be confirmed and will be communicated before works start, along with the duration of the closures and suggested diversion routes.

The project forms part of Suffolk's wider Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) to deliver safer, greener routes across the county.

Investing in Creativity: Suffolk's Culture Project Fund Supports Young Artists at Gainsborough's House

Suffolk's young creatives are flourishing thanks to support from Suffolk County Council's Culture Project Fund, which continues to open doors for people to explore the arts and develop their talents. Among the many projects supported in the fund's first year is Gainsborough's House in Sudbury, where new initiatives are helping young people find confidence, community, and creative opportunity through art.

The £500,000 Culture Project Fund, launched by Suffolk County Council in 2024, aims to strengthen the county's cultural life by supporting projects that increase access to creativity for people of all ages and backgrounds. Gainsborough's House has used this support to deliver two major programmes: Pulling Prints and the National Saturday Club.

Pulling Prints, launched this September, is a free printmaking programme for young adults aged 18–25 who are not currently in formal arts education. Participants are gaining hands-on experience in the Gainsborough's House Print Workshop, guided by practising artists and supported by cultural partners including the Mill Tye Gallery. Over six months, the group is learning new printmaking techniques, developing personal and professional skills, and preparing for a final public exhibition to showcase their work.

Alongside this, the National Saturday Club continues to provide free weekly art workshops for 13–16-year-olds from Sudbury and surrounding areas. Young people explore creative processes, experiment with materials, and gain confidence through mentorship from professional artists. The club also offers opportunities beyond Suffolk, including national exhibitions and masterclasses with leading creative professionals.

Both programmes demonstrate how the Culture Project Fund is empowering communities through creativity, particularly those who might not otherwise have access to cultural opportunities. The success of these projects reflects the Culture Project Fund's wider mission to ensure that arts and culture are accessible to all, fostering wellbeing, confidence, and inclusion through creative engagement.

Applications for the 2026 Culture Project Fund are now open, with grants available for projects large and small. Community groups, museums, arts organisations, and freelancers are all encouraged to apply.

Find out more and apply at: www.suffolk.gov.uk/cultureprojectfund

Suffolk County Council continues to drive electric vehicle progress

Suffolk County Council recently welcomed Keir Mather MP, government Minister for Aviation, Maritime and Decarbonisation, to the county to show how the council is leading the way with electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure for its residents.

The county council continues to be one of the country's leading local authorities for electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, under its Plug In Suffolk project.

Plug in Suffolk has grown considerably in recent years to provide more EV charging solutions to more Suffolk residents.

The council has long recognised the importance of this, not only to support the ever-growing number of Suffolk drivers who are switching to EVs, but also to benefit the county's visitors and the tourism economy.

The county council's latest EV charging solution is a trial of cross-pavement gullies. It is working with around 30 residents who do not have off-street parking to easily charge.

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The trial has seen each homeowner have a gully installed across the pavement, allowing them to safely run a cable from their house, through the gully, to their car. The success of the project will be assessed in early 2026, to see if it can be rolled out further. Early indications are that it has proved popular.

The Plug In Suffolk project began nearly seven years ago, as the UK's first 'fully open' public fast charging network for electric vehicles, meaning drivers simply pay by contactless payment with no need to register their details. Around 100 of these chargepoints were installed in largely rural locations, such as community centres.

Following a successful bid in March 2024 to the government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund, the county council was awarded £5.3 million to install on-street chargepoints. It was the first local authority in England to both award their LEVI main funding tender, and subsequently sign a contract with an operator, *Believ*, who are providing a further £16 million of funding, meaning Suffolk will see 6,000 chargepoints installed.

After close work with district and borough councils, communities, *Believ*, and from a survey to residents last year, the first of these on-street installations is beginning this month (November 2025).

Personal message from Richard

As we approach the end of a challenging year, I want to take a moment to reflect on the strength and resilience of our wonderful community here in Suffolk.

This holiday season, we are reminded of the importance of kindness, togetherness, and support for one another. While 2025 has had its difficulties, we have shown time and time again that when we work together, we can overcome any obstacle. Whether through volunteering, supporting local businesses, or simply checking in on a neighbour, your efforts continue to make Suffolk a place to be proud of.

I'd like to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has worked so hard this year to help others. It is through your dedication that we continue to move forward, stronger and more united.

As we celebrate the festive season, I encourage you to take time to rest, enjoy the company of loved ones, and reflect on the good things in life. May the new year bring you peace, good health, and happiness.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of Suffolk!

Follow us on:

Twitter - [Suffolk Green, Lib Dem & Independent Group \(@SuffolkGLI\) / Twitter](#)

Instagram - https://www.instagram.com/suffolkqli_group/

Facebook - [Suffolk GLI - Green, Liberal Democrat & Independent Group | Facebook](#)

Website - [Suffolk Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Group – The GLI Group at Suffolk County Council \(suffolkqli.wordpress.com\)](#)

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Date _____