

ALPHETON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 21st May 2026 at 7pm (following the Annual Parish Residents Meeting)

Present: Cllr Gray (Chair), Cllr Moore (Vice-Chair), Cllr Cullimore, Cllr Rix, Cllr Kemp and Cllr Malvisi (District), also present Sarah Headland, Parish Clerk

1. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Cllr Gray put herself forward for the position of Chair.

Cllr Moore put himself forward for the position of Vice-Chair.

Cllr Gray advised that this would be her seventh year as Chair and would likely be her final year in the role, although she may not necessarily leave the Council altogether. Cllr Moore advised that this would also probably be his final year as Vice-Chair.

2. Chairman's and Vice-Chairman's Acceptance of Office Forms

Both Acceptance of Office forms were signed in the presence of the Council.

3. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Nunn (DC) and Cllr Lindsay (CC).

4. Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Gray and Moore both declared a non-pecuniary interest in planning application DC/26/00462 – Alpheton Mill.

5. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th April 2026 were approved as a true and accurate record.

Proposed: Cllr Moore

Seconded: Cllr Cullimore

6. Public Forum

No members of the public were present.

7. Parish Clerk's Report

a. Approval of payments awaiting authorisation – APPROVED

Expenditure to be approved		
SALC Membership Subscription	£181.04	LGA 1972 s.111
LM Groundcare - hourly work - to replace battery in SIC	£37.50	RTR Act 1984 s.72(1)
Heelis and Lodge - Annual Internal Audit	£190.00	LGA 1972 s.111
Evan Markell - Grass Cutting (May)	£190.00	PHA 1875 s.164
Village Hall Hire	£30.00	LGA 1972 s.111
Aviva - money to be returned*	£94.76	LGA 1972 s.111
	£723.30	
Total expenditure	£2,583.24	
Bank balance as of 21st May 2026	£13,320.13	
Net total funds	£12,596.83	
Reserved funds		
RK Locality Grant for new noticeboard	£900.00	
JN and EM Grant for Defib batteries	£211.00	
Available funds	£11,485.83	

Cllr Malvisi advised that the money left over for the Defibrillator battery could be used to pay for the carry case and medical kit needed to operate the new defib (since the previous one was stolen and therefore does not need new batteries at this time). Clerk will reflect this in the next finance report.

*Clerk advised that there had been an administration error with regards to the insurance claim for the solar panels and that Aviva had incorrectly sent a payment of £94.76 to the Parish Council. Clerk has obtained Aviva's bank information and this money will be returned and a new claim will be raised with the correct insurer, Ecclesiastical.

8. District and County Councillors' Reports

a. Both County Councillors' reports were received during the Annual Parish Meeting.

b. District Councillor's Report

Cllr Malvisi reported that she is now Deputy Chair of Babergh. She advised that Babergh has launched a new website called *Future Suffolk*.

There will be a boundary review, although it is not yet clear where the boundaries will be drawn. A recent meeting was held regarding the Joint Local Plan and the Call for Sites process. It was noted that where a parish does not have a local plan, there may be a greater risk of landowners selling land for housing development.

There continues to be differing views regarding the type of housing required. Whilst there is a recognised need for social housing for younger people, some residents have expressed a preference for larger four-bedroom properties. To facilitate the merger of the District and County Councils into a unitary authority, internal procedures would need to be aligned. It was noted that there are approximately 27 business areas requiring coordination, which presents a significant challenge. The District Councillor Locality Budget has also been reduced.

9. Status Reports and Updates

a. SID Devices Redeployment and ANPR Data Report

No SID redeployment will take place until a decision has been made regarding replacement solar panels. No recent ANPR data report has been received and it is unclear when the next report will be available.

Cllr Cullimore provided a SID data summary covering the period 1 January to 11 April 2026. The average recorded speed was 34mph. Based on the average speeds recorded, it appears that the SID devices are having a positive effect on traffic management and speeding overall.

b. Councillor Vacancy Update

It was noted that the Village Hall Committee has gained several new members. A suggestion was made to revise the councillor vacancy advertisement and circulate it on various social media platforms.

c. Police and Crime Update

One crime was reported and investigated in March relating to violent and sexual offences.

d. Update on Transition to New Unity Trust Bank Account

Clerk advised that the process of moving to Unity Trust Bank will begin after the payments following this meeting have been made.

e. 20mph Speed Limit Update

The Council agreed that it would like to progress this matter. The next step will be to write to Robert Kemp at Suffolk County Council Highways.

It was noted that the Parish Council may be expected to fund any additional road signage required, for which there is currently no budget allocation.

10. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Community Governance Review

It was noted via the *Future Suffolk* website that the proposal for the unitary authority would place Alpheton and Bridge Street within the Chadacre Ward.

Cllr Malvisi advised that councillors within the new unitary authority may receive a salary, which could allow them to dedicate more time to parish visits as the role would effectively become full-time.

a. Alpheton Parish has been moved into the Cosford Electoral Division for County Council purposes.

It was noted that this has disrupted Alpheton's historic connection with Long Melford. With regard to the recent local elections, residents were reportedly unclear about whom they should vote for, as the changes had not been effectively communicated. This has caused confusion and concern amongst residents.

A letter outlining the Parish Council's opposition to the changes will be drafted and sent to the following:

Ian Gallin - Chief Executive, West Suffolk Council

Arthur Charvonia - Chief Executive - Babergh & Mid-Suffolk District Councils

David Connors - Electoral Service, Babergh & Mid-Suffolk District Councils

Cllr John Nunn - Suffolk County Council

Cllr Robert Lindsay - Suffolk County Council

Cllr Elizabeth Malvisi - Babergh District Council

James Cartlidge – MP

11. Review and Approval of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations for 2026

APPROVED

Proposed: Cllr Kemp

Seconded: Cllr Gray

12. Appointment of Parish Council Portfolio Holders

APPROVED

Proposed: Cllr Kemp

Seconded: Cllr Moore

13. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26

a. Annual Internal Auditor's Report 2025/26 – **APPROVED**

b. Certificate of Exemption 2025/26 – **APPROVED**

c. Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 – **APPROVED**

d. Accounting Statements 2025/26 – **APPROVED**

14. Privacy Policy

A new Privacy Policy was considered and approved by The Council following a recommendation from the Internal Auditor.

15. New Noticeboard on Old Bury Road

The Clerk was authorised to proceed with the purchase of the new noticeboard. Quotations had already been obtained and the preferred option previously agreed.

The Village Hall Chairman kindly agreed to install the noticeboard and will submit an invoice for fittings and associated costs.

16. Damage to Village Gateway

An update was received regarding the insurance claim and replacement of the damaged village gateway.

Glasdon, the gateway manufacturer, advised that the damaged gateway is beyond repair and will provide a quotation for a replacement plus the damaged signs. Suffolk Highways has advised on installation tolerances. It was noted that safety barriers are not permitted around the gateways.

A contractor will need to be identified to install the replacement gateway once manufactured. Quotations are to be obtained.

17. Theft of SID Solar Panels

Cllr Moore has been in discussions with local suppliers regarding replacement solar panels. The SID units were originally purchased from Sierzega in Austria, and a quotation has been obtained directly from the company for like-for-like replacements as part of the insurance claim.

An alternative option discussed was the purchase of an additional replacement battery (approximately £46), increasing the total to four batteries so that two could be charging whilst two remain in use. This could remove the need for solar panels. However, LM Groundcare would need to charge The Council for battery replacement and charging, and the associated costs would need to be confirmed. However, it was noted that moving the solar panels takes longer, which may offset any additional costs.

The Clerk will proceed with the insurance claim, and a final decision regarding next steps will be made at the next meeting.

18. Planning Matters

For Information:

- DC/25/05434 & DC/25/05435 – New Maltings, Old Bury Road – Awaiting decision
- DC/25/05546 – Buxton's, Old Bury Road, Alpheton – Erection of side and rear single-storey extensions – **Approved**
- DC/26/00462 – Alpheton Mill – **Approved**

New Applications:

- DC/26/01666 (LBC) & DC/26/01834 – Smithy Cottage, The Tye – Extension to chimney height, installation of 1.5m fencing, and erection of summerhouse – **Neutral response**
 - DC/26/01996 – Chestnut House, Tye Green – Erection of a garden room – **Neutral response**
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19. Date of Next Meeting

The next Parish Council meeting will take place on **16 July 2026** at Shimpling Village Hall.

Meeting closed at 9:06pm

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