



STRATFORD ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL

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Chairman
Roger Barrell

**The Annual General Meeting of Stratford St Mary Parish Council held on
Monday 12th May 2025, at the Village Institute, Higham Road
commencing at 1930hrs.**

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Cllr R Barrell – Chairman
Cllr N Woodard
Cllr W Davies
Cllr L Shead
Cllr D Robinson
Cllr G Robinson
Cllr N Wright
Cllr M Pearce

IN ATTENDANCE:

F Hall – Clerk
Members of the public - 1

01.05.24 To elect a Chairman

Cllr Barrell nominated by Cllr D Robinson, seconded by Cllr Davies, all in favour.

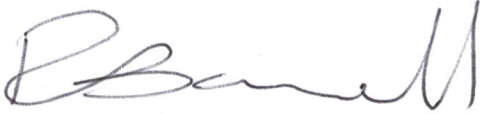
02.05.25 Present and apologies for absence.

Apologies received from County Cllr Georgia Hall, District Cllr John Ward and Cllr Carvalho.

03.05.25 To accept members declarations of interest in accordance with the Council's code of Conduct. None

04.05.25 To approve Minutes of the meeting held on the 7th of April 2025.

The minutes of the meetings held on the 7th of April 2025 were approved as a true record and were signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Cllr G Robinson, seconded by Cllr Wright, all in favour.


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05.05.24 Election of Officers

- (1) Vice Chairman – Cllr D Robinson
- (2) Institute Representative – Cllr Woodard
- (3) Emergency Planning – Cllr Shead
- (4) Footpaths Representative – Cllr Wright
- (5) Tree Warden – Cllr G Robinson

The above appointments were proposed by Cllr G Robinson, seconded by Cllr Woodard, all in favour.

06.05.25 Public Forum and receive reports from the District and County Councillor

Councillors had submitted their most recent reports which had been circulated by the Clerk and are also available to view on the Parish Councils website.

07.05.25 Weir Bridge

The Cabinet member for Highways at Essex County Council, Tom Cunningham, has confirmed the ownership of the bridge as belonging to Essex & Suffolk water and his staff have registered a complaint with them that the matter of the surface and fencing has not been properly dealt with. No update received. DR

The Chairman brought forward agenda items 20.05.25, 25.05.25, 26.05.25, 28.05.25, 30.05.25 and 31.05.25 to discuss after 07.05.25. Cllr D Robinson and Cllr G Robinson departed the meeting after these agenda items had been discussed.

08.05.25 B1029 Dedham Road, Stratford St Mary, Flooding Issues

No update

09.05.25 Proposal to make the B1029 from SSM to Dedham more pedestrian friendly

Cllr Pearce proposed to have better signage for footpaths to enable pedestrians to be aware of an alternative route to Dedham rather than walking along the B1029. Clerk to write to County Cllr Hall to ask if footpath signs can state where footpaths lead to. Clerk

10.05.25 Planning Applications

Discuss any planning applications that have been received.

APPLICATION FOR WORKS TO TREE(S) IN A CONSERVATION AREA - DC/25/01837

Proposal: Notification of works to trees in a Conservation Area - T1 - Ash - Pollard as per image attached - approx. reduction of up to 5m

Location: Kings Arms, Upper Street, Stratford St Mary, Colchester Suffolk CO7 6JN

Comments by 14.05.25

APPLICATION FOR WORKS TO TREE(S) IN A CONSERVATION AREA - DC/25/01886

Proposal: Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Pollard 1 No. Walnut (T1) to previous points

Location: Walnut Tree Cottage, 1 Upper Street, Stratford St Mary, Colchester Suffolk CO7 6LP

Comments by 14.05.25


All agreed no comment for the above planning applications.

11.05.25 Chairman's comments

VE day celebrations were a success, well done to the Village Institute Management Committee for putting this event together.

12.05.25 Correspondence and Clerks Report

Tree behind 1 Veyes end and 95 School Lane – the new owner of 1 Veyses End is concerned about the large tree immediately at the end of her rear garden and which is overhanging her garden. This tree is believed to be owned by Babergh D C and is situated in Strickmere but 1 Veyses End has asked the PC to assist and ask whoever owns it to come and inspect it to make sure it is safe etc. Cllr D Robinson has reported this


16/6/25

13.05.25 Finance

(1) To approve the expenditure since the last meeting and to receive a financial report from the RFO including balances at bank. The expenditure sheet, financial report, bank statements, accounts and reconciliations were circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting – copy of expenditure sheet and financial report are attached to the minutes. Proposed by the Cllr Shead, seconded by Cllr Wright, all in favour. **Decision** – expenditure of £1,560.56 from 08.04.25 to 12.05.25 and balance at the bank at 30.04.25 current account is £10,933.30 with £621.10 uncashed cheques and the reserve account £13,996.34 were approved by all.

(2) **Monthly cashflow analysis against agreed Precept.** No comment

(3) **Monthly cashflow reserves.** No comment

(4) **Changing bank accounts to Barclays bank** – Barclays have confirmed that the new current and savings accounts have been set up and Barclays customer agreement has been circulated to Cllrs before the meeting. All monies from Santander accounts to be transferred over to new accounts once Barclays have set up online access and Santander accounts to be closed. Clerk will chase up Barclays for online access. **Clerk**

(5) **Agree to set up a monthly standing order for Clerks salary, room and internet expenses from the new Barclays bank account.** Cllr Shead proposed to approve, Cllr Wright seconded, all in favour. Once online access has been set up Clerk to action. **Clerk**

(6) **River Stour Trust £25 subscription fee** – Cllr Woodard proposed to renew subscription, Cllr Wright seconded, all in favour.

(7) **To agree S.137 donations under the Local Government Act 1972 to the following organisations:**

(a) Dedham Vale AONB - £100.00.

(b) Suffolk Preservation Society - £30.00

(c) Suffolk Accident Rescue - £75.00

(d) PCC - £1000

(e) Donation request of £200 received from the Village Institute Committee to support the VE day Event.

All the above donations (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) agreed to be approved, proposed for acceptance by Cllr Wright, seconded by Cllr Pearce, all in favour. Clerk to arrange paperwork and payment of donations. **Clerk**

(8) **To agree to pay the Chairman's Allowance for 2025/26 - £125.00 if needed.** Cllr Davies proposed, Cllr Woodard seconded, all in favour.

(9) **Agree the yearend figures and sign off the AGAR section 1 & 2 for 2024/25. External Audit is required due to expenditure being above £25k.** Cllr Davies proposed to accept, Cllr Wright seconded and all in favour for the Chairman to sign these documents and a external audit was noted.

(10) **Insurance renewal on the 01.06.25** – Year 2 of the 3-year agreement, price has increased to £654.91 due to broker changing insurance companies and index linking. Cllr Wright proposed to accept and renew, Cllr Shead seconded, all in favour. For year 3 of the agreement in 2026 the Clerk is to contact Clear Councils a couple of months before renewal for quote. **Clerk**

14.05.25 To review the Standing Orders for 2025/2026

The Internal Auditor has recommended the PC adopt the NALC updated version of the model standing orders released in April 2025. Changes to sections 18.a.v, 18.c, 18.d and 18.f. Sections 14.a, 14.b and 14.c have been removed. Updated version has also had a change to language in the document to gender-neutral terms to align with the Civility and Respect Policy. Cllr Wright proposed to adopt updated standing orders, Cllr Shead seconded, all in favour. **Clerk**


15.05.25 Future Parish Council meeting dates for 2026

Future monthly meetings were discussed – the Village Institute Committee have advised that there is a price increase for hire of the Village Institute from £20 to £25. The Parish Room is currently £18 to hire. Cllr Woodard proposed to alternate between the Village Institute and the Parish Room for meetings, Cllr Shead seconded, all in favour. **Clerk**

16.05.25 Internal Audit 2024-2025

Review Internal Audit and discuss following recommendations:

- 1) Adopt latest NALC updated version of standing orders – adopted under agenda item 14.05.25.


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- 2) Council should look to publish an Accessibility statement documenting that the website is partially compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version 2.2 AA Standard. Clerk circulated Accessibility statement before the meeting, Cllr Wright proposed to publish, Cllr Shead seconded, all in favour. **Clerk**
- 3) Council should look to adopt or review its Code of Conduct at least every four years (following elections) or when there are legislative changes or guidance updates. Clerk Circulated the PCs Code of Conduct for review before the meeting. Document was reviewed, Cllr Wright proposed to accept, Cllr Shead seconded, all in favour. **Clerk**

17.05.25 Village Institute

Village Institute Representative – Cllr Woodard advised that the 100 club is being closed in 2 months time and £500 profit was made from the VE day event.

18.02.25 Field next to the Village Institute

Compulsory purchase law changes and loss of field to housing – the government have simplified the compulsory purchase order and can use this for any land that they deem suitable for development. Cllrs have been asked by the Chairman to think if there is anything the PC can do to stop development on the field next to the Institute.
Neighbourhood plan suggested – to be discussed under next agenda item.

19.05.25 Neighbourhood plan

The Chairman has written to the Chairmen of Higham, Raydon and Holton St Mary PCs asking if they would be interested in doing a joint Neighbourhood plan. Holton St Mary have advised that they will discuss this proposal at their meeting on Wednesday 14th of May, Higham have a meeting next Monday and have invited the Chairman to attend to discuss. The Chairman has been in contact with Paul Bryant at Babergh Council and is waiting for advice on creating a Neighbourhood plan. Babergh have earmarked 120 houses to be built in SSM and to create a Neighbourhood plan an independent committee has to be formed with members of the public. Update to be given at the next meeting. **RB**

20.05.25 Village grass cutting

Previously agreed to undertake interim cuts in between Baberghs cuts with Vertas. Cllr G Robinson advises that she has received an email from Babergh advising that they are finalising their grass cutting schedule. The grass has been cut again so review interim cuts again in Junes meeting.

21.05.25 Tree pruning Millennium Ave

The Chairman has met with Dedham Vale Tree Surgery who undertook the pruning in Millennium Ave, they haven't cut back as much as they should, and Highways trees need pruning back from the Cherry trees. Dedham Vale Tree Surgery have quoted £1050 plus VAT for an enhanced prune. The Chairman will contact Bland Landscape for a quote and revert at the next meeting. **RB**

22.05.25 The River Garden

Licence renewal – no update

23.05.25 Electric Pylons campaign – National Grid Norwich to Tilbury project

No update

24.05.25 Village Sign


No update on refurbishment work – Clerk to chase Hertford Signs. **Clerk**

25.05.25 Scheduled Councillor walks / Village works action plan

Cllr D Robinson advised that action is now required for works on the action plan spreadsheet so either volunteers to undertake the work or look to get a contractor. Cllr Shead to look into getting a volunteer group together. **LS**

26.05.25 Promotion of the Parish Council

Resident's surveys - demographics and perception parts of the survey have been analysed – Cllr G Robinson advised the following: 30 responses to the survey have been received which is just under 10% of SSM residents.


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75% understood how the PC is funded / 25% do not understand how the PC is funded
71% are over 41 years old / 46% are over 66 years old, retirement age
17% are teenagers, young adults / 13% are preschool
30% live alone, 60% of those are of retirement age and above
Average length of residency is just over 23 years
20% have lived in village for less than 10 years
There is an average of more than 2 cars in each residence
1/3 of houses have dogs, 2/3 of houses do not have dogs
52% think PC represents them well / 38% don't think the PC represents them well
73% are completely neutral about PC's performance because of lack of information / 25% think PC performs very well.
Statistics show what the PC know about demographics but peoples perception is not what was expected. Cllr G Robinson to revert on results from other questions on the survey in Junes meeting. GR

27.05.25 Internal control statement

Internal controls were reviewed and agreed, Cllr Shead proposed to accept, Cllr Wright seconded, all in favour. Clerk

28.05.25 Slow down signs village wide

Kingsleigh Estate Agents in Dedham have very kindly agreed to sponsor frames and posts for slow down signs and SSM Primary School have created designs for the boards. Cllr G Robinson advised that 15 boards are being created with 5 designs from the school children. Kingsleigh have asked what addresses these are to be delivered to – the Chairman will put a post of Facebook to ask if any residents would be willing to have them placed in their gardens. RB

29.05.25 Sharp metal post sticking out of the ground outside Walnut Tree Cottage, Upper Street

Clerk has had no response from the original contractor who installed the new village gates asking them to arrange to remove the metal post. The Chairman will get a quote from Bland Landscape for removal of the post. Although the PC are not responsible for the sharp metal post sticking out of the ground, as a goodwill gesture Cllr Woodard proposed to pay for the residents new shoes upon receiving a receipt for them, Cllr Davies seconded, all in favour. 2 Cllrs abstained from the vote. RB/Clerk

30.05.25 SSM Community Trust

Cllr Davies proposed Cllr G Robinson and Cllr Woodard to continue as PC representatives for the SSM Community Trust, Cllr Wright seconded, all in favour.

31.05.25 New resident's pack

Review and discuss – defer to the next meeting in June. GR

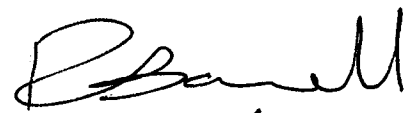
32.05.25 Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council

Cllr Pearce raised the fallen tree at the River Garden – Clerk to chase Savills and to be discussed at the next meeting. Clerk

33.05.25 Confirm the date of the 16th of June 2025 at 1930hrs at the Parish Room for the next meeting.

The meeting date of the 16th of June 2025 was confirmed.

Meeting closed at 2100hrs


16/6/25

FINANCIAL REPORT

to 30.04.2025

Balance at bank Current Acc	£10,933.30	Uncashed cheques £621.10 (remaining balance £10,312.20)
Balance in Reserve	£13,996.34	(£6,000 legal reserve, £1,000 grass cutting reserve and £135 Parish election reserve)
CIL	£348.05	
Interest Earnt Reserve Acc	£14.64	
Receipts since last meeting	£9,050.00	Precept

		PLANNED EXP.	ACTUAL SPEND TO DATE	DIFF - PLAN/AC T
General Admin	Audit	502.00	0.00	502.00
	Chairman's Expenses	125.00	0.00	125.00
	Clerk's Salary	7,800.00	650.00	7,150.00
	Employer NI contributions	420.00	0.00	420.00
	Clerk's Expense and room use	400.00	18.00	382.00
	Internet Use	120.00	10.00	110.00
	Software\Computer equip Microsoft	80.00	0.00	80.00
S137 Donations	S.137 Allowances	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00
Playground	Inspection	500.00	0.00	500.00
	Maintenance / repairs			
	Bark replacement			
Village Maintenance	Tree Maintenance	450.00	0.00	450.00
	Institute Grass Cutting	1,076.00	272.65	803.35
	Millennium Garden Grass cutting	578.00	0.00	578.00
	Millennium Ave & River Garden Grass cutting/Maintenance	735.00	0.00	735.00
	Litter pick	1,617.20	0.00	1,617.20
	Village Sign Maintenance	500.00	0.00	500.00
	Interium village grass cutting	1,600.00	0.00	1,600.00
Subscriptions/Training/Publications/Website	SALC Membership	380	348.45	31.55
	River Stour Trust	25.00	0.00	25.00
	Open spaces	45.00	0.00	45.00
	Community Action Suffolk	52.80	0.00	52.80
	Comm Action Suffolk Website	66.00	0.00	66.00
	Training	300.00	0.00	300.00
	Email app/ICO DataProt/Internet	84.00	0.00	84.00
Institute/Parish Room Hire	Institute Hire/Parish Room Hire	220.00	0.00	220.00
Village Lighting / maintenance contract	Lighting/Maintenance	785.00	695.38	89.62
Insurance	Insurance	607.00	0.00	607.00
Misc	Misc.	500.00	6.80	493.20
Admin	Admin	350.00	0.00	350.00
Dog/litter bins emptying	Dog/Litter Bins Emptying	1,311.00	0.00	1,311.00
Wreath	Wreath	20.00	0.00	20.00
Speed gun expenses	Speed Gun expenses	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
Speed signage	Speed signage			

D. M.
12/5/25

River Garden noticeboard rent	River Garden noticeboard rent	25.00	0.00	25.00
Parish Election Costs	Parish Election Costs	135.00	0.00	135.00
	TOTALS	24,408.00	2,001.28	22,407.72

R. Barwell
12/5/23



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Chairman

Roger Barrell

Clerk to Parish Council

Faye Hall

EXPENSES 08.04.25 TO 12.05.25

<u>DATE</u>	<u>CHQ NO.</u>	<u>PAYEE</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u> £
22.04.25	22590	Vertas - grass cutting	272.65
22.04.25	22591	Staff - expenses	6.80
22.04.25	22592	Staff - salary and expenses	678.00
01.05.25	22593	KASPA Sign Products - 30mph signs	118.62
01.05.25	22594	Julie Lawes - Audit charge	250.00
01.05.25	22595	Parish Room - hire for 28.04.25	18.00
01.05.25	22596	Staff - mileage expenses	31.50
10.05.25	22597	Staff expenses - Microsoft	104.99
11.05.25	22598	A O'Reilly - Millennium Garden maintenance	80.00
		Total expenses to date:	1,560.56

Signed  Chairman
at a Parish Council meeting dated 12th May 2025