



STRATFORD ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL

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Chairman
Roger Barrell

Stratford St Mary Parish Council meeting held on Monday 8th September 2025, at the Village Institute, Higham Road at 1930hrs.

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Cllr D Robinson – Acting Chairman
Cllr N Woodard
Cllr L Shead
Cllr R Carvalho
Cllr B Davies
Cllr G Robinson
Cllr M Pearce

IN ATTENDANCE:

Faye Hall - Clerk
County Councillor Georgia Hall
Member of the public - 2

- 01.09.25 Present and apologies for absence.** Apologies received from Chairman R Barrell, Cllr N Wright and District Councillor John Ward.
- 02.09.25 To accept members declarations of interest in accordance with the Council's code of Conduct.** Cllr G Robinson, Cllr D Robinson and Cllr N Woodard – Village Institute Committee.
- 03.09.25 To approve Minutes of the meeting held on the 14th of July 2025.** The minutes of the meeting held on the 14th of July 2025 were approved as a true record and were signed by the acting Chairman. Proposed by Cllr Shead, seconded by Cllr G Robinson, all in favour
- 04.09.25 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

R Barrell
20/10/25

also available to view on the Parish Councils website.

County Cllr Hall – another round of bus grants has started giving funding for more bus services. Cllr G Robinson proposed an evening/night bus between Ipswich and Colchester. Local government reform was also highlighted by County Cllr Hall – Suffolk County Council are now at the stage of putting their business case to government.

Agenda item 07.09.25 parking on the pavement outside The Swan – County Cllr Hall advised that the owner of The Swan has objected to the proposed double yellow lines. The informal consultation period has ended, and comments are being reviewed by SCC

Agenda item 06.09.25 Proposal to make the B1029 from SSM to Dedham parking and double yellow lines extension: – County Cllr Hall is for the proposal to fill in the gaps in the double yellow lines to be an extension of the lines and advised that Suffolk County Council are prepared to fund 1/3 of the costs and Dedham Parish Council are also happy to fund a 1/3 of the costs. This item will be formally discussed by the PC under the agenda item. County Cllr Hall advised that people parking in the gaps and then coming out with paddle boards onto the road is unsafe. She has been assured by the police that they will regularly monitor the road, so it doesn't turn into a race track if the double yellow lines go ahead. If there are issues, then the TRO can be revoked.

Cllr Davies raised that the Church wall has been hit again by a vehicle – County Cllr Hall advised that she will speak to the Community liaison officer to arrange for a site visit.

Cllr Woodard raised the building of a new preschool onsite at the Primary school – County Cllr Hall advised that this planning application has been revoked. Clerk to check the SCC planning application tool. **Clerk**

A member of the public raised concerns that if the double yellow lines are extended on the B1029 to Dedham that this would impact SSM with cars parking in the village. Lorries and the size of them coming through SSM was also raised. Cllr D Robinson advised that this issue was looked at a couple of years ago and there are no alternative routes. Cllr Shead noted that there is a Lorry watch scheme so will look into this. Speeding vehicles was also raised – Cllr D Robinson advised that the PC have a speed camera which records vehicles and their speed and there is a speed watch group but the police think the problem of speeding vehicles is relatively low in SSM. **LS**

05.09.25 Weir Bridge

The Cabinet member for Highways at Essex County Council, Tom Cunningham, has asserted the ownership of the bridge as belonging to Northumbrian Water and his staff have registered a complaint with them that the matter of the surface and fencing has not been properly dealt with. Following the suggestion at the last meeting, Cllr D Robinson has written to Tom Cunningham and Savills to advise that the Parish Council are proposing taking legal ownership of the bridge and has asked Suffolk CC to assist with the legal work. Suffolk CC do not consider it their bridge. Ownership has not been identified it is felt the bridge represents a hazard for pedestrians and small animals during winter months that needs to be dealt with. Essex PROW team have inspected the bridge and found it structurally sound but cannot improve the surface without the owner's permission. Cllr D Robinson advised that Savills have advised that Northumbrian Water are looking into the ownership of the bridge and will revert. SCC have advised that they are unwilling to assist with the legal work if the PC did decide to take legal ownership of the bridge. **DR**

06.09.25 Proposal to make the B1029 from SSM to Dedham more pedestrian friendly / parking on double yellow lines / Seasonal problems at Dedham

Dedham Road Suffolk side - Suffolk Police have recommended putting in full lines in the area, with no break and the 30mph should begin further up the straight, well away from the bridge area, more towards the bend up the road. The Parish Council voted against this at the meeting held on the 14th of July 2025 but there has been new information with police input and public response via social media, so this matter requires to be reconsidered.

Under the PC's standing orders section 20, an issue cannot be rediscussed and voted on within a 6 month period unless new information has been received and 2 Councillors request in writing for a special resolution to be made. The Clerk confirmed that she had received in writing 2 requests for a special resolution to be made on the issue of filling in the gaps on the existing double yellow lines on the B1029 from SSM to Dedham and extending them from Cllr D Robinson and Cllr Wright. The Police have recommended putting full lines in this area with no break and extending them due to the accumulation of cars and danger to pedestrians. It was noted that the parked cars help with slowing traffic so there is concern that the road could turn into a race track but Suffolk Police have advised that they will monitor the road if this proposal goes ahead. County Cllr Hall has also advised that if there are any issues with speeding vehicles then the TRO can be revoked.



Estimated cost for the TRO amendment is £7,185.92 - SCC have confirmed that they will fund a 1/3 of the cost and Dedham Parish Council have also confirmed that they will fund a 1/3 of the cost. Cllr D Robinson proposed to go ahead with the TRO amendment and for SSM PC to fund a 1/3 of the cost providing it is no more than £2,000 plus VAT, subject to details being confirmed and agreed at a future meeting. 5 Cllrs voted to accept this proposal in principle, Cllr Davies objected, and 1 Cllr abstained from the vote – majority in favour so Clerk to revert to Highways for acceptance. **Clerk**

07.09.25 Parking on the pavement outside The Swan – implementation of double yellow lines on Lower Street outside the Swan Pub.

Update given by County Cllr Hall under agenda item 04.09.25

08.09.25 Planning Applications

Discuss any planning applications that have been received.

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/25/03125

Proposal: Householder Planning Application - Erection of a single storey rear extension.

Location: 36 Strickmere, Stratford St Mary, Colchester, Suffolk CO7 6YG

Extension to comments given to 10.09.25

All in agreement no comment

09.09.25 Chairman's comments

The Parish Council would like to pass on its condolences to the family of Patricia Fitzpatrick OBE who passed away recently. Patricia had a strong connection with the village and lived at Woodhouse, Dedham Road for about 25 years and was on the Parish Council for 10 years, being Chairman from 1999 to 2003 before moving to East Bergholt.

10.09.25 Correspondence and Clerks Report

Email received from Nina Finbow commenting how impressed she and Higham are with the slow down signs around SSM which the Primary School children designed and has asked if Higham could use some of the posters to display as a means of traffic calming. Email has been sent to Miss Jones at SSM Primary School asking for permission for Higham to use the posters. Noted

11.09.25 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 Woodard, seconded by Cllr Davies, all in favour. Decision – expenditure of £2,381.90 from 15.08.25 to 08.09.25 and balance at the bank at 31.08.25 Barclays current account £3,204.85, Santander current account £0 and the Santander reserve account £14,055.11 were approved by all.
(2) Monthly cashflow analysis against agreed Precept. No comment
(3) Monthly cashflow reserves. No comment

Transfer of PCs savings from Santander to Barclays Bank – the only way to make a transfer from the savings account to either the PCs Santander current account or Barclays current account is for 2 signatories to call Santander together to authorise. Cllr Barrell is currently away so this will be done with Cllr Davies on his return. **RB/BD**

Santander have advised that as of the 1st of October there is a £4.99 charge for the PCs current account which needs to be closed once all funds have been moved across to Barclays. Noted.

12.09.25 Cleansing grant

Babergh have advised a 50% reduction in the cleansing grant for 2026-2027 and no contribution from 2027-2028 onwards. The PC use this grant to pay for the litter picker for the village for 130 hours per annum = £1,587.30. Cllr G Robinson proposed to put in reserve now £2,381 to cover the grant shortfall for 2026-2027 and the full amount for 2027-2028, Cllr Shead seconded, all in favour. Clerk to add to the budget for next year. **Clerk**

13.09.25 Asset register



PC reviewed the asset register and approved – Clerks old printer removed, and new printer added.

14.09.25 Village Institute

Village Institute Representative – Cllr G Robinson advised that a proposed event at the Institute on the 11th of October has been cancelled due to a low uptake in ticket sales. Quotes for repairs to the carpark are being received and are being looked at.

15.09.25 Field next to the Village Institute

Compulsory purchase law change and loss of field to housing – update on the proposals towards making the field an open space or village green and other considerations. Cllr D Robinson advised that Cllr Barrell had a meeting with a National Landscape Countryside Projects Officer who has proposed various things that can be done on the field including a pond. Cllr D Robinson proposed progressing with Richard Thomson who owns the field in making it a village Green. Clerk will resend correspondence received from SALC on Village Greens and Cllr Pearce will also look into contacts and processes for this. **Clerk/ MP**

16.09.25 Neighbourhood plan

Cllr D Robinson advised that this is still being looked into.

17.09.25 Village grass cutting

Previously agreed to undertake interim cuts in between Baberghs cuts with Vertas. Cllr G Robinson advised that Babergh are still cutting the grass on a regular basis so there has still been no need for any interim cuts. Earmarked reserve for interim grass cutting can now be removed. **Clerk**

18.06.25 The River Garden

Licence agreement – Savills have confirmed that the new lease agreement is now being drawn up.

Email received from a resident asking if a bollard at the gate is going to be installed as it is becoming a common occurrence for people to open the gate and drive onto the River Garden itself to unload paddle boards. Cllr D Robinson advised that the installation of a bollard is part of the new lease agreement being drawn up and is in hand. Cllr Pearce to come up with a proposal for this. It was suggested an alternative to a lockable bollard should be considered, sufficient to allow access by the grass cutting equipment. Clerk to contact grass cutting contractor to ascertain what the minimum width required is.
Clerk / MP

19.09.25 Tree issue at the back of No 1 Veyses End and 95 School Lane

The owner of 95 School Lane has documentation showing that the tree behind his house is not within his property's boundary. The Parish Council have contacted Babergh District Council who have advised that the tree is not theirs and that land registry shows that the tree is within the boundary of the property at 95 School Lane. Cllr D Robinson has undertaken a land registry search which confirms the site boundary that Babergh have advised. Clerk to revert to the resident and advise them to speak to their conveyancing solicitor. **Clerk**

20.09.25 Electric Pylons campaign – National Grid Norwich to Tilbury project

No updates.

21.09.25 Village Sign

Cllr D Robinson is still obtaining quotes. **DR**

22.09.25 30mph repeater signs

Cllr Wright has proposed the purchase of 4 more 30mph signs @ £11.50 per sign plus VAT and p&p. Cllr D Robinson proposed to purchase, Cllr Shead seconded, all in favour. **Clerk**

23.09.25 Scheduled Councillor walks / Village works action plan

Cllr D Robinson has been circulating the works action plan spreadsheet and would like to encourage Cllrs to add any works that need to be carried out to it.

24.09.25 Promotion of the Parish Council

Update to be given on the resident's surveys – Cllr G Robinson is still working on this – defer to

November's meeting. GR

25.09.25 New residents' pack

Cllr G Robinson is still working on this – defer to Novembers meeting. GR

26.09.25 Village Emergency telephone system

Agreed at January's meeting not to renew – Community Heartbeat claim they were unaware and asked for payment on 27.08.25. Unable to locate email cancelling after January's meeting and PC did not make any payment. Community Heartbeat are asking for payment as they continued to pay for this service themselves this year despite being warned on email before meeting in January, renewal was to be discussed. Further information circulated to Councillors for the meeting to discuss payment. Cllr Shead proposed to pay the outstanding amount and cancel, Cllr G Robinson seconded, all in favour. Clerk

27.09.25 Community thermal imaging project

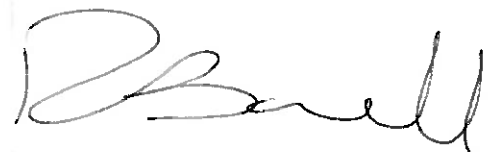
The PC took part in this project last year, Cllr G Robinson proposed not to take part again, Cllr Woodard seconded, all in favour.

28.09.25 Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council

Cllr Woodard raised keeping an eye on what is going on at the Primary School with regards to planning applications and The Black Horse moving from a pub to a shop.

29.09.25 Confirm the date of the 20th of October 2025 at 1930hrs at the Parish Room for the next meeting. The meeting date of the 20th of October 2025 was confirmed.

Meeting closed at 2101hrs

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. B. Bell', is located in the bottom right corner of the page.

FINANCIAL REPORT

to 31.08.2025

Balance at bank Current Acc Santander
 Balance at bank Current Acc Barclays

£0.00
 £3,204.85

Balance in Santander Reserve Acc
 Balance in Barclays Reserve Acc

£14,055.11
 £0.00

Interest Earnt Reserve Acc
 Receipts since last meeting

£23.85
 £0.00

(£348.05 CL, £2,260 earmarked for double yellow lines outside The Swan, £6,000 legal reserve, £1,000 grass cutting reserve and £135 Parish election reserve - £4,312.06 not earmarked)



	PLANNED EXP.	ACTUAL SPEND TO DATE	BUDGET LEFT
Audit	502.00	250.00	252.00
Chairman's Expenses	125.00	0.00	125.00
Clerk's Salary	7,800.00	3,250.00	4,550.00
Employer NI contributions	420.00	0.00	420.00
Clerk's Expense and room use	400.00	173.22	226.78
Internet Use	120.00	50.00	70.00
Software/Computer equip Microsoft	80.00	104.99	-24.99
S.137 Allowances	2,000.00	1,655.00	345.00
Inspection			
Maintenance / repairs	500.00	0.00	500.00
Bark replacement			
Tree Maintenance	450.00	0.00	450.00
Institute Grass Cutting	1,078.00	545.30	532.70
Millennium Garden Grass cutting	578.00	98.90	479.10
Millennium Ave & River Garden Grass cutting/Maintenance	735.00	330.75	404.25
Litter pick	1,617.20	493.90	1,123.30
Village Sign Maintenance	500.00	0.00	500.00
Interium village grass cutting	1,600.00	0.00	1,600.00
SALC Membership	380	348.45	31.55
River Stour Trust	25.00	25.00	0.00

Subscriptions/Training/Publications/Website

	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/CO DataProf/Internet	94.00	151.58	-57.58
Institute/Parish Room Hire	Institute Hire/Parish Room Hire	220.00	106.00	114.00
Village Lighting / maintenance contract	Lighting/Maintenance	785.00	695.38	89.62
Insurance	Insurance	607.00	654.91	-47.91
Misc	Misc.	500.00	301.35	198.65
Admin	Admin	350.00	166.80	183.20
Dog/litter bins emptying	Dog/Litter Bins Emptying	1,311.00	1,394.40	-83.40
Wreath	Wreath	20.00	0.00	20.00
Speed gun expenses	Speed Gun expenses			
	Speed signage	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
Noticeboard/Cycle rack rent	Noticeboard/Cycle rack rent	25.00	0.00	25.00
Parish Election Costs	Parish Election Costs	135.00	0.00	135.00
TOTALS		24,409.00	10,795.33	13,613.67