



STRATFORD ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL

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Chairman
Roger Barrell

Stratford St Mary Parish Council meeting held on Monday 9th of
March 2026 at 1930hrs at the Village Institute

MINUTES

PRESENT:


Cllr R Barrell – Chairman
Cllr D Robinson – Vice Chair
Cllr L Shead
Cllr R Carvalho
Cllr N Woodard
Cllr B Davies
Cllr N Wright
Cllr G Robinson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Faye Hall - Clerk
Member of the public - 3
District Councillor John Ward

*Before the meeting commenced the Chairman added a items under 18.03.26 – Lowe Hill House wall, Denbury sign on A12 and future development sites for Babergh.

- 01.03.26 Present and apologies for absence.** Apologies received from County Councillor Georgia Hall.
- 02.03.26 To accept members declarations of interest in accordance with the Council's code of Conduct.** Cllr G Robinson and Cllr D Robinson – Village Institute Committee
- 03.03.26 To approve Minutes of the meeting held on the 9th of February 2026.** The minutes of the meeting held on the 9th of February 2026 were approved as a true record and were signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Cllr Wright, seconded by Cllr D Robinson, all in favour.
- 04.03.26 To discuss if the PC has received any applications to fill the Councillor vacancy on the Parish Council.** An expression of interest has been received from Russell Townsend wishing to become a Parish Councillor and Russell was present at the meeting. Councillors discussed the


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application and Cllr Davies proposed to co-opt Russell Townsend onto the Parish Council, Cllr Shead seconded, all in favour. Russell was invited to sit with the Councillors and take part in the meeting.

05.03.26 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.

Local plan call for sites – District Cllr Ward advised that there are 3 sites in SSM that have been volunteered for development, a site on Higham Road which has been proposed since 2024 and 2 new sites – 1 large residential site just behind School Lane and the other one is on Dedham Road. These can be viewed on the Babergh website – local plan call for sites page. All sites are assessed and then if selected for development public consultations are held.

Pre-school planning application – there was a planning committee meeting last week where there was good debate and questions. District Cllr Ward, Cllr D Robinson on behalf of the PC and Sue Lawrence spoke to object to the planning application. A Councillor proposed to pass this planning application but the vote was defeated and the committee decided that more information is required from Highways for them to proceed with a decision. Once a new report from Highways has been received everyone will be invited again to comment, and the application will go back to the planning committee in June at the earliest. Cllr G Robinson proposed that some monitoring of traffic and parked vehicles on and around Strickmere should be started, every day, twice a day for a week. The Chairman will meet with some residents who have kindly volunteered to help with monitoring. Cllr Wright has also volunteered to assist.

A resident wished to give thanks to the PC, District Cllr Ward and Sue Lawrence for speaking at the planning committee meeting.

Cllr Shead raised the Denbury advertising sign on the A12 – District Cllr Ward will speak to enforcement about this.

06.03.26 Weir Bridge

Surfacing has now been added to the bridge, but by who is unknown. Clerk has written again to Savills to ask if Northumbrian Water are responsible for this and are the owners of the bridge. No update received

07.03.26 Double yellow line proposal on the B1029 from SSM to Dedham

Dedham Road Suffolk side – Highways have advised that the TRO is going to be advertised this week and the formal advertising period will run until the 27.03.26.

08.03.26 Extension of double yellow lines on Lower Street outside The Swan

Highways have advised that during the statutory consultation, which ran from 22.01 to 12.02, they received 9 responses. 4 residents have since withdrawn their objections which leaves 1 response in support and 4 responses in objection to the scheme. In addition, a petition organised by The Swan Inn was submitted containing 64 signatories opposing the proposal. PC need to confirm by the 20th of March if they would still like to go ahead with the TRO proposal. The PC felt that the bulk of signatories on The Swan petition are not from local people and the issue affects locals from a safety point of view for pedestrians and vehicles. The Swan proposed a kerb solution but this will not solve the problem. The Swan have land at the back of the pub which could be opened up for parking. Cllr Wright proposed to continue with the TRO and implementation of double yellow lines, Cllr G Robinson seconded, all in favour. **Clerk**

09.03.26 Planning Applications

Planning applications to be discussed:

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION WITHOUT COMPLIANCE OF CONDITION(S) - DC/25/05408

Proposal: Application under Section 73 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans and Documents), Condition 4 (Visibility Splays), Condition 5 (Parking and Manoeuvring), Condition 6 (Bins), Condition 13 (Ecological Appraisal Recommendations) and Condition 15 (Biodiversity Enhancement Layout), Removal of Condition 3 (Off-Site Highways Improvements) and Condition 8 (Landscaping Scheme) of planning permission DC/24/02317 dated: 03/02/2025 - Conversion of vacant offices (Class E) to Class F.1 Educational Use (Day school, SEN teaching



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provision); Creation of ramped access, covered cycle stands, bin storage area, sensory garden, multipurpose games area and boundary security fencing.

Location: The Old School, School Lane, Stratford St Mary, Colchester Suffolk CO7 6LZ

Comments by 06.03.26 – no extension to the commenting date could be granted.

Planning application noted.

APPLICATION FOR WORKS TO TREE(S) IN A CONSERVATION AREA - DC/26/00641

Proposal: Application for works to trees in a Conservation Area - T001 Copper beech 3m reduction of canopy reduce wind loading on defect (back to previous points. Retail maximum volume of leaf mass within inner canopy.

Location: Riversdale, Lower Street, Stratford St Mary, Colchester Suffolk CO7 6JS

Comments by 16.03.26

All in agreement no comment.

10.03.26 Chairman's comments

No comments

11.03.26 Correspondence and Clerks Report

No comments

12.03.26 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 Wright, seconded by Cllr Woodard, all in favour. Decision – expenditure of £797.37 from 10.02.26 to 09.03.26 and balance at the bank at 28.02.26 Barclays current account £2,311.88 Santander current account £0 and the Santander reserve account £14,114.13 were approved by all.

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

(3) Monthly cashflow reserves. No comment

The following virements were proposed by Cllr Shead, seconded by Cllr Wright, all in favour:
Move £1,588 from interim village grass cutting to village sign maintenance budget header
Move £432 from playground maintenance to tree maintenance budget header
Move £67.58 from lighting/maintenance to email app/ICO/internet
From the £300 training budget move £152.40 to dog/litter bin emptying, £24.99 to software/computer equip/Microsoft budget heading, move £14.60 to institute grass cutting budget heading and move £47.91 to Insurance budget heading. **Clerk**

Update on the transfer of PCs savings from Santander to Barclays Bank and closing of the Santander accounts. The Chairman and Cllr Davies will arrange to call Santander.

RB/BD

Donation request from Essex Suffolk Norfolk Pylon Group – The PC have previously made a donation to the Pylon campaign group so all in agreement no donation to be made.

Boxted Bridge – donation request received from Save our bridge campaign group. All in agreement not to donate as this is outside our area, but agreed to put a post on Facebook to promote this fundraising campaign.

13.03.26 Improvements to the highway in Church Road

At the last meeting a request was made from the PCC asking if the PC would contribute £3,000 towards extending the kerbing, re-seeding and restoring the verge outside the Church Boundary wall and to install some reflective posts. The PC agreed to provisionally reserve £500 for this and to ask Highways if there are any cheaper options. No update received from County Cllr Georgia Hall on cheaper options so this item is to be deferred to the next meeting.

14.03.26 Ongoing flooding issues on Dedham Road

Agreed at the last meeting to write a letter to James Cartlidge MP on this matter. An email was received from Highways advising that works were scheduled for the 13.02.26 – discuss if



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works have been sufficient with addressing the issue and if a letter still needs to be sent. Clerk to write to Highways asking them to confirm that works took place and what the actual works carried out were. **Clerk**

15.03.26 Tree on the Chase

There have been several complaints about a poorly sycamore tree in the Chase. District Cllr John Ward is looking into whether Babergh are responsible for this tree and will revert.

16.03.26 Copart opening times and usage

Whilst doing speed watch it has been noted that car transporters are coming through SSM at 0730hrs heading to Copart Dedham. The Chairman has asked for clarification on the opening times for Copart – Clerk to email enforcement to check. **Clerk**

17.03.26 Black Horse renovation works

It has been noted that works have commenced at the Black Horse – planning documents state that no internal works should be started without obtaining consent. Cllr D Robinson proposed to write to planning to ask what the latest position on the Black Horse is as works have commenced and ask if this has been approved, Cllr Shead seconded, all in favour. **Clerk**

18.03.26 Overgrown hedge in front of Church View Cottage

The Chairman has advised that complaints have been received with regards to the overgrown hedge in front of Church View Cottage – the hedge is part of 2 hedges. The Chairman has spoken to the owner of Church View Cottage who has advised that the hedge is not theirs. Cllr D Robinson will do a land survey to see who it belongs to. The other part of the hedge belongs to Walnut Tree Cottage so Clerk to write to ask for their part of the hedge to be cut back. **DR/Clerk**

Lowe Hill House

Email received advising that a car has crashed into the resident's wall again knocking it down, it was previously knocked into 2 years ago and numerous times before that. The last time the wall was knocked down Suffolk Highways came up with a plan to implement signs etc at a cost of £3,750 which the PC nor the owner could agree to fund. All in agreement to write to Highways again to ask them to re-consider what can be done and write to the community police liaison officer Niall Johnson to ask him to investigate and to see if there is anything he can recommend. **Clerk**

Denbury Signs

Discussed under agenda item 05.03.26

Future development sites from Babergh

Discussed under agenda item 25.03.26 – all in agreement to agenda for the next meeting. **Clerk**

19.03.26 IT Policy

Cllr Shead circulated the IT policy before the meeting and proposed adopting, Cllr D Robinson seconded, all in favour. **Clerk**

20.03.26 Village Institute

Village Institute Representative – Cllr G Robinson advised that towards the end of July the Village Institute Committee and Village Life are planning a big family picnic. The Institute floor has just been revarnished and work will be carried out to look after the floor.

21.03.26 Field next to the Village Institute

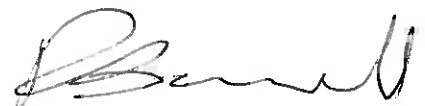
Update on applying the field to be an open space or village green – Open Spaces are sending out some forms so the Chairman will follow this up with Richard Thomson. **RB**

22.03.26 Neighbourhood plan

Holton St Mary and Raydon PCs have expressed an interest in coming together with SSM PC to discuss the possibility of a joint neighbourhood plan. A public meeting for all villages is to be Scheduled in Raydon but no date has been confirmed.

23.03.26 The River Garden

Licence agreement – no update



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Installation of bollard – Savills have requested that this be put on hold under the licence agreement has been finalised.

- 24.03.26 Electric Pylons campaign – National Grid Norwich to Tilbury project**
No update
- 25.03.26 Scheduled Councillor walks / Village works action plan**
List for works is ongoing.
- 26.03.26 Promotion of the Parish Council**
Update to be given on the resident's surveys – defer to April's meeting.
- 27.03.26 New residents' pack**
Update to be given – defer to April's meeting.
- 28.03.26 Meadow management – supporting our pollinators**
Email received from Babergh asking for any suggestions for areas that maybe suitable for meadow management. All in agreement that there are no green areas suitable in the village – Clerk to write back to Babergh. **Clerk**
- 29.03.26 APM**
Cllr Shead proposed expenditure of £10 for the Quartet delivery man to deliver the APM leaflets, Cllr D Robinson seconded, all in favour. Change of venue to the Village Institute noted. **Clerk**
- 30.03.26 Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council**
None
- 31.03.26 Confirm the date of the 13th of April 2026 at 1930hrs at the Parish Room for the next meeting.** The meeting date of the 13th of April 2026 was confirmed for the next meeting

The meeting closed at 2101hrs



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FINANCIAL REPORT

to 28.02.2026

Balance at bank current acc Santander	£0.00
Balance at bank current acc Barclays	£2,311.88
Balance at Santander reserve acc	£14,114.13
Balance in Barclays reserve acc	£0.00
Interest earned Santander reserve acc	£11.98
Receipts since last meeting	£0.00

(£348.05 CIL, £2,260 earmarked for double yellow lines outside The Swan, £6,000 legal reserve and £135 Parish election reserve total £8,743.05** £5,371.08 not earmarked)

		PLANNED EXP.	ACTUAL SPEND TO DATE	BUDGET LEFT
General Admin	Audit	502.00	502.00	0.00
	Chairman's Expenses	125.00	0.00	125.00
	Clerk's Salary	7,800.00	7,150.00	650.00
	Employer NI contributions	420.00	352.06	67.94
	Clerk's Expense and room use	400.00	293.82	106.18
	Internet Use	120.00	110.00	10.00
	Software/Computer equip Microsoft	80.00	104.99	-24.99
S137 Donations	S 137 Allowances	2,000.00	1,905.00	95.00
Playground	Inspection	500.00	0.00	500.00
	Maintenance / repairs			
	Bark replacement			
Village Maintenance	Tree Maintenance	450.00	882.00	-432.00
	Institute Grass Cutting	1,076.00	1,090.60	-14.60
	Millennium Garden Grass cutting	578.00	111.50	466.50
	Millennium Ave & River Garden Grass cutting/Maintenance	735.00	551.25	183.75
	Litter pick	1,617.20	493.90	1,123.30
	Village Sign Maintenance	500.00	2,088.00	-1,588.00
	Interim 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	25.00	0.00
	Open spaces	45.00	45.00	0.00
	Community Action Suffolk	52.80	0.00	52.80
	Comm Action Suffolk Website	66.00	66.00	0.00
	Training	300.00	0.00	300.00
	Email app/ICO DataProt/Internet	84.00	151.58	-67.58
Institute/Parish Room Hire	Institute Hire/Parish Room Hire	220.00	217.00	3.00
Village Lighting / maintenance contract	Lighting/Maintenance	785.00	695.38	89.62
Insurance	Insurance	607.00	654.91	-47.91
Misc	Misc	500.00	2,236.61	-1,736.61

£29.99 replacement rubbish bags for A Reilly, £39.98 reimbursement for damaged trainers, £1.20 charge from Barclays to pay a cheque in to transfer funds from Santander, £120 emergency telephone system, £2,038.64 TRO

Paul
9/3/20

Admin	Admin	350.00	260.24	89.76
Dog/litter bins emptying	Dog/Litter Bins Emptying	1,311.00	1,463.40	-152.40
Wreath	Wreath	20.00	20.00	0.00
Speed gun expenses	Speed Gun expenses	1,000.00	480.87	519.13
Speed signage	Speed signage			
Noticeboard/Cycle rack rent	Noticeboard/Cycle rack rent	25.00	25.00	0.00
Parish Election Costs	Parish Election Costs	135.00	0.00	135.00
	TOTALS	24,409.00	22,324.56	2,084.44

P. Smith
9/3/24