



# STRATFORD ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL

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**Chairman**  
Roger Barrell

## Stratford St Mary Parish Council Annual General Meeting held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2026 at 1930hrs at the Village Institute

### DRAFT MINUTES

**PRESENT:**

Cllr R Barrell – Chairman  
Cllr W Davies  
Cllr L Shead  
Cllr D Robinson  
Cllr R Carvalho  
Cllr N Wright  
Cllr R Townsend

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

F Hall – Clerk  
Members of the public - 3  
District Cllr John Ward

**01.05.26 To elect a Chairman.**

Cllr Barrell nominated for Chairman by Cllr Davies, seconded by Cllr Wright, all in favour.

**02.05.26 Present and apologies for absence.**

Apologies were accepted from Cllr G Robinson and Cllr Woodard.

**03.05.26 To accept members declarations of interest in accordance with the Council's code of Conduct.** Cllr Townsend – PCC agenda item 25.05.26.

**04.05.26 To approve Minutes of the meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2026.**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2026 were approved as a true record and were signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Cllr D Robinson, seconded by Cllr Wright, all in favour.

#### **05.05.26 Election of Officers**

- (1) Vice Chairman – Cllr D Robinson proposed to continue in this role, Cllr Shead seconded, all in favour.
- (2) Institute Representative – Cllr D Robinson proposed that Cllr G Robinson would be happy to continue in this role, Cllr Wright seconded, all in favour.
- (3) Emergency Planning – Cllr D Shead proposed to continue in this role, Cllr D Robinson seconded, all in favour.
- (4) Footpaths Representative – Cllr Wright proposed to continue in this role, Cllr Davies seconded, all in favour.
- (5) Tree Warden – Cllr Townsend proposed to take on this role, Cllr Davies seconded, all in favour

#### **06.05.26 Public Forum and receive reports from the District and County Councillor**

The District Councillor submitted their most recent report which had been circulated by the Clerk and is also available to view on the Parish Councils website.

District Cllr Ward advised that Darius Laws has been appointed Suffolk County Council for our area. A member of the public raised Babergh call for sites and was concerned about potential development, District Cllr Ward reiterated that the sites are just suggestive sites that have been put forward by landowners, Babergh have had over 1100 sites submitted and all will be assessed to see if they are viable for development. A resident raised that buses were being diverted due to overhanging tree branches near the Black Horse – Clerk to email the CC. **Clerk**

#### **07.05.26 Weir Bridge**

Ownership of the bridge – Savills have advised that this bridge is unregistered. Cllr D Robinson contacted Essex County Council, and they do not know who owns the bridge and Tom Cunningham who is the Essex Highways cabinet member maintains that the bridge is the property of NWL. All in agreement to keep pursuing who owns the bridge.

#### **08.05.26 Double yellow line proposal on the B1029 from SSM to Dedham**

No update received.

#### **09.05.26 Extension of double yellow lines on Lower Street outside The Swan**

Highways have confirmed that the TRO proposal has now been approved and they will shortly request an estimate from their contractor where they have up to 4 weeks to return. Once received, a job pack will be issued, and the contractor will then have 14 weeks to deliver the works on site. The timeline takes us to early August for delivery.

A resident has emailed with photos of the continued parking problems outside The Swan. District Cllr John Ward has raised the PCs proposal of having someone in SSM as a parking warden and will chase Ipswich Borough Council who are the parking authority for a response.

#### **10.05.26 Planning Applications**

Planning applications to be discussed:

##### **APPLICATION FOR WORKS TO TREE(S) IN A CONSERVATION AREA - DC/26/01982**

**Proposal:** Notification of works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Fell 1 No. Robina (T1)

**Location:** Lowlands, Upper Street, Stratford St Mary, Colchester Suffolk CO7 6JN

Comments by 01.06.26

Cllrs all in agreement no comment.

ABC pre-school planning application – this is scheduled to go back to the planning committee to be discussed on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2026. Highways have still not consulted with residents about parking/traffic concerns. A resident has written to James Cartlidge MP, and he has advised that he will send a letter of complaint to the Planning Committee about the inaccurate information being given from Highways. Residents advise that they have started a petition.

#### **11.05.26 Chairman's comments**

VE celebration on bank holiday Monday was very good and a well done given to the Village Institute Committee for organising this event.

There has been a burglary in the village 2-3 days before the APM.

The bench on Strickmere has been caught by the grass mowers, the bench is clearly rotten and in poor condition and is not repairable. There is a plaque on the bench 'In memory of Amy Smith'.

All in agreement to put something on Facebook asking if anyone knows of any relatives of this person and if they would like to replace the bench, if no one comes forward then all in agreement that the bench will be removed. **DR**

#### **12.05.26 Correspondence and Clerks Report**

Email received 29.04.26 from Ed Barrie – Just emailing to make you aware that we have had an accident while working outside the farm and we have knocked over one of the cherry trees. If you could please direct us in what type of tree we will replace asap sorry for any inconvenience this has caused. Cllr Townsend to check what kind of tree it is and revert. **RT**

#### **13.05.26 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 Davies, all in favour. **Decision** – expenditure of £1,861.27 from 14.04.26 to 11.05.26 and balance at the bank at 30.04.26 current account is £9,237.89 and the reserve account £14,136.96 were approved by all.

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

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

**(4) River Stour Trust £25 subscription fee** – Cllr D Robinson proposed to renew subscription, Cllr Shead seconded, all in favour. **Clerk**

**(5) 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

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

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

**(7) Agree the yearend figures and sign off the AGAR section 1 & 2 and the certificate of exemption for an external audit for 2025/26.** Cllr Wright proposed to accept, Cllr Shead seconded and all in favour for the Chairman to sign these documents. **Clerk**

**(8) Insurance renewal due the 01.06.26** – Year 3 of a 3-year agreement, Insurance cost is £692.81, previous year was £654.91. Cllr D Robinson proposed to accept and renew, Cllr Wright seconded, all in favour. **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**

#### **14.05.26 Standing orders for 2026/2027**

Standing orders were reviewed, Cllr D Robinson proposed to accept, Cllr Wright seconded, all in favour. **Clerk**

#### **15.05.26 Financial regulations**

Financial regulations were reviewed, Cllr Wright proposed to accept, Cllr D Robinson seconded, all in favour. **Clerk**

#### **16.05.26 Website accessibility statement**

Cllr D Robinson proposed to adopt version 2.2, Cllr Shead seconded, all in favour. **Clerk**

#### **17.05.26 Internal control statement**

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

**18.05.26 Future Parish Council meeting dates for 2026 / 2027**

The following dates for meetings were agreed: 08.06.26 Parish Room, 13.07.26 VI, 14.09.26 VI, 12.10.26 Parish Room, 09.11.26 VI, 11.01.27 VI, 08.02.27 Parish Room, 08.03.27 VI, 12.04.27 Parish Room and 10.05.27 VI. To agree the date for the Annual Parish meeting - 26.04.27 VI.

**Clerk**

**19.05.25 Publication scheme**

The Clerk circulated a copy of the Publication scheme proposed for adoption before the meeting. Cllr D Robinson proposed to adopt, Cllr Wright seconded, all in favour. **Clerk**

**20.05.25 Internal Audit 2025-2026**

The internal audit was reviewed and comments noted.

**21.05.26 PC owned speed sign outside Weavers House, Lower Street**

The solar panel on the speed sign was stolen between the 09.04.26 to 10.04.26 – police ref 37/20194/26. This has been reported to the PC's insurance company ref:486310. The insurance company have reverted to confirm that they will pay £424.23 net to replace the solar panel and £300 net to fit. The policy excess is £250 so the total sum they will pay is £474.23. They have advised that they are unable to pay the additional security measure in the sum of £125. Cllr D Robinson proposed to accept the insurance settlement for the claim and re-order a new solar panel, Cllr Wright seconded, all in favour. Cllr Wright proposed to look at what security measures can be put in place once the new solar panel has been installed. **Clerk**

**22.05.26 Ongoing flooding issues on Dedham Road**

Works have been undertaken by Highways on Dedham Road, but no response received as to what works were done. All in agreement to remove this item from the next agenda. **Clerk**

**23.05.26 Tree on the Chase**

Poorly Sycamore tree on the Chase – Suffolk CC need to be chased on this. **RT**

**24.05.26 Lowe Hill House – damage to wall**

Email sent to Highways asking if it would be possible to change the priority at School Lane / Higham Road, so instead of a crossroads can it be made into a T junction? This would then make drivers slow down and not speed up Higham Road. No update received.  
The resident of Lowe Hill House has advised that the car involved in hitting their wall also hit and damaged the bend signs. They have logged this on the SCC online reporting tool but have had no response. The PC Clerk has also logged this online and will ask the new CC Darius Laws to assist. **Clerk**

**25.05.26 Improvements to the highway in Church Road**

The PCC have asked if the PC would contribute 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. Highways have advised that there are no cheaper options, all in agreement to donate the £500 provisionally reserved to the PCC towards the cost of restoring the verge. **Clerk**

**26.05.26 Overgrown hedge in front of Church View Cottage**

Hedge is overgrown making the path narrow to walk along. There are 2 parts making up this hedge - letter sent to Walnut Tree Cottage and Church View cottage asking if they will work with the Parish Council and start a resolution for this issue to be resolved.

Both residents have emailed back asking for the PC to contact them to discuss this issue – Cllr Wright has agreed to make contact and revert.

Cllr Shead proposed that SCC Highways enforcement should be contacted as it is their pavement and copy in CC Darius Laws, all in agreement. **Clerk**

**27.05.26 Burning along Higham Road**

Clerk has emailed a complaint to the environment agency who have advised the D7 exemption that the company operates under allows them to carry out the work they are doing. The only other legislation would be Statutory nuisance from smoke, where the smoke would have to be proven to have a significant impact on health or be a nuisance in law. If any resident feels their health is

being seriously impacted or that their property is being filled with smoke, they should report the matter to the environment agency online or by calling 0300 123 4000 but be expected to provide some evidence. Noted

**28.05.26 Village Institute**

Village Institute Representative – AGM was held on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April.

**29.05.26 Field next to the Village Institute**

Update on applying for the field to be an open space or village green – the Chairman has been in correspondence with Richard Thomson, and he has advised that he is minded in giving the field to the village sooner rather than later. Cllr D Robinson asked if Richard could make the field an open space before gifting the field to the village, the Chairman advised that Richard is discussing this with his family / solicitors.

**30.05.26 Neighbourhood plan**

Holton St Mary, Higham and Raydon PCs have expressed an interest in coming together with SSM PC to discuss the possibility of a joint neighbourhood plan. The HSM PC rep attended a meeting at Polstead PCs AGM on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May where Paul Bryant from Babergh gave a talk on Neighbourhood Plans (NHP). A NHP must be positive – how you would like your village shaped and where you would like development. A What's app group is being created for all interested parties to try and take the joint NHP forward.

**31.05.26 The River Garden**

Lease agreement – Savills have advised that the request for a lease agreement has not passed through the next stage, but NWL are willing to proceed with entering into a licence agreement which would be for a period of a year and then reviewed at the end of that term. A draft licence will be sent out for review.

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

**32.05.26 Replacement of 30mph sign coming into the village from Dedham**

Cllr Wright proposed replacing 2 x 30mph signs on the road from Dedham at a cost of up to £100, Cllr D Robinson seconded, all in favour. **NW**

**33.05.26 Millennium Garden maintenance**

Alison O'Reilly is no longer doing the maintenance for the Millennium Garden, Cllr D Robinson has proposed using a local lady in the village called Lisa Crane @ £20 per hour for a maximum of 10 hours a month in the summer and a maximum of 5 hours a month in the winter - all in agreement to use Lisa. Clerk to write to Lisa to confirm agreement. **Clerk**

**34.05.26 Neighbourhood Watch**

Cllr Davies advised that Jessica Baldry has now taken over NHW.

**35.05.26 Electric Pylons campaign – National Grid Norwich to Tilbury project**

Ongoing.

**36.05.26 Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council**

Cllr Wright raised the signs that have been left behind in the village that have been left behind the bench in Church Road have still not been collected – Clerk to chase. **Clerk**

**37.05.26 Confirm the date of the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 2026 at 1930hrs at the Parish Room for the next meeting.**

The meeting date of the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 2026 was confirmed.

Meeting closed at 2059hrs

