

OUSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 13th May 2025.

Councillors present: John Gale (Chairman), Edward Page Turner, Fiona Bills, Geoff Ingham and Sylvia Pettitt.

Also present: Joanne Kirk (Clerk) and County Councillor Bobby Bennett.

1. Election of chairman

John Gale was nominated and following a vote, it was resolved that he would be chairman.

2. Signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office form and agreement to abide by the Council's Code of Conduct by the chairman.

The chairman signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3. Election of a vice chairman.

Sylvia Pettitt was nominated and following a vote, it was resolved that Sylvia Pettitt would be vice-chairman.

4. County Councillor's Report.

Bobby Bennett spoke about the following:

- Pothole repairs have increased by 34%.
- SCC has purchased a new gritting fleet.
- Their summer road resurfacing programme has started.
- They have received £7.3 million funding for improving electric vehicle charging points.
- They are trying to improve air quality by encouraging vehicles not to idle especially outside schools, carparks and town centres.
- Adult and social care takes up a large amount of SCC funding, She thanked the voluntary groups that support this sector.
- SCC is supporting families through its Strong Families Partnership.
- Funding continues to be a challenge. Suffolk is one of the poorest funded counties for education.
- Local Government reorganisation will move to a unitary model. SCC has proposed one unitary councils, district councils have put alternative proposals forward.
- Devolution will see the formation of a combined mayoral authority with Suffolk and Norfolk.

5. Register of Members' Interests form.

Councillors reviewed their Register of Members' Interest forms. No amendments were necessary.

6. Acceptance of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from parish councillor Guy Holland Bosworth and the reason for absence accepted.

7. Declaration of Interest in items on the agenda and dispensation requests.

No councillors declared an interest in any items on the agenda and no dispensation requests were received.

8. Approval of minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 11th March 2025.

It was resolved that the minutes were correct. The chairman signed them.

9. Public session.

No issues were raised.

10. To receive an update on the list of actions agreed at the last meeting.

There were no outstanding councillor actions.

11. Finance.

a) Approval of any payments and signing of Schedule of Payments

It was resolved that the following payments would be approved:

- JP Kirk - expenses - LGA 1972 111 - **£26.78**
- SALC annual subscription – LGA 1972 111 - **£179.34**
- C Whitaker – internal audit of PC accounts - LGA 1972, s111 – **£80.00**
- McGregor Services – grass cutting - Open Spaces Act 1906, ss 9 & 10 - **£168.00**

- Community Heartbeat Trust – replacement defibrillator pads – GPC - **£146.34.**

Payments agreed in the budget:

- Ousden Village Hall - annual donation as agreed in the budget - Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s.19 - **£2,800** plus **£300.00** for the insurance for the playpark.

b) Approval of payments authorised between meetings:

No payments were authorised between meetings.

c) Statement of receipts and payments made since 1st April 2025.

Receipts

Date	Description	Supplier	Total
24/04/2025	Refund of test payment	Joanne Kirk	£1.00
28/04/2025	Precept	West Suffolk Council	£11,082.00

Payments

Date	Minute	Description	Supplier	Total
08/04/2025	432/16a	IT services	IT Services @ CAS Ltd	£49.00
21/04/2025	431/9m	Bank charges	Lloyds Bank	£4.25
24/04/2025		Test payment	Joanne Kirk	£1.00
Staff costs as per confidential cashbook				

d) Bank balances as of 30th April 2025.

Lloyds Bank Current Account	£11,537.11
Lloyds Bank reserve account	£5,301.70
Total in Banks	£16,838.81

Sylvia Pettitt and Geoff Ingham verified and signed the bank statements.

£9,000 was transferred to the Council's reserve account on 12th May. The current account balance is now £2,531.11 and the reserve account balance is £14,306.07.

e) Update on the inspection of parish council property carried out by John Gale.

John Gale has inspected the Parish Council's property. No work is required.

f) Internal auditor's report.

No issues were raised.

g) To approve the Receipts and Payments summary for the financial year 2024 – 2025 and the explanation of significant variances (over 15%).

It was resolved that the receipts and payments summary for the financial year 2024 – 2025 and the explanation of significant variances would be approved.

h) To approve sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

It was resolved that sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 would be approved. The Chairman and RFO signed sections 1 and 2.

i) To decide whether Ousden PC should submit a Certificate of Exemption from an external audit.

It was resolved that Ousden Parish Council would submit a Certificate of Exemption from an external audit as its income in 2024/25 was £11,448 and its expenditure was £8,633 which is below the £25,000 threshold for an external audit. The Chairman and RFO signed the Certificate of Exemption.

j) Confirmation of the dates for the notice of the period for the exercise of public rights.

It was resolved the dates for the exercise of public rights would be Tuesday 3rd June 2025 – Monday 14th July 2025..

k) To approve the Financial Report which the Council needs to publish as part of the Transparency Code 2015.

It was resolved that the financial report would be approved.

l) Precept information for 2024/25.

A precept payment from West Suffolk Council of £11,082 was received on 28th April 2025.

- m) **Email from VHMC requesting additional financial support in line with the % increase in the precept request.**
It was resolved that this would be discussed at the Council's budget setting meeting in December 2025. Prior to this, an article will be included in the newsletter detailing requests for money received and asking for residents' views about using the precept to fund them.

12. Planning

- a) **DC/24/1702/FUL - Malandra, Dunstall Green Road - one self-build dwelling (following demolition of existing bungalow) – Notification of appeal – for information only.**

13. Highways/rights of way matters/tree or transport issues.

- a) **Motorbikes riding unsafely on the byway off Wickhambrook Road.**
There is an increasing problem with motorbikes using this byway at times riding dangerously and showing little regard for other users.

14. Resignation of a councillor and Notice of Vacancy.

Helyn Dudley has resigned and the vacancy has been advertised. The closing date for an election to be called is 15th May, after that the Parish Council can co-opt a new councillor.

15. To discuss any village issues:

- a) **Police visit**
PC Claydon will be visiting the pop up café on Sunday 29th June from 10-11am.

16. Correspondence.

- a) **Email from SALC about the Town and Parish Forum on 17th June at Newmarket Memorial Hall – for information only.**
b) **SALC AGM at 75th anniversary in the Athenaeum on Tuesday 1st July 2025 at 9.30am – for information only.**

17. Any other business for noting or including on the agenda.

The following items was raised:

- Increased lorry movements along Dunstall Green Road.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.04pm.

Signed (Chairman) Dated