

OUSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 9th September 2025.

Parish councillors present: John Gale (Chair), Edward Page-Turner, Guy Holland Bosworth and Sylvia Pettitt.

Also present: Joanne Kirk (clerk), County Councillor Bobby Bennett, District Councillor Mike Chester and two members of the public.

1. Acceptance of apologies for absence.

Parish Councillor Fiona Bills sent her apologies.

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

No interests were declared and no dispensation requests were received.

3. Approval of minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 13th May 2025.

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

4. Public session.

No issues were raised.

5. County Councillors Report.

County Councillor Bobby Bennett spoke about the following:

- Suffolk County Council has been working on local government reform. They are proposing a single unitary council. West Suffolk Council is proposing three unitary councils. The predicted saving would be 34.5m whereas three unitary councils would cost more. One of the suggestions is that parish councils might be able to take on more responsibility if they want to. They have not been told about any change of direction by MHCLG following the resignation of Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner.
- Dog attack in Stansfield and the need for a better reporting system for out-of-control dogs.

6. District Councillor's report.

District Councillor Mike Chester also spoke about local government reform. His preferred option would be two unitary councils however central government will make the final decision.

West Suffolk Council's Thriving Communities fund is open for applications.

Brandon has been allocated £500,000 for improvements to the locality.

7. Police issues.

Since the last meeting there has been an attempted aggravated car break-in, a burglary of a dwelling during the day, where the rear patio doors were smashed to gain entry and a suspicious vehicle was seen entering farm yards in Hargrave.

8. Co-option of a two new parish councillors

Following the resignations of parish councillors Helyn Dudley and Geoffrey Ingham, it was resolved that Jo Wright and Jess Pettitt would be co-opted onto the Parish Council. They signed a Confirmation of Eligibility for Co-option form and a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

9. Update on list of actions agreed at the last meeting.

There were no outstanding councillor actions.

10. Finance

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

It was resolved that the following payments would be approved:

- J P Kirk – expenses - LGA 1972, s111 – **£16.20.**
- Risby Parish Council -phone costs (15% of cost of clerk's mobile phone) - LGA 1972, s111 – **£26.78**
- HMRC – PAYE - LGA 1972, s111 – **£151.20.**
- Starboard Systems – Scribe subscription - LGA 1972, s111 - **£165.60.**
- McGregor Services – grass cutting – Open Spaces Act 1906, ss 9 & 10 - **£204.00**
- J P Kirk – 1/6 of cost of Microsoft Office - LGA 1972, s111 - **£20.00.**
- Community Action Suffolk – insurance - LGA 1972, s111 - **£449.77.**

Ousden Parish Council has received notification of the latest NALC annual pay award for local government employees backdated to 1st April 2025. It was resolved that the clerk would be paid the new rate with immediate effect and that a payment of **£58.65** (LGA 1972, s111) for 5 months back pay would be approved.

Sylvia Pettitt and Edward Page Turner reviewed and signed the Schedule of Payments.

b) Approval of payments authorised between meetings.

No payments were authorised between meetings.

c) Statement of receipts and payments made since the last meeting.

Receipts

Date	Description	Supplier	Total
09/05/2025	VAT refund 2024/25	HMRC	£204.60
12/05/2025	Bank interest received	Lloyds Bank	£3.63
09/06/2025	Bank interest received	Lloyds Bank	£7.98
09/07/2025	Bank interest received	Lloyds Bank	£6.81

Payments

Date	Minute	Description	Supplier	
14/05/2025	433/11a	Clerk's expenses	Joanne Kirk	£26.78
14/05/2025	433/11a	SALC membership	Suffolk Association of Local Councils	£179.34
14/05/2025	433/11a	Internal audit fee	Mrs C Whitaker	£80.00
14/05/2025	433/11a	Grass cutting	McGregor Services	£168.00
14/05/2025	433/11a	Annual donation	Ousden Village Hall and Playing Fields	£2,800.00
14/05/2025	411/11a	Playground insurance	Ousden Village Hall and Playing Fields	£300.00
14/05/2025	433/11a	Defibrillator pads	Community Heartbeat Trust	£146.34
20/05/2025	431/9m	Bank charges	Lloyds Bank	£4.25
09/06/2025	410/9f	Grass cutting	McGregor Services	£168.00
21/06/2025	431/9m	Bank charges	Lloyds Bank	£4.25
03/07/2025	410/9f	Grass cutting	McGregor Services	£168.00
19/07/2025	431/9m	Bank charges	Lloyds Bank	£4.25
26/07/2025	425/10f	Data protection fee	ICO	£47.00
05/08/2025	410/9f	Grass cutting	McGregor Services	£84.00
19/08/2025	425/10e	Village hall rental for meetings	Ousden Village Hall and Playing Fields	£200.00
19/08/2025	431/9m	Bank charges	Lloyds Bank	£4.25
Staff costs as per confidential cash book				

Transfers

	From	To	Amount
12/05/2025	Lloyds Bank Current Account	Lloyds Bank reserve account	£9,000.00
14/05/2025	Lloyds Bank reserve account	Lloyds Bank Current Account	£2,000.00
11/06/2025	Lloyds Bank reserve account	Lloyds Bank Current Account	£500.00
04/08/2025	Lloyds Bank reserve account	Lloyds Bank Current Account	£500.00

d) Bank balances as of 30th August 2025.

Lloyds Bank Current Account	£317.13
Lloyds Bank reserve account	£11,324.49
Total in banks	£11,324.49

Edward Page Turner and Sylvia Pettitt verified and signed the bank statements.

- e) **Approval of the continued use of electronic banking and BACS payments, the Council's banking arrangement with Lloyds, and the use of variable direct debit or standing order where appropriate.**
It was resolved that Ousden Parish Council would continue to use electronic banking with Lloyds and direct debits or standing orders where appropriate.
- f) **Six-month budget review.**

Budget overspends

Payments		
Budgeted	£35.00	
Actual	£47.00	
Difference	-£12.00	GDPR fee increased.
Bank charges		
Budgeted	£0.00	
Actual	£21.25	
Difference	-£21.25	Bank charges of £4.25 a month introduced by Lloyds after the budget was set.

The budget is currently on track.

Reserves

Earmarked Reserve	Opening Balance	Transfers	Spend	Receipts	Current Balance
Election costs	£1,218	£300			£1,518
Emptying of bins	£225				£225
Defibrillator maintenance	£182	£200	£122		£260
Clerk and councillor training	£144	£20			£164
Maintenance of fixed assets	£400	£400			£800
Village project	£300	£700			£1,000
Ousden Bowls club	£450				£450
TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES	£2,919	£1,620	£122		£4,417
GENERAL FUND					£7,225
TOTAL FUNDS					£11,642

- g) **Purchase of a poppy wreath and donation and approval of online payment.**
It was resolved that Sylvia Pettitt would be asked to organise a wreath again this year and a payment of £50, to include a donation, approved.

11. Planning.

- a) **West Suffolk Local Plan.**
The new West Suffolk Local Plan was adopted on 15th July 2025.
- b) **Planning applications received between meetings.**

DC/25/1033/FUL	Witham's Farm Chapel Road Ousden	Agricultural building.
DC/25/1056/HEDGE	Land Off Church Hill Lidgate	Removal of 10 metres of hedgerow across two locations

12. To discuss any highways/Rights of Way issues/tree/transport issues.

- a) **Letter from Moulton Parish Council about Community Road Safety.**
It was resolved that Ousden Parish Council would join the group and that John Gale would be authorised to make representations on behalf of Ousden Parish Council and act on any recommendations made by the group.

13. To review the following policy documents.

It was resolved that the following documents would be approved:

- a) **Financial Regulations**
 - b) **Updated Standing Orders based on the new NALC model.**
 - c) **Scheme of Delegation.**
 - d) **Updated Contact Privacy Notice.**
 - e) **Procedural policies as listed in appendix A.**
 - f) **Freedom of Information, data protection policies and policies for dealing with the press/media. as listed in appendix B.**
 - g) **Employment policies and procedures as listed in appendix C.**
 - h) **Other policies as listed in appendix D.**
 - i) **Planning documents listed in appendix E.**
14. **To discuss any village issues:**
- a) **Replacement litter bin for the play area.**
It was resolved that a budget of £200 would be allocated for a replacement bin.
 - b) **Email from the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership about their Thermal Imaging project this winter.**
John Gale agreed to run the project.
15. **To discuss any correspondence.**
- a) **Email from West Suffolk Council about the next Parish and Town Council Forum which will be held on 21 October 2025 at West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds at 7pm.**
John Gale agreed to attend.
 - b) **Letter from SARS requesting a donation.**
It was resolved that a donation of £50 would be made.
 - c) **Email from the Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Group about Community Emergency Rest Centre Training on Tuesday 18th November from 6-9pm in Haverhill Arts Centre.**
No councillors were able to attend.
16. **Any other business for noting or including on the agenda of the meeting on Tuesday 9th December 2025.**
No issues were raised.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.30pm.

Signed (Chairman) Dated

Appendix A – Procedural policies

- **Complaints Procedure.**
No changes were made.
- **Procedure for Dealing with Correspondence.**
No changes were made.
- **Procedure for the Public Session.**
The work forum was amended to 'session'.
- **Co-option Policy.**
This policy has been updated in line with the SALC model.
- **Email policy for councillors.**
No changes were made.
- **Electronic Communication Policy.**
This is a new policy.
- **Code of Conduct.**
No changes were made. The SALC model code of conduct was used as a template.
- **Persistent and vexatious complaints and correspondence policy.**
No changes were made.

Appendix B – Freedom of Information, data protection policies and policies for dealing with the press/media.

- **Data Protection and Information Management Policy.**
This is a new policy.

- **Social media policy.**
No changes were made.
- **Filming and Recording at Meetings Policy.**
No changes were made.
- **Subject Access Request Policy.**
The contact information has been updated.
- **Contact Privacy Statement.**
This has been updated and simplified.
- **Procedure for Handling Requests for information.**
No changes were made.
- **Freedom of Information Publication Scheme.**
This policy has been updated in line with the SALC model template.
- **Assessment of personal data held by Stradishall Parish Council.**
This document has been updated.

Appendix C - Employment policies and procedures.

- **Equal Opportunities Policy.**
No changes were made.
- **Sexual and General Harassment Policy and Procedure.**
This is a new policy. No changes were made.
- **Disciplinary and Grievance Policy.**
This is a new policy based on the SALC template.

Appendix D – Other policies.

- **Volunteer Policy.**
No changes were made.
- **Hedge Policy.**
No changes were made.

Appendix E – Planning documents

- **The Role of Ousden Parish Council in Dealing with Planning Applications.**
This policy has been updated.
- **Planning applications and how to respond.**
This policy has been updated.