

OUSDEN PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 8th September 2026.

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

Also present: Joanne Kirk (clerk), County Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger, District Councillor Mike Chester and one member of the public.

1. Acceptance of apologies for absence.

Parish Councillor Jo Wright sent her apologies and the reason for absence was accepted.

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 12th May 2026.

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

4. Public session.

Celia Holt, Chair of Ousden Village Hall updated the Parish Council about the progress of the plans for a new village hall. Their application for a lottery grant was turned down because there are areas in the country which experience greater deprivation. It is very difficult to provide adequate data evidencing need in rural communities because numbers are so low.

She spoke about the way forward, perhaps a smaller less expensive structure or no structure at all.

She also spoke about the playing field. The latest inspection report picked up some moderate risk items. The swings and part of the rope walk have had to be removed until they can be repaired.

Funding is a challenge as there is very little funding for rural communities.

5. County Councillors Report.

County Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger spoke about the following:

- The Government's decision to review the options for local government in Suffolk based on legal advice. This is at a time when considerable time and resources have been spent preparing for local government reorganisation. All of the proposals were outside the population parameters required. The District Council elections should still go ahead in May 2027 with the existing boundaries.
- She has a locality budget and a highways locality budget.

6. District Councillor's report.

District Councillor Mike Chester spoke about the following:

- A change to the planning process which means that more decisions will be made by planning officers.
- West Suffolk Council's latest call for sites. Land is needed for 1,200 homes a year. 328 sites have been put forward but no decisions have been made yet.
- The West Suffolk Waste Recycling Hub West Recycling Hub is going to be expanded as the current site is too small.

7. Police issues.

No crimes were recorded in Ousden in May and June 2026.

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

There was one outstanding councillor action. It was resolved that Sylvia Pettitt would be given a budget of up to £100 to purchase a tree to put the circular bench round.

Update on clerk's actions

The clerk has checked and updated the Parish Council's website, including trying to ensure that it meets with accessibility requirements.

9. Finance

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

- J P Kirk – expenses - LGA 1972, s111 – **£22.28**

- Risby Parish Council -phone costs (15% of cost of clerk's mobile phone) - LGA 1972, s111 – **£31.36**
- Starboard Systems – Scribe subscription - LGA 1972, s111 - **£231.94.**
- Community Action Suffolk – insurance - LGA 1972, s111 – **£480.08.**
- HMRC – PAYE - LGA 1972, s111 – **£168.80**
- McGregor Services – hedge cutting – Open Spaces Act 1906, ss 9 & 10 - **£144.00**
- Elan City – second year of Elan City extended warranty – Highways Act, 1980, S274A - **£238.80.**

b) Approval of payments authorised between meetings.

No payments were authorised between meetings.

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

Receipts

Date	Bank	Description	Total
11/05/2026	Lloyds Bank reserve account	Bank interest received	£2.66
08/06/2026	Lloyds Bank reserve account	Bank interest received	£3.99
09/07/2026	Lloyds Bank reserve account	Bank interest received	£4.55
10/08/2026	Lloyds Bank reserve account	Bank interest received	£4.85

Payments

Date	Minute	Description	Supplier	Total
13/05/2026	455/11a	Clerk's expenses	Joanne Kirk	£19.88
13/05/2026	455/11a	Internal audit fee	Mrs C Whitaker	£85.00
13/05/2026	455/11a	SALC membership	Suffolk Association of Local Councils	£185.38
13/05/2026	455/11a	Donation	Ousden Village Hall and Playing Fields	£5,300.00
13/05/2026	455/11a	Grass cutting	McGregor Services	£168.00
19/05/2026	446/10h	Bank charges	Lloyds Bank	£4.25
22/06/2026	446/10h	Bank charges	Lloyds Bank	£4.25
23/06/2026	446/10h	Grass cutting	McGregor Services	£168.00
06/07/2026	446/10h	Grass cutting	McGregor Services	£168.00
22/07/2026	446/10h	Bank charges	Lloyds Bank	£4.25
24/07/2026	446/10h	Data protection fee	ICO	£47.00
10/08/2026	446/10h	Grass cutting	McGregor Services	£120.00
21/08/2026	446/10h	Bank charges	Lloyds Bank	£4.25
Staff costs as per confidential cashbook				

Transfers

Date	From	To	Amount
16/05/2026	Lloyds current account	Lloyds reserve account	£5,000.00

d) Bank balances as of 1st September 2026 and confirmation of bank reconciliation.

Lloyds current account	£763.93
Lloyds reserve account	£11,079.78
Total in Banks	£11,843.71

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 and BACS payments, the Council's banking arrangement with Lloyds, and the use of variable direct debit or standing order where appropriate.

f) Six-month budget review.

There are currently no overspends and the budget is on track.

Reserves

Earmarked reserves	Opening Balance	Transfers	Spend	Receipts	Current Balance
Election costs	£1,518.09	£100.00			£1,618.09

Emptying of bins	£225.00		£225.00
Defibrillator maintenance	£260.05	£200.00	£460.05
Clerk and councillor training	£163.76	£20.00	£183.76
Maintenance of fixed assets	£800.00	£200.00	£1,000.00
Village project	£1,000.00		£1,000.00
Ousden Bowls club	£450.00		£450.00
Legal fees	£0.00	£1,000	£1,000
TOTAL RESERVES	£4,416.90	£520.00	£5,936.90
GENERAL FUND			£5,906.81
TOTAL FUNDS			£11,843.71

g) Purchase of a poppy wreath and donation and approval of online payment.

Sylvia Pettitt agreed to organise a poppy wreath again this year. It was resolved that a donation of £50 would be made.

h) New HMRC mileage rate.

The new HMRC mileage rate is 55p a mile.

10. Planning.

a) Planning applications received between meetings.

DC/26/1331/OUT	Land off Dunstall Green Road, Ousden	a. one dwelling b. extension of garden land for Lilac Cottage. Resubmission of previous application assessed against changes to NPPF.
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As Ousden Parish Council did not object to the previous application for this site (DC/25/1899/OUT), it was resolved that a response would be submitted using the clerk's delegated powers saying that the Council's position remained unchanged.

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

a) Query about using a Highways approved contractor to clear the drains on the Hill.

Ousden Parish Council has not received a definitive answer from the drainage team at Suffolk County Council yet. County Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger agreed to follow up with the drainage team.

b) Replacing faded repeater signs in Ousden.

The cheapest option is to replace the actual signs. A 300mm repeater sign from Start Safety is £12.55 + VAT. John Gale confirmed that 10 repeater signs are needed and one 600mm sign. Cllr Hopfensperger said she might be able to give some funding towards the signs. John Gale agreed to investigate possible options and report back at the next meeting.

12. To review the following policy documents.

It was resolved that the amended documents would be approved.

a) Financial Regulations.

No changes were made.

b) Updated Standing Orders.

The word chairman was changed to chair.

c) Scheme of Delegation.

Word chairman was changed to chair.

d) Contact Privacy Notice.

No changes were made.

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.

13. To discuss any village issues.

a) Update on the registration of the village hall with the Land Registry.

The registration is due for consideration by the Land Registry until July 2027.

14. To discuss the following correspondence:

a) Information from Phonely about the switch over to digital landlines which is due to be completed by 27th January 2027 – for information only.

The UK's old landline phone network is being switched off by January 2027 and replaced with digital phone services delivered via broadband.

Many residents will not notice a major difference, however some older home phones, telecare devices, pendant alarms and monitored home alarm systems may be affected and could require updating before the switch takes place locally. Residents are encouraged not to wait until the last minute and to contact their provider to:

- ask when their area is scheduled to switch
- check whether their current phone will still work
- check any telecare or alarm systems
- ask about emergency backup during power cuts

The full resident guide is available at <https://www.phonely.co.uk/uk-digital-landline-switchover>

b) Letter from the domestic abuse charity Lighthouse asking for Ousden Parish Council's support in promoting their services and requesting a donation.

It was resolved that a donation of £50 would be made. The clerk will also ask for information about the charity to share in the next newsletter and on the Ousden Facebook page.

c) Email from CouncilWise about their new Training and Support service for parish councils.

It was resolved that Ousden Parish Council would not subscribe at this stage.

d) Email from West Suffolk Council about their updated Register of Members' Interests form where the home address of councillors has been removed – for information only.

e) Email from Well Being Suffolk giving details of the mental health services they provide – for information only.

People aged 16 or over and living in Suffolk, can **self-refer directly** to the service without needing to see a GP or have a formal mental health diagnosis.

Visit: wellbeingsuffolk.co.uk

Call: 0300 123 1503

15. Any other business for noting or including on the agenda of the meeting on Tuesday 8th December 2026.

No issues were raised.

16. To resolve to exclude press and public under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960: the public and press be excluded for the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure of private and confidential information.

a) To discuss staffing matters.

It was resolved that members of the press and public would be excluded from the rest of the meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.25pm.

Signed (Chairman) **Dated**

Appendix A – Procedural policies

- **Complaints Procedure.**
Word chairman changed to chair.
- **Procedure for Dealing with Correspondence.**
No changes made.
- **Procedure for the Public Session.**
Word chairman changed to chair.
- **Co-option Policy.**
No changes were made.
- **Email policy for councillors.**

Paragraph 3 was amended from:

With the introduction of GDPR in May 2018, consent is required to hold the contact details of a member of the public. The clerk keeps a record of when consent was obtained. If you receive an email from a member of the public, it is Parish Council policy to forward it to the clerk who can obtain the necessary consent. The clerk will then respond to the email in line with the Parish Council's protocol for dealing with correspondence.

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If an email is sent to a parish councillor, it is the Parish Council's policy to forward it to the clerk. The clerk will then respond to the email in line with the Parish Council's protocol for dealing with correspondence.

- **Electronic Communication Policy.**

No changes were made.

- **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.**

No changes were made.

- **Social media policy.**

This is a new policy.

- **Filming and Recording at Meetings Policy.**

Twitter was removed and word chairman changed to chair.

- **Subject Access Request Policy.**

No changes were made.

- **Procedure for Handling Requests for information**

No changes were made.

- **Freedom of Information Publication Scheme.**

No changes were made.

Appendix C - Employment policies and procedures.

- **Equal Opportunities Policy.**

No changes were made.

- **Sexual and General Harassment Policy and Procedure.**

The word chairman was changed to chair.

- **Disciplinary and Grievance Policy.**

The word chairman was changed to chair.

Appendix D – Other policies.

- **Hedge Policy.**

No changes were made.

Appendix E – Planning documents

- **The Role of Ousden Parish Council in Dealing with Planning Applications.**

The document has been amended to reflect the fact that the rules for making planning decisions have changed and that most planning applications will be decided by planning officers including all householder applications.

- **Planning applications and how to respond.**

The document has been amended to reflect the fact that the rules for making planning decisions have changed and that most planning applications will be decided by planning officers.