

BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Tel: 01787 739317 Email: clerk@boxford-pc.gov.uk

MINUTES of the MEETING of BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL held on Tuesday 25th February 2025 at 7.00p.m. in the Village Hall, Boxford.

PRESENT: Cllrs K Couling (Chairing meeting), D Warren, H Watts, V Strafford, P Watt, C Lawson. Z Rumsey (Clerk), CCllr J Finch, DCllr Hurren (from 19.30) and 5 members of the public attended in person. No Video link was requested.

1. Apologies:

L Wortley (Chair)

2. Declarations of Interest by Councillors:

None received.

3. Approval of Minutes of 28th January 2024:

Approved.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes:

Parking at the Care Home, Brook Hall Road – Cllr Warren has been advised by the managers of the Care Home that they have been in negotiations with the owners of the land regarding purchasing. Cllr Warren will continue to monitor the situation.

5. Questions from the Public:

A resident wished to comment on the house prices for the new properties at Goodlands, which are currently on the market starting at £325,000. It was the understanding of the resident that the development was to be sold as affordable housing. DCllr Hurren advised that the matter of affordable housing had been abandoned by BDC.

A resident wished to thank SCC for finally clearing Butchers Lane, however the drains were blocked now worse because the dirt had not been properly cleared.

It was reported that there are a number of pot holes on School Hill & Swan Street; these have been reported to SCC using the online tool.

An update was requested on the speed limit changes. CCllr Finch advised that the proposal has gone through with 2 caveats requested for Sand Hill and Ellis Street. The PC will be advised of these in due course.

At this point of the meeting 2 Police Constables arrived. They wished to inform the meeting that they had been dealing with the disturbances at the playing field, including showing presence within the village and it seems to have had a positive impact. The Police will be holding a Community Meeting on 8th March and hoped to see many residents attend. More information will be available around the village. Police Constable Brendan McKenna wish to inform the PC and residents that his contact details can be found by searching Boxford on the Suffolk.police.uk website.

6. District Council Report:

DCllr Hurren advised the residents that he was aware of the matters at Ash Street but he was unable to discuss further.

The attached report was received and distributed to Parish Councillors ahead of the meeting. DCllr Hurren commented on the Devolution White Papers and the budget which has been put to the Cabinet with a 2.99% increase.

DCllr Hurren mentioned that the village had recently had a road sweep; Cllr Watt commented that the task was pointless as residents were not aware when this was taking place and cars were not removed from the roads. DCllr Hurren agreed that in future leaflets would be provided around the village and the PC would assist in asking residents to move their cars for the sweep to be more effective.

DCllr Hurren was asked about the footpath at Goodlands. He advised that the footpath was to be provided by the Woodland Trust. Members of the public and Council wished to know what the Enforcement Team were doing about this as it was thought the footpath should have been installed by now. DCllr Hurren was under the impression that a new Planning Application had been brought before the Parish Council, this was not the case.

BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Tel: 01787 739317 Email: clerk@boxford-pc.gov.uk

7. County Council Report:

The attached report was received and distributed to Parish Councillors ahead of the meeting. Cllr Finch commented on the Devolution White Papers and the budget which has been approved through Cabinet

Cllr Couling asked about the matter of the yellow lines in the village. Cllr Finch advised that he was not aware of the delays that had been experienced. He will look into the matter.

Cllr Couling also wished to advise Cllr Finch that SCC were increasingly leaving behind road signs and they were becoming quite a nuisance. It was requested that these are removed ASAP.

8. Finance – Bank Balances and previously agreed payments for the January period.

28th January 2025 Opening Bank Balances: £111,421.68.

Income: £1390.00 cemetery fee

The following pre-agreed payments paid: -

10/02 Z Rumsey - £454.09 - Clerk Salary
Vertas Group - £768.04 - Grounds Maintenance
Suffolk Tree Services - £240.00 - Tree felling Fen Street
SLCC Enterprises - £72.00 - Clerk Training
SLCC Enterprises - £72.00 - Clerk Training
Box Media - £250.00 - Keep the Heat Project
Boxford Village Hall - £94.50 - Dec Hall Hire
Boxford Village Hall - £95.50 - Jan Hall Hire
Boxford Village Hall - £95.50 - Feb Hall Hire
Boxford Village Hall - £2,500.00 - Hall Grant
12/02 Mortimer Contracts - £848.40 - Grass contract
18/02 E.ON - £34.44 - Bell House Electricity

The sum of the payments made was £5,524.47.

25th February 2025 Closing Bank balances:

Community Account £28,508.42

Deposit Account £34,247.01

Reserve Account £43,531.78

Total of £106,287.21

Consider the following items: -

a) *Authorise payments*

Suffolk Cloud £205.00

Village Hall Mar £95.50

Scribe £489.60

It was resolved to approve all payments.

b) *Using Receipts and Payments accounting*

The Clerk wishes to change the accounts back to Receipts and Payments. It was explained that it was not understood why it was changed to Income and Expenditure, it was not necessary and a more complicated method to use. It would be more transparent to residents to use the Receipts and Payments method. The Clerk was asked to provide guidance and this will be carried forward to next month.

c) *Scribe subscription*

Carried to next month

d) *SALC Payroll*

The Clerk requested to subscribe to SALC Payroll. It was resolved to approve the subscription.

BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Tel: 01787 739317 Email: clerk@boxford-pc.gov.uk

e) *Donation to Kernos Centre*

It was resolved not to offer a donation at this time.

f) *Appoint SALC as Internal Auditor*

It was resolved to appoint SALC as Internal Auditor.

g) *Policies & Procedures renewals*

Carried to next month – Finance Committee to meet prior to next months meeting to go through all policies in line with AGAR.

9. Planning – Report on Decisions from the Planning Authority.

DC/24/05241 Hawthorns, Calais Street – Granted with Conditions

DC/25/00045 The Old Forge – Raise no objections

DC/24/04936 23 Swan Street – Granted with Conditions

DC/24/04937 23 Swan Street – Granted with Conditions

DC/24/05537 The Arc – Granted with Conditions

Consider the following items: -

a) DC/25/00393 – 10 Ellis Street Boxford Sudbury Suffolk CO10 5HH. Householder Application – Replacement and re-positioning of oil tank. It was resolved to raise no objections.

b) *Any other urgent planning matters:*

DC/24/04456 – Land South Of, Calais Street, Boxford. Application for Outline Planning Permission Erection of up to 7 No new market residential dwellings including new access, parking and landscaping. The PC had still not had the opportunity to discuss with the developers about the path and the style/type of properties, as such the PC are not supportive of the changes to the application.

10. Cemetery and Churchyard

An updated was provided on the ongoing works. It was suggested that the PC provide a number of daffodils around the Cemetery and Churchyard. This will be looked into.

a) *Rainwater harvesting – maintenance*

A report was provided regarding the maintenance required. The PC will be presented with a request for funds once a quote has been received.

11. Environmental and Ecology

Nothing to report.

12. Public Realms

Stone Street and other areas of the village have been cut and tidied.

The street light has now been installed but is not yet connected. This is being chased.

a) *Butchers Lane*

See resident's comments above. The lane has been scraped but soil has been left of the side banks and the drains are still blocked. SCC have been contacted to do it again.

13. Car Park

Cllr Strafford advised that he & Hugh Phillips have been working through the Heads of Terms and these along with the fees are still being reviewed. A new boundaries proposal has also been drafted. Cllr Strafford hopes to come back to the PC with a proposal in the next couple of months.

14. The Croft – Tree Surgery Works

The land owner has given permission to access his land to excavate the pond. Quotes were distributed to Councillors prior to the meeting. It was resolved to instruct Charlie Smith to carry out the tree works.

15. Temporary Access request via the Croft

An email has been received following last months agreement to allow a resident on Swan Street access through the bollards for the occasional wood delivery. Another resident has requested permission to use the access. It was resolved that the code would not be given out, but with 48hours notice, Cllrs Couling or Warren will happily arrange to remove the bollards at an agreed time.

BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Tel: 01787 739317 Email: clerk@boxford-pc.gov.uk

16. Bell House

It was suggested that Bell House be tidied up and cleaned and used for occasional sub-committee meetings. It was advised that it was originally the plan, alongside the Car Park, to knock down the building or sell on. It was agreed that it was unnecessary to spend time and money on the building when there are alternative locations that can be used. The Parish Council need to come up with an alternative location for storage of documents but in the meantime, the building will be solely used for storage purposes.

17. Village Hall Hire

It has been noted that the PC are paying £60 per month, solely for the hire of the Committee Room, which is only used on an occasional basis for sub-committee meetings. It was reported that this was an agreement of a previous Chair of the PC. It is felt that this fee is too high as it is not used regularly every month. It was resolved that the PC will give notice to the Village Hall and will only hire the Committee Room on an ad/hoc basis.

18. Tree Warden ID Card

It was resolved that due to liability and insurance limitations, the tree warden would be added onto the PC website alongside the Councillors and all shall have photographs added to the website for identification purposes.

19. Date for Annual Parish Meeting

It was the suggestion of some Councillors that the Annual Parish Meeting be held on a Saturday morning in the hope that more residents were able to attend. It was resolved that the APM be held at 10am on Saturday 26th April 2025. The Clerk will inform groups of Boxford and request their presence and reports.

20. Member's Reports

It was noted that meetings are taking too long and it was felt this is largely due to County and District Councillor reports being lengthy. It was resolved that County and District Councillors are restricted to 10 minutes each and requested that reports are for local information only.

The chair declared the meeting closed at 21.30.

Boxford Report 25th February 2025.

Firstly some clarity on the Devolution deal and Unitary bid for our own area.

As of this moment James Finch will remain our County Councillor for an extra year until the mayoral elections for a combined Suffolk and Norfolk mayoral region, this is likely to take place in May 2026. This is at the behest of the new labour government who want just one group to talk to per region.

This new mayoral level, will of course come with its own levels of monetary requirements and extra budgets to do what ever its new role may be. One worries that this budget will cost as much as the total savings of the exercise to cut out one level of confusing local government, just to introduce another. That would be a damming mistake.

As some may be aware the combined County, District and Borough councils of Suffolk are collectively working on a proposal for unitary councils across Suffolk and it is likely that I will remain your district councillor for as long as that takes which I was well elected to do anyway, so not much change there.

The issues here are the size of the new combined authority and how many across Suffolk, I would have preferred 3 across Suffolk but as the numbers don't stack up to the recommended government preferred size of 500,000 we will be lucky to get away with 2 as the total population of Suffolk is just over 800.000. We will see.

Closer to home the council business goes on unabated and we are focused on setting the 25/26 council tax, as low as we possibly can to ease the financial burden upon our residents. Likely to be 2.9% again at this moment, our costs have gone up much more than that with increases in NI, wages, materials and everything else.

Some of our investments have done well which is a bonus and the new car parking tariffs are yet to be added into the mix, may be disappointing.

We are yet to enact the outgoing government recycling demands and I hope we do not have too under the new government, who haven't commented yet.

As chair of Audit and Standards, it falls on my shoulders to see that all our accounts are internally audited and signed off as correct and published forthwith, this has just happened despite the lack of an external auditor under new government legislation to enable a quick catch up and fresh start.

We continue to work on our JLP with some haste to accommodate our new housing demands from the government and will be consulting with an update in early summer, hopefully this will result in more affordable housing that new and older residents can afford to buy or rent.

All local matters that come under my jurisdiction are being addressed by myself and under control.

Happy to answer any questions from councillors or attending public tonight.

I work with another until 7.00.pm. on Tuesdays but will endeavour to be with you by 7.30.pm. at the very latest.

Have a good meeting and thank you for what you do for our village.

All Best Wishes. Bryn.

A Report for Boxford Parish Council Meeting on 25th February 2025 From James Finch – County Councillor for the Stour Valley

Tel: 01206 262993 (change) Mobile 07545 423796 Email: james.finch@suffolk.gov.uk

➤ Council's budget prioritises vulnerable residents and essential services

Suffolk County Council has unveiled its proposed budget for 2025/26, with a strong focus on supporting vulnerable residents across the county.

Under the proposals, the council's net budget would rise by 6.7%, from £752.9 million in 2024/25 to £803.7 million in 2025/26. Key allocations include:

- £18.1 million extra for children's services, ensuring continued support for young people and families in need
- £35.2 million extra for adult care, aimed at addressing the growing demand for social care services.

To help fund these essential services, the council is proposing a 4.99% rise in Council Tax. This would consist of a 2.99% increase in general Council Tax and an additional 2% specifically for adult care services.

This means the costs for a household would be:

- **Band B property:** £24.67 per week, a £1.17 increase from 2024-25 (Band B properties are the most common in Suffolk)
- **Band D property:** £31.72 per week, a £1.51 increase from 2024-25.

The council will also receive £12.1 million of the additional £880 million allocated by the government for adult and children's social care. It also expects to receive £2.2 million of the £263 million earmarked for a new Children's Services Prevention Grant.

To balance the books, the council has also identified £10.9 million in additional savings, building on the £17.5 million approved last year. This brings the total savings to £28.4 million for the 2025/26 financial year.

➤ Suffolk commits to devolution fast track

Following an invitation from ministers, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet today agreed to recommend Suffolk for inclusion in the government's Devolution Priority Programme (DPP), which would see the creation of a directly elected Mayor (likely covering Suffolk and Norfolk) and the replacement of existing council structures with a streamlined unitary council being set up.

The decision followed a debate and vote at a meeting of all county councillors on the cabinet.

Suffolk County Council wrote to the government expressing its desire to be at the front of the queue for devolution and local government reorganisation. At the beginning February Suffolk was approved as part of the Devolution Priority Programme, more detailed proposals, engagement and Government-led consultation will follow.

➤ Unique landscape to be changed forever by pylons

A large area of landscape on the Norfolk/Suffolk border with particular uniqueness, rivalling those of other nationally protected landscapes, is set to be decimated by pylons as part of National Grid's Norwich to Tilbury project.

In a letter to both Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council, and other local leaders, National Grid has outlined that it has decided to install overhead lines through the Waveney Valley, rather than running cables underground, as they had set out in their previous consultation.

This is a significant blow to local communities and the natural environment, especially following last year's Valued Landscape Assessment, a report jointly commissioned by Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council.

The report concluded that *"the length of the Waveney Valley expresses many special qualities, and in the context of Suffolk and Norfolk, it is considered to be a valued landscape. Conserving and enhancing the special qualities articulated in this report is a key aspiration of existing planning policy."*

I, along with Cllr Richard Rout, believe this decision not to underground any of the proposed pylons through the Waveney Valley, is nothing short of contemptible. The study that Suffolk County Council

commissioned saw the area recognised as a valued landscape and National Grid's plans will wreak untold damage on it. There was a clear alternative to this and they've chosen not to take it.

"What we find particularly flagrant - if this is what National Grid will press ahead with – there is a lack of any suggestion of mitigation or compensation package for the local area.

Suffolk and Norfolk County Council will now look to take up their concerns with National Grid and discuss the issue further. ***I am pleased to confirm that undergrounding in the Dedham Vale is still in place.***

➤ **Detailed report provides blueprint for changes to Suffolk's SEND services**

A report has been published that provides the most detailed assessment of need for the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities services in Suffolk, (known as SEND). This report will be used as a blueprint for immediate change.

As a result of this analysis, a series of recommendations have been made to further shape improvements to SEND services. Some of the key findings and recommendations in the report include:

- A significant rise in demand for SEND services, with projections suggesting further increases in the coming years
- The importance of early intervention, timely diagnoses, and accessible services to address complex and multiple needs
- Strategic priorities emphasising communication, transition support, and whole system improvements to meet evolving demands.

The report also captures the voices of children and young people, parents, and practitioners to ensure lived experiences inform future strategies. The Suffolk Parent Carer Forum was involved in collating the report. The report can be found here: [Suffolk SEND Needs Assessment](#).

➤ **Suffolk County Council Collaborates with Ipswich Town Football Club to Launch Stop Smoking Campaign: 'Never Stop Trying'**

Suffolk County Council, in association with Ipswich Town Football Club, is excited to launch a powerful new stop smoking campaign encouraging people to never stop trying on their journey to quit smoking.

The campaign highlights real-life stories of struggle, perseverance, and success, reminding people that while quitting smoking is difficult, the benefits of stopping are well worth it, no matter how many attempts it takes.

The campaign's theme of persistence is echoed through a compelling new video that features Eddy and James, two Suffolk residents who have faced the challenges of quitting smoking and are now sharing their personal experiences. Their stories emphasise that quitting may involve setbacks, but it's important to keep trying.

This message mirrors the journey of Ipswich Town Football Club, who spent 22 years fighting to return to the Premier League—a long and challenging journey, but one that proves that with perseverance, you can achieve your goal.

Those seeking support on their quitting journey should visit **Feel Good Suffolk Stop Smoking**. The service offers various methods designed to assist people at every stage, whether it's one-on-one coaching, phone support, or digital tools.

Watch the campaign film at www.feelgoodsuffolk.co.uk/NeverStopTrying/ and follow Feel Good Suffolk on Facebook or Instagram.

➤ **Virtual Fostering and Adoption Sessions for the Stour Valley**

Fostering is a flexible role with options for short term care from a weekend a month to longer term opportunities, all providing life-changing support for local children. If you want to find out more about what it's like to foster or adopt with us, please call a member of the team on 01473 264800 or Visit www.fosterandadopt.suffolk.gov.uk to find out more how you can foster and adopt in Suffolk.

My Priorities

Education - Supporting Vulnerable People - Jobs and Growth - Localism and the Stour Valley - Building on Suffolk's Strength all underpinned by strong financial management and fair council tax.