

# BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES of the MEETING

held on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 7.00p.m. in the Village Hall, Boxford.

**PRESENT:** Cllrs D Warren, H Watts, A Troke, P Watt, J Tolputt and J King. Charles Jackson and Colin Parr (until 8pm), Z Rumsey (Clerk), DCllr Hurren. 5 members of the public attended in person.

### 1. Co-Option of Councillor

Charles Jackson and Colin Parr were nominated to be co-opted to the Parish Council, this was proposed and seconded and voted unanimously. The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was signed by C Jackson at the end of the meetings and was agreed to be signed by C Parr prior to the next meeting as he needed to leave the meeting early.

### 2. Apologies:

Cllr C Lawson and CCllr J Finch. It was resolved to accept the apologies.

### 3. Declarations of Interest by Councillors:

Cllr Watts declared an interest for the Planning Application for The White Hart, he will be asked to leave the room during this item.

### 4. Approval of Minutes of 28th October 2025:

It was resolved to accepted the minutes as correct and these were signed by the Chair.

### 5. Matters Arising from the Minutes:

A quote has been received for the replacement of the gate posts to the Churchyard. It was resolved to approve the quote.

### 6. Public Participation- Views / Questions from the Public:

A resident informed the PC that there appears to be white paint on the new bench and a tree at The Croft.

A member of the Boxford Volunteer group updated the meeting that there has been some teething problems with the bus service but they were working to get this sorted.

A resident asked for an update on the proposed new speed limits for Stone Street and commented that he didn't think the restrictions would be enough. He would like to see additional calming measures put in place as the road is now extremely dangerous. The PC will look into this.

### 7. District Council Report:

The attached report was received by DCllr Hurren and was forwarded to the Parish Councillors prior to the meeting. DCllr Hurren informed that he was still waiting for a meeting to be arranged with the Woodland Trust. The trees in Ash Street have been reported, he is waiting on a response. DCllr Hurren is waiting to hear whether the unspent locality budget that was given to the PC earlier in the year could be rolled over to a different project as the original did not go ahead, although funds have been agreed for the replacement of the gate posts to the churchyard.

A resident asked DCllr Hurren if traffic wardens will be put in place to monitor the parking when the new yellow lines are installed? DCllr Hurren responded that the wardens do come through the village occasionally and if he asks them to come, they will. He will inform them of the specific areas that need to be monitored.

### County Council Report:

The attached report was received and distributed to Parish Councillors ahead of the meeting. As CCllr Finch was not at the meeting, the report was not discussed.

### 8. Finance –

a) *Bank Balances and previously agreed payments.*

22nd October 2025 Opening Bank Balances: £129,381.87.

Income:

£132.00 (*Cemetery payment*).

Outgoings:

Parochial Church, £2500.00 - Agreed Insurance donation

Business Services, £780.35 - Insurance  
Zoe Rumsey, £565.81 - Clerks Salary  
HMRC, £185.16 - PAYE  
Mortimer Contracts, £834.00 - Public Realm contractor  
Boxford Village Hall, £41.00 - October Hall Hire  
Relx UK Limited, £90.00 - Arnold Baker book  
E.ON, £32.92 - Bell House Electricity

The sum of the payments made was £5,029.24.

19<sup>th</sup> November 2025 Closing Bank balances:

Community Account £42,150.14

Deposit Account £34,596.76

Reserve Account £47,737.73

*Total of £124,484.63*

b) *Authorise payments*

Vertas £856.37 - Approved

c) *Clerks salary point increase as per contract*

It was noted that the Clerks salary should have increased to LC2 21 in April 2025. The Clerk will inform SALC Payroll and the increase will be backdated.

d) *Approval of Clerks expenses payment*

The Chair informed the meeting that as per the contract of employment, The Clerk is entitled to claim a working from home allowance and mileage incurred; this has not been claimed since the start of the Clerk's employment. It was resolved to approve the payment.

e) *Budget Review*

The draft budget was discussed with a number of items questioned. The Chair informed the meeting that a further budget meeting was needed and would take place in the first two weeks of December. If a full Council meeting is not held in December, an extraordinary meeting would be called at the start of January to allow the budget to be discussed in full prior to the full Council meeting at the end of January.

f) *Consideration of donation to Mary's House*

The Chair advised the PC that Mary's House had been used by the Council for various meetings with outside agencies and it was thought that a small donation of £40 should be considered as payment for the use of the room. It was resolved to approve the donation.

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

DC/25/04465 – 2 Rectory Park – Raise no Objections

DC/25/04517 – 10 The Causeway – Raise no Objections

DC/25/04671 – 4 The Causeway – Granted

a) *Consider the following items: -*

DC/25/04912 – Simbos Gun Dogs and Grooming, Boxford – Full Planning Application – Construction of detached annexe.

It was resolved to raise an objection to the application given that the construction is outside of the settlement boundary and the applicants previous record.

DC/25/04654 – The White Hart, Boxford – Application for Listed Building Consent – Repairs to chimney.

Cllr Watts was asked to leave the room for this item. It was resolved to raise no objection to this application. Cllr Watts returned to the meeting.

b) *Any other urgent planning matters:*

DC/25/04682 – 22 Stone Street Boxford – Householder Application. Replacement of fenestrations, introduction of new roof lantern and reinstatement of dwarf wall.

DC/25/04683 – 22 Stone Street Boxford – Application for Listed Building Consent. Replacement of fenestrations, introduction of new roof lantern and reinstatement of dwarf wall.

Additional information had been added to the application following the PC's decision from the last meeting. It was resolved to still raise no objection to the application and it was thought that the original application seemed more in keeping.

## **10. Approval of Policies – Equal Opportunities, Safeguarding, Health and Safety**

It was resolved to adopt all of the above policies.

**11. Consideration of Scribe Cemetery Software**

It was resolved to subscribe to the cemetery software to update the current system to assist the Clerk. Cllr Tolputt offered any assistance with regards to backdating records.

**12. Consideration of contribution to repairs to surface to the front of the Old Gaol**

SCC Highways have reviewed the request and have once again refused to repair the surface. The PC agreed that the surface was unsafe, the volunteer group have received a quote for repairs from a SCC approved contractor for £3,000 + VAT. CCllr Finch has offered £500 from his locality budget and DCllr Hurren is requesting that the remainder of his locality budget can be used for this matter, the PC resolved that CIL funds can be used for the remainder of the cost.

**13. Consideration of leasing The Old Mill Surgery**

Cllr Warren and Cllr Parr have been communicating with the new owners of the Old Mill Surgery. The initial offer made by the owners is thought to be too high for consideration. Cllr Parr will continue with discussions with the owners.

**14. Consideration of installation of new bench for late resident in Millenium Garden**

DCllr Hurren is looking into the matter; it was thought that this is not a matter for the PC.

**15. Construction of Boxford Disaster Plan**

It was discussed whether there should be a plan in place for Boxford or whether using the SCC plan is sufficient for our needs. Cllr Warren will look into the SCC plans.

**16. Clerks Correspondence**

*a) Request for larger cemetery memorial*

A request has been made for a larger memorial to be placed in the cremation area. It was resolved to reject the request on the basis that the other memorials are for double plots and so further names will be added in the future.

*b) Ownership of land at Stone Street Road*

It was felt this email was a sales pitch and we are not permitted to pass on personal information so it would be best to ignore the email.

*c) On Street Parking – Church Street*

The PC felt this request was a neighbourhood dispute and therefore not PC business. The Clerk will respond as such.

**17. Approve dates for 2026 meetings**

27th Jan, 24th Feb, 24th Mar, 28th Apr, 26th May (Annual), 23rd Jun, 28th Jul, 25th Aug (prov), 22nd Sep, 27th Oct, 24th Nov, 22nd Dec (prov). Dates approved.

**18. Member's Reports**

Cllr Troke advised the meeting that he had ordered Spring bulbs at a cost of £145 and had arranged for the Scout group to start planting on Sand Hill. It was resolved to reimburse the cost of the bulbs.

**19. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 27th January 2026**

A provisional meeting is to take place on 23rd December, should there be an urgent matter to discuss

**The Chair declared the meeting closed at 21.16.**

Signed.....*D. Warren*.....

Date.....*27<sup>th</sup> January 2026*.....

Report for Boxford's PC meeting 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025  
from Cllr Bryn Hurren.

Firstly, we are finally getting towards the final conclusions of the long drawn out local government review which has been chugging along for close on a year now. Both the County and combined Districts proposals for the future unitaries for Suffolk are now in before Steve Read the new communities and LGR minister for final determination and decision, we are now told that this will be towards the end of March 2026.

However, we have just been informed that both Submissions have been accepted by his department and we are now in a consultation period that ends in mid January. Both public bodies and individuals are entitled and indeed encouraged to express their feelings and preferred option.

We will then be facing Mayoral elections on the 6<sup>th</sup> May and we already have 4 political and one independent candidate. More to come I am sure as publicity brings more interest before the window closes. We will then have spring campaigning before the ballot and the result being declared 7<sup>th</sup> May.

I presume, then they will start work right away to form cabinet and shadow authority before unitary elections in May 27, This is not entirely clear yet.

At BaberghmidSuffolk, we are constantly striving to bring our housing stock up to date, this is a constant battle due to changing legislation and increasing demands for better standards. We now have Awaab's law after the little boy who died from inhalation of mould spores in an affected house which is now of course unlawful, we of course have some older and in some cases not so old housing stock affected in this way and remedial action is promptly taken. What is even more concerning is the ever increasing numbers of homelessness in our region, the numbers have gone up from 91 in 21/22, 123 in 22/23, 136 in 23/24 and more than that this year already by mid October. More urban councils also have to watch fume and pollution levels. Terrible problem and indictment on our modern society.

The 25/26 budget is our priority now, with budget and tax setting at the forefront of our minds, it will be hard once again to keep doing everything we do with limited funds and I am sure we will increase Council tax by 3.00.% which is in line with inflation and keeps us standing still at least and with some increased charges (possibly car parking) we will struggle by for one more year, our cifco investments continue to do well and also our environmental tariffs and power from waste initiatives bring in good monies which should increase as power prices rise more than inflation.

The Babergh growth scheme at Corks Ln is a disaster but not sure how big the hit will be yet. We will do well to keep the District budget to around 9% of total Council tax as we always strive to do, in real terms this equates to just under £5.00. per week on a Band D property. But we will have the Mayoral budget as well next year which will be eyewatering, although we will lose the PCC precept and have the combined unitary precept in lieu of County and District ones.

Watch this space as things will change and gather pace as we get nearer to D day.

Nearer to home, I am aware that a part of my locality budget for Boxford was not spent last year, I have spoken to grants team and proposed that we be allowed to keep it and roll it forward into this years budget, which would make a bigger sum for whatever sum you choose this year. Our area team have no problem with this but it has to go though to team leader for sanctioning this approach, I will as always do my very best.

Probably the most important task for all PCs, including Boxford at the moment is to update their Local Neighbourhood plan, if they have one that is.  
With increased building numbers required from national government, it is important to engage with LPA to get the very best we possibly can for our village with increased infrastructure and hopefully some local needs housing to provide local housing for the village into the future.  
This is what the current BNP says and I would think and hope that will continue.

I will be happy to answer questions from PC and public this evening.

Have a good meeting tonight. Bryn.

# A Report for Boxford Parish Council Meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025 From James Finch – County Councillor for the Stour Valley

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

## ➤ Ofsted Focused Visit finds ‘early signs of improvement’ in Front Door Children’s Services

The report noted ‘early signs of improvement beginning to emerge. These include

- Children identified as at risk of harm receive prompt and appropriate responses with strong oversight and swift multi-agency collaboration
- Clear investment and support from the whole council for children's services
- High staff morale, stable workforce, strong peer and managerial support maintaining consistency for families despite leadership changes

However the report also highlighted the following areas which still need for improvement:

- Monitoring systems need to more reliably flag delays and support effective management decision-making
- More consistency in professional curiosity and threshold decisions needed
- Better recognition and response needed to pattern of concern when multiple or repeated requests are made for the same families

Since the ILACS report in August 2024, which found that the authority’s children’s services ‘Require Improvement to be Good’, Suffolk County Council’s children’s services have been on a transformation journey.

We welcome the report and opportunity to receive this focused visit from Ofsted. I am pleased to say that Ofsted’s findings were very much as we expected. The focused visit has demonstrated that we know our service well; we know our strengths and where we are making good progress, but we also know where we need to continue to improve in this very complex area.

## ➤ Suffolk’s recycling centres raise half a million pounds for charity

The Benjamin Foundation, which operates re-use shops at Suffolk’s recycling centres in Bury St Edmunds and Foxhall, is benefitting from the money to provide local families with childcare, mental health, youth, family and housing support services.

The half-million-pound milestone came during the national Second-Hand September campaign this year, with people pledging not to buy anything new during the month.

The relationship between The Benjamin Foundation and the county council’s recycling centres is helping us to protect the environment, as well as supporting our residents.

A key part of this success story is the repair and resale of white goods. They are collected at Suffolk’s recycling centres, repaired by The Benjamin Foundation’s skilled technicians and sold in their charity shops, giving them a second life and helping families

## ➤ Mapping project reaches major digital milestone

Suffolk County Council has reached a major digital milestone in putting the county on the map.

It has completed the Definitive Map and Statement (DM&S) consolidation project, using modern background mapping to prepare the updated legal record of public rights of way (PROW) such as footpaths, bridleways, and byways in Suffolk. The consolidation project is the process of preparing a new digital DM&S that incorporates all legal changes since the previous issue.

Moving away from hand-drawn maps and written notes, the council has created new versions of the maps from a digital database using specialist software against Ordnance Survey Master map base mapping. It has involved checking and digitising more than 10,500 individual routes across the county, ensuring they reflect the effects of more than 2,600 legal orders, including complex public path order packages.

This ensures that Suffolk’s PROW network — which extends across thousands of miles of countryside — is properly recorded and accessible for generations to come. The updated Definitive Maps are clearer and easier to interpret and working from a digital database makes it easier to share data with a wide range of partners, including user groups, councils, developers, the National Trust, Natural England, and the Forestry Commission.

Working copies of the maps are available for the public to view and download from the [Rights of Way and Access pages](#) of the Suffolk County Council website.

## ➤ **Suffolk residents safer than ever due to 70% increase in Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV)**

This increase in tailored fire safety advice and support comes as Candle Fire Safety Week (20–26 October) coincides with Diwali, the Festival of Lights (20 October), celebrated by Hindu, Sikh, and Jain communities, when homes are illuminated with candles and oil lamps (diyas). The timing serves as a timely reminder as Christmas approaches of the importance of fire safety, particularly when using open flames in the home.

For Suffolk residents, individuals who qualify for a Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) are visited by a specialist practitioner or operational firefighters who will help create a tailored home fire safety plan. Those deemed most at risk also receive free smoke alarms or specialist equipment.

This includes the elderly, individuals with hearing or sight impairments, those with limited mobility, and people living with dementia, who may have a reduced ability to respond quickly to fire hazards. Factors contributing to this elevated risk include physical frailty, cognitive impairments, and the use of medications affecting alertness and mobility.

To help identify the most vulnerable in the community, the team has integrated with SafeLink, an online platform that allows residents or their carers to complete a virtual home fire safety check.

Based on the data entered, the platform alerts the Prevention Team to those considered most vulnerable and at higher risk. This approach ensures fire safety support reaches as many people as possible while prioritising additional resources for those who need it most. People deemed as low risk will still receive a bespoke Home Fire Action Plan.

Despite being one of the smallest fire prevention teams in the country, the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service Prevention Team, has transformed home fire safety delivery across Suffolk.

The growth in HFSVs reflects improvements in working practices, stronger community engagement, staff training, and targeted support for vulnerable residents, ensuring help reaches those most at risk.

Our focus is always on protecting residents where the risk of harm from fire is greatest – in their homes. Every visit and educational session increases the likelihood that domestic fires can be prevented.

*With nearly 850 accidental fires each year across England started by candles, this month is a perfect opportunity to remind everyone to take simple precautions. Keep candles and oil lamps away from flammable materials such as curtains, decorations and soft furnishings, place them on stable surfaces out of reach of children and pets, never leave them unattended, ensure they are properly extinguished, and make sure smoke alarms are installed and working.*

## ➤ **Tom's race with new foster carers**

What started as a small local project in the Midlands is now a major nationwide campaign involving over 90 local authority fostering services, project managed by CAN Digital. 'The Run' is set to be the most ambitious jointly funded fostering film project yet.

The film focuses on Tom, an 11-year-old boy, contrasting his need to run - away from danger, a chaotic home life, to get to school in time for breakfast club because he's hungry - with running as a sport.

Despite the disadvantages Tom faces before being fostered – not even having PE kit for school – he's good at running and the film climaxes with Tom taking part in an athletics tournament, running in a stadium, with the support of his new foster family.

It's Tom's chance to shine. Can Tom win his race? On the track and in his life?

The message of this project is very simple, but so important – we need foster carers, and we need people to foster for Suffolk County Council.

This sentiment applies across the country, which is why this project has grown into a national campaign. 'The Run' is a brilliant, emotional film none of us could have produced on our own, which is why this partnership is so important.

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

### **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.*