

# BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES of the MEETING

held on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026 at 7.00p.m. in the Village Hall, Boxford.

**PRESENT:** Cllrs D Warren, H Watts, J King, C Parr, C Lawson, C Jackson and A Troke (arrived 19.40). Z Rumsey (Clerk), CCllr J Finch. 15 members of the public attended in person.

**1. Apologies of Absence:**

Cllr P Watt and DCllr Hurren. It was resolved to accept the apologies. Cllr A Troke informed the Clerk prior to the meeting that he would be running late.

**2. To note the vacancy of Parish Councillor**

Noted

**3. Declarations of Interest by Councillors:**

None received.

**4. Approval of Minutes of 27th January 2026:**

It was brought to the Clerks attention that item 11 should be School Hill not School Street, this was amended. It was resolved to accepted the minutes as correct and these were signed by the Chair.

**5. Matters Arising from the Minutes:**

It was confirmed that there is a licensing agreement between SCC and the owner of the permissive footpath from Cox Hill to Fenn Street. SCC are responsible for the maintenance; the ownership has been made clear. SCC have accepted that it is not safe; they are due to make a proposal within 2 weeks.

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

A resident raised the matter of the Goodlands; he informed the meeting that he will be making a complaint with BDC – The meeting was advised that the volunteer group have been corresponding heavily with BDC. Evidence has been put to BDC to resolve. **Action:** Volunteer group

Residents of Stone Street asked for clarification on the process for the 20mph speed limit. Cllr Parr confirmed the agreed process as per January minutes. A meeting with the highways engineer will take place on 4<sup>th</sup> March. The residents requested a meeting with Cllr Watts prior to this to discuss their wishes; a meeting was agreed for 3<sup>rd</sup> March. **Action:** Cllrs Parr & Watts

CCllr Finch was asked for an update on the new yellow lines to be installed in Church Street. It was confirmed that the matter is in the process of a Road Traffic Order; it is in the hands of the lawyers. It is likely to be completed early Summer.

A resident asked about the repainting of the faded yellow lines in the village; an email containing photographs was sent to the Clerk following January's meeting. CCllr Finch advised that they will be done at the same time as the new lines to utilise resources. Cllr Parr commented that they need to be done as soon as possible - CCllr Finch will take away. **Action:** Cllr Finch

A resident wished to address DCllr Hurren regarding the bottle bank at the playing field; will the bank be staying once the extra bin collections come in? What will be the financial impact to the village? It was confirmed that the Parish Council ae not involved in the bottle bank; it is dealt with by the Playing Fields Committee.

**7. District Council Report:**

The attached report was received by DCllr Hurren prior to the meeting. As DCllr Hurren was not at the meeting, the report was not discussed.

**County Council Report:**

The attached report was received and distributed to Parish Councillors ahead of the meeting. CCllr Finch discussed key matters from the report.

**8. Review of previous action points:**

Car park – Cllr Parr is waiting feedback from the diocese; a meeting is due to be held with the playing fields committee.

School grant – The money been paid to school

Grass cutting at school hill – has been arranged to be carried out this week

Boxford Massachusetts – contact has been made

## 9. Finance –

### a) *Bank Balances and previously agreed payments.*

21st January 2026 Opening Bank Balances: £ 118,845.09.

Income:

£780.00 Cemetery Payment

£390.00 Cemetery Payment

£129.38 Interest

£178.53 Interest

£1,477.91 Total.

Outgoings:

Dedham Vale Tree Surgery - £4,740.00 - Cemetery Tree Works

Boxford Playing Fields - £714.49 - Bookkeeper

Zoe Rumsey - £477.61 - Clerks Salary

Mortimer Contracts - £464.40 - Public Realm contractor

Unity Bank - £6.00 - Service Charge

Starboard Systems - £27.60 - Scribe Cemetery

Boxford School - £2,469.00 - IT Grant

HMRC - £146.63 - PAYE

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E.ON - £32.55 - Bell House Electricity

Suffolk Cloud - £130.00 - Website and emails

The sum of the payments made was £ £9,354.91.

18th February 2026 Closing Bank balances:

Community Account £ 28,325.69

Deposit Account £ 34,726.14

Reserve Account £ 47,916.26

**Total of £ 110,968.09**

### b) *Authorise payments*

None

### c) *Authorise SALC as internal auditor*

Authorised

## 10. Planning – Report on Decisions from the Planning Authority.

DC/25/05330 – 25 Swan Street, Boxford – Granted

### a) *Consider the following items: -*

DC/25/05629 – The Fleece, 8 Broad Street, Boxford – Application for Listed Building Consent. Works to facilitate the conversion of buildings to holiday let (C3) for use in association with the existing public house.

DC/26/00051 – The Fleece, 8 Broad Street, Boxford – Full Planning Application. Conversion of buildings to holiday let (C3) for use in association with the existing public house.

Following an extension of time granted for the above applications, Cllr Parr has made contact with the architect to confirm discrepancies with the parking. It was resolved that the PC are in support of the proposed works to the buildings but have some reservations regarding the discrepancies in the application, Cllr Parr will draft a response and send over to the Clerk. **Action:** Cllr Parr

DC/26/00412 – Box House, Swan Street, Boxford – Householder Application - Replacement of 2 no. units rear and 1 no. unit side fenestrations with double-glazing on main dwelling; re-siting of oil tank; demolition of existing shed and erection of new garden outbuilding.

DC/26/00411 – Box House, Swan Street, Boxford – Application for Listed Building Consent - Replacement of 2 rear and 1 ground floor side single-glazed timber windows with double-glazed units in powder-coated aluminium to rear and painted hardwood to side, forming an enlarge structural opening extended to floor level with French doors under existing lintel at side opening.

The PC raised no objections to the application. **Action:** Clerk

### b) *Any other urgent planning matters:*

None

**11. To agree an action to install railings at the crossing point of the A1071**

It was resolved that this would be raised with the Highways engineer during the meeting regarding the 20mph speed limit. **Action:** Cllr Parr

**12. To approve Vertas contract for grass cutting of playing field**

It was resolved to approve the contract. **Action:** Clerk

**13. Update Annual review of documents and policies**

a) *Grant Policy*

It was suggested that some amendments be made following a meeting with the village groups. **Action:** Clerk

b) *Reserves Policy*

Approved

c) *FOI & Publication Scheme*

Approved

d) *Code of Conduct*

Approved

e) *SAR Policy*

Approved

**14. To agree a date for the Annual Parish Meeting**

It was resolved that the meeting will be held before the full council meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> April. The PC will take the opportunity to show residents ongoing and upcoming projects in the village and will invite local groups to make a brief presentation. The Clerk will create an advert to go in the BRN and on the website, ASAP. **Action:** Clerk

**15. Clerks Correspondence**

An email has been received requesting permission to set off a low noise fountain style firework on an existing grave during the burial of another family member. It was resolved to allow the firework with the caveat that all rubbish is cleared and any damaged cause will be the responsibility of the family to repair.

All other correspondence has been discussed under agenda items.

**16. Member's Reports**

Cllr Lawson has been approached by a resident to ask if there is anything the PC can do to provide a crossing patrol for school drop off and pick up times. It was recommended that this is discussed with the school.

Cllr Jackson requested measures be put into place regarding the speed of traffic on School Hill. Cllr Parr confirmed that this is part of the current 20mph speed limit works.

Cllr Parr reported that a contractor has been agreed with CCllr Finch for works to take place to the tarmac at the bus shelter. It was requested that the Clerk make contact with the contractor to approve the quote and works.

**Action:** Clerk

Cllr Parr informed the meeting that a paper is being prepared to respond to the document received in March 2025 from BDC named Planning for the Future in Babergh and Mid Suffolk regarding development planning and increased housing. It was suggested that the PC should adopt a logical approach to planning in the area.

**17. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 24th March 2026**

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 21.06.

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

Date.....*24<sup>th</sup> March 2026*.....

## Report from Bryn for Boxford PC meeting 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

Dear Clerk and Boxford Councillors, as you may be aware I have also got the full council meeting at Ipswich HQ this evening, this is also budget day for the District Council and likely to go on a while, with also a briefing on so many things afterwards.

With this in mind, I am having to send apologies for tonight's meeting but please get any questions, queries or comments to me via Zoe or David who I hope I will be meeting soon.

**Budget Process.** This reaches its final stage tonight with debate and hopefully agreement this evening, it has been well trailed that we are settling for an inflation covering rise this year of 2.9%, this keeps our share of the budget to around 8.8% and just below £5.00. for a band D property throughout Babergh.

Having said this, I am aware that all of the other partners we collect for are going for larger increases, so the overall tax bill will be probably going up again by well over 5%. Thankfully most of the PCs we also collect for, have come in at below 5% but some as high as 10% and even above, while they are small in comparison with the bigger authorities, every little costs the lower paid constituents.

**County Council Elections.** These are now back on as I always suspected they would be and I am thrilled that democracy is still to take place on a four yearly basis.

We now await with hope and intrepidly Minister Steve Read's views and decision on future local government in our region. Will it be one, two or three unitories?

The decision is expected towards the end of March.

**Refuse Collection.** Myself and all Babergh councillors have been tasked with leading the first wave of publicity for the new government scheme and I am grateful to Trudi the BRN editor for including the amendments in last months copy, the official roll out of the new scheme is starting to happen across the District now and all residents should have there first information pack during March, followed by two kitchen caddies and the second recycling bin, all this is very hard to achieve in a rural area but we have to be committed to making it work for everybody and giving help where needed.

On local matters, I have continued to support your views on car parking in the village but do have concerns re the disappearing yellow lines and our efforts to police the area without them being made clearer for residents and visitors to see. Maybe you can approach James for help on this matter. I am sure he will try to help if he can.

For my part, I have asked that I be sent a full report for our policing duties throughout the whole month of March which will tell us of visits and number of notices handed out.

After some serious hold ups on the handover of Primrose meadow to the WT, we do seem to have progress now towards the right outcome, this has been a horrible battle for myself but have had brilliant help from Hugh Phillips who seems to get his head

around these matters and is willing to help. Developers are always looking for another landfall and are determined to get it sometimes.

Not really a PC matter but just to let you know that Aldi supermarket have just been given permission to move to the bigger Homebase site, this will be good for Sudbury but does and will bring challenges to rural shops in the local villages, we hope that their present site will be utilised by another national chain, a DIY store would be nice.

Lastly, you will have noticed that I have finally managed to get your church gates on to their new posts, it was done on the first day without rain during this year on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February and went well, I have made an adjustment downwards in the costs and have made an allowance of £50.00 on the invoice to go back to repair the lower bar and sand and apply preservative and oil, once they have dried out more during the spring. Some remedial work may be needed to the tarmac path but my idea of shoring up the bank each side with the old posts seems to have worked a treat, also much cheaper than brickwork.

Have a good meeting and as always I will do my best to help with anything that arises from tonight's meeting and into the future.

All Best Regards. Bryn.

# A Report for Boxford Parish Council Meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026 From James Finch – County Councillor for the Stour Valley

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## ➤ Council sets out plans for 2026/27 budget

The £850 million plan aims to safeguard frontline services, support the most vulnerable, and invest in Suffolk's future – despite rising costs, growing demand and shortfalls in national funding. Key themes of the draft budget include:

- Savings and efficiencies: £46.5 million of savings through service transformation and efficiencies, including a temporary reduction in employer pension contributions, made possible by the strong position of the council's pension fund.
- Rising financial pressures: Increasing demand, in particular for adult and children's social care, will add £32.2 million in costs, alongside continued pressures from the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit.
- Reserves: A one-off use of reserves will bridge a £5.9 million funding gap, while keeping reserves above the minimum level needed to manage financial risks.
- Capital investment: The capital programme has been shortened from four years to three ahead of local government reorganisation in 2028. It continues to fund essential projects like school expansions and infrastructure upgrades, as well as new schemes, such as improvements to bus services, public rights of way, and cycling and walking infrastructure.

Our priorities are clear: protect frontline services, invest where it will make the most impact, and make the decisions needed to keep Suffolk strong, resilient and ready for the future.

To support these plans, the council has proposed a 4.99% rise in Council Tax, comprising a 2.99% general increase and an extra 2% for adult care. Alongside a forecast 1% rise in the taxbase, this would generate an additional £27.4 million.

For households, this would mean:

- Band B property: £25.90 per week, an increase of £1.23 a week (Band B properties are the most common in Suffolk)
- Band D property: £33.30 per week, an increase of £1.58 a week.

We have proposed a Council Tax increase as part of this budget, and that proposal will be debated on 12<sup>th</sup> February. It is important to be clear that the government's provisional finance settlement assumes that councils will raise Council Tax by the maximum permitted each year, leaving local authorities with limited options if essential services are to be maintained. ***The final budget was agreed by all county councillors at a Full Council meeting on Thursday 12 February 2026.***

## ➤ Young people's voices shape Suffolk's 2025 Annual Public Health Report

The event brought together partners from across the public, voluntary and community sectors to listen to young people who were involved in creating the report, using hackathon events to explore what matters most in their communities. Attendees discussed how youth social action improves physical and mental health, with potential to address health inequalities across Suffolk.

For the first time, Suffolk's Annual Public Health Report is predominantly video based, sharing real-life stories and experiences from young people across the county. A key part of the report focuses on three youth-led "hack" events, delivered in partnership with Volunteering Matters, bringing together young people and local partners to talk about what helps young people thrive and what gets in the way.

Conversations at the launch highlighted the importance of putting young people at the heart of decisions that affect them and how to put the report's recommendations into action.

This year's Annual Public Health Report represents an important step forward for Suffolk. By listening directly to young people, we have a clearer understanding of the challenges they face and what supports their wellbeing. The report shows that youth social action can play a central role in improving health and reducing inequalities. Our focus now must be on acting on what young people have told us and working with them to make lasting improvements.

The launch is part of a programme that will support young people aged 11–20 (and up to 25 with additional needs) to design and lead projects that make a positive difference in their local areas led by young people.

The 2025 Annual Public Health Report, including all videos and supporting case studies featured in the report, can be viewed here: <https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/jsna/annual-public-health-reports/annual-public-health-report-2025>

## ➤ **Department for Education (DfE) acknowledges progress - and sets clear expectations for Suffolk's SEND improvement**

In a recent stocktake visit, officers from the DfE reported progress in governance, quality assurance and timeliness, leadership and multi-agency working. They praised a shared commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND and laid out a number of recommendations for further improvement.

SEND services in Suffolk are delivered in partnership by Suffolk County Council, the NHS Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) and NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB, the Suffolk Parent Carer Forum and education settings.

The findings of the stocktake visit have been published in a letter addressed to Sarah-Jane Smedmor, Executive Director of Children & Young People's Services at Suffolk County Council, and Dr Ed Garratt OBE, Chief Executive Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board. You can read the letter here:-

[Inspections and evaluations - Suffolk SEND Local Offer](#)

The DfE acknowledged work to clear the backlog of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) by January and the fact that plans will be delivered above the national average for timeliness. Officers noted a need to ensure that plans reflect families' views and lead to timely, appropriate support.

The next review of SEND services by the DfE is scheduled for the end of the spring term.

## ➤ **County Council has approved much-needed provision for children with complex needs**

Papers published in January set out plans for the new provision, which will provide purpose-built Ofsted-registered accommodation, improving outcomes for children and reducing reliance on high-cost, private placements. Following a successful bid, £1.4m of Department for Education funding has been secured for the project, which will be match-funded with a further £1.4m from Suffolk County Council.

Nationally, councils are facing growing demand and increasing complexity of need. Suffolk is facing the same pressures, with more children coming into care, and children entering care later with lived experiences meaning that they often require more specialist care and support at higher costs. A lack of choice in the current care market means there is a critical need for Suffolk based, Ofsted-registered placements for children with complex needs.

Suffolk County Council has approved plans by Unity Schools Partnership, a trust that runs 40 schools across Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire, to open the 126-place school on the site of the former Saxmundham SET School in Seaman Avenue, Saxmundham.

## ➤ **Nationally significant Anglo-Saxon burial ground found at Sizewell C site**

- **Ancient graves of two high-status individuals found with weapons and personal items**
- **Discovery sheds fascinating new light on Suffolk society in the 7th century**
- **Remarkable archaeological find to feature on BBC Two's and I Player "Digging for Britain"**

Among the most remarkable discoveries is a high-status grave containing two individuals buried alongside a fully harnessed horse, weapons, and personal items. These finds, dating to the 7th century, suggest the individuals were elite members of Anglo-Saxon society and reflect their complex burial traditions.

The team from Oxford Cotswold Archaeology (OCA), working on behalf of Sizewell C, identified at least 11 burial mounds, known as barrows, along with cremation and inhumation burials. All had been carefully arranged across a prominent point in the landscape near Theberton in Suffolk.

Despite poor bone preservation caused by the local sandy soils, detailed excavation and recording have preserved valuable information about burial practices and social status in early Medieval Suffolk.

## ➤ **Adam Buxton shines a light on the need for more Foster Carers in a new documentary**

Adam Buxton said: "I didn't really know very much about fostering before I spent time with Gary, Shannon and Catherine. We've got 3 children and a dog at home, and the thought of adding another child or more children into our family life blows my mind. What they do, for kids who haven't asked to be brought into care, amazes me. And Shannon's reflections as a young person who has helped her parents to foster were just incredible. I'm full of admiration and respect for them and their families."

Gary, a former logistics manager and now factory worker, his wife and two daughters have been fostering for Suffolk County Council for 12 years. They usually foster children in the short term and have also looked after a young girl with disabilities for a longer time. In response to *Adam asking him why they foster, Gary gets emotional and replies tearfully that they do it to give children a childhood.*

Catherine, a library book scheme co-ordinator, her husband Sean and their two children have been fostering with Norfolk County Council for six years. They originally planned to foster on a short-term basis but have become long-term foster parents instead. Among Top Trumps and Minecraft sword repairs, *Adam asks Catherine why they foster. She gestures around the lounge and replies that they're giving a child a chance.*

The 19-minute documentary can be viewed on the Foster East Youtube channel, below:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6uiWmxiCRU&embeds\\_referring\\_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.suffolk.gov.uk%2F&source\\_ve\\_path=OTY3MTQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6uiWmxiCRU&embeds_referring_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.suffolk.gov.uk%2F&source_ve_path=OTY3MTQ)

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.*