

# BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES of the MEETING

held on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 7.00p.m. in the Village Hall, Boxford.

**PRESENT:** Cllrs D Warren, H Watts, A Troke, P Watt, J King, C Parr, C Lawson. Z Rumsey (Clerk), DCllr Hurren. 5 members of the public attended in person.

**1. Apologies of Absence:**

Cllr J Tolputt and CCllr J Finch. It was resolved to accept the apologies. Cllr Jackson absent.

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

None received.

**3. Approval of Minutes of 25th November 2025:**

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

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

None.

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

The permissive footpath between Fenn Street and Cox Hill is becoming increasingly dangerous. The fencing next to the stream is damaged and leaves cover the surface. It is believed there is an agreement between the owners and the Suffolk CC. **Action:** The Clerk to request CCllr Finch to take this matter forward.

The yellow lines at the junction of Swan Street and Church Street and Broad Street and Swan Street need to be repainted. **Action:** Clerk to advise CCllr Finch, cc. Cllr Watts

It was noted that the response from Highways to reported potholes was inadequate as most were rejected without an inspection being carried out. Also, repairs are taking longer than 20 days to complete. It was also mentioned that the 40mph speed sign has fallen down on the A1071, SCC have informed the resident that they will not repair. **Action:** Cllr Watts.

**6. District Council Report:**

The attached report was received by DCllr Hurren, who also commented on the Mayoral elections, the Call for Sites for Boxford, the Tree for life program and the refuse collection and recycling initiative.

DCllr Hurren updated the meeting on the Footpath to Primrose Wood and reported that the rubbish has now been cleared by the developer. The Woodland Trust is waiting for developer to sign over the land so that the path can be put path in.

BT have advised that they would remove the public telephone by the Old Goal. They also stated that the Village could adopt the telephone box. **Action:** The Clerk and DCllr. Hurren

DCllr Hurren advised there is no schedule for traffic wardens to visit the Village, they come on an ad hoc basis. It was requested that this happens more frequently.

Cllr Warren informed DCllr Hurren that the Village Contractor cuts all the grass in the Village and asked if the Parish Council can have a schedule of when grass cutting is to be carried out to minimize conflict between BDC and the Parish Council Contractor. He also asked if BDC could hand over responsibility for grass cutting to the Parish Council and reimburse them for the work carried out. **Action:** DCllr Hurren.

**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.

## 7. Finance –

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

25th November 2025 Opening Bank Balances: £124,484.63.

Income:

£190.00 (*Cemetery payment*).

Outgoings:

Suffolk Wildlife, £38.00 - Subscription

Standing order, £417.00 - Error sent to Barclays (Clerk is dealing with)

Vertas Group, £856.37 - Playing Fields grass cutting

Zoe Rumsey, £470.08 - Clerks Salary

Zoe Rumsey, £104.79 - Clerks Mileage

Zoe Rumsey, £390.00 - Clerks WFH allowance

Sudbury Plants, £500.00 - Christmas Tree

HMRC, £142.97 - PAYE

Andrew Troke, £145.00 - Spring Bulbs reimbursement

E.ON, £31.50 - Bell House Electricity

Boxford Village Hall, £41.00 - December Hall Hire

Zoe Rumsey, £540.06 - Clerks Salary

Unity Bank, £4.20 - Service Charge

E.ON, £32.55 - Bell House Electricity

Starboard Systems, £262.80 - Scribe Cemetery

Mortimer Contracts, £612.00 - Public Realm contractor

Boxford Village Hall, £41.00 - January Hall Hire

Boxford Playing Fields, £1,026.51 - Cricket Square maintenance

HMRC, £173.71 – PAYE

The sum of the payments made was £5,829.54.

21st January 2026 Closing Bank balances:

Community Account £36,510.60

Deposit Account £34,596.76

Reserve Account £47,737.73

**Total of £118,845.09**

Cllr Lawson queried why money was being spent on the Cricket Square when Boxford does not have a team. He was reminded that this had been agreed at a previous meeting as it was hoped there would be a revival of the Cricket Club.

### b) *Authorise payments*

Dedham Vale £4,740.00 – Approved

### c) *Budget Review*

Cllr Parr presented the budget report that the Finance Group had produced for consideration by the Council. This budget would be the basis for the precept for 2026/2027 it was resolved to accept the budget.

### d) *Approval of Precept figure*

Cllr Parr disclosed that with the budget allocations, the Finance Group have recommended an increase in the precept from £65,107 to £73,200. It was resolved to accept the recommended increase.

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

DC/25/04502 – The Old Forge – Granted

DC/25/04682 – 22 Stone Street – Granted

DC/25/04683 – 22 Stone Street – Granted

DC/25/05110 – 30 Stone Street – Raise no Objections

DC/25/04654 – The White Hart – Granted

DC/25/05713 – Kemball House – Approval

DC/25/04513 – Old School House – Granted

DC/25/04912 – Simbos – Refusal

a) *Consider the following items:* -

No planning matters received prior to issuing the agenda.

b) *Any other urgent planning matters:*

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.

The PC supported the application for the holiday lets in principle; however, the parking arrangements would be dangerous for cars coming out of the Fleece and pedestrians in Broad Street. **Action:** The Clerk to seek an extension to allow time for the Parish Council to clarify the parking situation with the applicant. This item to be carried forward to the next meeting.

#### 9. Update on 20mph speed limit for Stone Street

Cllr Parr reminded the meeting that in February 2024 a special meeting was held for Stone Street residents at which it was concluded that in addition to the 20mph speed, limit traffic calming measures would also need to be put in place. At the end of July 2024, the highways department signed off approval in principal but highlighted that further discussions were needed to resolve some of the issues raised. This meeting did not take place.

Cllrs Parr and Warren met with CCllr Finch to clarify the position. At the meeting it was suggested that the way forward was as follows;

1) Meet with the highways safety engineer on site to discuss the options for the additional works/modifications.

**Action:** Cllr. Finch to initiate.

2) When the afore mentioned is complete, then determine the budget costs for the works.

**Action:** SCC Highways

3) When the budget is available, then a final consultation with the community will be organized.

**Action:** Parish Council.

This process was resolved and will be managed via the Parish Council. **Action:** Cllr Watts

#### 10. Enquiry from Boxford, Massachusetts

An enquiry has been received from a resident in Boxford, Massachusetts regarding the 50 year anniversary of the visit and was keen to see if the Parish would like to do the same again. **Action:** Cllr Troke to make contact and take the matter forward.

#### 11. Update on Parking requirements

Contact has been made with the diocese to ask if the land on School Hill behind the cemetery could be sold to make into a car park. Due to issues that have been raised regarding the proposed car park down Stone Street Road, this proposal has been put on hold. A suggestion has also been put to the playing fields committee to extend the car park at the playing field and to resolve the drainage issues and resurface the existing car park. **Action:** Cllr. Parr

#### 12. Consideration of grants

The Friends of Boxford School (FoBS) have requested that the previously awarded grant of £2,000 be used for IT equipment instead of playground equipment. It has been established that FoBS are £460 short of the total funds needed. It was proposed that the PC approve the request and increase the grant to £2460; this was resolved. **Action:** Clerk to arrange payment of £2460 to Boxford Primary School.

#### 13. Clerks Correspondence

All correspondence has been discussed under agenda items.

#### 14. Member's Reports

2 x Quotes to carry out additional tree works in the cemetery have been received, but were rejected as they were considered to be too expensive. It was suggested that Cllr King speaks with the public

realm contractor to see if these works can be carried out under the current contract as the PC is still within budget for 2025-26. **Action:** Cllr. King

Cllr Lawson requested that works be carried out on the footpath from the top of School Hill. **Action:** Cllr King to inform the contractor.

Cllr Parr reported that had received a revised alternate quotation for resurfacing the area in front of the Old Goal for £1500 + VAT. It was resolved to go ahead with the project and request £500 from Cllr. Finch's locality budget. **Action:** Clerk to request £500 from Cllr. Finch locality budget.

**15. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 24th February 2026**

**The Chair declared the meeting closed at 21.37.**

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

Date..... 24<sup>th</sup> February 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.*