

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF
PARHAM PARISH COUNCIL
PARHAM VILLAGE HALL**

Tuesday 2nd September 2025 at 7.15pm

- 1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.**

Councillors Present

Michael Block (Chair) Jonathan Cottrell Michael Gray
John Patrick James Rogers Jason Wood
Cllr Stanley was absent.

In attendance

Lydia Kindred (clerk) & 7 members of public, 6 of whom left after the Public Forum

- 2. Declarations of Interest**

None

- 3. Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 1st July were approved as a true record.

- 4. Matters arising**

None

PUBLIC FORUM

Several comments and concerns were raised regarding the planning applications to be discussed at items 8.1 and 8.2

- 5. Chair's report**

The Chair reported on the recent village get-together on the Church meadow. This was well attended and attendees enjoyed the BBQ and brass-band. He reported that over £10,000 has already been raised for the church replacement roof.

- 6. Clerk's report**

The clerk reported on Martyn's Law, which is due to come into force in late 2025. The Council will be required to carry out a basic terrorism risk assessment for any public events it organises and ensure that an incident response plan is in place. Training for staff and volunteers may also be necessary, with stricter requirements applying to events with 799 or more attendees.

The clerk noted that SALC will be increasing their payroll charges by £7 per annum. Councillors were reminded to inform the clerk of any new residents so that a welcome letter from the Parish Council can be delivered. Work has also begun on the draft Emergency Plan.

Finally, the clerk thanked Councillors for attending the meeting in July to discuss proposals for the battery storage facility at Hacheston substation, noting that the planning application is not yet live.

- 7. Responsible Financial Officer's report**

7.1 The following payments were approved:

Amount	Payee	Details
£120.00	Suffolk Cloud	Web hosting and support
TBC	L. Kindred	Pay to 30.09.2025
TBC	HMRC	PAYE to 05.10.2025
£561.21	Clear Councils	Insurance renewal
£40.00	G. Whiting	Mow and strim near the bus shelter

The clerk's pay slip and HMRC demand have not yet been received. The clerk will circulate these when they have. It was noted that the PAYE must be paid before 21st October, which is before the Council's next scheduled meeting.

- 7.2 Payments since the last meeting:
Suffolk Cloud gov.uk domain registration £35.00
Gary Whiting 3 x cut and strim grass £120.00
A refund of £22.80 from SLCC has been received.
- 7.3 As at 31.08.2025, the bank balances were:
Community account: £1,202.75
Deposit account: £7,008.85
CCLA latest valuation: £23,177.74
- 7.4 In the absence of the Examining Officer, Cllr. Patrick signed the bank reconciliation and statements.
- 7.5 The year-to-date report on payments and receipts was noted and was in line with the budget.
- 7.6 It was noted that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) has reached an agreement on rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2025. As per the contract terms, it was agreed to backdate the clerk's pay to the revised rate from 1st April.

8. The following planning applications were considered

8.1 DC/25/2997/FUL *Erection of a Solar Photovoltaic Installation of 20 MW output and all associated supporting infrastructure including, cable routing, inverters and transformers, fencing, CCTV, and landscaping for temporary period of 42 years Land South Of Easton Lane, Glevering Park House, Glevering Estate IP13 0EX*

Councillors considered the planning application and the various comments and concerns raised by the members of public. They noted that whilst sympathetic to the residents, some of their concerns were not material planning considerations.

Following discussion, it was agreed to object to the proposal on the following grounds:

- Concerns about flooding in a village which already experiences flooding. The proposed solar panels were felt likely to concentrate rainfall and increase run-off.
- Loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. Members expressed the view that solar panels should be located on lower-graded land.
- The cumulative impact of multiple energy projects on the local area.

8.2 DC/25/2733/FUL *Full planning application for the construction and operation of a Solar Farm (49.9MW) and Battery Energy Storage Scheme (50MW) with all associated works, equipment, enclosures, access and biodiversity net gains Parcels to Northwest of Easton and South West Of Letheringham, Suffolk*

Following discussion, it was agreed to object to the proposal on the following grounds:

- The scale and size of the proposed development (287 acres) was felt to be wholly inappropriate for the two small villages concerned. Councillors noted that it would dominate the landscape, detract from views around the River Deben and have a severe negative impact on public visual amenity.
- The loss of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land, classified as grades 2 and 3a. Reference was made to policy SCLP10.3 of the East Suffolk Local Plan, which promotes the protection of such land.
- The cumulative impact of energy projects in the area, especially during the construction stages and visually.
- Councillors expressed the view that large expanses of solar panels could channel rainfall into narrow flows, exacerbating local flooding. Villages had already suffered during Storm

Babet, and the awaited Section 19 Reports were noted. Councillors also highlighted that the proposal runs counter to local flood mitigation efforts such as “Slow the Flow” projects and attenuation basins.

- Negative impact on tourism, with concern that the development would dominate the landscape and adversely affect local attractions such as Easton Farm Park and holiday accommodation.
- Concerns regarding the proposed battery storage being located next to woodland, with potential adverse impacts on wildlife.

8.3 It was noted that prior approval was granted for this application:

DC/25/2590/P3Q *Conversion of a WWII Nissen Hut to a 3 bed dwelling, located at Moat Hall Farm* Moat Hall Silverlace Green Parham Suffolk IP13 9AE

8.4 DC/25/2251/LBC & DC/25/2250/FUL

It was noted that these application were considered by the referral panel on 5th August and were both permitted.

Single Storey Extension - The Old Parsonage Hall Road Parham IP13 9PW

8.5 A revised planning application for The Cottage, The Street, Parham, IP13 9AA was noted but the consultation period closed on 22nd August.

DC/25/2258/FUL Garden outbuilding consisting of workshop, studio, WC and storage.

Councillors were pleased to note that the applicant had addressed the concerns raised in relation to the previous planning application when submitting this revised proposal.

9. Flood Mitigation

9.1 Cllr. Patrick provided an update on the village flood-prevention projects and confirmed that £68,000 has been pledged towards three schemes.

9.2 Councillors discussed the projects and procurement process. Members were keen to begin work as soon as possible, with the aim of completing the schemes before winter in order to reduce the risk of flooding during the wettest months.

Due to unresolved land ownership issues relating to one of the projects, it was agreed to proceed at this stage with the two larger schemes only. Cllr. Patrick will seek confirmation that a portion of the grant funding can be retained to carry out the third project later in the year or in 2026.

A detailed estimate for each scheme has been received from the Internal Drainage Board (IDB), the statutory flood risk management authority. The IDB employs specialist staff, including ecologists, and is responsible for issuing the necessary permits, ensuring all works are fully compliant.

Councillors noted that obtaining alternative quotations would require significant preparatory work from non-specialist contractors and may not provide comparable expertise. The IDB can offer a short lead time, enabling completion of the projects before winter. The IDB has successfully delivered similar schemes, including at Debenham and design liability insurance is covered. Elements of the IDB quotation, such as equipment hire, have been price-checked and found to be competitive.

It was agreed that the Clerk will check the Council's obligations regarding quotations and tendering for a project of this size. A further meeting will then be called to consider this and to appoint a contractor.

The Clerk advised that, if the Council receives the grant funding, total receipts would exceed £25,000, which would trigger the requirement for an external audit in the next financial year.

10. Assertion 10:

10.1 A report on Assertion 10 of the AGAR and its implications for the Council was provided by the clerk. It was agreed to ask Suffolk Cloud to carry out a website accessibility review at a cost of £70.

10.2 It was agreed to defer considering the draft IT Policy as circulated until the next meeting.

11. Insurance Renewal

It was noted that the insurance renewal has increased from last year. The clerk has looked at other providers and they are charging a similar amount. The policy is still fit for the Council's needs and covers all the Council's assets, and provides public liability and the required employee infidelity insurance. It was agreed to accept the renewal.

12. Closed churchyard

The maintenance of the closed section of the churchyard was discussed. The Chair has asked the contractor to mow and strim the area as soon as possible. It was also agreed to include provision in next year's budget for a second cut to help keep the area in a better condition.

13. Consider correspondence received:

ESC Planning policy consultation and leaflets for residents

CCLA notification of minor changes to charges (0.01%)

Request for Parish Council to host a meeting with the local MP for residents – it was agreed not to support this request due to the Parish Council being a non-political entity.

Correspondence from Letheringham Parish Council re DC/25/2733/FUL

Letter from STOP Deben re DC/25/2733/FUL

Barclays notification of interest rate decreasing by 0.1%

14. Councillors' reports & updates

Cllr Patrick reported that a new rights of way bridge and gate will be installed at Mill Green later this year.

Cllr Rogers reported that the Environment Agency has been clearing vegetation in the river.

15. Matters to be raised at the next meeting

IT Policy

Flood attenuation project & quotations

Initial budget discussions

16. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting was confirmed as being on the 4th November at 7.15pm.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the Meeting at 9.30pm.

Signed

Chair of the Council

Date