MINUTES OF MEETING OF
PARHAM PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT PARHAM VILLAGE HALL

Tuesday 8th September 2026 at 7.15pm

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Councillors Present

Michael Block (Chair)	Jonathan Cottrell	Michael Gray	John Patrick
James Rogers	Jason Wood		

In attendance

Lydia Kindred (clerk) 2 residents

Apologies were received from District Councillor Langdon-Morris.

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7th July 2026 were approved as a true record.

4. Matters arising

None

PUBLIC FORUM

One of the residents reported on a petition to designate Brick Lane as a Quiet Lane which now has over 700 signatures. She also reported on Greener Fram's new community energy project, 'Fram Powers Up' which will be launched on 16th October. She then asked about how the approved solar development on Parham Airfield will connect to the substation at Hacheston and Cllr. Gray confirmed that the cable will be going over his land rather than down Hall Hill.

5. Chair's report

The chair reported on the memorial testing in the churchyard (see item 9) and on the fundraising for the Church roof. The majority of the funds have now been secured and it is hoped that the works will soon commence. Donations can also now be gift aided. *The clerk will put a link to the Gift Aid declaration on the community website.*

6. Clerk's report

On 7th September, the government announced that it is withdrawing its decision to implement Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Suffolk. Local elections in May 2027 will go ahead on existing council boundaries. All LGR plans in Suffolk will be halted; we won't be moving to unitary councils and will now keep our district and county councils.

The screening opinion for the cable route for the solar application in Letheringham and Easton has now been published. It concludes that the impacts of the proposed development would constitute EIA development and therefore a full Environmental Impact Assessment is needed.

The clerk will be attending the next ESC Town and Parish Council Planning Forum on 16th September, and ESC's winter preparedness session on 14th September. The planning forum is likely to cover upcoming changes in the planning decision process, designed to reduce the number of applications ESC's planning committee considers.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) process is being digitised, with the hope that submissions for the year ending 31st March 2027 will be completed fully online. It is likely that the Internal Auditor's report will not be digitised at this point.

7. Finances

7.1. The following payments were approved:

Amount	Payee	Details

£571.82	Clear Councils	Insurance premium October 2026-September 2027
£1,270.75	L. Kindred	Pay to 30.09.26
NIL	HMRC	PAYE to 05.10.26
£40.00	Gary Whiting	Grass cutting June 2026
£2,433.30	The Spotted Penguin Company (Office Furniture Direct)	New chairs for the Village Hall (Using CIL funds)

7.2 Additional payments since the last meeting- None

7.3 Receipts since the last meeting- None

7.4 Bank balances & CCLA Fund holdings as at 26th August 2026

Community account: £882.2 Deposit account: £6,419.07

CCLA Deposit Fund £36,129.92 (Note, around £100 is now being generated per month)

NB Over £32,000 of the Council's funds are reserved for specific purposes.

7.5 The bank statements and bank reconciliation were reviewed and signed off by the Examining Councillor.

7.6 The year-to-date report on payments and receipts was reviewed. The figures were compared with the budget. The grass mowing costs are considerably lower than budgetted due to the exceptionally dry summer.

7.7 Councillors noted that the National Salary Award for 2026- 2027 has now been agreed, with a 3% increase. As per terms of contract, it was agreed to backdate the clerk's pay to this rate from 01.04.2026. With September's payslip having been issued, SALC will be asked to add this to December's.

8. Village Hall

1. Village Hall Representative

Following Cllr. Cottrell stepping down from the Committee in August, the Chair asked for a new representative from the Parish Council. There were no volunteers at this point.

2. Additional chairs

The new chairs have been purchased on account using CIL funds and have safely arrived. The Village Hall Committee will treat them with moth-proofer.

9. Closed churchyard

A report was received from the chair and clerk's recent safety checks carried out in the closed churchyard, including 'topple testing' the memorials. One headstone was laid flat as a safety measure. Many of the older memorials may look precarious but are securely in the ground. The Chair will remind the Parochial Council of its responsibilities to test memorials in the open burial ground.

An update on the grounds maintenance was received. Whilst the Council budgetted for two cuts, the second was not needed this year. Instead, the contractor will strim patches of nettles and will cut two hedges bordering the closed churchyard.

10. Concerns regarding the restoration of The Old Parsonage

The Council noted that this building is Grade II listed and lies within the curtilage of a Grade I listed building. It represents a rare surviving example of a parson's cottage with minimal internal and external alterations.

Concerns were raised about the slow progress of restoration works at The Old Parsonage, particularly the risk of the building being left exposed over winter. Members noted that the thatch has been completely removed and that the scaffolded tin sheeting previously protecting the roof is no longer in place.

There were also concerns that some of the current works may not comply with the planning consent, and it was agreed that the Parish Council will write to East Suffolk Council's Conservation Officer to seek clarification.

11. Biodiversity & Countryside Stewardship Scheme:

1. Maps showing the extent of the managed land on the three greens were noted. The clerk will send digital copies of the maps to Councillors for their reference.

2. An autumn hedge cutting schedule for the greens was agreed, focusing on areas that could not be completed last year when the ground was too wet.
3. Issues with a willow tree near North Green were discussed, including a bough hanging loose in the tree. The resident has contacted SCC's Highways department but the tree is not under their jurisdiction. The area falls outside the land managed under the Stewardship Scheme Cllr. Gray explained property owners' maintenance responsibilities go beyond their property boundaries when next to a highway, and that any works to this tree would likely be the responsibility of the property owner, despite it being on seemingly ownerless land. Whilst sympathetic to the resident, Councillors agreed that they could not carry out these works under the Biodiversity scheme, or contribute to the cost without risking setting a precedent.

12. Council website

It was agreed to upgrade the community website to make documents more accessible and compliant as per Suffolk Cloud/Pear Space's email at a cost of £150

13. Insurance

It was agreed that the insurance policy is fit for the council's needs, and covers their assets and needs sufficiently.

14. Correspondence:

The Pensions Regulator re Re-enrolment and re-Declaration 3 yearly duties– *completed by the clerk.*

Email concerned re field stubble and fire risk- *passed to the landowner who carried out precautionary actions.*

Concerns from a resident regarding a lack of bin collections, poor communication and general dissatisfaction with East Suffolk Council's Better Recycling scheme were discussed. Councillors echoed these frustrations and it was agreed that the clerk will write an official complaint to ESC in this regard.

15. Councillors' reports & updates on actions

Cllr. Patrick provided an update on the Natural Flood Management Projects within the village. The dam at the Gull has now been fenced in and the open pipe has been covered. Funding has been given to purchase a monitor to numerate the efficiency of the dam.

The project at Park Farm has been delayed due to nesting season but it is hoped to be completed this winter. Landowners' signed consent is required or the funding offer could be withdrawn. The third project at Havey's Pit will not be proceeding at this stage but Cllr. Patrick will continue to engage with the resident in case the situation changes.

Other NFM schemes are progressing north of Framlingham which will also benefit Parham. The Internal Drainage Board has committed to clear the Culvert which, with the Gull project, should slow water flow into the river and reduce the bottle-necking. Parking a tanker on Brick Lane during the works should mean that the a road closure can be avoided and when a date is agreed, Cllr. Patrick will speak with residents about this. He will also continue to chase UKPN to remove trees which are growing in the watercourses and also causing issues with overhead lines.

16. Matters to be raised at the next meeting

Consider purchasing a gate to connect the churchyard to church meadow to improve access. Cllr. Block will obtain some prices.

17. Next meeting

The next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 17th November.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.45pm.

Signed…….. **Date ……**