

BARKING PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at Barking village hall at 7.00pm on Thursday 15th January 2026

Present

Cllr M Tabberer (*Chair*), Cllr S Butler, Cllr R Fellowes, Cllr A Ross and Cllr Bailey

In Attendance

Mrs L Rogers *Clerk*

Bpc77/25 Apologies County Councillor K Oakes

Bpc78/25 Declaration of Interests and Applications for Dispensation

No interests were declared and no requests for dispensation had been received.

Bpc79/25 To Approve Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th November 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2025 were approved by the councillors and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Bpc80/25 Report from County Cllr Kay Oakes

Cllr Oake's report was circulated to the Councillors – (appendix 3).

Bpc81/25 Report from District Cllr Dan Pratt

Cllr Pratt's report was circulated to the Councillors - (appendix 2).

Bpc82/25 Public Forum

No matters raised

Bpc83/25 Planning Matters

No applications to consider

Bpc84/25 Finance

- a. The Councillors approved the RFO Report (appendix 1) authorising payments made since the last meeting and to be made; noted income received since the last meeting; reviewed the Reconciliation of Accounts against Bank Statement and to approve the payments to be made.
- b. Deposit account for funds – the councillors reviewed the arrangements and agreed to review again at the March meeting. CCLA have merged with Jupiter.
- c. Budget – the Councillors agreed the budget for 2026-27 at £22,755
- d. Precept - the Councillors agreed the Precept for 2026-27 at £17,500 which for a Band d house will be £91.49 a rise of £5.62 (6.54%). The Tax Base for barking fell by 0.5% to £191.28

Bpc85/25 Path Along the Tye

The Clerk continues to work towards making the Section 38 application to the Secretary of State prior to advertising in the EADT newspaper as a Public Notice and sending letters sent to anyone with rights over the Tye. The Councillors agreed to have a further plan made to extend the footway from the Old Mill site to the new bus stop a little along the Ringshall road down from the war memorial. This is in case funds will allow a further length to be added.

Bpc86/25 Damage to parquet floor in the hall

The councillors agreed to cover the cost of the repair but the Councillors recommend a hire deposit of £250 and to check other village halls hire deposits

Bpc87/25 Digital and Data Compliance for Parish Councils – Clerk to action new email and website link. Cllr Tabberer to help to set this up

Bpc88/25 Village Hall Management Committee – The solar panels are being installed. The electricity consumer unit needs to be replaced to enable the solar panels to be connected. Gary Dalby has repaired a leak in the roof and some further work to the roof is required. There

are plans to refurbish the arm chairs. The next coffee morning is on 7th February and another Winter Walk is planned.

Bpc89/25 Benches in the Village

It was agreed that Cllr Bailey will assess if the bench by the play area can be renovated. If not agreed to order a new bench and store it at Cllr Fellowes until it can be installed.

Bpc90/25 Reports from Councillors

An area of asphalt at he the Church path near the nursing home needs to be replaced. Cllr Fellowes to obtain two quotes

Bpc91/25 Date of the Next Meeting

Thursday 19th March 2026 at 7pm

Meeting closed at 8.05pm

Chairman Date

Appendix 1 Finance Report

Financial Report 15th January 2026

Income Received since 20.11.2025

MSDC	Solar panels deposit grant	4,390.60
UK Powernetworks	Wayleave	65.15
Rural Payments Agency	DEFRA money	2,206.34
		<u>6,662.09</u>

Expenditure (movement since 20.11.2025) and invoices agreed for payment

Four Parishes Magazine	Local donation	100.00	102316	LGA 1972, s137
Josh Eaton	Litter Picking	169.00	102317	Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9&10
Blackthorn Landscapes	Grass cutting	595.00	102318	Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9&10
L Rogers	November expenses	25.00	102319	LGA 1972
L Rogers	December pay	410.36	102320	LGA 1972
HMRC	December tax & NI	88.01	200001	LGA 1972
Barking Village Hall	Hall Hire April - September	33.00	200002	LGA 1972
L Rogers	Defibrillator pads	94.19	200003	Public Health Act 1936, s234
L Rogers	January wages	410.36	200004	LGA 1972
HMRC	January tax & NI	88.01	200005	LGA 1972
Blackthorn Landscapes	December grass	595.00	200006	Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9&10
Blackthorn Landscapes	September grass	960.00	200007	Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9&10
Blackthorn Landscapes	August grass	960.00	200008	Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9&10
		<u>4,527.93</u>		

Unpresented cheques

Four Parishes Magazine	Local donation	100.00	102314	LGA 1972, s137
Barking Pre-school	Local donation	150.00	102315	LGA 1972, s137

Four Parishes Magazine	Local donation	100.00	102316	LGA 1972, s137
Josh Eaton	Litter Picking	169.00	102317	Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9&10
Blackthorn Landscapes	Grass cutting	595.00	102318	Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9&10
HMRC	December tax & NI	88.01	102321	LGA 1972
Barking Village Hall	Hall Hire April - September	33.00	102322	LGA 1972
L Rogers	Defibrillator pads	94.19	102323	Public Health Act 1936, s234
L Rogers	January wages	410.36	200004	LGA 1972
HMRC	January tax & NI	88.01	200005	LGA 1972
Blackthorn Landscapes	December grass	595.00	200006	Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9&10
Blackthorn Landscapes	September grass	960.00	200007	Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9&10
Blackthorn Landscapes	August grass	960.00	200008	Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9&10
		<u>4,342.57</u>		

Account	Statement date	Balance	Balance less unpaid cheques
Community a/c	13.12.25	£20,167.81	£4,342.57
Base reward a/c	13.12.25	£16,558.44	£0.00
		<u>£36,726.25</u>	<u>£32,383.68</u>
CCLA Account	2.10.25 interest	£824.21	
	31.10.25	<u>£251,128.80</u>	

Appendix 2 District Councillor Dan Pratt Report

Bringing Nature Back in 2026

Towards the end of 2025, Suffolk and Norfolk launched the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to reverse biodiversity loss by identifying locations where habitat creation and improvement will have the greatest impact. Aligning with this call to action, Mid Suffolk District Council committed nearly £2 million to revitalise habitats and support wildlife in the district. This will include a Community Grant worth £500k for nature restoration projects to launch at the end of January. To progress our ambitions to protect 30% of MSDC land for wildlife by 2030, we will consult with our communities to identify council land to be brought under meadow management. This year, Mid Suffolk will also progress with its management plan for the recently acquired 60-acre site in Thorndon.

Barking Village Hall is now Solar Powered

Work to install a new photovoltaic panel array and battery storage system at Barking village hall was completed last month. The solar generated electricity will provide low-cost energy to the hall and export surplus energy to the grid providing an additional income. Barking Pre-School is one of many user groups that will benefit from the scheme. The project was funded by a ~£20k Community Development Grant supplemented by the Locality Award. This is a fantastic achievement for the hall and the management committee and follows the solar installation on Offton and Willisham Village Hall last year.

Pavement clearance work parties

In December, local councillors and residents uncovered and cleared a 250-metre section of overgrown pavement between the Forge and Ashburnham Farm in Barking. Another work

party will be scheduled soon to extend the works. This follows other footway and cycle path clearance efforts in Stowmarket, Haughley, Bacton and Needham Market.

Locality Awards

The locality award grant for 2025/26 has now closed with all funds for our ward being allocated in December. The fund has assisted with a range of projects. Recipients include Barking Village Hall, Orchard Barn CIC, the Great Bricett Community Meadow, the Battsford Punchbowl Pub CIC, the River Gipping Trust, and the Wattisham Army Cadets.

Stowmarket 3G Football Pitch

Mid Suffolk has secured funding from the Football Foundation and Premier League to deliver a new 3G football pitch in Stowmarket. The pitch will use a cork infill as part of research by the Football Foundation into sustainable and high-performing alternatives to conventional rubber crumb.

New Community Darts Venue

A new darts venue The Bull Room has opened in the former Stannard's store in Stowmarket after it was awarded £125k in matched funding from the Mid Suffolk Gateway Fund. The venture is offering darts equipment and accessories, coaching sessions and pay-and-play lanes.

Call for Sites

The 'call for sites' to suggest land for future development ends on 9th January. Sites put forward will be assessed by the planning policy team at Mid Suffolk. This information will be used to guide part of the Joint Local plan site allocation.

Norfolk and Suffolk Mayoral Elections delayed

The government has delayed the election for a Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk until May 2028. The government has also offered the option for Councils undergoing reorganisation to request a further delay to upcoming local elections. The Green Party group is calling for these elections to go ahead as planned.

Appendix 3 County Councillor Kay Oakes Report County Council report

[Suffolk secures more than £26 million bus funding over three years](#)

Millions of pounds of investment is to take place in Suffolk's bus network over three years following allocation of Government funding.

Services, ticketing, and infrastructure will all benefit under the package worth nearly £27 million between 2026 and 2029.

Suffolk County Council will receive a total of £26,813,760 under the Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG).

This funding will enable the continuation and expansion of new and improved services introduced over the past two years through LABG support and its predecessor, the Bus Services Improvement Grant (BSIP), many of which were shaped by community feedback.

Suffolk will receive:

- 2026/27 - £8,849,119
- 2027/28 - £8,937,920

- 2028/29 - £9,026,721

The funding is split into two areas.

Revenue investment will focus on:

- Maintaining and growing enhanced services based on local suggestions.
- Increasing publicity and travel information to help residents make informed choices.

Capital funding will deliver:

- Renewal and expansion of Real Time Passenger Information across Suffolk.
- Improved ticketing options and accessibility in partnership with bus operators.
- Investigations into bus priority measures to reduce journey times and encourage modal shift.
- Upgraded bus stops with new shelters, better footway links, and accessibility enhancements—many suggested by local communities.

Local authorities will have flexibility to use LABG funding to meet local needs—whether by reducing fares, introducing new routes, investing in zero-emission buses, or improving bus stops and stations.

Last July Suffolk County Council announced a £2.8m investment in new bus routes and improved services following announcement of LABG funding of £8 million for 2025-26. As well as new routes, some services gained increased frequency and a Sunday schedule added.

Alongside the £2.8m revenue for delivering new or enhanced services, the county council also [previously announced £5.2m of capital funding from the DfT](#) for new and improved bus stops, bus stations, bus priority measures or vehicle upgrades.

For more details of public transport in Suffolk go to the [Suffolk On Board](#) website.

OPINION: How Suffolk is investing in our roads

By Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council Cabinet member for Operational Highways, Flooding & Ipswich

Potholes are undoubtedly the bane of a motorist's life and remain one of the most common complaints landing in councillors' inboxes.

In a recent newspaper column, the Ipswich MP claimed that Suffolk will receive £219.4 million over the next four years to address potholes.

However, this figure does not tell the whole story.

The Department for Transport's small print makes clear that the funding must also be used for footways, bridges, highway drainage, and street lighting, not solely for pothole repairs. Moreover, the announcement assumes the government will fully deliver on this commitment.

Recent experience suggests otherwise. In the last two weeks, it has been confirmed that the postponement of the mayoral elections means Suffolk will miss out on its share of £37 million in the next two years, funding that was originally included in the devolution deal. The MP went on to suggest that the additional funding would allow us to “renew worn-out road surfaces” and “end the endless cycle of emergency repairs.”

Most of the road funding is already spent on planned resurfacing and surface-dressing schemes.

This financial year alone, nearly 150 locations and more than 100 miles of road are included in such programmes across the county.

Preventative maintenance remains a key priority. Last autumn, Suffolk Highways trialled specialist equipment, including a Dragon Patcher and Roadmender, to repair defects before they developed into potholes.

During the trial, more than 3,500 defects were treated across over 230 roads. While assessments are still underway to determine value for money and where they can be best used, early indications suggest this approach could improve efficiency in the future. There is no doubt that Suffolk’s roads have steadily improved in the last ten years.

Independent surveys show a two-thirds reduction in A-roads classified as being in the worst condition since 2011, with nearly 300 miles of road moved out of the poorest category, while more than 350 miles now fall within the best condition band, bringing the total to 3,295 miles - 77% of Suffolk’s roads.

This improvement has not come by chance. Since 2017, Suffolk County Council has invested more than £20 million of local taxpayer funds, resurfacing 1,000 miles of road and securing additional investment for drainage and pavements.

Suffolk has also consistently met the highest performance standards, enabling it to secure full funding from the Department for Transport under previous best-practice schemes.

The busier a road is the greater the chance that a defect could cause a problem, so Suffolk Highways gives greater priority to repairing roads that carry the most vehicles.

Regular safety inspections are carried out, with the frequency depending on how busy the road is.

However, potholes and other defects may still appear between inspections, especially after freezing conditions when water in the road surface freezes and expands, causing cracks.

This year alone the Suffolk Highways 2025/26 surface dressing programme, which concluded at the end of August, treated a total of 90 sites covering over 90 miles of road.

Similarly, this year’s resurfacing programme will deliver works across 57 locations covering more than 11 miles. So far, 22 of the 58 resurfacing sites have been delivered with the remainder coming by the end of the financial year.

Yet there is more to be done. Progress cannot stand still. As a motorist myself, I want to see both local and national government commit further funding to our road network.

Motorists already face mounting costs—vehicle tax, fuel duty, and rising insurance premiums among them – so it is important we get something back.

Another charge is now also looming. In the recent Budget, the Chancellor announced plans for a pay-per-mile road tax for electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles.

While the government has delayed implementation until April 2028 to work up the detail, road pricing, it seems, may soon be added to the growing list of financial burdens facing motorists.

I expect this is one promise that the government will keep.

[Suffolk residents urged to apply quickly for free home energy upgrades](#)

At the end of November 2025, Suffolk County Council secured £1.38 million from the government’s Warm Homes Local Grant Fund.

Residents and landlords are urged to apply quickly, as the funding must be allocated by the end of March 2026.

The fund aims to provide free energy saving improvements to energy inefficient homes if residents are on a low income, receive certain benefits or live in a certain postcode area. This could be wall and loft insulation, solar panels or air source heat pumps.

“Over recent years, Warm Homes Suffolk has made improvements to hundreds of properties, giving people warmer, safer homes and reducing their energy bills.”
Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Devolution, Local Government Reorganisation and NSIPs

To be eligible, Suffolk homes must:

- be privately owned (either by you or your landlord)
- have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of D, E, F or G (you can find this out when you apply)

Household income must usually be £36,000 a year or less - but if you earn more than that, you might still be eligible if either:

- you live in a certain postcode area (certain areas of Beccles, Felixstowe, Ipswich, Lowestoft and Stowmarket)
- someone in your household is getting certain benefits
- you have a severe or long-term health condition, which is adversely affected by living in a cold home

Once these conditions have been approved, an assessment of your home will identify which measures are best suited to your property. These will then be installed by trusted contactors, for free.

To check your eligibility, or to find out more about how Warm Homes Suffolk could help you, visit www.warmhomessuffolk.org or call the team on 03456 037 686.

Statement on provisional local government finance settlement 2026 to 2027

Cllr Richard Smith MVO, Suffolk County Council's deputy leader and cabinet member for finance, economic development and skills, said:

"We are deeply disappointed by the government's [provisional local government finance settlement](#). Our current understanding is that Suffolk County Council now faces a £6 million budget gap — £3.5 million worse than we had previously forecast.

"This is despite government assumptions that councils will raise Council Tax by the maximum amount every year, and the introduction of a so-called 'fairer' funding model. The government has shifted resources towards metropolitan areas at the expense of rural counties like ours, while injecting very little new money into the system.

"This settlement makes an already difficult financial position even more challenging. We will continue to press for a genuinely fair funding formula that properly reflects the needs and costs of delivering services in rural communities."

Council secures £2.9 million from DfT Incentive Fund for 2025/26

Suffolk County Council has been awarded £2.9 million from the Department for Transport's 2025/26 Incentive Fund for best practice in highways management.

The fund, introduced by the current government, rewards local authorities that demonstrate excellence in highway asset management and efficiency.

The award builds on the council's strong track record of success in previous years, where it has consistently secured the maximum available funding under similar schemes.

Under the Incentive Fund scheme authorities must report:

- Highway maintenance spends over the past five years
- Road condition data, with trend analysis
- Pothole repair statistics for the last five years
- A 2025/26 resurfacing plan
- Show a balance of preventive against reactive maintenance
- Coordination with utilities to reduce disruption
- Climate resilience efforts
- Adoption of best practices and innovation

Suffolk County Council will spend a total of £47.3 million on highways maintenance in 2025-26.

The Suffolk Highways 2025/26 surface dressing programme treated a total of 90 sites covering over 90 miles of road.

Similarly, this year's resurfacing programme will deliver works across 57 locations covering more than 11 miles.

So far, 22 of the 58 resurfacing sites have been delivered with the remainder coming by the end of the financial year.

