

STRADISHALL PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 2nd March 2026

Parish councillors present: Ian Hutchinson (Chair), Jonathan Masefield, Ed Hollingsworth, Robert Deeks and Louise Latache.

Also present: County Councillor Bobby Bennett, District councillors Karen Richardson and Marion Rushbrook and four members of the public.

1. Acceptance of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from parish councillors Adrian Lee and Debbie Gates and the reason for absence accepted.

2. Declaration of Interest in items on the agenda and dispensation requests.

No councillors declared an interest in any items on the agenda and no dispensation requests were received.

3. Approval of minutes of the meeting held on Monday 5th January 2026.

It was resolved that the minutes were correct. The chairman then signed them.

4. Public session

The following issues were raised during the public session:

- The urgent need for pedestrian crossing warning signs along the A143.

5. County Councillor's report

Cllr Bennett spoke about:

- County council elections which are now taking place in May 2026. There has been a boundary change but Stradishall still falls within Clare decision.
- Proposals for a Forest City between Cambridge and Haverhill which are at the discussion stage.
- There will be a new special needs school and centre of Excellence in Suffolk.
- Suffolk Highways are working hard to repair potholes.
- Anglian Water came to a Clare Town Council meeting.

A question was asked about why grips not being cleared anymore. Cllr Bennett agreed to find out. Stradishall Parish Council asked about the shortfall needed to pay for pedestrian crossing signs. Cllr Bennett said she should be able to cover it and asked the clerk to put in a request by the end of the week.

Stradishall Parish Council also asked whether any action had been taken about the trees at Stradishall Crossroads. Cllr Bennett agreed to go back to Highways and ask for enforcement as the trees are overhanging the highway.

6. District Councillors' report.

The next District Council elections are in 2027. District councillors will not be able to give any locality funding until after the County Council elections on 7th May. The new Local Plan needs to be completed in 30 months, but West Suffolk Council is confident that they can complete it in time.

7. HERA report.

Concerns were raised about speeding along the A143 and the safety of children crossing the road. The suggestion was made to try and arrange a meeting with the new Prison governor, Waites, the developer carrying out work on the prison, County Cllr Bobby Bennett, District councillors, Stradishall Parish Council, HERA and the Police to discuss prison issues.

8. Police issues.

a) January 2026 crime report.

The only crimes reported in January and February were at HMP Highpoint.

The safety camera van was in Stradishall in December and one person was caught speeding.

9. Update on list of actions agreed at the last meeting.

There were no outstanding councillor actions.

Updates on clerk's outstanding actions:

- Stradishall Parish Council is still waiting to find out if the bid for new bus stops near the Highpoint Estate has been successful.
- The clerk applied to WSC for a Communities Capital Fund grant for replacement swings and is waiting to see if the application has been successful.

10. Finance

a) Approval of any payments and signing of Schedule of Payments

It was resolved that the following payments would be approved:

- J P Kirk - expenses - LGA 1972, s111 - **£34.40**
- CAS – annual renewal of gov.uk domain name and email address - LGA 1972, s111 - **£54.50**.
- HMRC - PAYE - LGA 1972, s111 – **£184.80**

Jonathan Masfield and Ed Hollingsworth checked and signed the Schedule of Payments.

b) Approval of payments authorised between meetings.

No payments were authorised between meetings.

c) Statement of receipts and payments made since the last meeting.

Receipts

Date	Description	Supplier	Total
09/01/2026	Bank interest received	Lloyds Bank	£6.69

Payments

Date	Minute	Description	Supplier	Total
19/01/2026	354/10k	Bank charges	Lloyds Bank	£4.25
17/02/2026	354/10k	Bank charges	Lloyds Bank	£4.25
Staff costs as per confidential cashbook				

Transfers

Date	From	To	Amount
06/01/2026	Lloyds reserve account	Lloyd's bank current account	£500.00
09/02/2026	Lloyds reserve account	Lloyd's bank current account	£500.00

It was resolved that the statement of receipts and payments would be approved.

d) Bank balances as of 28th February 2026 and confirmation of bank reconciliation.

Lloyd's bank current account	£876.57
Lloyd's reserve account	£12,207.47
Total in Banks	£13,084.04

Jonathan Masfield and Ed Hollingsworth verified the bank statements and bank reconciliations.

e) Update on the financial checks carried out by a councillor.

Cllr Adrian Lee has checked the Parish Council's accounts and signed the Internal Control Report. No issues were raised.

f) Review of income and expenditure for 2025/26 against the budget and discuss the level of reserves for general and earmarked expenditure.

Councillors reviewed the receipts and payments for 2025/26 against the budget. The following overspends occurred in 2025/26.

Overspends as of 31st March 2026

	Amount	Explanation
Bank charges		
Budgeted	£0	
Actual	£43	
Difference	-£43	Lloyds Bank introduced bank charges of £4.25 a month in March 2025 after the budget was set.

ICO Data Protection fee

Budgeted	£35	
Actual	£47	
Difference	-£12	GDPR fee increased.
Website		
Budgeted	£60	
Actual	£104	
Difference	-£44	Website hosting fee £55, Switching to gov.uk email address and domain name £49)
Other admin costs		
Budgeted	£0	
Actual	£230	
Difference	-£230	Use of church for a meeting £30, use of Café 33 for meetings £200.
Other payments		
Budgeted	£300	
Actual	£384	
Difference	-£84	New litter bin for near Highpoint Estate £240
Playing field maintenance		
Budgeted	£1,500	
Actual	£1,555	
Difference	-£55	Replacement swing seats £662, extra materials for playing field roof repairs £193, repairs to gym equipment £255, fitting new swing seats and replacing bird deterrents £220, repairs to rope traverse £225.
PAYE		
Budgeted	£720	
Actual	£727	
Difference	-£7	Annual pay increase.

Reserves

Earmarked Reserve	Opening Balance	Transfers	Receipts	Current Balance
Election costs	£1,558			£1,858
Clerk and councillor training	£114			£134
Playing field maintenance	-£696	£1,555		-£751
Playing field project	£200			£200
Playing field (moles)	£200			£350
Village events	£177	£49		£628
Inspection of play equipment	£612			£612
Traffic Regulation Order	£2,100			£2,600
Defibrillator				£0
Verge cutting	£100			£100
Defibrillator maintenance	£156			£456
Village project	£440	£25		£815
VAS fund	£7			£607
Tree works	£500			£1,100
TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVE	£5,468	£1,629		£8,709
GENERAL FUND				£4,375

TOTAL FUNDS**£13,084**

- g) **To review the register of fixed assets and insurance values and check that the level of insurance cover is adequate.**

The Parish Council's current asset value is **£74,283**. The insurance value is **£81,401**.

One new asset was purchased in 2025-26 – the litter bin opposite Best One Stores - **£240**.

It was resolved that insurance values would be increased by 5% when the insurance is next renewed.

- h) **Review of the Council's risk assessment.**

It was resolved that the risk assessment would be approved.

- i) **To check that the levels of liability insurance are adequate.**

The levels of liability cover under the new Ansvar Policy are as follows:

All Risks (unspecified items)	Public Liability	Fidelity Guarantee (Dishonesty)	Personal Accident	Employers' Liability
£1k	£10m	£25k	£10k	£10m

It was resolved that the levels of liability cover were adequate.

- j) **Review of confidential cashbook and deductions by a councillor.**

Cllr Adrian Lee had reviewed the clerk's confidential cashbook as part of the Council's internal controls and confirmed that the PAYE details and tax code were correct.

- k) **To nominate a councillor to inspect the Council's property for damage or defects by 30th April 2026 and complete the inspection checklist.**

It was resolved that Adrian Lee would inspect the Council's property.

- l) **Quote for Pedestrian Crossing warning signs on the A143.**

Cost of new road signs along the A143	Cost ex VAT
SCC Works licence	£50.00
Posts x 4 and installation	£900.00
4 signs	£935.60
	£2,055.60

County Cllr Bobby Bennett has agreed to cover as much of the cost as she can.

11. To discuss any planning issues.

- a) **DC/26/0222/HH and DC/26/0223/LB - Tally Ho, The Street, Stradishall - a. one bay window to annexe building b. alterations to fenestration.**

It was resolved that no objections would be made to this application.

- b) **Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework – for information only.**

The National Planning Policy Framework is being updated.

- c) **Planning applications received between meetings.**

DC/26/0111/TCA	22 St Margarets Place, Stradishall	One Conifer (on plan) fell
DC/26/0124/TCA	7 St Margaret's Place, Stradishall	One Picea (marked on plan) fell

12. Highways/rights of way matters/tree or transport issues.

- a) **Possible location for the VAS on Edmunds Hill and installation of a post.**

Cllr Ed Hollingsworth has agreed a location on his land. A resident has offered to install a post if Stradishall Parish Council provides the post and post mix. It was resolved that Stradishall Parish Council would cover these costs.

- b) **Possible installation of speed camera warning signs.**

It was resolved that a payment of up to £250 for 4 signs would be approved. Councillors agreed to identify possible posts to install them on and what type of brackets would be needed.

- c) **Update from the Suffolk Parish Road Safety Group about Suffolk County Council's new 20mph policy.** Suffolk County Council has approved a new 20mph policy but one of the biggest concerns is how smaller

councils will fund the change if they wish to. As County Council elections will take place on 7th May, it was agreed that Stradishall Parish Council would wait until after the elections before following up on this.

d) The Government's new Road Safety Strategy and 5 related consultations – for information only.

- **Proposed changes to penalties for motoring offences**
- **Mandatory eye testing for older drivers**
- **Minimum learning period for learner drivers**
- **Mandating safer technologies**
- Improving motorcycling training, testing and licensing**

e) Latest VAS data

Data from 12pm on the 6th November 2025 to 10am on 17th February 2026. The sign was positioned at the bottom of Edmunds Hill.

Highest incoming speed was 62mph on 1st January 2026 at 1.00am.

Highest outgoing speed was 65mph on 14th Feb 2026 at 10.00pm.

The data shows a little more compliance compared to when it was in the same location from May to July 2025 but this may be because fewer motorbikes are out and about over the winter.

f) Parish Council survey carried out by Suffolk Highways.

It was resolved that the clerk would submit a response on behalf of Stradishall Parish Council, including comments about Stradishall Parish Council's concern about speeding along the A143 and the fact that grips are not properly maintained.

13. Playing field issues:

a) Latest play inspection report.

All the findings were low risk. Adrian Lee has removed the old information signs.

b) New Service Level Agreement from West Suffolk Council.

As the play equipment is not classed as having high usage, West Suffolk Council is proposing to reduce the number of inspections to one every three months. It was resolved that Stradishall Parish Council would accept this change and that the clerk would sign the new Service Level Agreement on behalf of Stradishall Parish Council.

14. Village issues:

a) Email from HERA asking for an informal meeting with Stradishall Parish Council to discuss the possibility of the Highpoint Estate separating from Stradishall Parish and forming a separate parish meeting.

Councillors present were happy for the clerk and Chair to attend the informal meeting. The consensus was that it would be more appropriate not to involve district councillors at this stage.

15. To confirm the dates of meetings in 2026/27.

It was resolved that the dates of meeting for 2026-2027 would be:

- Monday 11th May 2026 - Annual Meeting of the Parish Council followed by the Annual Parish Meeting.
- Monday 6th July 2026
- Monday 7th September 2026
- Monday 2nd November 2026
- Monday 11th January 2027.
- Monday 1st March 2027

16. To discuss the procedure and possible items for the Annual Parish Meeting.

The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council will start at 7pm followed by the Annual Parish Meeting at 8pm. Written copies of reports will be requested so that they can be circulated prior to the meeting.

17. To discuss the following correspondence:

a) Email from West Suffolk Council about their Five Dinners initiative which is free to West Suffolk Council residents.

This is a meal planning service which allows people to choose recipes and creates a shopping list.

- b) Letter from West Suffolk Council about their review of Public Space Protection Orders – for information only.
- c) Email from West Suffolk Council about the schedule for delivery of new bins under the new Better Recycling scheme.
Information about the scheme and schedules for the delivery of new bins are available on the West Suffolk Council website at <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/bins/better-recycling/>
- d) Email from West Suffolk Council about changes to Renter’s Rights which come into effect on 1st May 2026 – for information only.

18. Any other business for noting or including on the agenda of the Annual Parish Meeting on Monday 11th May 2026 at 7pm and the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council after the Annual Parish Meeting.
No issues were raised.

19. To resolve to exclude press and public under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960: the public and press be excluded for the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure of private and confidential information
- a) To discuss staffing matters.
It was resolved that members of the public would be excluded for the remainder of the meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.26pm.

Signed: Dated: