

MINUTES OF THE ONEHOUSE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 10 MARCH 2025 T 7.30 P.M. IN TRINITY HALL

Present: Cllrs Copping (Chair), Nutman, Boulter, Roberts, Crissell and Corker.

In attendance: Paul Bryant MSDC NP Officer, Avril Goudy and Nikita Goodrich MSDC Planning Officers, County Cllr Otton (in part), District Cllr Matthissen (in part) Mrs Fuller Acting Clerk, Mrs Swansborough Clerk and 3 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence. There were none.

2. To confirm and approve the minutes of the meetings 10 February 2025.
The minutes were approved and signed.

3. To receive members Declarations of Interest on agenda items.

Cllr Crissell declared a prejudicial interest in the planning application as he is a member of Trinity Hall Committee. He duly signed the interest book.

4. To consider any dispensation requests from councillors.
There were none.

5. To receive an update on the appointment of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

Victoria Swansborough has been appointed as Clerk and RFO of Onehouse Parish Council with effect from 3 March. She will work with Mrs Fuller for the next month or more. She was welcomed by all.

6. To discuss the production of a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) with Paul Bryant (PB), MSDC Neighbourhood Plan Officer.

PB explained that a NP goes through a regulated process whereas a People and Places Plan doesn't. Once made an NP becomes a material consideration in planning terms. The average time to complete a NP is between two and three years. What it includes is down to the parish having consulted with residents. The first task is to set up a working group as OPC cannot produce a NP on its own, an employed consultant will also be appointed. Grants are available to cover most or all of the costs involved. OPC will need to apply to have the area designated and PB suggests this should be the parish boundary. Once the draft plan has been prepared it is sent to MSDC for independent examination to check general conformity with national and district policies, after which some alterations may be necessary. After any amendments have been made MSDC arrange a referendum which has to have a 51% majority for the NP to be adopted. There is a need to designate heritage assets and protect open spaces. It is likely to be important to identify sites for future housing with the government uplift in housing numbers by 37%. PB suggested that Cllrs look at adopted NPs of comparable villages. The Chair thanked PB and the planning officers for attending the meeting.

7. Public comment. A resident stated that it would be nice if the village sign is cleaned and repainted.

8. Report from County Cllr Otton.

The government has now confirmed that Suffolk and Norfolk are included in the Devolution Priority Programme, and have agreed to the request from the Suffolk County Council administration to cancel this year's local elections in May. This

means that councils in Suffolk now need to work on proposals for reorganisation to submit to the government by the autumn.

Suffolk County Council has announced that it will be proposing one single unitary council for Suffolk at the Full council meeting on 13 March although district and borough councils have been clear that they would prefer two or three. All the councils need to submit their proposals to the government by 21 March 2025. The plan is for a mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk to be elected in May 2026, along with councillors for new authorities, so the timeline for these changes is very tight. The government has launched a public consultation on proposals to create a Mayoral Combined County Authority for Norfolk and Suffolk. On Monday 10 February, The Home Office published a report of its recent inspection of Suffolk's Fire and Rescue Service. Although the inspection found that the service was good at preventing fires, protecting the public and that it met requirements for responding to major incidents, the report was also concerning as it identified several areas where the service needed to improve, including improving culture and morale, senior leaders to act as role models and show they are committed to the values of the service through their behaviour, improving communication between staff and senior leaders and making sure employees are confident raising concerns. Suffolk County Council has been awarded £3.7 million from the government to encourage cycling, walking and active travel across the county, and to make journeys more accessible. This comprises £0.9 million from the Round 5 of the Active Travel Fund, and £2.8 million from the Consolidated Active Travel Fund. The money can be spent on the following schemes: footpaths and crossing points, maintaining existing walking and cycling infrastructure, improving cycle routes and Public Rights of Way, traffic calming, and rail station access improvements. The council is currently considering suitable local projects, which will be announced in the coming months. Suffolk County Council has announced that from 1 June 2025, its libraries service will be moved back in-house. Currently the libraries are run by a local charity, Suffolk Libraries, but negotiations on the new contract have now broken down. The council made the decision to divest its libraries in 2012 and they have been run by Suffolk Libraries ever since then. The council is reassuring residents and library employees and volunteers that no front-line jobs will be cut, that libraries will remain open and there will be no reduction to opening hours. Running the library service had been financially challenging in recent years, with the council agreeing to provide an extra £720k in May 2023 for that financial year. The council is also keen to reassure Friends groups that money raised for local libraries will still be used for those libraries. The decision will be made at the cabinet meeting on March 18 unless it is called into the scrutiny committee. There is also a petition that has reached over 5000 signatures so this will be presented to one of the council's meetings. At Cabinet on Tuesday 25 February, a Local Transport Plan for the county from 2025-2040. The plan is needed by law to access funding from the government for active travel and major transport schemes, and details how the council plans to prioritise walking, cycling and wheeling in town centres to reduce congestion and air pollution. It also describes the projects that will be needed to improve transport links for Suffolk, such as works at Ely and Haughley railway junctions, better public transport, and how to manage the transition from fossil fuels. Also

agreed were 15 Area Transport Plans detailing the council's transport ambitions for towns around Suffolk.

Cllr Otton has asked again if SCC has received funds from National Highways to repair roads following the damage while the A14 was closed, nothing to date.

Once the new financial year starts Cllr Otton will look at her locality funding for Trinity Hall improvements.

9. Report from District Cllr Matthissen

The Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC) meeting on 27 February approved the council's annual budget for 2025/26. The council tax bill for a Band D property remains at £175.03. That works out under £3.37 a week to cover all district council services, including waste collection, licensing, planning, public realm and supporting the local economy, culture and communities. The Council committed to a capital programme of £36.3m (£26m committed, with another £10m proposed 'capital ambition' projects), partly funded from reserves. Among other things, expenditure includes: investment in sports and health facilities in Stowmarket and Stradbroke, investment in the new Skills and Innovation Centre, £1.5m fund to support High Street regeneration in Stowmarket, £300k per year funding pot for projects in other market towns and rural communities and investment in cycling and walking infrastructure. There is an increase in the Locality Award to £10,000 per Ward. The government has opened a consultation until April 13, the devolution for Suffolk and Norfolk. It is clear there will be an election for Mayor of Suffolk + Norfolk in May 2026. Initial plans are to be sent to the government by 21 March 2025 regarding the creation of unitaries. MSDC is concerned about the lack of public consultation on this aspect of the reforms. An Extraordinary meeting of Mid Suffolk and Babergh Councils to discuss the issues was rescheduled from Feb 10 to April 10 to allow more time to review emerging details. Joint Local Plan (JLP) for Babergh and Mid Suffolk is being reviewed, to make sure it stays compliant with the government's increased targets for housebuilding and end date 2044. The timeline for this work was approved at the February Council meeting. The Cabinet member for Heritage, Planning and Infrastructure, Cllr Andrew Stringer, has highlighted the importance of Neighbourhood Plans, which form part of the District's local plans.

After investigation it is MSDC who has installed the Church Way sign at the top of Church Walk. This was due to a property having difficulty with receiving post. MSDC decided it could not be Church Walk as there is one in Stowmarket. Cllrs are appalled at the lack of consultation with the parish who installed the Church Walk sign in memory of Pauline Llewellyn. Cllr Matthissen is trying to get the matter rectified which may be difficult as the Post Office has been advised of the name of Church Way

10. Planning Matters

a) To discuss and make recommendation to MSDC on any applications received prior to this meeting.

25/00995 Erection of a canopy porch (following demolition of existing porch) and insertion of fire door exit. Trinity Hall, Forest Road – support..

b) To receive MSDC decisions on previously considered applications.

24/05450 Construction of a new drop kerb, 34 Forest Road – granted.

25/00279 Discharge of conditions appl 24/05051 Condition 3 (Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy), The Cedars, Lower Road – acceptable.

11. Finances

To ratify the following payment

a) £400.00 J R Landscapes deposit for work around playing field

This payment was unanimously ratified

To approve payment of the following invoices:

b) £376.00 Gipping Press March OHSMag

c) £195.00 OHS Village Hall and Playing Field Trust Garage rental and Little Owls room hire January & February

d) £24.17 Mr D Nicholson fuel for equipment Pauper's Graves Working Group

e) £1220.00 Mrs Fuller Clerking services February

Items a) - e) + l) & m) were unanimously approved for authorisation

To approve the following donations

f) £220.00 Suffolk Accident Rescue Service

g) £400.00 East Anglian Air Ambulance

h) £110.00 East Suffolk Headway

i) £770.00 Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice Bureau

Items f) - j) were approved under Sect 137 and Sect 142 For Mid Suffolk CAB

j) To receive monthly financial report from the Clerk

At the end of February, the current account was £2,703.91. £2,186.97 Pride in our Place grant has been received since month end, less this month's cheques totalling £3,715.17 bring the figure to £1,175.71. The instant access account stands at £24,340.73 bringing total funds to £25,516.44. The Clerk will transfer £1500.00 to keep the current account at £2,675.71 as previously agreed.

k) to appoint an independent internal auditor for accounts at year end 31 March 2025

Mrs Brown is no longer carrying out internal audits. Heelis and Lodge charge £220.00 for annual expenditure between £25,000.00 and £50,000.00. The Clerk has contacted an accountant in Woolpit who will charge £60.00 per hour which could prove more expensive. It was proposed, seconded and carried to use Heelis and Lodge.

Action: The Clerk

l) £150.00 J R Landscapes grass cutting playing field

m) £20.00 Mrs J Copping reimbursement for monthly phone plan October-February

12. To discuss the People and Places Plan against a Neighbourhood Plan and take any necessary action.

Following the presentation by Paul Bryant, it was agreed not to pursue a PPP. Cllr Copping will look at comparable size parishes NPs and find out if we could use a consultant other than those at MSDC. Cllrs will debate whether to produce a NP at the next meeting.

Action: Cllr Copping

13. To consider the co-option of a councillor and take any necessary action.

An advert has been put in OHSMag and on the Facebook page. Breakthrough Communications run a course on recruiting and retaining councillors and it was unanimously agreed that Cllr Crissell will attend on 16 April. The course costs £35.00.

Action: The Clerk

14. To approve the draft Role of the Footpath and Tree Warden and take any necessary action.

The draft was approved by councillors. The role will be advertised in the April OHSMag for the new appointee to take on the role from the Annual Parish

Council meeting in May. Cllr Copping will draft an advert.

Action: Cllr Copping

15. To consider an amended Safeguarding Policy and take any necessary action. This was deferred to the April meeting.

16. Events

a) To receive an update on holding a Village Show and take any necessary action.

No report has been received from the working group again this month. It was proposed, seconded and carried that since no details or plan and costs has been received from the working group, a village show will not take place in 2025. It was agreed to support OHSMC with the village fete this year and look to introduce a village show in 2026. The Clerk will advise Mr Leek of this decision.

Action: The Clerk

It was agreed to continue the meeting for complete all items

17. To receive an update on the Paupers Graves and take any necessary action.

The Pauper's Graves working group have discussed the sale of logs from the recent work on the trees. Although it seemed like a good way to raise some funds, the logistics of getting people on site to collect the logs is impossible. The wood will instead be used for wildlife habitats. Work continues to clear and maintain the area.

18. To discuss development of land around the parish and take any necessary action.

Cllr Copping has met with Melanie Hall, SCC Highways, who is determined that the Onehouse sign will be reinstated at the Hopkins Homes development on the grass area near to the traffic lights. The design is completed and Melanie Hall is sorting out who will pay for the sign.

Cllr Boulter has been advised by Mr Leek that SCC are to commence work on Footpath 28 in the next few weeks. The metal barriers are to be removed and repurposed so people cannot fall into the ditch. The path is to be reinforced. OPC has not been contacted about this and no footpath temporary closure notice received or been put up by the path.

It is alleged that a bridge has been constructed from The Limes and garden waste has been deposited in the ditch.

The land close to Onehouse Hall is being used regularly by the owner to get rid of rubbish and commercial waste. The resident has been advised to contact MSDC Planning and Environmental Health.

19. To discuss OHSMag, Onehouse website and Facebook page and take any necessary action.

OHSMag - The Editor has advised that the May issues will be her last. Mrs Swansborough has been asked if she would consider taking on the role of OHSMag editor alongside her duties as Clerk. In the meantime, Cllr Crissell will contact Gipping Press as they may be able to edit the magazine in the interim and find out costs involved.

Action: Cllr Crissell

The next OHSMag working group meeting is 20 March.

Website and Facebook – nothing to discuss.

20. To receive correspondence/communications and to deal with any matters. **Resident** asking who owns the field next to Pauper's View as they are concerned that it could be built on. The Clerk will advise the name of the farmer

that works the land. *Action: The Clerk.* **The following items have been circulated to Cllrs :** **SALC** Training Bulletin 11, 25 February, 4 March, News Bulletin 24 February, 3 & 10 March, Devolution updates 17 February, 10 March, Devolution briefing note from SCC 19 February, SALC winner & finalist Star Council awards 2024, Mid Suffolk Area Forum 18 March. **MSDC** Town & Parish Liaison meeting – devolution 5 & 10 March, Town & Parish update March, adoption of BMSDC JL development scheme March 2025. **SCC** advance notice of road closure Forest Road 19 March, EP Passenger Group meeting 12 March. **County Cllr Otton** Suffolk's 45 libraries remain open and see new investment as SCC plans to take service back in house, county leaders to propose one council for Suffolk.

21. To receive reports

a) Report from the Clerk

Highways work Forest Road – Road closure 19 March 8 am – 5 pm for investigations around medium pressure gas main, closure has been later confirmed by Highways Officer as 9.30 am – 3 pm so will not affect the school bus.

Eco Futures furniture – the two benches and picnic table have been ordered and Eco Futures are giving OPC a 5% discount. They are likely to be ready in three weeks and it is hoped to get a group together for the delivery to install the seating on site straight away.

Mill Grove noticeboard – Hopkins Homes doesn't have a contractor who can install the noticeboard but can give us details of a subcontractor we can contact. The Clerk was asked to get three quotes. *Action: The Clerk*

Onehouseparishcouncil.gov.uk emails – Cllrs Corker and Crissell will complete setting up their new email addresses this month. *Action: Cllrs Corker & Crissell*

22. Questions to the Chairman There were none.

23. Items for next agenda

Safeguarding policy, Neighbourhood Plan, Forest road to Chilton Leys footpath, Church Walk/Church Way sign update, Environmental issues including flower barrels.

24. To confirm date and time of the next meeting as Monday 14 April 2025 at 7.30 p.m. Noted.

The meeting closed at 10.01 p.m.

Signed.....

Dated.....