



Minutes of the Stansfield Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday 11th March 2026, Stansfield Village Hall at 7pm

Present: Cllrs R Barnes (Chair), A Pallett (Deputy Chair), J Ball, K Spillett, P Barnes, A Colettl.
Also Present: County Cllr Bobby Bennett, District Councillor Sarah Pugh, Abbie Lee (Clerk) and one member of the public.

- 1. Welcome by the Chair:** The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that the meeting is being recorded.
- 2. Apologies**
Cllr Slater sent apologies. Cllrs resolved to approve their reasons for absence.
- 3. Declarations of Interests**
There were no declarations of interest.
- 4. Minutes**
The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 7th January 2026 were approved as a true and accurate record and were duly signed by the Chair.
- 5. Public Forum**
There were no comments or questions from members of the public.
- 6. County, District and Parish Councillors' Reports**
 - 6.1 The following County Councillor report was received from County Cllr Bobby Bennet:
County Elections will take place in May. Boundaries changing but Stansfield will still come under the Clare ward.
Suffolk County Council Highways were filling potholes quickly but more are appearing rapidly. Reporting by members of the public using the SCC online Reporting Tool is encouraged.
Cllr Bennett said she would examine her current locality budget to find some contribution towards Speed Indicator Devices (SID) for Stansfield, but if elected again in May, might be able to give a more generous sum.
 - 6.2 The following District Council report was received from District Cllr Sarah Pugh:
Still awaiting to hear on government reorganisation.
It is believed 2027 District Council elections will not go ahead, as there will be elections for the Unitary Council with view to them being a shadow authority, meaning there will be County Cllrs, District Cllrs & Unitary Councillors for one year. However, the Unitary Councillors won't have any powers as will be learning/shadowing.
New refuse bins are now being delivered for the new system being introduced in June. Some potential problems for residents were discussed.
 - 6.3 Report already circulated about the Parish Council (PC) meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) . Cllr P Barnes also attended an online forum with the PCC and Chief Constable and questioned both about creating a better way for community bodies, like our

PC, to report Threats to a Community, as they develop. No direct answer was given, but Cllr Barnes is following this up.

A court case involving the alleged killing of over 30 sheep by dogs in July last year has been referred by Ipswich Magistrates to Ipswich Crown Court for a Pleas and Directions (preliminary) Hearing on 30th March 2026

7. Planning and Development

7.1 Planning application DC/25/1871/HH Laurel Bank Farmhouse, Assington Green, Stansfield, CO10 8LY. Clerk to write to planning officer and put on record that residents' and Parish Council's concerns were not addressed regarding size and scale of the building.

Planning application DC/26/0219/LB, Lower Thatch Cottage, Plough Hill, Stansfield, Suffolk, CO10 8LT. Listed buildings consent. Stansfield Parish Council to Support Listed Buildings Officer decision/recommendation.

Planning application DC/26/0218/HH Lower Thatch Cottage, Plough Hill, Stansfield, Suffolk, CO10 8LT

7.2 A discussion took place on the proposed new Forest City between Newmarket and Haverhill. A petition being organised by our MP Nick Timothy calling this an insane proposal is being circulated.

8. Community Matters

8.1 The following update on Assets of Community Value was received:

Append the list of Community Assets to the Parish Council Asset Register, stating that these are assets the community finds valuable. Need to ascertain how the list and its items are formally registered. Investigations are under way to check if some of these items may be able to be registered formally as Assets of Community Value which, in the event of any of them coming for sale, would give the community a period of grace to possibly organise funds to try to purchase them.

8.2 The following update on the Old Chapel Churchyard was received: One gate is left to finish and is need of a lot of work, which Cllr Ball is organising. Need to consider how to make them theft-proof.

8.3 No dates have yet been issued by West Suffolk Council Co-ordinators for more local training on rest centre management.

8.4 The following update on speeding in the village was received:

Cllrs authorised the Clerk to look into funding for a Speed Indicator Device and ascertain ongoing costs. Also to look into village gateways.

8.5 Cllrs noted Appendix 1 of the Agenda regarding village 20 mph limits.

8.6 The following update on the village sign was received: it is being refurbished by the Good Neighbours community group. A resident has offered to make a new crossrail and post free of charge as long as materials are covered.

8.7 The following update on the grit bin was received: examine properly and add to next year's budget if it needs replacing.

8.8 Summer Fun Day 2026: The Village Hall was unavailable for the preferred date of 18th July, so Saturday 15th August has been booked when a core of volunteers is available to run the event. However, more volunteers are still needed.

8.9 Cllrs noted the Summer Fun Day ius schedule for 15th August 12pm – 3pm.

8.10 Cllrs noted the date of the Spring Coffee Morning: 14th March 10am – 12pm.

8.11 The following update on the 2026 Village Tidy Up was received: Equipment has been delivered. To consider purchasing equipment for future picks. Still need more volunteers.

8.12 Cllrs approved for the PC website to host a page to replace the village website. The page is to provide links to village groups and there is an option to upload old editions of the Parish Pump.

9. Clerk's Report

- 9.1 Cllrs noted that it was recently brought to the Clerk's attention that Parish Councils are no longer permitted to use personal cloud storage plans for Council documents and must use business plans. This will make sharing documents much easier. Cost details given in item 10.5.
- 9.2 Cllrs noted the Clerk attended a Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) online training course on internal audit.
- 9.3 Cllrs noted the Clerk attended an SALC online training course for Assertion 10 compliance.
- 9.4 Cllrs noted the Clerk attended a SALC online training course for Annual Meetings.
- 9.5 Cllrs noted the Clerk responded to correspondence from residents on PRow issues and the village sign.
- 9.6 Cllrs noted the Clerk has started CiLCA training.
- 9.7 Cllrs noted the Clerk reported fly tipping on Thurston Lane, which has not been dealt with.
- 9.8 Cllrs noted the Clerk responded to a resident enquiry concerning the change in Clerk's email address and the use of non-gov.uk email accounts by Parish Councillors.
- 9.9 Cllrs noted the Clerk is looking into SID device options.

10. RFO Report

- 10.1 Cllrs noted application forms for Cllrs Spillett and Ball have been submitted to Unity Trust bank.
- 10.2 Cllrs resolved to approve the year to date budgeted expenditure versus actual expenditure. The Clerk was thanked for her efforts to reduce the cost of some IT and other services, therefore helping to keep the parish precept rate as low as possible.
- 10.3 Cllrs resolved to approve the bank reconciliation from 1st April 2025 – 31st January 2026.
- 10.4 Cllrs reviewed and approved the schedule of payments and items of expenditure for January and to authorise the Chairman to sign.
- 10.5 Cllrs resolved to approve an annual Microsoft OneDrive Cloud Storage plan for £45.60 plus VAT per year and for the Clerk to purchase and be reimbursed.
- 10.6 Cllrs resolved to approve the Clerk to change the accounting software when the current Scribe contract ends in favour of a cheaper alternative called EasyPC, which is £60 per year (VAT exempt) with the first three months free, which would be a saving of £105 based on the 2025 renewal cost for Scribe.

11. Governance

- 11.1 Cllrs noted that in minute 07/01/2026 11.6, it was stated that no VAT would be applied to audit fees. This is incorrect and the standard rate of 20% applies.
- 11.2 Cllrs resolved to approve the SALC Internal Audit Letter of Engagement.
- 11.3 Cllrs reviewed and approved the Equity & Diversity Policy, noting there have been no changes.
- 11.4 Cllrs reviewed and approved the Risk Assessment & Statement of Internal Controls, noting only small changes have been made.
- 11.5 Cllrs reviewed the NALC Model Code of Conduct, noting there are no changes but that all Cllrs should be familiar with this document.
- 11.6 Cllrs reviewed and approved the Scheme of Delegation.
- 11.7 Cllrs reviewed and approved the Social Media Policy.
- 11.8 Cllrs reviewed and approved the Document Retention & Disposal Policy.
- 11.9 Cllrs reviewed and approved the Safeguarding Policy.
- 11.10 Cllrs reviewed and approved the Procedure for Public Session Policy.

12. Agenda Items for Future Meetings & Any Other Business

To consider the question of how Council News and affairs can be published more effectively. Cllr P Barnes to write a proposal.

To receive an update on the defibrillator.

Volunteer Emergency Service volunteers required.

Meeting closed at 8.21 pm

Dates of remaining 2026 meetings:

Wednesday 13th May: Annual Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday 19th May: Annual Parish Meeting

Wednesday 9th September: Parish Council Meeting

Signed: Chairman Date.....