

WESTLETON PARISH COUNCIL

The unapproved minutes of a **Meeting of Westleton Parish Council** held on
Monday 27 July 2026 at 19:30 in Westleton Village Hall.

Richard Green
Clerk to Westleton Parish Council

AGENDA

26/87 Attendance and apologies for absence

In attendance

Cllr Alexander
Cllr Banks
Cllr Fisher
Cllr French
Cllr Holmes
Cllr Johnson
Cllr Overton
Cllr Shearme
Cllr Turner (Chair)
Cllr Watson
Cllr Webber

Apologies for absence accepted from

None

Also present

District Councillor Paul Ashton
Cllr Debbie Hughes, Bramfield and Thorington Parish Council
Cllr Jasmine Backhouse, Darsham Parish Council
Cllr Heather Ballantine, Darsham Parish Council

26/88 Declaration of interests

Cllr Fisher and Cllr Holmes declared pecuniary interests in respect of item 26/96(c), and Cllr Watson declared a pecuniary interest in respect of items 26/94(c), to which his standing dispensation applies, and 26/94(g).

26/89 Reports from County Councillor and District Councillor

District Councillor Paul Ashton reported that the bin emptying completion rate is improving, and that although call centre waiting times are long, the wait time is reducing. He spoke briefly about the High Lodge and Priory Paddocks planning applications. Cllr Shearme queried the non-emptying of dog waste bins, which Cllr Ashton suggested to report online – Clerk to action.

26/90 Public forum

Cllr Hughes of Bramfield and Thorington Parish Council, and Cllr Backhouse and Cllr Ballantine of Darsham Parish Council were in attendance to share their councils' views in respect of the High Lodge Leisure / Darsham Resort planning application (item 26/93(a)).

Cllr Hughes cited a raft of concerns regarding scale, the environment, noise, and lighting. Their principal concern is the A12 / A144 junction, noting that the number of people due to be accommodated at High Lodge will be far higher than population of their entire parish. They also noted that the biodiversity and ecology study does not mention any rare species, and that in sum, the application represents a complete change of the environment.

Cllr Ballantine stated that Darsham Parish Council was drafting its final response and that they had picked up on some positives in the application, such as transport, noting that a bus will go around the site to pick people up. They noted that there is no clarification regarding access / transport to welfare facilities. They further stated that most lighting is low-level bollard lighting, and that the high-level lighting may be too excessive in height at 5 metres. They are very concerned about the increase in parking provision, and mentioned that most workers will leave on a Friday night / Saturday morning and return on Sundays. They are, however, pleased to see a Phase 2 post-Sizewell plan, which would return to the original planning conditions in terms of occupancy, among other things.

Cllr Turner also noted the increase in parking spaces from 440 to 580, and will raise a question at the next Northern Transport Forum regarding the lack of on-site facilities and access / transport arrangements in respect of welfare facilities. Cllr Fisher questioned the impact on Darsham's dark skies village status. Cllr Backhouse stated that the application site is not in Darsham and far enough away that its impact should be minimal.

26/91 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2026 were **agreed by all** to be an accurate record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chair.

26/92 Matters arising from the minutes

Nothing not already included on the agenda for this meeting.

26/93 Planning

- a) **Planning applications** – The following applications were discussed and responses **agreed** as indicated below:

Details
Consulted by: East Suffolk District Council Planning ref.: DC/26/2184/FUL Details: Pond Bridge and Pond Dipping Platforms and Island Mere Hide Access Ramp Site: RSPB Minsmere Link: https://publicaccess.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=TGIWCAQXJDB00 Response deadline: 6 August 2026 Response: No objections
Consulted by: East Suffolk District Council Planning ref.: DC/26/1655/VOC Details: Variation of Condition Nos. 1B BNG, 2, 4, 5(b) and 5(c) of DC/24/2824/FUL - Conversion of redundant agricultural buildings to provide a single dwelling house and erection of new cartlodge. 1B - BNG - Altered that the works are to be carried out in accordance to the Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy. 2. Amended drawings. 4. Amended condition relating to discharge of water from the drive to the highway. 5b. Works are to be carried out in accordance to the conservation strategy. 5c Removal of this element of the condition, Heritage Asset Assessment. Site: Lymballs Farm, Lymballs Lane, Westleton, IP17 3QH Link: https://publicaccess.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=TEJZPGQXIJH00 Response deadline: 4 August 2026 Response: No objections
Consulted by: East Suffolk District Council Planning ref.: DC/26/1120/VOC Details: Variation of Condition Nos. 1, 3, 8 & 19 of DC/23/3455/VOC - Variation of Condition No 2 of DC/20/3142/FUL - Redevelopment of golf course and vacant paddock land for the siting of 170 lodges, 3 tree houses, new Facilities Building, Maintenance and Housekeeping Building, car parking and associated highway works - Reduce the size of the Central Facilities Building - 1. Drawings and documents - 3. Occupancy - 8. Ecology - 19. Main Facilities Building Site: High Lodge Leisure, Darsham Road, Hinton, Blythburgh Link: https://publicaccess.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=TCCT1GQX06O00 Response deadline: 12 August 2026 Discussion: Cllr Johnson noted that the application had been approved in 2021, but there was a wealth of new documentation that needs to be reviewed. He proposed calling a meeting of the Planning, Housing and Infrastructure Committee before the drafting and submission of a response.

- b) **Four Winds, Bakers Lane** – The Clerk stated that there had been no progress and that the solicitors had been chased by both parties.
- c) **Local Plan scoping consultation** – Cllr Turner has drafted and circulated proposed responses, and it was **agreed** to submit these. The Clerk reminded councillors that they can respond to the consultation in the capacity of a member of the public.

Councillors' portfolio reports were circulated prior to the meeting (Appendix 1 to the minutes), with further discussion and questions as outlined below:

- (a) **Common** – Nothing further to report.
- (b) **Community Field** – There was some discussion regarding the vandalism to the play tractor. It was agreed not to repair this, and Cllr Holmes will remove a protruding bolt. Cllr Fisher questioned the gap in hedge and noted that pirri pirri burr is still present – Cllr Holmes will address both points. Cllr Overton has been exploring making more use of the adult gym equipment and informal walking football, and noted that the pétanque court is being used and enjoyed.
- (c) **Allotments** – Cllr Watson noted that 58 cubic metres of water had been used to date. It was **agreed by all** to pay the additional cost for registering additional members in the National Allotment Society for this year, and the Clerk will make arrangements. Cllr Banks raised fire concerns, and Cllr Fisher noted that hydrocarbons should be prohibited on site. The Clerk will advise plot-holders to exercise extreme caution during this hot and dry weather.
- (d) **Affordable housing project** – There was a lengthy discussion on this item. It was ultimately agreed that the Parish Council is not a party to this project and therefore has no power by which it can respond. Nevertheless, the Clerk will draft a response for circulation, stating that the Parish Council is sympathetic to the standpoints of the parties, and hopes that the matter can be brought to a swift resolution.
- (e) **Trees and footpaths** – Nothing further to report.
- (f) **Village Hall** – Cllr Banks requested to defer consideration of a financial contribution to the Men's Breakfast initiative to a later agenda pending further information.
- (g) **NSIPs** – Cllr Turner added that he had had a meeting with the Sizewell C Transport Manager and will circulate a report from that meeting. Works in the village are due to take place in October, with water works on Reckford Road requiring a 14-week road closure from November to March.
- (h) **Wellbeing** – Cllr Overton reported that a wellbeing event will provisionally take place on 3 October. Cllr Banks stated that the Village Hall may be available at no charge, and he will check. It was, however, **agreed in principle** that the council would cover the cost of hiring the hall for the event.
- (i) **War Memorial** – Cllr Alexander will give the new bench a coat of Danish oil.
- (j) **New Year Fireworks event** – Cllr Shearme reported that most volunteers were unavailable for training. The Clerk will continue to look at insurance conditions and this item will be revisited on a later agenda.

Council administration

- (a) **Council structure and transparency**
 - i. The Clerk presented proposals for an overhaul of the structure of the Parish Council's portfolios / working groups and sub-committees to facilitate better compliance with the transparency code as recommended in the internal audit, to improve public participation and consultation, and to reduce the burden on full council meetings. In summary, the proposals are to streamline the current 12 sub-committees, portfolios and working groups into two committees and two steering groups. The proposals were discussed at length, and it was ultimately agreed to **approve** the proposed structure on a nine-month trial basis. The Clerk will publish the new council structure on the website.
 - ii. The circulated proposed terms of reference for the Parish Council's new steering groups and committees were **approved as amended** during the meeting; the amendments being:
 - To rename "Green Assets and Recreation" to "Green Spaces and Recreation".
 - To add that either the Chair or Vice-Chair of the full council must be a standing member on the Finance and Administration Committee and the Planning, Housing and Infrastructure Committee.

- To add “emergency planning” and “archives” as areas within the Community Engagement Steering Group.
- To add clarification in the terms of reference for the Planning, Housing and Infrastructure Committee on how planning application responses are circulated to councillors prior to submission.

Committee chairs, steering group leads, and councillor membership in the committees and steering groups were **agreed** as follows:

- **Planning, Housing and Infrastructure Committee**
Cllr Johnson (Chair), Cllr Alexander, Cllr Fisher, Cllr Turner, Cllr Watson.
- **Finance and Administration Committee**
Cllr Webber (Chair), Cllr Alexander, Cllr Holmes, Cllr Johnson, Cllr Turner.
- **Green Spaces and Recreation Steering Group**
Cllr Shearme (Lead), Cllr Fisher, Cllr French, Cllr Holmes, Cllr Overton, Cllr Watson.
- **Community Engagement Steering Group**
Cllr Banks (Lead), Cllr Overton, Cllr Turner.

The Clerk will publish the terms of reference for and councillor membership in the new committees and steering groups on the website.

- (b) **Council meeting timings and schedule** – It was **agreed by all** to adopt the proposed schedule for council meetings through to the end of 2027. In summary, the council will now meet at 19:00 on the second Monday of each month, excluding August. The Clerk will ensure that the new schedule is published.

26/96

Council finances

- (a) **Bank reconciliation for Q1 2026-27** – The bank reconciliation for Q1 of the 2026-27 financial year (Appendix 2 to the minutes) was verified and signed by Cllr Webber and duly noted by the council.
- (b) **Financial position and performance** – The Parish Council’s financial position and performance against the budget correct as at 25 July (Appendix 3 to the minutes) were noted.
- (c) **Payments and receipts** – It was **agreed by all** to approve the schedule of payments for authorisation (Appendix 4 to the minutes). Payments received since the last meeting were noted.
- (d) **Reserves Policy** – It was **agreed by all** to adopt the circulated draft Reserves Policy. The Clerk will publish the policy on the website.

26/97

Correspondence to the Parish Council

The Clerk noted an enquiry from the Beccles Historic Walks Group, which is intending to arrange a walking tour of the village on Monday 26 April. The Clerk has put the group in contact with a number of representatives in the village who may be able to assist.

Cllr Turner reported on a meeting he attended with the MP for the area regarding local bus provisions.

26/98

Questions to the Chair / Items for the next agenda

The following items were proposed for the next agenda:

- Discussion on archives.

26/99

Date of next meeting

The Parish Council will next meet at 19:00 on Monday 14 September.

****Meeting closed 21:54****