

WESTLETON PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of a meeting of Westleton Parish Council held on
Monday 24 November 2025 at 19:30 in Westleton Village Hall.

Richard Green
Clerk to Westleton Parish Council

MINUTES

25/201 Attendance and apologies for absence

In attendance

Cllr Alexander
Cllr Banks
Cllr Fisher
Cllr Johnson (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Overton
Cllr Shearme
Cllr Turner (Chair)
Cllr Watson
Cllr Webber

Apologies for absence accepted from

Cllr French
Cllr Holmes

Also present

Cllr Ashton, East Suffolk Council (minute 25/201 to 25/203 inclusive)
Cllr Richard Smith, Suffolk County Council (minute 25/201 to 25/203 inclusive)
1 member of the public

25/202 Declaration of interests

Cllr Watson declared an interest in relation to minutes 25/207(c) (Allotments) and 25/212 (in respect of LionLink).

25/203 Pre-meeting reports from County Councillor and District Councillor

Cllr Smith reported that he remains frustrated by roadworks and will be meeting with Steve Merry for an update on Friday 28 November. Cllr Smith also cited continued frustration regarding the local government finance settlement due on 15 December, the timing of which he stated is not ideal. The county council's budget plans will be made public at the end of December. Cllr Smith stated there is continued uncertainty regarding the holding of county council elections in May 2026, with a definitive answer expected at the end of January 2026. Cllr Smith believes that the financial situation is as tough as it has ever been during his time as a county councillor.

Cllr Turner asked that Cllr Smith consult Steve Merry regarding the traffic avoiding the A12 traffic lights at Darsham by rat-running through Westleton using Darsham Road. Cllr Turner further asked Cllr Smith to enquire about variable speed limits on the A12 by way of LED signage to enable speed to be increased at night or when no works are taking place. Cllr Turner stated Steve Merry has not responded to these enquiries so far.

The member of the public present raised a concern regarding convoys of large HGVs in early morning. Cllr Smith echoed their concerns.

Cllr Ashton reported that the district council also faces a challenging budget, with East Suffolk being one of 68 districts in the country due to receive less funding from central government, with Cllr Smith stating this is reported to be up to £10 million less. Cllr Ashton stated that he believes government is of the view that East Suffolk is well-off and that this is an attempt to redistribute wealth. Cllr Ashton stated that there is likely to be a recruitment freeze or reduced rate of recruitment while attempting to uphold the same level of service. Cllr Ashton further stated that the implementation of a new recycling system comes with additional costs.

Cllr Ashton reported on a meeting relating to the B1125 road and stated that exploratory works on the B1387 will take place in December, with physical construction work expected to commence in February/March 2026. Consequently, he reported that the earliest that the B1125 at Blythburgh will be closed would be April 2026 and that improvements to the B1387 are required first. He stated, therefore, that there is still time for monitoring.

Cllr Ashton mentioned Essex and Suffolk Water's proposals for a new reservoir at Sibton and recycling facility at Lowestoft, as well as new pipelines to connect them.

Cllr Turner reported that the B1125 Reckford Road will be closed for two months for water mains replacement works at the end of January 2026, which will also have an impact on traffic movements more widely.

Cllr Smith stated the need for greater co-ordination, but reported that this does not seem to happen.

Both Cllr Smith and Cllr Ashton stated that the consultation on Local Government Reform is now live.

*****Cllr Smith and Cllr Ashton both left the meeting*****

25/204 Public forum

Nothing raised.

25/205 Minutes of previous meeting

It was **agreed** that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2025 be accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair.

25/206 Matters arising from the minutes

The Clerk provided an update on correspondence with Wave Utilities regarding a previous bill. Wave Utilities is unable to offer any reduction and the bill stands. The matter is now closed.

25/207 Councillors' portfolio reports

- (a) **Common** – Cllr Shearme reported that a recent work party was rained off, but that he did the work that the work party would have done with the help of a member of the public. Three quotes for pond clearance have been obtained and circulated with work to take place in the new year. Cllr Shearme reported that the firebreaks need re-doing and that paths need to be cut through heather, with these works needing to be completed before bird nesting season starts in early February. A quote for the pond works of £500 was **accepted** and it was **agreed** to proceed with these works.

It was **agreed** to discuss expenditure further at an extraordinary meeting to be held on Monday 15 December (see minutes 25/215(a) v. and vii. and minute 25/217).

- (b) **Community field** – Cllr Shearme reported that the Community Field grass is being eaten away by chafer bugs and that this needs to be addressed. He is struggling to get multiple quotes and stated that the work needs to be done in spring. Cllr Webber requested a second opinion regarding the chafer bugs. It was stated by several members that the neighbouring landowner needs to be consulted if herbicides and chemicals are to be used. Cllr Alexander has received an estimate for replacing the posts at the playground of under £2,000. It was **agreed** for the parish council to order the parts needed in order to reclaim VAT. Cllr Banks agreed to replace the hinges on sheds. The Clerk will continue to follow up with Natural England regarding donation arrangements.

It was **agreed** to discuss expenditure further at an extraordinary meeting to be held on Monday 15 December (see minutes 25/215(a) v. and vii. and minute 25/217).

- (c) **Allotments** – Cllr Watson reported that all 24 plots have now been taken. He proposed to make a further 6 or 8 beds, which was **agreed**. This would come with an additional cost in terms of fencing (£392.37 for an additional 29 metres of 5ft-high rabbit fencing or £578 for 6ft-high deer fencing). The cost of gates was also discussed. It was **agreed** to install deer fencing and to seek further clarification on whether the rabbit-proofing would be dug into the ground.

It was **agreed** to discuss expenditure further at an extraordinary meeting to be held on Monday 15 December (see minutes 25/215(a) v. and vii. and minute 25/217).

It was **agreed** for the Clerk to proceed to contact Essex and Suffolk Water and to pay the application fee of £543.60 (incl. VAT) for the installation of a water supply.

- (d) **Affordable housing** – Cllr Fisher reported that there are continued delays. Both he and Cllr Turner will continue to push for progress.

- (e) **Trees and footpaths** – Cllr Webber had nothing to report. Cllr Turner mentioned a concern raised at the parish council surgery regarding footpaths at the Common, and stated that this matter has been dealt with by Cllr Shearme. It was **agreed** that going forwards, Cllr Webber will be included in circulars regarding planning applications that relate to trees.

- (f) A portfolio was discussed for Cllr Overton. She stated that she has an interest in pursuing community wellbeing, with a view to promoting the use of adult fitness equipment, and that she would like to be involved in the affordable housing portfolio.

25/208 Strategic Objectives for 2026

The Clerk introduced a discussion on initiating a village survey with a view to formulating Strategic Objectives to guide the work and budget of the parish council in line with SALC and NALC recommendations. It was

agreed to form working group at the January meeting with broad community involvement, including representatives from the Village Hall.

25/209 Future of the White Horse Inn

Cllr Turner reported that a village meeting will be held at 19:00 on Monday 1 December. The meeting will introduce the offer from Chestnut Group and will seek to form a community group or committee to explore this offer further. Several questions and concerns were raised, and these will be addressed at the meeting.

25/210 Fireworks and bonfire

Cllr Shearme reported that a bonfire meeting had been held and that he is awaiting posters. Volunteers are needed to help build a frame for the bonfire.

25/211 Defibrillator

It was reported that the defibrillator is not working. It was **agreed** to purchase battery and pads for the defibrillator and to register it on the national circuit. The cost of this is estimated to be £367 and will be reported on further at the extraordinary meeting on Monday 15 December (see minutes 25/215(a) v. and vii. and minute 25/217) for further consideration. There is the potential for a second defibrillator at the bus shelter.

25/212 Sizewell C and NSIPs

Cllr Turner reported on a Northern Transport Forum meeting attended by Cllr Webber. Concerns have been raised regarding rat-running on Darsham Road and speeding on the B1125 between Blythburgh and Westleton. Cllr Turner stated that he will further request speed monitoring. Cllr Banks raised requests on behalf of residents to have signs on the roads entering village to state that there are speed cameras.

Cllr Turner stated that the SeaLink PINS examination is underway and that the parish council's first submission has been made. There now follows six months of hearings and Cllr Turner will circulate any relevant information that is made available. Cllr Turner has been asked to join steering committee of the East Suffolk Community Energy Partnership which should enable better access to information.

Cllr Turner further reported that the LionLink consultation is due to start in January and that National Grid has offered to hold a consultation session in Westleton in January.

25/213 Planning

The following planning matters were discussed and it was agreed to issue the consultee responses as stated below:

Consulted by	Planning ref.	Details	Response
East Suffolk Council	DC/25/4210/TCA	<i>1no. Silver birch (marked on plan) – Fell</i> Site: Mulberry, Darsham Road, Westleton, IP17 3AH Link: https://publicaccess.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=T504M9QX07400 Response deadline: 25 November	No objection
East Suffolk Council	DC/25/4204/FUL	<i>Single storey rear extension</i> Site: 1 Clematis Close, Westleton, IP17 3BN Link: https://publicaccess.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=T4YDX8QXMMM00 Response deadline: 1 December	No objection
East Suffolk Council	DC/25/4284/TCA	<i>Fell two leylandii</i> Site: Lucarnes, Mill Street, Westleton, IP17 3BD Link: https://publicaccess.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=T5AVV5QXMQ900 Response deadline: 2 December	No objection

East Suffolk Council	DC/25/4270/FUL	<i>Revised scheme to DC/25/1829/FUL. Phased development for the erection of two new dwellings and the alteration and extension to Stranton</i> Site: Stranton, Darsham Road, Westleton, IP17 3AH Link: https://publicaccess.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=T5920VQX07400 Response deadline: 8 December	Reiterate the parish council's previous concerns regarding the location of vehicular access on the corner.
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25/214

Council administration

- (a) **Community engagement** – Cllr Banks proposed setting up an email mailing list and producing an email circular from the parish council in adherence with GDPR guidelines in order to improve community engagement. Cllr Banks also requested that the parish council's minutes also be circulated in this way and Cllr Johnson suggested that this be done by way of a link in the email circular. Cllr Fisher stated that the Emergency Plan could also be incorporated as part of this venture. Cllr Banks further requested that the Village Hall be included as a rolling agenda item. Cllr Banks' proposals were all **agreed**.
- (b) **Meeting venue** – The Clerk reported that the parish council's January meeting will take place in the village hall foyer, with the other meetings for the year to take place in the main hall.
- (c) **IT matters** – The Clerk reported that the accessibility audit had been passed and that any issues identified had been rectified. The Clerk further reported a cost increase in respect of gov.uk email addresses to £27 (excl. VAT) per email address, per year. It was **agreed** to proceed with ordering the email addresses.

25/215

Council finances

- (a) **Finance sub-committee** – Cllr Webber proposed the recommendations of the finance sub-committee following its meeting on 12 November, with decisions made by the full council as follows:
- Savings** – It was **agreed** to effect a transfer from the current account to the savings account to leave £25,000 in the current account.
 - Bank** – It was **agreed** to change banking provider from Barclays to Unity Trust.
 - Accounting software** – It was **agreed** to adopt accounting software at the time the Clerk deems appropriate.
 - Signatories** – It was **agreed** to add Cllr Webber as a signatory to the bank accounts with Unity Trust.
 - Budget 2026/27** – It was **agreed** to defer the consideration of the draft budget for 2026/27 to the extraordinary meeting on Monday 15 December pending further input on expenditure from council members.
 - Precept 2026/27** – It was **agreed** to defer the consideration of the precept for 2026/27 to the extraordinary meeting on Monday 15 December pending the approval of the draft budget for 2026/27.
- (b) **Financial position and bank balances** – The parish council's financial position and income and expenditure correct as at 19 November 2025 were circulated prior to the meeting and were noted. Bank balances as at 19 November 2025 were noted as follows:

Current	£59,565.18
Savings	£50,495.37
Total bank balance	£110,060.48

(c) Invoices and payments – The following were **approved** for payment:

From	Details	Amount	VAT	Total	Power
Toilets+	Provision of toilets on Community Field 26/9 – 3/11	£150.44	£30.09	£180.53	PHA 1936, s.87
HJG Gardening	War Memorial grass cutting 8/10 – 31/10, shrub reduction	£415.00	NIL	£415.00	WM(LAP)A 1923, s.1
SALC	Training for clerk Training for Cllr Overton	£201.00	£40.20	£241.20	LGA 1972, s. 137
Community Action Suffolk	Accessibility audit	£90.00	£18.00	£108.00	LGA 1972, s.142
Westleton Gardeners	Village planting	£247.77	NIL	£247.77	LG(MP)A 1976, s.19

25/216 Correspondence to the council

The Clerk circulated key correspondence prior to the meeting.

Cllr Turner noted that the church has requested further funds and proposed to defer further discussion on this to the extraordinary meeting to be held on Monday 15 December (minute 25/217).

25/217 Date of next meeting

As Chair, Cllr Turner took the opportunity to call an extraordinary meeting to take place at 7pm on Monday 15 December 2025.

The parish council next meets for an ordinary meeting on Monday 26 January 2026.

*** Meeting closed 21:36 ***

Signed: _____

Date: 15 December 2025

Cllr Andrew Turner, Chair, Westleton Parish Council