

Acton Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting Held at 7:00 pm on Wednesday 15th July 2026 at Acton Village Hall

Present: Cllrs Christine Johnson, Katie McSweeney, Merian Davis, Roberta Caradine, Steve Le Grys, Carol Dyer and Graham Round (Chairman)

In attendance: Abbie Lee (Clerk). There were no members of the public in attendance.

MINUTES

APOLOGIES

- 1 Cllr Antil sent his apologies. Cllrs **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** his reason for absence.
Cllr Gibbens sent his apologies. Cllrs **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** his reason for absence.

MINUTES

- 2 Cllrs **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** the minutes of the meeting held on 17th June 2026 and authorised the Chairman to **SIGN** as a true and accurate record of the meeting. **AIF.**

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest.
3.2 There were no written requests for a dispensation prior to the meeting.

CLERK'S REPORT

- 4.1 Cllrs **NOTED** the Clerk's report on significant matters not on the agenda and not already drawn to Cllrs' attention.
4.2 Cllrs **NOTED** the following actions taken under delegated powers since the last meeting:
Suffolk Tree Services were authorised to fell the dead tree on Jennens Way that overhangs the school grounds in accordance with section 5.18 of the Council's Financial Regulations at a cost of £1800 + VAT.

PUBLIC FORUM

- 5.1 No County Councillor report was received.
5.2 District Councillor report was received via email in advance of the meeting and is available on the Parish Council website.
District Councillors are to investigate Acton's position regarding any housing allocations and report back.
Parish Council raised concerns with District Councillors that BDC are slowly shifting the cost of emptying of litter and dog waste bins onto Parish Councils. District Councils are responsible for street cleaning.
5.3 There were no members of the public present.

PLANNING

- 6.1 There were no new planning applications.
6.2 Cllrs **NOTED** any planning validations, parish council recommendations and local planning authority decisions made since the last meeting.

ENVIRONMENT

- 7.1 Cllrs **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** Suffolk Tree Services as the supplier for the 2026 village Christmas Tree at £975 + VAT for 18ft Nordman fir with light installation, noting Cox's did not respond to the Clerk's requests to quote. **AIF**
7.2 Cllrs **NOTED** a new litter picker has been appointed and has commenced duties.

- 7.3 Cllrs **NOTED** that BDC's admin charge for booking the annual play inspections and sending the reports will increase from 10% of the inspection cost (£5.80 last year) to a flat fee of £25, also noting that this is still cheaper than if APC were to go direct to the Play Inspection Company.
- 7.4 Cllrs **AGREED** a working group for the Community Christmas Event. **AIF**
- 7.5 Cllrs **NOTED** the current streetlight electricity contract was due for renewal on 31st July, **REVIEWED** three quotes for three-year contracts and **ACCEPTED** Cardinal Energy as the supplier based on price. **AIF**

	Utility Aid		Cardinal Energy		SSE	
2026-27	£	1,308.09	£	1,167.57	£	1,187.40
2027-28	£	1,307.03	£	1,144.95	£	1,182.23
2028-29	£	1,323.53	£	1,158.60	£	1,203.01

- 7.6 Cllrs **NOTED** the Clerk attended the routine play area course conducted by the Play Inspection Company and passed the practical examination. Cllrs also **NOTED** it was advised by the Play Inspection Company that there should be a sign at the Lime Tree Green play area with the address or W3W location in the event the emergency services need to be called. Clerk to look into pricing.
- 7.7 Cllrs **DISCUSSED** options regarding poor service level of PRow maintenance by Suffolk County Council. Cllr Round recently walked the routes with the PRow manager and noted the vegetation was only cut 90 cm wide instead of the required 150 cm wide, the work quality was generally very poor, and some routes were impassable. More than ever, access to PRow is important to residents' wellbeing and health.

It was agreed that Cllr Round should continue communications with SCC PRow Management:

- Press for urgent overhead and side cutting back of growth at the top of the steps at PRow 30
 - Press for urgent overhead and side cutting back of growth along PRow 11 from Clayhall Lane/ProW 3 Waldingfield.
 - Ask PRow Team to confirm the date of Acton's second 2026 vegetation cutting and request that officers confirm a date when they will inspect the work quality.
 - For 2027, well in advance of the growing season, SCC to arrange with their contractors a process for a third vegetation cut of Acton's PRow routes.
 - Work with PRow Team to bring forward a programme to improve the surface and access of Acton's routes 2, 30 and 6.
 - SCC to confirm that route 16 is included in the current cutting schedule.
- 7.8 Cllrs **RECEIVED** the report regarding a tree at the Wildlife Reserve overhanging a neighbouring property: The tree to the right of the main entrance was visually inspected and it is considered not to be a nuisance. Clerk to advise the resident that the PC do not consider any action is required and will inform the resident that, at their cost, the council will permit them to engage a reputable tree surgeon to remove any overhanging branches back to the boundary and remove up to 2 meters from the height of the tree.
- 7.9 Cllrs **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** felling of decaying horse chestnut tree in the churchyard and note that due to the TPO, a replacement will need to be planted. Total cost to fell **£1,800** + VAT. Awaiting quote for replacement.
- 7.10 Any other Environmental or PRow issues: Labels on defibrillator cabinets with W3W location. Clerk to organise.

ACTON FIELD TRUST

8. Cllrs **RECEIVED** the following update from Acton Field Trust:
- 2024-25 self-assessment tax return has been filed with no tax liability to pay.
 - Next Acton Field Trust meeting is on 23rd July.

FINANCE

- 9.1 Cllrs **REVIEWED** and **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the schedule of payments and items of expenditure for June and **AUTHORISED** the Chairman to **SIGN** the schedule of payments. **AIF**
- 9.2 Cllrs **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the bank reconciliation at 30th June 2026. **AIF**
- 9.3 Cllrs **APPROVED** setting up a standing order for the litter picker's monthly invoice of £120 per month, consistent with the arrangements in place with the previous litter picker. **AIF**

GOVERNANCE

10.1 Cllrs **REVIEWED** and **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the following policies, noting there are no changes unless otherwise stated: **AIF**

a Privacy Policy

b Publication Scheme

c Training Policy

d Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy

e Reserves Policy, noting the following change in paragraph 4.1:

Previous: The current policy for the level of general reserves to be held by the Council is between **45%** and **65%** of annual precept (**£58,000 in 2025/26**) to cover 6 to 9 months running costs.

New: The current policy for the level of general reserves to be held by the Council is between **55%** and **75%** of annual precept (**£61,000 in 2026/27**) to cover 6 to 9 months running costs.

f Grievance Policy

g Disciplinary Policy

h Investment Strategy, noting the following change to paragraph 2:

Previous: The parish council's financial regulations encourage the parish council to consider an investment strategy (**clause 8.5**). The parish council should ideally limit funds in any one UK bank to £85,000 per bank in order to stay within the Financial Services Compensation Scheme guarantee which has been available to smaller local authorities since 2015

New: The parish council's financial regulations encourage the parish council to consider an investment strategy (**section 12.3**). The parish council should ideally limit funds in any one UK bank to £120,000 per bank in order to stay within the Financial Services Compensation Scheme guarantee which has been available to smaller local authorities since 2015 **and increased from £85,000 to £120,000 in December 2025**.

i Complaints Procedure

j Data Protection & Information Management Policy

k Subject Access Requests Policy, noting the addition of the following line:

Upon receipt of an SAR, the Council Will: (a) Check if the information requested is already publicly available (in accordance with Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (information accessible by other means)).

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)

11 Cllrs **RECEIVED** and **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the revised explanation of variances for the external audit report, noting the total income figure has been corrected and that despite not being required, the external auditor has requested an explanation regarding the difference in value of total assets between 2024-25 and 2025-26

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS OR ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12 Speedwatch Data:

January: 6 vehicles recorded speeding. 6 x Letter One sent by police

February: 4 vehicles recorded speeding. 3 x Letter One sent by police

March: 26 vehicles recorded speeding. 20 x Letter One sent by police and 1 x Letter Two

April: 50 vehicles recorded speeding. 42 x Letter One sent by police and 2 x Letter Two

Cllr Le Grys attended a Round Table event on flooding.

Meeting closed by the Chair at 7.46 pm

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 16th September 2026

SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

Payments made under delegated powers or Financial Regulation 6.8 since the last meeting:

▪ Cartridge Save: Ink Cartridges	£74.25
▪ Tesco: Batteries for handheld speed gun	£17.00
▪ Tesco: Printer paper	£4.90
▪ Fuel for Wildlife Reserve Machinery	£17.04

Payments authorised for settlement before the next meeting:

- Direct debits, standing orders and other contractual payments approved by the Council
- Salaries and HMRC payments
- Payments arising from previous Council decisions
- Payments authorised by the Clerk or Clerk and Chair under delegated powers or Financial Regulation 5.15

ALL PAYMENTS & RECEIPTS FOR JUNE 2026

Date	Description	Supplier / customer	Net	VAT	Total
09/06/2026	Interest Received	Lloyds Bus Bank Savings	37.84	0.00	37.84
01/06/2026	Litter Picker	Litter picker	-91.67	0.00	-91.67
01/06/2026	Homeworking Allowance	Clerk	-26.00	0.00	-26.00
04/06/2026	Streetlight maintenance	Pearce and Kemp	-19.50	-3.90	-23.40
09/06/2026	Mobile Phone	EE	-7.50	-1.50	-9.00
16/06/2026	Bank Charges	Lloyds Banking Group	-4.25	0.00	-4.25
17/06/2026	Pension	NEST	-282.50	0.00	-282.50
18/06/2026	Ink Cartridge	Cartridge Save	-74.25	-14.85	-89.10
22/06/2026	Paper and Batteries	Tesco	-18.25	-3.65	-21.90
22/06/2026	Fuel for Machinery	Karan Sudbury (BP Service)	-14.20	-2.84	-17.04
24/06/2026	Streetlight Electricity	SSE Energy Solutions	-70.85	-3.54	-74.39
25/06/2026	MS365	Microsoft Limited	-10.08	-2.02	-12.10
26/06/2026	2025-26 Audit Fee	Suffolk Association of Local	-342.00	-68.40	-410.40
26/06/2026	CiLCA Registration Fee	Society of Local Council Cl	-495.00	0.00	-495.00
26/06/2026	Meeting Room Hire	Acton Playing Fields and Vil	-24.00	0.00	-24.00
26/06/2026	Barrow Hill/High St Parking	Suffolk County Council	-1,582.06	0.00	-1,582.06
26/06/2026	SID Rotations	Leigh Martin/LM Groundcar	-100.00	0.00	-100.00
30/06/2026	Clerk Salary	Clerk	-1,357.79	0.00	-1,357.79
30/06/2026	Homeworking Allowance	Clerk	-26.00	0.00	-26.00
30/06/2026	Interest Received	Unity Trust	438.34	0.00	438.34

These payments were **AUTHORISED** at the Parish Council Meeting dated **15th July 2026**.

ABBREVIATIONS:

Cllr(s):	Councillor(s)	BDC:	Babergh District Council
TPO:	Tree Preservation Order	PRoW:	Public Right of Way
PC:	Parish Council		