

# Acton Parish Council

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## MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held at 7:00 pm on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2026 at Acton Village Hall

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

**In attendance:** Abbie Lee (Clerk), District Cllr Nunn, District Cllr Malvisi, County Cllr Faircloth Mutton, and three members of the public.

### APOLOGIES

- 1 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 15<sup>th</sup> July 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:
  - 'No Fires' sign made for the gate to the allotments.
  - **AUTHORISED** Suffolk Tree Services to remove some major dead wood on Jennens Way.
  - Instructed Suffolk Tree Services to clear PRow2 to make it safer for the resurfacing work.

### PUBLIC FORUM

- 5.1 The County Councillor report had been placed on the website. The following verbal report was also received:
  - Local Government Reform has been withdrawn in Suffolk but is under review for the other authorities. BDC elections will take place at the same time as the Parish Council elections in 2027. Norfolk and Suffolk are still in negotiation regarding the mayoral authority. Elections for this would be 2028 but could be brought forward to 2027. There would be a mayoral combined authority whereby the mayor would control strategic development. Mayors will have the power to introduce two new precepts: one for households and one for tourism tax.
  - Cllr Faircloth-Mutton is looking into the ongoing issues with reduction in bus service, cancellations and out of date bus timetables. The timetables are the responsibility of a County Council-employed contractor.
  - The EV charging points on Lambert Drive were mentioned by APC, as there does not seem to have been a public consultation and the project does not appear to have been thought through. Who is monitoring the usage?
  - Councillors asked the County Councillor to pass onto Cllr Hudson, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways, their dissatisfaction with the poor reliability of the bus services serving Acton. Several specifics were highlighted; the cancellation of services returning to Acton from Bury St Edmunds. After two subsequent journeys failed to pick up from the town centre, passengers had to hire taxis. Numerous cancelled journeys and a bus leaving from the wrong stand at Sudbury caused a panic.
  - It is difficult to find versions of the current bus timetable and those displayed at bus stops are out of date.
- 5.2 The District Councillor report had been displayed on the website. The following verbal report was also received:

- Devolution: It is still not confirmed if mayoral elections will take place. Hopefully more will be known by the end of September.
- NPPF is a complete rewrite and NOT an update. One of the biggest changes is that settlement boundaries will cease to exist if a settlement extends beyond it; it then becomes *Settlement*. All policies have changed.

- 5.3
- A member of the public commented on receiving a letter on trimming back their hedge.
  - A member of the public commented on poor visibility coming out of Barrow Hill.
  - A member of the public commented on the out-of-date bus timetables at the bus stops.
  - A member of the public commented on flooding on Tentree Road.
  - A member of the public commented on the PC sending a letter to the transport officer regarding the bus timetables and unreliable bus service.
  - Cllr Nunn commented how County Council funding has been significantly reduced for dealing with long term drainage issues.

## 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.
- a DC/26/03109 Unit 1, Woodview, Bull Lane Industrial Estate, Bull Lane, Acton. Under the scheme of delegation, the Clerk responded to the consultation, suggesting pedestrian access from the bus stop should be improved, as it is not safe for children.
- Councillors' attention was drawn to the *community engagement* session at the Masonic Hall in Sudbury on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2026 to seek the public's views for a proposal by Cilldara for a mixed development to include 750 new homes within the Parishes of Sudbury and Long Melford and backing onto Newmans Green Acton.

## ENVIRONMENT

- 7.1 Cllrs **RECEIVED** an update on PRow2: The work had been completed with positive feedback received from residents. Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich will cover cost of the replacement path to the vicarage garden.
- 7.2 Cllrs **RECEIVED** the report on the Lime Tree Green play area upgrade and **AGREED** the next steps were for the Clerk to proceed with the proposal and grant application with Babergh District Council. Subject to the successful grant application for £30K, Kompan will be contracted as the successful supplier. Total project cost £61,674.13 + VAT to be funded as per the project report. **AIF**.
- 7.3 Cllrs **CONSIDERED** that the annual rent for the Barrow Hill allotments from October 2026 should remain at the current rate of £7.50 per allotment. **AIF**.
- 7.4 Cllrs **NOTED** the new litter picker had been in post for five weeks now and sends weekly reports and photos to the Clerk. Positive feedback from residents has been received.
- 7.5 Cllrs **APPROVED** the quote from Hayden's Arboricultural Consultants to assess the health and safety of all trees for which the Parish Council is responsible, **NOTING** Suffolk Tree Services **AGREED** to do an annual visual inspection of all trees free of charge following the detailed plan and recommendations from Hayden's.
- The Council has a responsibility to maintain trees in its ownership in a safe condition. The plan going forward is to agree the frequency of in-depth surveys by a contractor like Hayden's and engage a tree surgeon to make visual annual inspections.
- Total cost of works quoted to survey is **£2,915 + VAT**. This takes APC over its hedges and trees budget for 2026-27 but there are sufficient funds in hedges and trees reserve. Cllrs **NOTED** 1.2 of the quote referred to church driveway instead of churchyard but the revised correct quote has been issued. **AIF**.
- 7.6 There were no other environmental rights of way issues or any works arising.
- 7.7 Cllrs **RECEIVED** the following update from Cllr Round on the PRow cutting schedule: There have been issues surrounding active birds' nests on PRow30; however, Highways have left the overgrown foliage in dangerous condition. Cllr Round is working with Highways officers to try to progress improvements to Footpath 2 (north of the churchyard) and Footpath 6 (from route 2 to Barrow Hill). This is a well-used route by residents for daily exercise.

## ACTON FIELD TRUST

- 8 Cllrs **RECEIVED** the following update report:

- Large trees that are starting to overhang a public footpath are going to be cut soon.
- Entering into a three-year cutting schedule for the field with the field being divided into three sections and cut on a rotational basis. Creative Scapes is the nominated contractor.
- Due to late filing of 2024-25 self-assessment with HMRC, a penalty of £1200 has been issued from HMRC. However, due to misleading communication from HMRC, the penalty is being appealed.
- Dividend received of £1,100.

## COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS EVENT

- 9 Cllrs **RECEIVED** the following update from the working group:  
 Still to arrange first meeting.  
 The owner of the VW Camper Van has confirmed availability for the event.  
 A Santa needs to be found.

## FINANCE

- 10.1 Cllrs **REVIEWED** and **APPROVED** schedule of payments and items of expenditure for July & August 2026 and **AUTHORISED** the Chairman to **SIGN** the schedule of payments. **AIF.**
- 10.2 Cllrs **REVIEWED** the bank reconciliation at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2026.
- 10.3 Cllrs **REVIEWED** the year to date actual expenditure compared to budgeted expenditure.
- 10.4 Cllrs **CONSIDERED** and **APPROVED** the following donations to local groups, all of which have supported Acton residents in the last year, according to the Council's Donations and Grants Policy and as **REVIEWED** by the Clerk and Cllr Johnson, **NOTING** that the following comes to a total of £3,300 and that the annual budget for 2026-27 is £3,500. Also **NOTING** Acton Playgroup has already received its donation this year: **AIF.**
- |   |                                                  |      |
|---|--------------------------------------------------|------|
| a | Acton Good Neighbours Scheme                     | £400 |
| b | Community Action Suffolk                         | £150 |
| c | Headway Suffolk                                  | £100 |
| d | Kernos Centre                                    | £200 |
| e | Lighthouse Womens Aid                            | £100 |
| f | Rural Coffee Caravan                             | £100 |
| g | 1 <sup>st</sup> Acton & Waldingfield Scout Group | £200 |
| h | St Nicholas Hospice                              | £350 |
| i | Sudbury 1 <sup>st</sup> Responders               | £300 |
| j | Suffolk Accident Rescue                          | £300 |
| k | Sudbury Citizens Advice                          | £300 |
| l | Sudbury Newstalk                                 | £150 |
| m | The Family and Community Network                 | £300 |
| n | Acton Playgroup                                  | £350 |
- 10.5 Cllrs **CONSIDERED** a request for a donation from the Quay Theatre in Sudbury, **NOTING** no fixed sum has been requested. Cllrs **AGREED** to donate £100. **AIF.**
- 10.6 Cllrs **REVIEWED & APPROVED** the [Asset Register 2026-09-06.xlsx](#). **AIF.**
- 10.7 Cllrs **APPROVED** the Community Christmas Event budget of **£1,300**. **AIF.**

## GOVERNANCE

- 11.1 Cllrs **NOTED** the April – June 2026 internal controls and bank reconciliation compliance review was completed and signed off by Cllr Johnson and the bank reconciliation signed by the Clerk in accordance with Financial Regulation 12.6.
- 11.2 Cllrs **NOTED** the renewal of the [Data Protection Certificate](#) for 2026-27.
- 11.3 Cllrs **NOTED** the contractual 2026/27 National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) pay award for the Clerk at 3.3%, applicable from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027 and backdated from 1st April 2026.
- 11.4 Cllrs **APPROVED** annual web accessibility testing to be carried out by Parish Council Websites at a cost of £150 annually, **NOTING** this is a legal requirement from 2026-27. **AIF.**
- 11.5 Cllrs **APPROVED** the **£11.43** increase in the Clear Councils insurance for 2026-27 (including premium increase, admin fee and insurance tax), **NOTING** the explanation from the insurer regarding the three-year fixed price given last year. **AIF.**

## **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)**

- 12.1 Cllrs **NOTED** the external auditor's Report & Certificate and the Notice of Conclusion of Audit.
- 12.2 Cllrs **NOTED** all actions from the full internal audit report have been completed, where possible, and signed off by Cllr Antill.
- 12.3 Cllrs **NOTED** the 2027 AGAR submissions will be completed via the digital portal.

## **ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS OR ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 13
- Map of dog bins for residents, trying to encourage dog owners/walkers to pick up and use the bins. There are a lot of residents not using the bins.
  - Update on bus service and timetables.
  - To look at work to be done in Wildlife Reserve.
  - Cllrs Antill to attend a SALC Superforum on 17<sup>th</sup> September.
  - July Community Speedwatch: 86 vehicles were recorded speeding: 75 x letter one sent, 1 x letter two sent, 1 x no further action.
  - To look at fire break safety measures for next summer.

**The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.44 pm.**

## **SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS**

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

|                                             |         |
|---------------------------------------------|---------|
| ▪ Amazon: Wi-Fi Extender                    | £14.99  |
| ▪ Amazon: Label Maker                       | £34.18  |
| ▪ Litter Picker: Admin Reimbursement        | 103.68  |
| ▪ Post Office: Postage                      | £3.64   |
| ▪ Suffolk Tree Services Removal of Deadwood | £360.00 |
| ▪ Auto Innovations: No fires sign           | £27.60  |
| ▪ LM Groundcare: Replace steps on playtower | £43.75  |

### **Payments AUTHORISE 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 JULY AND AUGUST 2026:

### JULY 2026

| Date       | Description                   | Supplier / customer            | Net        | VAT     | Total      |
|------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|---------|------------|
| 01/07/2026 | Q2 Grant for Charity Manager  | Acton Playing Fields and Villa | -1,375.00  | 0.00    | -1,375.00  |
| 02/07/2026 | Mileage for Reserve           | Clerk                          | -12.54     | 0.00    | -12.54     |
| 02/07/2026 | Mileage to training day       | Clerk                          | -39.60     | 0.00    | -39.60     |
| 02/07/2026 | Play Area Inspection Course   | Suffolk Association of Local C | -278.50    | -55.70  | -334.20    |
| 06/07/2026 | Streetlight maintenance       | Pearce and Kemp                | -19.50     | -3.90   | -23.40     |
| 09/07/2026 | Interest Received             | Lloyds Bus Bank Savings        | 39.16      | 0.00    | 39.16      |
| 09/07/2026 | Mobile Phone                  | EE                             | -7.50      | -1.50   | -9.00      |
| 14/07/2026 | Pension                       | NEST                           | -282.17    | 0.00    | -282.17    |
| 14/07/2026 | Wifi Extender                 | Amazon EU S arl UK Branch      | -12.49     | -2.50   | -14.99     |
| 20/07/2026 | Bank Charges                  | Lloyds Banking Group           | -4.25      | 0.00    | -4.25      |
| 22/07/2026 | Streetlight Electricity       | SSE Energy Solutions           | -65.35     | -3.27   | -68.62     |
| 22/07/2026 | Label Maker                   | Amazon EU S arl UK Branch      | -28.48     | -5.70   | -34.18     |
| 23/07/2026 | P30 Q1                        | HMRC                           | -1,009.45  | 0.00    | -1,009.45  |
| 27/07/2026 | Bank transfer                 | Acton Parish Council           | -10,000.00 | 0.00    | -10,000.00 |
| 27/07/2026 | Bank transfer                 | Acton Parish Council           | 10,000.00  | 0.00    | 10,000.00  |
| 27/07/2026 | Admin Costs for Litter Picker | Litter picker                  | -103.68    | 0.00    | -103.68    |
| 27/07/2026 | MS365                         | Microsoft Limited              | -10.08     | -2.02   | -12.10     |
| 27/07/2026 | Felling Jennens Way           | Suffolk Tree Services          | -1,800.00  | -360.00 | -2,160.00  |
| 30/07/2026 | Meeting Room Hire             | Acton Playing Fields and Villa | -66.00     | 0.00    | -66.00     |
| 30/07/2026 | Drop Kerbs Barrow Hill        | Suffolk County Council         | -2,652.03  | 0.00    | -2,652.03  |
| 30/07/2026 | Accounting Software           | BWP Creative                   | -292.20    | -58.44  | -350.64    |
| 30/07/2026 | Clerk Salary                  | Clerk                          | -1,356.58  | 0.00    | -1,356.58  |
| 30/07/2026 | SID Rotation                  | Leigh Martin/LM Groundcare     | -50.00     | 0.00    | -50.00     |
| 30/07/2026 | Homeworking Allowance         | Clerk                          | -26.00     | 0.00    | -26.00     |

### AUGUST 2026

| Date       | Description             | Supplier / customer        | Net        | VAT     | Total      |
|------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------|---------|------------|
| 03/08/2026 | PRoW2 Road Closure      | Suffolk County Council     | -1,000.00  | -200.00 | -1,200.00  |
| 04/08/2026 | Streetlight Maintenance | Pearce and Kemp            | -19.50     | -3.90   | -23.40     |
| 05/08/2026 | Stamps                  | Post Office                | -3.64      | 0.00    | -3.64      |
| 10/08/2026 | Interest Received       | Lloyds Bus Bank Savings    | 39.73      | 0.00    | 39.73      |
| 10/08/2026 | Mobile Phone            | EE                         | -7.50      | -1.50   | -9.00      |
| 18/08/2026 | Bank Charges            | Lloyds Banking Group       | -4.25      | 0.00    | -4.25      |
| 21/08/2026 | Pension                 | NEST                       | -282.17    | 0.00    | -282.17    |
| 24/08/2026 | Streetlight Electricity | SSE Energy Solutions       | -68.57     | -3.43   | -72.00     |
| 25/08/2026 | MS365                   | Microsoft Limited          | -10.08     | -2.02   | -12.10     |
| 28/08/2026 | Transfer to Savings     | Acton Parish Council       | -20,000.00 | 0.00    | -20,000.00 |
| 28/08/2026 | Transfer to Savings     | Acton Parish Council       | 20,000.00  | 0.00    | 20,000.00  |
| 28/08/2026 | Removal of deadwood     | Suffolk Tree Services      | -300.00    | -60.00  | -360.00    |
| 28/08/2026 | No Fires Sign           | Auto Innovations           | -23.00     | -4.60   | -27.60     |
| 28/08/2026 | External Auditor        | PKF Littlejohn             | -315.00    | -63.00  | -378.00    |
| 28/08/2026 | Engine Additive         | Ernest Doe and Sons Ltd    | -17.79     | -3.56   | -21.35     |
| 28/08/2026 | Salary                  | Clerk                      | -1,356.58  | 0.00    | -1,356.58  |
| 28/08/2026 | SID Rotation            | Leigh Martin/LM Groundcare | -50.00     | 0.00    | -50.00     |
| 28/08/2026 | Playtower Steps         | Leigh Martin/LM Groundcare | -43.75     | 0.00    | -43.75     |
| 28/08/2026 | Mileage No Fires Sign   | Clerk                      | -8.74      | 0.00    | -8.74      |

These payments were **AUTHORISED** at the Parish Council Meeting dated 16<sup>th</sup> September 2026.

Signed: .....Chairman Date.....