

Shimpling Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting of the Council

Monday 14th July 2025, 7:00pm at Shimpling Village Hall

Present:

Councillors: David Dunkley (Chair), Gerry Shrimpton, Mark Milhench, Laurence Rooke,

District Councillors: Stephen Plumb

County Councillors: Richard Kemp

Clerk: Natasha Byford

1. **Apologies for absence:** Apologies from Cllr O'Reilly-Turner, Cllr Brunwin and Cllr Holt these were noted and accepted.

2. **Declarations of Members Interest(s):**

- a) **To receive disclosure of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest(s) including gifts of hospitality in excess of £25:** None received.
- b) **To consider requests for dispensation for the agenda item(s) under discussion:** None received.

3. **Public Participation session**

No members of the public (MOP) attended.

4. **Approval of minutes of the previous meeting:**

- a) The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 12th May 2025 were approved.

Action: Clerk to publish these on the website and Social Media.

- b) The Clerk read through the action points of the last meeting. There were no comments on this.

5. **Chair's report:**

Cllr Dunkley's read the below report from his last couple of months as Chair:

It has been a relatively quiet time since May.

We are approaching the final stages of the project to introduce EV Car Chargers at the Village Hall with all documentation very close to agreement. At this stage, but actual installation of the chargers has not yet to be discussed.

The Neighbourhood Plan has been progressing well with a draft version of the plan about to be pulled together for discussion amongst the project group. However, the government has decided to cease funding the development of Neighbourhood Plans, although, apparently, still approving their creation, so we are discussing with our consultant on what is still left to do. Obviously, the Parish Council will now have to determine the best way forward.

The new bus service was finally announced. This will provide a 6-days a week service for the village, with bus times to be announced soon. I would like to thank Councillor Shrimpton for his considerable efforts, and patience, and also all of those connected with bus services at Suffolk CC for their support in providing the service.

On a broader note, Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution for Suffolk and East Anglia is ongoing, and at quite a fast pace as our area are designated as an early adopter. This is supposed to come with additional funding, but the level of that and where it will be allocated has not, as yet, been confirmed.

Devolved government, through the election of a Mayor, is different from Local Government Reorganisation, albeit collaboration will be necessary. Some dates to be aware of are:

- Election of Mayor. – May 26
- Shadow election of councillors to new authorities – May 27
- Implementation of new authorities – Apr 28
- It is unclear when elections to existing authorities will occur.

The Mayor will take over the responsibilities of the Police & Crime Commissioner, but PCC stays in place until 2028 when their term concludes.

Hopefully more clarity will show itself as time goes by.

6. District Councillors report:

Cllr Plumb read their report and there were no further questions, there was a discussion of devolution. The report is in Appendix A below.

Cllr Plumb left the meeting at 7:21pm.

7. County Councillors report:

Cllr Kemp read the report and there were no further questions on this. The report is in Appendix B below.

Cllr Kemp left the meeting at 7:31pm.

8. Village Hall:

- a) Cllrs received the following report on behalf of the VHC;

Village Hall Management Committee

Following the year 2024-5 AGM held on the 28th April, all positions on the committee were nominated and agreed. (see attached up to date membership). The year 2024-5 finances have been reviewed by an independent assessor and agreed.

Finance - we currently have sufficient funds to cover regular commitments including those taken on from the Parish Council in 2024.

With the installation of the solar panels, we have already seen a reduction in the energy bill for June compared with last years bill. Once the export tariff has been sorted by EDF we should also generate income.

Regular Events – The evening Pilates class which started in January on a Wednesday (term time) 6.30pm, the attendance continues to be sufficient to make it viable.

Zumba Gold continues Friday at 1pm with just enough attendance to keep it going.

Film nights attendance continues to cover the costs of the film licence and film rental and its valued by the regulars.

The Rural Coffee Caravan continues to attract a good attendance, and the charity plan to bring their van, advice and expertise to the village in 2025.

Other potential classes

The committee has discussed at many meetings the needs of young residents of the village and what activities they would like in 2025. It was agreed that there needs to be DBS checked coaches for any sessions for under 18yrs and the committee are thus not able to do these themselves. Finding a table tennis coach (as we have a table tennis set) was proposed as one way forward and we continue to work on finding a suitable person.

We have also had a pool table donated by a resident and this will be advertised along with the table tennis set as activities available to do in the hall

Other Events

The Arts & Crafts sessions that have attracted sufficient interest are the pottery events so another is planned for Saturday 22nd November with a focus on Christmas decorations - it will be suitable for adults and children.

The Silver Jewellery making session was again postponed and a new date will be agreed.

The Summer Dance this year on the 9th of August at Shimpling Park Farm Barns will be a Barn Dance with Ceilidh band Catch the Pidgeon playing. Ticket sales have been slow to get going but we have now reached 50 which is the minimum number to break even. Further advertising will hopefully generate additional sales in the final couple of months

A "Vernon's Quiz" is planned for the 15th November and we are negotiating with the new pub management to hopefully have them supply the fish & chip supper.

Maintenance & Improvement Projects

As previously highlighted, the external maintenance and redecoration will need to be done this year. There is damp in the toilets and blown plaster on the exterior walls. The committee has started to seek quotes for the work which will be passed to the Parish Council.

b) Members received the list of repairs and improvements that the VHC have put forward but as they haven't received any quotations for doing any of the works, this couldn't be discussed further.

c) The mould in the women's toilet in the VH was discussed and it was thought it needed to be investigated. Cllr Rooke said that he was happy to look at the downpipe and ensure the water was clearing through the pipes.

Action: Cllr Rooke to do some further investigation into the downpipe and see if he can establish the cause of the mould.

d) Members received the additional quotation of £150 for the cutting of the boundary hedge at the rear of the village hall, it was agreed to go ahead with this.

Action: Clerk to contact Chris Cooke and agree the quotation.

e) Members received the quote for the Land Registry drawing that is required for the lease, members agreed to go ahead with this cost.

Action: Clerk to let Mark know to go ahead with the drawing.

9. Responsible Finance Officer's Finance Report:

9a) The Clerk gave a finance report, details of which were circulated to members prior to the meeting. The Clerk stated which invoices (please see below) needed to be paid.

Leaving balances as follows:

Treasurers Account	£6,858.42
Business Account	£18,241.20
Including CIL of	£3,061.56
Earmarked Reserves of	£8,500.00
General Reserves of	£8,929.18

9b) To acknowledge payments made outside the meeting

- **Lark Valley Grass Cutting** **£883.80**
- (Open Spaces Act 1906, ss.9-10)
- **Lark Valley Grass Cutting** **£448.80**
- (Open Spaces Act 1906, ss.9-10)

9c) The following amounts were approved for payment:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| • Clerk's Net salary after Tax | £531.22 |
| • HMRC Tax payment | £69.80 |
| • Employee NI | £60.10 |
| • Clerk's expenses (Fuel) | £18.54 |

LGA 1972 s. 111 (ancillary Powers)

The above payment schedule was approved by members.

9d) The Clerk noted that the Council have received money from bank interest £12.48 and £12.14.

10. **Clerks Report:** A full copy of the Clerk's report was circulated to members prior to the meeting. The following matters were considered for resolution:

Summary of Progress: During the period (5th May 25 – 6th July 25), I have worked 4 hours 30 minutes under the given time frame of 5 hours per week, this included organising all the paperwork for the July meeting, agendas, actions from the three May meetings, organising payments, external audit work, as well as general administration. This was agreed by Cllrs. A discussion regarding employer NI was had as the PC have to pay employer NI every other month or move to a monthly Clerks pay, it was thought leaving it as it is was easier and ensuring we get the employer NI refunded.

11. **Neighbourhood Plan:**

The Chair updated members that the Neighbourhood Plan was going well, however the Government have stopped the funding for this financial year. Our consultant has been paid up to the end of stage 3, which is where we should have a draft neighbourhood plan document ready to go out to consultation. The neighbourhood plan team are liaising with the consultant on this and will keep the PC informed.

Action: Cllr Dunkley to liaise with the PC and Neighbourhood Plan working group

12. **Planning:**

Planning Decisions:

- DC/24/04287 - Rectory Cottage, Old Rectory Lane, Shimpling, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP29 4HQ - Full Planning Application - Erection of 1No replacement dwelling including enhancement of 5 acre horse paddock (existing dwelling to become Bat Habitat) – Awaiting decision

- b. DC/25/01655 - Land West And North Of Mill Cottage, Mill Hill, Shimpling, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP29 4HH - Planning Application - Change of use of land from agricultural to residential garden. Addition of a new boundary stock fence with straining wires, with mixed native hedgerow planted along the fence line. – Awaiting decision
- c. DC/25/02008 - Lyndhurst, Little Chadacre, Shimpling, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP29 4HL - Full Planning Application - Subdivision of dwelling to form 2no. dwellings including alterations and extensions – Refused
- d. DC/25/02353 - Land Adjacent Gannock Bungalow, Old Rectory Lane, Shimpling, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP29 4HG - Planning application - Conversion of an Existing Agricultural Barn (Previously Approved Under Class Q) to Form One Dwelling – Awaiting decision

Planning Applications:

None

13. External Audit

The external audit report was not received yet, the Clerk noted it would be added to the September meeting agenda.

Action: Clerk to add External Audit to the September meeting agenda.

14. EV Charger

Members read the lease for the EV charger and agreed to go ahead with this. There was a statutory declaration that needs to be signed, members agreed to spend up to £100 if this is chargeable.

Action: Clerk to organise getting the lease signed and sent off

15. Playground:

- a) Cllr Milhench informed members that he had fitted bird deterrent spikes and cleaned the playground equipment, members thanked him for his efforts with this. Cllr Milhench noted that one of the fence posts was rotten and required replacing and said he would look into this.

Action: Cllr Milhench to look at replacing the rotten fence post.

- b) Members received the quotations for playground inspections and agreed to go ahead with ROSPA play safety, as long as they included the zip wire in their inspection, as it was the cheaper option by far and also added us to an annual inspection schedule.

Action: Clerk to check whether the zipwire is included and if so then to agree the quotation and get the inspection booked in

c) The members postponed discussing usability of the playground.

16. Councillor Vacancy:

Members invited Susanna Dowie to talk about why she would like to join the PC as a Councillor. Members then voted to co-opt Susanna. Mrs Susanna Margaret Dowie of The Gannocks, Old Rectory Lane, Shimpling, Bury St Edmunds, IP29 4HG was voted to serve on the council by unanimous vote.

Action: Clerk to ensure acceptance of office and register of interests are completed within 28 days and send any details required for new Councillors.

Action: Clerk to ask for an email address to be set up for Susanna.

17. Tree Relocation

Members discussed the tree relocation and decided that it wasn't with the PC powers to relocate the tree, as the PC did not plant it and it is on private land.

18. Access for trimming footpath

Members discussed the message that Chris sent over regarding the fact that he cannot access the footpath at the bottom of Gents Lane with the ride on mower now the fence has been erected. It was discussed and agreed that Cllr Milhench, with the help of Cllr Rooke and some residents would clear out the ditch, and attempt to rebuild and extend a section of the footpath to ensure it is wide enough for the mower to get down. They would also put a reflector on the fence post to assist with visibility.

Action: Cllr Milhench and Cllr Rooke to go ahead with the ditch clear out and attempt to extend the pathway of the footpath.

19. Bus Stop

Members discussed potential bus stop improvements. Cllr Shrimpton said he will look into what kind of improvements the funding covers.

Action: Cllr Shrimpton to look into the bus stop improvement funding

20. The Bush Inn

The Asset of Community Value application has been accepted and The Bush is a ACV until 2030.

21. GDPR/Councillor Devices

It was discussed that a shared Councillor Google Drive folder to store any council documentation on was the way forward, to ensure members don't have any PC information on personal computers.

Action: Clerk to set up a Councillor google drive folder and send round to Cllrs.

22. Telephone Kiosk

Members thanked Dave and Linda for their efforts with cleaning up and painting the telephone box, members said how good it looked.

23. Correspondence Received:

None

24. Urgent Matters to be brought to the attention of the council:

None

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 9:10pm

Appendix A: District Councillors report:

Last chance to complete our LGR survey

Our Local Government Reorganisation survey asking for views on the future of vital local government services runs until 25 July. We are keen for as many people as possible to have their say, so please continue to share it with your networks and communities. Any further significant developments will go before Full Council and we will, of course, keep you fully informed.

Thousands of listed building owners could benefit from innovative planning change

Thousands of listed building owners could find it easier to make windows more energy efficient under innovative proposals from Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils.

New council chair elected, with outgoing chair appointed to cabinet role

Cllr Elisabeth Malvisi has been elected as chair of Babergh District Council – resuming the role she has carried out for most of the last two years.

Council will share in celebrations for artist John Constable's 250th birthday anniversary

In 2026, Babergh District Council will be supporting a national celebration marking the 250th anniversary of the birth of iconic Suffolk-born artist John Constable (1776 - 1837).

Rentable electric cars arrive in Babergh and Mid Suffolk

Six electric vehicles have arrived at three locations across Babergh and Mid Suffolk for communities to use as part of the Plug In Suffolk Car Club.

£38k boost for community facilities in Babergh

Improvements to village halls and community hubs are amongst the latest projects to receive a funding boost from Babergh District Council.

Councillors unite to defend democracy in local planning

Cross-party councillors have unanimously condemned Government criticism of local planning authorities and attempts to “rob them” of their democratic powers.

‘Trek, treat, repeat’ – Beautiful walks and foodie gems celebrated in new project

Stunning walks and fantastic places to eat are showcased across Babergh and Mid Suffolk in a new initiative.

Public Switched Telephone Network

Landline phones are switching to digital, which could stop telecare alarms working. This means that all landline providers need to know which of their customers use telecare, so they can keep them safe. The switchover is already happening, so you need to act now. If you, a resident, or someone you know uses a telecare alarm, make sure to contact the landline provider for support. Visit the digital phone switchover website for more information.

Community Fun Days July 2025

Community Fun Days are returning to the districts at the end of July, providing families with a series of free days out packed full of activities. Events are taking place between 10am and 2pm at:

- Sudbury, Belle Vue Park – Monday, 21 July
- Hadleigh Pool and Leisure Centre – Friday, 25 July

Each event is free attend and has activities for all ages - people just need to turn up on the day. However, children that receive means tested free school meals are able to pre-book some activities and order a free lunch by visiting the Abbeycroft website - our partners for this year's fun days.

Rural Housing Week event

Parishes across the districts are being invited to a Rural Housing Week event, hosted by Community Action Suffolk, from 10am to 3pm on 10 July at the John Peel Centre.

Appendix B: County Councillors Report:

Information Updates

Cost of Living help and advice:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>

Benefits advice and support:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>

Flood preparation advice: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-and-rescue-safety-advice-in-the-community/preparing-for-flooding>

Flood recovery advice and support: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>

Funding for Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution

On Tuesday 17 June, Cabinet approved allocating £1.9m from council reserves towards the cost of work the council needs to undertake to set up the new mayoral authority with Norfolk County Council and to prepare its business case for a single unitary council, which needs to be submitted to the government in September. Mayoral elections are due to be held in May 2026, with the mayoral authority set up a few months earlier, in February.

The government has provided £1m towards the costs of the mayoral authority, which Suffolk County Council and Norfolk County Council have agreed to split between them. The government has also allocated £290k for Suffolk towards Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), which is to be shared with the other councils who are also preparing their proposals for the government to consider in September.

The council is not planning to use all of the £1.9m from reserves, which it is allocating as the financial outturn for 2024-25 was better than expected – it just wants to put aside some money it can use if necessary. The costs of setting up the mayoral authority and reorganising local councils is more likely to be tens of millions; it is the potential long-term savings that makes the process worthwhile to the government, who provide council funding.

Raising Educational Attainment in Suffolk

On Tuesday 24 June, the council's Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee considered the educational attainment of children in the county and how to improve it, as Suffolk is currently below national attainment figures at Key Stage 2 (year 6) and at Key Stage 4 (year 11).

The council works closely with headteachers and the leaders of multi-academy trusts (MATs) so that schools can learn from each other via the Suffolk Education Partnership, which was established in January 2023. The Department for Education's RISE (Regional Improvement in Standards and Excellence) programme also undertakes targeted work with schools to help them improve grades, and council officers in the education team also provide support to all local authority-maintained schools, with mentoring and advice for governing bodies.

Support is also offered to academy schools, although they do not have to engage with it; while the council still has statutory responsibility for school improvement for all of Suffolk, academies receive their funding directly from the government and not from local authorities.

The meeting also noted that Suffolk still receives a low level of funding compared to other counties, and council leaders regularly lobby the government for fairer funding.

Council Gains £8m for Bus Service Improvements

Suffolk County Council has been awarded a grant of £8m from the Department for Transport to fund new and enhanced bus services across the county. The new funding from the government's Local Authority Bus Grant can be used for the following:

- £2,805,076 revenue funding for new or enhanced services
- £5,229,805 capital funding for new and improved bus stops, bus stations or vehicle upgrades

The council plans to use the money to improve bus priority on congested streets, upgrade the Real Time Passenger Information system (giving live updates in bus arrival times), and improve bus stops and routes. It will also use some of the money to look into the journeys people take with a view to creating more innovative fare offers in future and get more people to use bus services.

Previous funding has been used for projects such as the first Sunday and evenings service between Bury St Edmunds and Sudbury in over 20 years, and direct links from Haverhill and Mildenhall to West Suffolk Hospital.

Details of successful local bids for the funding will be posted on the Suffolk on Board website, and if you are interested in putting forward a bid for future funding, you can find information on how to do that here:

<https://www.suffolkonboard.com/news/2024/06/bus-service-improvement-plan-where-should-the-money-be-spent/>

Suffolk Libraries Changes to Suffolk Community Libraries

From the 1 June, libraries across the county were taken back in-house by Suffolk County Council at the end of the contract with Suffolk Libraries, who had been running the libraries since 2012. This was a controversial decision which attracted a lot of public and press interest, including a petition against it which was signed by over 20,000 people.

The new name for the service is Suffolk Community Libraries, with new branding, but the council's political administration has given assurances that all libraries will remain open, with no reduction in opening hours.

Local Businesses Celebrate Carbon Reduction

On 11 June, the council held its annual Carbon Charter event to recognise local businesses for their efforts at carbon reduction.

The awards were set up by the council in 2010 and since that time more than 500 businesses of all sizes have been given Carbon Charter awards for taking action on climate, reducing their carbon emissions or developing green spaces. Speakers at the event included CNH Tractors, Groundwork East and Home Farm Nacton, and prizes were given to Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, Shepherd Engineering, Kelling Heath Holiday Park and Woodhill Park.

If you are a business owner and want to find out about how to reduce carbon and make your enterprise more environmentally friendly, please visit www.carboncharter.org where you can find advice, tips and webinars/local events.

Flood Team Wins Local Government Chronicle Award

The council's Flood Investigations and Grants Team are celebrating after winning a national award for its work supporting the communities affected by flooding caused by Storm Babet in October 2023.

The team, which was set up in the immediate aftermath of the storm to help flood victims to apply for grants, won the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) award for Small Team of the Year at a recent awards ceremony at Grosvenor House in London. Over 900 homes and businesses were affected by Storm Babet, which caused the worst flooding in Suffolk for more than 70 years.