

GREAT LIVERMERE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Great Livermere Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 19th March 2025 7:00 in Great Livermere Village Hall

Present. Cllrs A Norburn, A Johnston (Chair), T Redman & Suffolk County Council (SCC) Cllr R Hopfensperger.

1. Co-option of new Parish Councillor

No candidates at this time.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence received, and accepted from Cllrs R Charlton, Cllr S Chalton and West Suffolk District Councillor (WSDC) Cllr A Speed.

3. Members Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:

3.1 To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda. None.

3.2 To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests. None.

3.3 To grant dispensations as appropriate under Section 33 of the Localism Act. N/A

4. Minutes - The minutes of the Wednesday 15th January 2025 Parish Council meeting were agreed and approved as a correct record.

5. Meeting open to the public

No members of the public present.

6. Report from Suffolk County (SCC) Councillor: R Hopfensperger.

Cllr Hopfensperger apologised for missing some of our recent meetings. She confirmed that she would be happy to pay for the works to remove the damaged equipment in the Play Area and for the work to clear the path opposite the Village Hall. The Clerk will make the arrangements to facilitate this. Cllr Hopfensperger reported that the Suffolk Libraries service is coming back in house. Suffolk county Council have a statutory duty to run a library service. The contract, with the charity that was running the service, came to an end and they were not able to provide a robust enough bid to retain the contract. They have done an excellent job during the period they were running the service and Suffolk County Council will continue to offer all the services that the charity provided. SCC are planning on investing in the service with a new fleet of vehicles and stock. Cllr Hopfensperger reported on the local government “reform” and the proposed new combined authority. Suffolk County Council believe one council for Suffolk would make delivering public services simpler, cheaper and quicker, and better meet the needs of residents and businesses. Following a recent government announcement that Suffolk’s county, district and borough councils will be replaced with a single-tier system, Suffolk County Council argues that consolidating all services under one unitary authority is the only effective way to deliver against the government’s criteria for local government reform. The move would see all council services, such as waste collection and disposal, housing, social care, planning, highways maintenance, leisure, school placements and travel and street cleaning, all provided by one authority - rather than the six that currently exist in Suffolk. Bringing together district, borough and county council functions is expected to reduce duplication, lower administrative costs and ensure a more coordinated and cost-effective approach to delivering essential services. The council warns that splitting services among multiple bodies would force the duplication of essential functions - such as social care, highways maintenance and schools - currently managed at a county level.

The key benefits of one council are:

Simpler for residents – one council would make it easier to understand and contact local government

Clearer accountability – there would be less confusion over who is responsible for what

Better use of funding – a more coherent, strategic, financially sustainable, county-wide approach to budgeting

Better alignment of services – since everything is under one roof, services can be more easily coordinated, creating opportunities for improve services for residents

More efficient decision-making – with just one council, decisions can be made more quickly

Stronger leadership – a single, visible and accountable body providing a clear strategic voice for Suffolk.

The council will submit its initial proposal to the government by 21 March, with a more detailed business case to follow later in the year.

The government will then undertake a public consultation.

The government's plans will also see the election of a mayor for Suffolk and Norfolk in May 2026, who would take control over strategic policy areas like transport infrastructure, economic development, health improvement and blue light services – along with devolved government funding to deliver positive change.

Cllr Hopfensperger reported that West Suffolk District Council is still discussing its preferred approach to the local government reorganisation. Several models are being considered, including a single authority for the whole of Suffolk, two authorities covering Suffolk, or three authorities, with Ipswich as a separate authority within Suffolk. West Suffolk Council will submit its response by the March 21st deadline, with further information available after this date. The potential impact on Parish Councils remains unclear but we will no longer be represented by two councillors as is the case at the moment but will instead be represented by one Councillor. In addition, the government's plans will also see the election of a mayor for Suffolk and Norfolk in May 2026, who would take control over strategic policy areas like transport infrastructure, economic development, health improvement and blue light services – along with devolved government funding to deliver positive change. There will not be SCC elections this May due to the timings of the restructure. The whole situation is moving very quickly.

7. Report from West Suffolk Council (WSDC) Councillor: A Speed.

Cllr Speed had unfortunately got stuck in traffic and was unable to attend the meeting. He has offered previously to provide some funding towards village projects. It was agreed that we would ask for up to £260 to replace the football nets, at the playing field and for £50 to cover the costs of some Neighbourhood watch literature. Cllr Hopfensperger provided a brief update on West Suffolk Councils position regarding the move to a unity council. (see item 6 above)

Action Clerk

8. To receive any progress report, Chairman

Cllr Johnston has purchased some Neighbourhood Watch literature. It was agreed that he should purchase some more so that we could deliver them to all the residents in the village. The Parish Council, hopefully using the contribution from Cllr Speed, will reimburse Cllr Johnston for any related expenses. We would still like to find someone who is willing to run the scheme.

Action Cllr Johnston

9. To receive any progress report, Clerk:

Concerns had been raised about some of the trees in Church Road. Cllr Redman had spoken to the resident who raised the issue, and they are now reassured. It was hoped that the Land Registry details, discussed at the last meeting, will shed some light on ownership of the area. The School Gardens sign has been repaired.

10. Finance.

10.1 The following accounts were approved for payment/receipts noted.

Description	Type	Supplier / customer	Total
Bus shelter cleaning	Payment	Jeff Wells	-£20.00
Path, equipment removal	Payment	CCTS	-£660.00
Administration	Payment	Various	-£870.02
Land registry search	Payment	Land Registry	-£7.00
bank charges	Payment	Unity Bank	-£6.00
bank charges	Payment	Unity Bank	-£6.00
recycling credit	Receipt	West Suffolk	£126.00
Administration	Payment	Various	-£119.60

Cllr Redman carried out the additional accounts check at the meeting.

10.2 Bank reconciliation, budget report and accounts update.

The Clerk provided a bank reconciliation, budget report and a schedule of payments for the Councilors' information.

10.3 To confirm internal audit review completion and arrangements for internal audit by SALC.

Cllr A Norburn completed the internal audit review.

It was agreed to appoint SALC as the internal Auditor for the period 1st April 2024-31st March 2025. The cost of this will be £183. The Clerk will make all the necessary arrangements for the end of year accounts.

Action Clerk

11. Play area

11.1 Play area report, circulated.

As mentioned under item 7 it was proposed that we replace the football nets in the play area. Cllr Johnston will measure the goal size to ensure we purchase the correct size. It is anticipated that Cllr Speed will cover the cost of these replacements.

Action Cllr Johnston

11.2 To confirm removal of damaged equipment.

The contractor has removed the damaged equipment from the play area. Cllr Hopfensperger has agreed to pay for these works.

11.3 To discuss any areas of concern.

There are currently no additional areas of concern in the play area.

12. Highway/village matters

12.1 Update on Highway matters to include:

12.1.1 To receive any Vehicle Activated Sign/Automatic Numberplate Recognition VAS/ANPR update

The VAS was taken down to allow the ANPR device to be put up. The ANPR device has now gone, and the VAS was put back up again. We will wait for feedback from the ANPR team.

12.2 Footpath issues. To include

12.2.1 To receive any update on the issue with bridge at Ampton water.

The Councillors met with Claire Dickson, SCC Operations Manager Rights of Way and Access, to discuss progress made on the above matter. It was reported that Suffolk County Council, with the permission of the landowner, have recently undertaken detailed ground investigation works in relation to the sighting of a replacement crossing for Great Livermere Public Footpath No. 13. Further topographical surveys will be undertaken in the coming months, with a view a proposed crossing solution sought following the remaining surveys. The County Council hope to be able to confirm the future accommodation of the Public Footpath in Summer 2025. The Parish Council consider this to be good news and are hopeful that things are moving in the right direction. Claire Dickson will continue to work with the Parish Council and will provide regular updates on progress.

12.2.2 To confirm skirting of footpath opposite the Village Hall.

The path opposite the hall has been skirted back and is much improved. Cllr Hopfensperger has agreed to pay for these works.

12.3. Village Matters to include:

12.3.1 To receive any update on the Biodiversity and Environmental policy, to include the suggestion to re-wild an area at The Forge and confirmation of land ownership.

The Land Registry require a cheque for payment. The cheque was raised and signed at the meeting. The Clerk will now send off our request to the Land Registry.

Action Clerk

12.3.2 To receive an update from the Rural Coffee Caravan regarding visits and information on cost of living support.

The Coffee Caravan is planning to visit the village, starting off with visits by the War Memorial. Dates for their visits will be shared as soon as we have them. The Coffee Caravan are currently offering free Tesco vouchers to help with the cost of living. These are available to anyone who is struggling financially with cost the of living or post winter. If anyone would like some of the vouchers, or knows of anyone who would benefit from these, they can get in touch at info@ruralcoffeecaravan.org.uk

12.3.3 To receive a report on recent village litter picking event.

Three residents attended the event as well as most of the Councillors. The Coffee caravan was in attendance and between them and the Clerk tea and cake was provided for all the volunteers. Although turnout was not a big as in as in previous years, those that came still managed to collect 12 bags, +21 glass bottles and an old Xbox. We are very grateful for all those who took part.

12.3.4 To discuss future of dog litter bins in the village.

West Suffolk Council are looking to make efficiencies where possible and with limited funding they can currently offer some of the smaller villages with only a few bins a cost-free option to remove those existing bins and replace them with lockdowns bins. Currently Great Livermere are not charged for their bins to be emptied, but if charging was to come in, the cost would be in the region of £800+ a year, for four bins. Great Livermere will do some work to identify sites, three potentially, that they would like the new bins to be sited at. Cllr Johnston will provide a map indicating locations.

Action Cllr Johnston

13. Planning Matters to include any applications/decisions received since the agenda was posted.

13.1 West Suffolk Local Plan Public Consultation on Main Modifications, information circulated. This consultation is limited to the legality and soundness of the main modifications. It does not offer the opportunity to repeat or raise further representations on other parts of the plan or seek wider changes. The Parish Council had no comments to make.

14. Councillors reports and items for future agendas.

A resident has expressed interest in looking after a piece of land by Birds Croft. The Clerk will do some work around identifying who owns the land in question and whether they would have any objections to this. The Clerk will see if she is able to identify ownership of all the public green spaces, within the village.

Action Clerk

It was asked if we are able to get any dog pooh posters for the village. In the past we have got some posters from The Dogs Trust. The Clerk is unsure if these are still available. If not, she believes West Suffolk Council can provide some posters free of charge.

Action Clerk

Cllr Redman reported that the local history event, held recently in the village was a great success and very well attended. The Councillors were very pleased to hear the event was a success.

Cllr Redman had previously mentioned that a resident might be interested in starting a book club. Unfortunately, there has been no real interest in this from others in the village.

15. Correspondence for action/information

15.1 WSDC Building Resilience and Nutrition (BRAN) fund. Information circulated.

The Building Resilience and Nutrition (BRAN) fund is open to applications from community groups, charities, voluntary organisations, faith groups and social enterprises. It has been created from £90,000 given by Suffolk Public Sector Leaders and is being delivered by West Suffolk Council in partnership with Community Action Suffolk and Suffolk County Council. Information circulated.

15.2 SCC Medequip return request

Cllr Johnston will put the poster, from Medequip, asking for old medical equipment to be returned, on the noticeboard and Facebook. **Action Cllr Johnston**

15.3 Onesuffolk, to note increase in website hosting price.

It was noted that the website hosting price is set to increase by £6, from £6 to £66 per year.

15.4 Request for information on local charities, Ixworth Surgery.

The Social Prescriber at Ixworth Surgery has been in contact to say they are trying to make a list of local charities, in the Ixworth surgeries' catchment area. They are aware that there are charities that they may be able to secure small grants through, for a few patients, so that they are able to buy essential items. The Clerk will put them in touch with the Calthorpe Trust. **Action Clerk**

16. Date of next meeting. Annual Parish Meeting Wednesday 21st May 2025 7.00pm to be followed by the Annual Parish Council meeting at 7.30pm.

The Clerk will contact the Feoffment Trust and Calthorpe Trust to ask them to submit a report for the Annual Parish Meeting. Cllr Johnston will do a Chairmans report and Cllr Redman will provide a report from the Church.

17. To receive Chairs resignation, if tendered, and election of new Chair

As agreed previously, Cllr Johnston stepped down from the position of Chair. Due to personal issues, Cllr S Charlton, who was due to take up the post, was unable to do so. Cllr Redman proposed Cllr Norburn for the position of Chairman, this was seconded by Cllr Johnston. Cllr Norburn accepted the position and completed the relevant paperwork.

18. To consider the exclusion of the public and press in the public interest for consideration of the following items:

18.1 Personnel Issues. None.

18.2 Legal Issues. None.

No further business, meeting closed.