

YOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting

held on

Thursday 5th June 2025

at 7pm

Yoxford Village Hall

1. Attendance and apologies

Attendees:

Cllr. Richard Allenby-Pratt
Cllr. Janet Gardner
Cllr. Nicol McCallum
Cllr. Ian Patterson
Cllr. Angela Roper
Cllr. Deborah Thompson
Cllr. David Tower
Cllr. John Walford

Apologies accepted for absence:

Cllr. David Childs
Cllr. Laura Greenberg
Cllr. Hazel Wheeler

District Cllr. Julia Ewart

In attendance:

County Cllr. Richard Smith

4 members of the public

2. To receive declarations of interest and to consider requests for dispensations: none declared.

3. Public Forum

- a) Members of the public may address the Council on any agenda item: no contributions from the public.
- b) County Cllr. Richard Smith gave the following report:
 - i. Suffolk County Council are now engaging with Town and District Councils regarding central government's plans for local government reorganisation with the next step being public consultation in readiness for inclusion in the submission of a business plan to central government by 26th September 2025.
 - ii. With the deferment of local elections to 2026, Cllr. Smith has a further year and will then retire.
 - iii. The S19 Flood Report has now been completed and Cllr. Smith asked for further comment from the Parish Council. Cllr. Smith outlined that he will link with the Parish Council to support its work but that there are no funds for this. He also believes that as much as possible can be done to mitigate future risk. Main actions for the Parish Council are:
 - 1. The writing of a Community Flood Plan
 - 2. Liaising with affected householders
 - iv. Cllr. Tower asked Cllr. Smith for clarification regarding the recently instated 30mph speed limit on the A12 between Yoxford and Saxmundham. Initially, he believed that this is linked road safety measures linked to the solar farm but agreed that its range is excessive. Cllr. Smith will contact Steve Merry for further clarification. Cllr. Walford shared that he had contacted the Sizewell Team for clarification. The generally agreed view of the meeting was that there is an overall and general lack of clarity about all road traffic measures. There ensued a discussion regarding average speed, how the new speed limit will be enforced at, for example, evenings, weekends and holiday times. Concerns were voiced regarding the increased risk of accident and Cllr. Smith added he has significant concerns also, regarding the impact on the economy of Lowestoft. Cllr. Smith will seek further information and clarification and pass on anything to via the Clerk.
- c) To receive a report from the District Cllr. Julia Ewart: no report

4. Minutes

- a) Cllr. Patterson proposed that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 15th May 2025 and the Annual Meeting held on 15th May 2025 be approved. Cllr. Tower seconded this proposal and all present voted in favour.

- b) Matters arising:
 - i. the overgrown pavements around Satis House seem to have been cleared but the work is unfinished. Cllr. Allenby-Pratt to liaise with the Clerk to ensure the area is as clear as possible.
 - ii. Cemetery driveway and access issue: Cllr. Tower has not yet assessed these two areas and so the item will carry over to July's meeting.

ACTION: Cllr. Allenby-Pratt and Clerk to liaise re condition of pavements around Satis House.

ACTION: Cllr. Tower to check condition of the cemetery drive and the access that's been cut into the boundary.

ACTION: Clerk to include cemetery matter on July's Agenda.

5. Councillors' and Clerk's Reports

- a) Yoxwood (Cllrs. Allenby-Pratt and Childs): Cllr. Allenby-Pratt shared that the paths have been mown. The Clerk shared a summary of her telephone contact with Pat Wallace who'd contributed to the cutting of the grass and arranged for the mower to be collected and serviced by Sibton Country Supplies Ltd. Invoice to be sent through to the Clerk for processing.
- b) Police: no report
- c) ESC Community Partnership (Cllrs. Roper & Thompson): an online 'catch up' meeting has been scheduled for 25th June.
- d) Cemetery including:
 - i. further consideration of the most effective ways of communicating and enforcing the Council's policy on the use of artificial flowers: this matter was discussed. Main points include:
 - 1. a hard stop/ removal of artificial flowers could lead to potential conflicts
 - 2. a long amnesty could be more effective
 - 3. a permanent notice could be installed with an advisory/request for the planting of bulbs instead
 - 4. In conclusion, the discussion brought no clear consensus and so the item will remain on the Agenda for July's meeting.

ACTION: Clerk to carry this item over to July's meeting Agenda.

- ii. SCL Landscape Management's quote to maintain the path beyond the cemetery and annual hedge cut: the quotation was discussed. Cllr. Thompson proposed that this be approved. Cllr. Roper seconded this and all present voted in favour.

ACTION: Clerk to liaise with SCL Landscape Management Ltd.

- iii. Further consideration of the draft Policy for Memorials (benches, plaques and trees) in Public Spaces: there was significant discussion about the policy. The Clerk outlined key areas that required further work before the draft policy was ready for consideration for approval. These include bench costs/charge and charges/after care of memorial trees.

ACTION: Cllrs. Patterson and Walford to explore the policy further, liaise with the Clerk in readiness to submit a final draft for approval.

- e) Work Party: Cllr. McCallum reported that one volunteer had given their time in May and a litter pick had been completed.
- f) Funding Working Group (Cllrs. Gardner, Roper, Thompson and Tower): Cllr. Roper summarised the most recent meeting and progress of the Working Group. This report is included as Appendix C. In addition, the following was added:
 - i. Two further quotes are required for the repair/renewal of the Council's noticeboard.

ACTION: Clerk to contact the Village Hall contractor and another carpenter in the village to invite them to quote.

- ii. Working Group will meet next 24th June 7pm to agree the research plan.

9. Strategic Objectives 2025-2026

- a) To receive an update on the legal transfer of Yoxwood View play area (Priority 1.2): the Clerk reported that there's been no progress and asked that Council approved her contact with CAS Ltd. in order to seek further legal guidance about the matter. Cllr. Tower proposed this was approved. Cllr. Patterson seconded this and all present voted in favour.

ACTION: Clerk to contact CAS Ltd. for further advice.

- b) To consider any information for communicating (Priority 2.1): These were discussed and agreed, along with matters from the meeting, as: Yoxfayre and Sea Link. Cllr. Roper offered to take on the writing of the Newsletter. In addition, the siting of an additional noticeboard in the Village Hall for information/updates on NSIPs was discussed and agreed.

ACTION: Clerk to liaise with Cllr. Roper regarding the handover of newsletter information.

ACTION: Clerk to explore costs of renewing of noticeboards in the village hall. This information will be passed to the Sole Trustee.

10. Parish Matters

- a) To receive and discuss relevant updates regarding the Sizewell C project, including:
- Feedback from contact with SZC regarding the speed reduction on A12 covering the Town Farm Lane junction. (Cllr. Walford): item already discussed at 3.b)iv.
 - Discussion of the emails from residents concerning:
 - B1122 - Sizewell C HGV traffic exceeding 30mph Speed Limit: the matter was discussed at length. Cllr. Walford shared that he has spoken with Richard Knight at the Sizewell C office in Leiston who believes the matter has been resolved. From the resident's contact with the Clerk, it seems that the matter has not been resolved. Speed of the lorries and HGVs continues with no known plan of how the Sizewell C will manage its contribution. A number of options were discussed such as the reinstatement of a neighbourhood speed team.
 - A1120 – continuing issues: with matters from the previous item in mind, the resident's contact was applauded by the Council. Ways that the Parish Council might mitigate speed risk were discussed and the need to co-ordinate with other neighbouring councils being considered as key.

ACTION: Clerk to contact District Cllrs. Julia Ewart and Paul Ashton to request their support.

- To consider a proposal from Cllr. Tower to apply to the SZC Community Fund Small Bids for a third speed indicator sign, to be sited on the B1122, Middleton Rd before the railway crossing: this proposal was discussed and in light of the increasing traffic issues, it was felt unanimously that an additional device would be helpful. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. Patterson and all present voted in favour.

ACTION: Cllr. Tower and Clerk to complete and submit application.

- b) To receive and discuss relevant updates regarding other Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) including:
- Feedback from the affiliates meeting of ESPA held on 24th May 2025: Cllr. Walford apologised for not being able to represent the Parish Council at this event.
 - Cllr. Patterson gave the following feedback from SALC's Sea Link Workshop on 2nd June:
 - The Parish Council should register as an Interested Party in National Grid's Sea Link project
 - Individual Councillors should also register.
 - As a result of central government's changes to policy, consultation has been reduced from three years to six months.
 - Once agreed, provisions of the Development Consent Order (DCO) are legally binding and so, to contribute to the consultation process is the key way to affect change.
 - Cllr. Patterson's summary is included as Appendix D.
 - To consider a proposal from Cllr. Thompson that the Parish Council registers as an Interested Party in order to take part in the process and, if approved, to agree the content of this submission: this was seconded by Cllr. Walford and all present voted in favour.

ACTION: Clerk to register the Parish Council as an Interested Party by 23rd June 2025.

- c) Cllr. Roper gave the following update from her attendance at Suffolk County Council's briefing regarding its response to the government's proposal for local government reorganisation in Suffolk:
- Suffolk County Council believes that a unitary authority will facilitate better joined up services.
 - The slides/presentation are not yet available.
 - Cllr. Roper's summary is included as Appendix E
- d) In readiness for a response to Suffolk County Council's S19 Flood Report for Yoxford, the following were considered and then approved by all to be included for submission. Key actions for the Parish Council are:

- A Community Emergency Flood Plan was discussed. Working Group to be formed to complete this. This plan may be an addition to the existing Emergency Plan.

ACTION: Clerk to forward existing Emergency Plan to all Councillors.

ACTION: Councillors to consider their availability to contribute to this matter.

- Cllr. Allenby-Pratt raised the potential conflict between certain actions in the Report such as natural slowing of water flow vis a vis appropriate maintenance or the digging out of waterways. These anomalies suggest that clarification is required. In addition, the flood risk report will require review if the lakes proposed by the Cockfield Estate are given approval because these will be sited within the flood plain. It was agreed that these points should be submitted to Suffolk County Council.

ACTION: Cllr. Allenby-Pratt to prepare a summary for submission to Suffolk County Council.

ACTION: Clerk to submit the Parish Council's response.

- e) To discuss a proposal for the stored play equipment (formerly in Mulberry Park): Cllr. Tower summarised the condition of this equipment, currently stored by the former Chair. It was considered as worthy of repair.

ACTION: Clerk to contact Village Hall contractor to invite him to quote.

- f) To approve the annual inspection of the village children's play area at £100 plus VAT: total £120. Cllr. Tower proposed, Cllr. Patterson seconded and all present voted in favour of approving the annual inspection.

ACTION: Clerk to liaise with the Inspector to schedule the inspection.

- g) The resident's email requesting that the Parish Council applies for Mulberry Park to be registered as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) was discussed at length. The consensus was that this was not the correct course of action at present and that the resident should be encouraged to make direct contact with the Townland Trust.

ACTION: Clerk to contact the resident.

11. Planning Matters

- a) To consider the following planning application:

Planning reference: DC/25/1757/TCA

Proposal: 1no. Oak (T1 on plan) - Fell 1no. Ash (T2 on plan) - Fell Replacement planting of 2no. standard 6-8 cm girth Cherry (marked T1A and T2A on plan)

Site address: The Limes, Brook Street, Yoxford, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17 3EX

Consultation letter expiry date: 12th June 2025

This application was discussed. As the oak tree has a TPO, there should be a survey but no report was seen within the application. The consensus was that due process should be followed and so no support could be given. This was proposed by Cllr. Allenby-Pratt and seconded by Cllr. Walford. All present voted in favour.

ACTION: Clerk to submit Council's comments via the ESC Planning Portal.

12. Administration and Finance

- a) Cllr. Tower proposed the approval of SALC's Letter of Engagement for Internal Audit 2024/5. Cllr. Patterson seconded this proposal and all present, voted in favour.
- b) The Clerk shared that the Internal Audit for 2024/5 had been delayed by SALC and is now scheduled for the week of 9th June 2025.

- c) Following consideration, Cllr. Tower proposed the approval of the 2024/5 Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) of the AGAR. Cllr. Patterson seconded this proposal and all present, voted in favour.

ACTION: Chair and Clerk to sign the 2024/5 Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) of the AGAR.

ACTION: Clerk to prepare the document for submission.

- d) Following consideration, Cllr. Tower proposed the approval of the 2024/5 Accounting Statements (Section 2) of the AGAR. Cllr. Patterson seconded this proposal and all present, voted in favour.

ACTION: Chair and Clerk to sign the 2024/5 Accounting Statements (Section 2) of the AGAR.

ACTION: Clerk to prepare the document for submission.

- e) The analysis of the Significant Variances from the financial year 2024/5 was noted.
f) The period for the exercise of public rights from 9th June to 20th July 2025 was agreed.
g) The monthly financial position for June was noted. Appendix A.
h) A correction of the invoice to the Sole Trustee of Yoxford Village Hall for Clerk's work on Sole Trustee business for April 2025: 17 hours @ £17.79ph = £302.43 was noted.
i) The invoice to the Sole Trustee of Yoxford Village Hall for Clerk's work on Sole Trustee business for May 2025: 11.5 hours @ £17.79ph = £204.59 was noted.
j) Cllr. Tower proposed that the payments listed below are authorised. Cllr. Patterson seconded this proposal and all present, voted in favour.

Details	Payee	Amount	VAT	Total	Power
Expense Claim: tools for Voluntary Group	Councillor	£38.92	£7.79	£46.71	OSA 1906 ss. 9 & 10
Salary June 2025	Employee	£949.28	nil	£949.28	LGA 1972 s.112

ACTION: Clerk to process the payments above.

13. Correspondence

Correspondence received from 9th to 29th May 2025 was reviewed. Appendix B. In addition, an email from a resident regarding the siting of advertising boards on Brook St. was discussed. It was decided that although the Parish Council had some sympathy for the resident's point of view, it could take no action because the boards had been positioned on the landowner's property.

ACTION: Clerk to contact the resident.

14. Questions to the Chair/Items for the Next Agenda

The following matters to be included/recorded at next month's meeting:

- a) To consider re-siting of Yoxwood benches
b) Cllr. Tower gave his apologies for July's meeting.

15. Next Meeting

The date and time of the next meeting of the Council was confirmed as 3rd July 2025

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

Trudy Charles
Parish Clerk
13th June 2025

Appendix A: Monthly Financial Position: June 2025

Receipts: UT Current Account - May 2025

	May-25	Year to date
Cemetery Reservations/Interments	£ -	£ -
Transfer from UT Instant Access Savings Account	£ -	£ 5,000.00
Neighbourhood CIL	£ -	£ 3,900.77
Grants	£ -	£ -
Precept	£ -	£ 7,897.50
	£ -	£ 16,798.27

Payments UT Current Account - May 2025

Grounds Maintenance Contract (excl. VAT)	SCL Landscapes	£	430.00	£	430.00
Grounds Maintenance Contract: Jubilee planting	Volunteer	£	50.00	£	50.00
Salary, PAYE & NI	Employee/HMRC	£	949.48	£	1,898.96
Banking Service Charge: Monthly from 01/10/24	Unity Trust Bank	£	6.00	£	12.00
Audits/Legal: Internal/Ext Audit	PKFLittlejohn	£	-	£	-
Training	SALC	£	-	£	-
Mileage	Various	£	-	£	-
SALC Payroll Subscription	Subscriptions	£	45.00	£	45.00
SALC Membership Annual Subscription	Subscriptions	£	353.61	£	353.61
PC Mobile	Lebara	£	14.70	£	29.40
MUTs: cash float top up	Volunteer	£	150.00	£	150.00
MUTs: Lunch	Caterer	£	-	£	-
Bench x 1 for Yoxwood	Yoxwood	£	-	£	-
Bench x 1 for Teenage Shelter	Teenage Shelter	£	-	£	-
Youth Club Funding	Youth Club	£	-	£	-
Cemetery/YAA Water	Anglian Water	£	-	£	83.84
Annual Insurance	CAS Ltd	£	-	£	-
Annual Insurance	Yoxwood	£	-	£	-
Donations: (RBL Poppy Appeal 2024)	Charity	£	-	£	-
Donations:	Community	£	-	£	-
ICO: annual renewal	Subscriptions	£	-	£	47.00
CAS Ltd: 12th .gov.uk email address	Website/Media	£	20.00	£	31.99
Village Events: Yoxwood Easter Egg Hunt	Yoxwood	£	158.20	£	158.20
VAT (paid & to reclaim)	HMRC	£	95.00	£	97.40
		£	2,271.99	£	3,387.40

Total Funds: Bank/Cashbook Balances

Unity Trust Current Account as of 29th 2025	£ 15,514.52
Unity Trust Savings Account as of 29th May 2025	£ 34,934.25
United Trust Bank Business Bond	£ 7,611.05
United Trust Bank Business Bond	£ 5,952.49
	£ 64,012.31

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Earmarked Reserves:

Strickland Manor Hill Play Area	£	1,170.85
Townland Trust Partnership Fund	£	4,425.00
Youth Club	£	2,922.17
ECBS	£	1,125.00
CIL 2020-2021	£	5,293.43
CIL 2021-2022	£	17,090.94
CIL 2022-2023	£	3,732.47
CIL 2023-2024	£	5,293.43
CIL 2024-2025	£	3,896.10
CIL 2025-2026	£	3,900.77
Meet Up Tuesday Grant	£	1,191.06
Teenagers' Shelter Grant	£	287.59
	£	50,328.81

General Reserves (=Total Funds – Earmarked Reserves)

£ 13,683.50

Appendix B: Correspondence 9th to 29th May

Sending Organisation	Date(s) received	Details	Date forwarded
Suffolk Association of Local Councils	Various 20/05/25 22/05/25 29/05/25	News bulletins incl. on devolution, training, area forum, AGM, Consultation re SCC's Local Nature Recovery Plan NSIPs East Suffolk Area Forum	Various 21/05/25 22/05/25 29/05/25
	20/05/25	Workshop re. Sea Link	21/05/25
National Association of Local Councils	various	Newsletter, Chief Exec's Bulletin	various
East Suffolk Council	21/05/25	Planning consultations - DC/25/1757/TCA	21/05/25
	various	Greenprint Forum: newsletter, forum dates, local govt. review & survey	various
	20/05/25	East Suffolk Grant Scheme re Tour of Britain	21/05/25
Suffolk County Council	Various 20/05/25 20/05/25 28/05/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Network: webinar re. river health & testing - 20th May Suffolk County Council's response to the government's proposal for local government reorganisation - Transport Group online meeting 23rd May invite - Publication of S19 Flood Investigation Report - Suffolk Climate Action Team: networking events 	Various 21/05/25 21/05/25 29/05/25
Police	01/04/25	Police Connect: Suffolk Police shine spotlight on criminal use of the road	01/04/25
Others:			
AEPA			
SCDF	19/03/25	Invitation to next meeting on Tuesday 15th April 2025, 2pm-4pm	19/03/25
HMRC			
ESPA	16/05/25	ESPA Affiliates meeting at Yoxford Village Hall Sat May 24th at 3pm	21/05/25
LionLink			
SeaLink			
Sizewell C	Various	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Northern Transport Forum Draft Minutes 5th February 2025 - May update - Meet the regulator (EA) meeting 13th May 	various
Suffolk Wildlife Trust	13/05/25	Wilder Communities Events Programme	15/05/25
Residents			
Yoxwood Primary School	02/04/25	Spring Term Newsletter	02/04/25

Appendix C: Funding Working Group Report Update May/June 2025

1. Sizewell C Community Fund

Present: Councillors Angela Roper, Deborah Thompson and David Tower

- An online meeting was held with Sarah Mortimer on Tuesday, 6th May 2025.
- We discussed the possibility of applying to the fund for the redevelopment of the Village Hall. We were advised that the project should be divided into three tranches: the village hall, car park and children's play area. The highest funding awarded so far by the Fund has been just over £200,00, and there is a possibility that it will not fund a larger amount in the future. More and more capital projects, including village halls, are being prepared.
- We will need the following:
 - A clear idea of what we are bidding for.
 - Support for the project from the local community, i.e., evidence of a need. What do residents want from the village hall, car park, and play area?
 - Evidence of how the community will be impacted long-term by Sizewell C construction.
 - To display that our project will have a sustainable and lasting legacy.
 - A clear business plan (to include SWOT analysis and plans for the running and maintenance of the project), architects' plans, evidence of engagement with residents and the results.
- To prepare a professional and convincing bid, we will need the help of experts such as architects, landscape architects, solicitors, and accountants. There is the possibility of receiving expert advice through Community Action Suffolk.

2. Young People Taking Action (Cyds Project)

Present: Councillor Angela Roper

- An in-person meeting was held with Stuart Watson on Thursday, 8th May 2025.
- We discussed further funding sources for the Yoxford Youth Club. Two ideas were to seek funding to extend the Youth Club to three terms a year (requested by participants) and to provide transportation for young people in surrounding villages to attend Yoxford Youth Club.
- Following our initial meeting, I proposed to Cyds that the NFU Mutual Funding for Rural Community and Education Projects is a possibility to fund the transportation of young people in surrounding villages to Yoxford Youth Club.

3. Funding and Community Engagement Event 15th May 2025, East Suffolk House, Melton.

Present: Councillor Angela Roper

- Suffolk Community Foundation, Sizewell C Community Fund, East Suffolk Community Team, The National Lottery, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and Community Action Suffolk all presented.
- Slides are available here: <https://www.suffolkecf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Funding-Community-Engagement-Event-slides-25.pdf>
- Takeaways were as follows:
 - There are many potential funding bodies to apply to, but we need to have all our plans, financial models, and evidence of need.
 - As a result, much strategic and project planning work needs to be undertaken with the assistance of external experts to be able to bid
 - We may need to undertake an organisational health check. This is a free self-assessment that identifies RAG status and an action plan for the organisation.

[CAS Ltd Organisational Health Check.](#)

- A priority is community engagement to find out what residents want.

4. Successful bid to Enabling Communities for a new YPC noticeboard.

- We received funding for a new noticeboard in the grounds of the churchyard. We have one quotation but require two further quotations for the following:
 - To supply, fit and paint a hardwood three-glass panelled noticeboard and to concrete into the ground using treated and painted posts.

Cllr. Angela Roper

27th May 2025

70/2025

Appendix D: SALC Presentation on NSIPs, 2nd June 2025: a summary

1. We are likely to see an increasing number of NSIPs in the future, especially if there is no evidenced resistance to them from local councils and individuals. Each will have a hearing conduct by an Inspectorate, but these hearings will now only last a maximum of six months, so objections have to be carefully presented to make the most impact. The number of protesting voices is also an important consideration for the Examining Body when they plan the hearings. It is crucial, therefore, that the PC, and as many individuals as possible, register with the Inspectorate as Interested Parties before the deadline of 23 June.
2. In putting the PC's case to the Inspectorate, it will be essential to show that we have carried out a public consultation in the parish.
3. The sometimes overlooked function of the hearings, in addition to recommending or not recommending the project itself, is to create the Development Consent Order, which sets in stone the works the project is allowed to do. (We have seen with Sizewell C how hard it is to stoop or change that once it begins — everything from removal of trees and hedges to instituting speed limits.) That's why it's important to object at the start, and keep a close watch on what the project is asking for.
4. Therefore we need to submit a list of areas that need discussion in the issue-specific hearings. As a PC outside the immediate location, we need to consider the community impact (increased traffic and all that implies, working hours, impact on our amenities, including our use of footpaths, the coast, ecological and wildlife impacts, etc). Impact may be cumulative, too, both through time and because of the number of projects.

When thinking about impact, it is helpful to think of four levels of objection:

- (i) AVOID HARM, or if not possible
- (ii) REDUCE HARM, or if not possible
- (iii) MITIGATE HARM, or if not possible
- (iv) COMPENSATE FOR HARM.

Projects like Sealink or Lionlink play down the harm that will be caused.

(Sealink is the most important of the NSIPs coming up, and may require 3 sites as well as Friston for conversion stations.)

Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk District Council send in Impact Reports to the hearings, so we should consider sending local impact material to them.

5. It is possible to question the need for the project, not in terms of the public interest need for electricity generation, but in terms of the specific location and the current technologies. Why this landfall? Is it a matter of cost-saving? Is the technology already getting outdated?

6. Other actions:

We should make the NSIPs a standing item on the monthly PC agenda

We should collaborate with adjacent councils

We should enable members to take specific responsibilities for representation between PC meetings where necessary

We should ensure all representations are kept available, properly documented and archived as Word docs.

Cllr. Ian Patterson

Appendix E: Report on Suffolk County Council Briefing on Local Government Reorganisation in Suffolk.
Westleton Village Hall. 13th May 2025.

- Meeting led by SCC Chief Executive Officer, Nicola Beach and attended by six other local Parish Councillors.
- Following the Government's decision to place Suffolk on its Devolution Priority Programme (DPP), Suffolk County Council believes that a new single local council is the smartest, simplest, and best option for the whole of Suffolk, which will deliver the biggest savings and most sustainable service improvements.
- This is the biggest shake-up of local government in Suffolk for 50 years.
- The council argues that any alternatives will have to work hard to justify the risks of breaking up critical services such as social care, creating new council boundaries and smaller population sizes.
- Early analysis by financial consultants PwC suggests that establishing a single new local council could cost around £19 million, but that this could be repaid quickest through the significant savings achieved by having one council.
- Alternatively, the cost of breaking Suffolk into two or even three, as proposed by Suffolk's district and borough councils, would cost £7 million to £13 million more and, in the case of three new councils, that investment would never be repaid as there would be no savings to be found.
- More details on SCC website: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/devolution>

Questions from participants:

- How will a unitary authority represent and solve local and rural issues? The point was made that it is vital to have Neighbourhood Plans (other PC's are working on these).
- The proposal is to reduce the current 308 councillors to 90-140 councillors. I pointed out the differences in how District Councillors are currently remunerated compared to County Councillors and how this results in a lack of diversity and equality.

Survey to complete:

- There is a 10-minute survey to complete, which will be available until August 4th 2025. It asks questions about local democracy, such as how you raise issues that need addressing and local decision-making – such as how you might want to get involved and about the specifics of council reorganisation itself.

www.suffolk.gov.uk/devolution

Cllr. Angela Roper