

FARNHAM WITH STRATFORD ST ANDREW PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 10 November 2025 at the Riverside Centre

Councillors present: Rosemary Conibeer (Vice Chair), Richard Ayres, Jill Pass, Richard Sayer, Annabel Warne and Jeremy Williams.

In attendance: Katherine Abbott (Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer).

Before turning to the agenda, the Vice Chair referred with sadness to the death of Dick Spatchett on 18 October at Ipswich Hospital. Dick had been a valued member of the community. The Parish Council wished to record its condolences to Dick's family and friends.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ian Norman and Cllr Tim Plant.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest for items on the agenda.

3 Reports of the District and County Councillors

Cllr Reid (SCC) had provided a written report which was noted. A written report had also been received from Cllr Noble (ESC) who was present for this item and summarised the contents of her report. The Parish Council sought information on the budgetary implications of the possible transfer of certain roles and responsibilities to town and parish councils because of the Local Government Review. Cllr Noble said the leadership team at East Suffolk Council was meeting with Government representatives but no further information on this aspect was available yet. The Vice Chair thanked Cllr Noble for her report and attendance.

4 Minutes of the last Meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13 October 2025 were approved without amendment.

5 Matters arising

The following updates to previous minutes were provided and noted:

Allotments – A new tenant had taken the tenancy for the recently vacated allotment. A gentleman had also asked to be advised if another allotment became vacant.

Footpaths – The clearing of some of the overgrown footpaths was noted with appreciation. A work order had been issued by SCC for the footpaths reported to it via the online reporting tool. ACTION: It was agreed to review progress on this at the next meeting.

House of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) – The information received from the Private Housing Team at East Suffolk Council to the queries raised by the Council was noted. The terms and conditions of the licence required for the property and the process to report concerns were discussed.

6 Questions from members of the public

No questions had been received.

7 Updates from external meetings

(i) Sizewell C Community Forum (23 October) – Cllr Williams

The main points discussed at the Forum were:

- Final investment decision was made in July, and the UK Government was now the majority investor
- Main construction would accelerate in 2026
- Southern Park and Ride would open at Christmas.
- Construction of the Sizewell Link Road had commenced
- Question about the future of the Middleton Oaks – seven were permitted for removal under the DCO. The possibility of saving two of the ancient oaks was being actively explored.
- Question about right turns on to the A12 to head south and the difficulties being caused by the bunching of traffic because of reduced speed limits. A road safety scheme was being put in place at Marlesford and this should assist with this. Any remaining concerns should be reported to the SZC Traffic Review Group.

The full draft meeting notes available at <https://www.sizewellc.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Draft-Sizewell-C-Community-Forum-meeting-notes-23.10.25-.pdf>

8 Community Engagement survey

The Vice Chair provided a brief update on recent discussions with Community Action Suffolk and potential next steps.

9 Review of Standing Orders

The Clerk stated that the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) had updated its Model Standing Orders to reflect new procurement legislation, enhanced Code of Conduct requirements, and adopted gender-neutral language, This Model had been used to provide the updated version of the Standing Orders for annual review and adoption.

The Parish Council reviewed the Standing Orders and formally approved and adopted them.

10 Review of Financial Regulations

The Clerk reported that the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) had also updated its Model Financial Regulations and this had been used to create the draft for annual consideration. The Clerk clarified that, within the text, 'Must' and bold text referred to a statutory obligation the Council could not change;

'Shall' referred to a non-statutory instruction by the Council to its members and staff.

The Parish Council reviewed the Financial Regulations and formally approved and adopted them.

11 To note the status of the Clerk's pension re-enrolment and declaration

The Clerk stated that she had completed the required confirmation with the Pension Regulator to state that she was not enrolled in a workplace pension and to declare that the PC has complied with all its legal duties. This was formally noted.

12 To review the early draft of the 2026/7 budget ahead of formal decision in January

The Responsible Finance Officer (the RFO) referred to the early draft of the Budget and sought the Parish Council's suggestions for additions, changes etc with the benefit of Year-to-Date (as at 31.10.25) income and expenditure alongside historic actual End of Year figures. The RFO had also suggested additional budget items for a modest Chairman's allowance, training to be compliant with the requirements of the new Assertion 10 within the Annual Governance and Accountability Review and for the incremental establishment of a General Reserve. These suggestions were agreed for inclusion in the draft.

The Parish Council considered the draft which, when considered in January, would help to inform the setting of the Precept. Councillor Ayres stated that an above inflation increase in the Precept should be considered in January, based on a review of the forecast position and unknown aspects from the Local Government Review and the likely impact on Parish Council commitments. This was agreed.

It was also suggested that the creation of a contingency fund be considered in January to cover risks such as unexpected reductions in funding, emergencies, or contractual liabilities. This could be held separately or within the General Reserve. This was agreed.

9.30pm – Cllr Sayer left the meeting due to another commitment

13 Verbal report by the Responsible Finance Officer

The RFO reported the following financial figures as at 7 November:

Balance of unrestricted funds: £4650.25

Balance of restricted: £1461.06

Invoices to be paid:

Salary Clerk/RFO - £413.20 (gross)

CAS – gov.uk website domain name for two years - £55

CAS – x1 gov.uk inbox for one year - £27

The renewal of cyber security software, at best value for money, was agreed (estimate \$55)

Income received £25 (rents for three allotments)

The ICO annual certification fee had been paid on 1 November (£52)

The invoices stated were approved and the revised balance of unrestricted funds after payment would be £4155.05 (not including unknown software costs).
Accounts were reconciled.

14 Verbal report by the Clerk

There was nothing to report.

15 Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

16 Next meeting

The date in December and indicative items for the agenda were noted.

The Meeting closed at 9.39pm