

FARNHAM WITH STRATFORD ST ANDREW PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 8 June 2026 at the Riverside Centre

Councillors present: Ian Norman (Chair), Rosemary Conibeer (Vice Chair), Jill Pass, Tim Plant, Annabel Warne and Jeremy Williams.

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

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Richard Ayres

2 Declarations of Interest

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

3 Reports of the District and County Councillors

Cllr Ewart (SCC) was present and provided a verbal report. In summary:

- Cllr Ewart advised that she now had some 15 villages and one town council within her ward, that she was also a district councillor and Chair of the Scrutiny Committee at SCC;
- The Parish Council was invited to advise Cllr Ewart of any broken or missing road signs so that she could raise these with the Highways Department. The budget of £15,000 would need to be spread across all the villages and town council in her ward.
- Cllr Ewart said she was campaigning for a new GP practice in Saxmundham and sought the Parish Council's support.
- Cllr Ewart would be co-hosting a symposium on the proposed NSIP by Essex and Suffolk Water through Saxmundham, but also related to other NSIPs including SZC, Lion Link, and Sea Link
- Cllr Ewart invited the Parish Council to involve her in any matters where her assistance might be helpful

Cllr Noble (ESC) could not attend the meeting due to other commitments but had provided a short, written report. This was noted.

4 Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes were approved without amendment.

5 Matters arising

(i) Allotments

Cllr Plant reported that Mr Clifford and Ms Fielder had taken over the allotment recently vacated by Mr Rudge. This was in addition to the smaller plot they already worked. As the vacated plot had been in a poor state of maintenance, it was agreed by the Parish Council that it would be rent-free until November 2027.

Mr Briggs had taken over half an allotment from Mr Clifford and Ms Fielder.

(ii) gov.uk email

The update by Cllr Pass on her use of a new gov.uk email for Council business was deferred to the July meeting.

(iii) Volunteering

Cllr Williams had produced a draft leaflet to be included in the Ebb and Flow which encapsulated the items discussed at the Annual Meeting regarding volunteering opportunities within and for the benefit of the community. This was agreed. An update on responses would be received at the July meeting.

The advert for an Ecological Volunteer had been provided to one resident and their response was awaited.

6 Questions from members of the public

An anonymous letter had been received related to sensitive and complex issues with a property in Stratford St Andrew. Following discussion of the letter's contents, it was agreed that the Clerk would write to several relevant bodies seeking investigation of the allegations and, as appropriate, action.

7 Recruitment (Co-option) of a new Parish Councillor

The required period during which ten residents were able to request an election to fill the vacancy on the Council had expired at midnight on 4 June.

An advert had been published inviting applications to be a Parish Councillor by 30 June. Qualifying applications would be considered and a decision on co-option to the role made at the July meeting.

8 Procedure for the Co-option of Councillors

The Clerk had circulated a draft procedure for the process to be followed for the co-option of applicants to the current and future Parish Councillor vacancies.

This was reviewed, approved and adopted.

9 Recruitment of a new Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer

The Chairman updated Council on the short-listing and interview selection process completed on 5 June. Subject to pre-employment checks, the position had been offered to Kim Puttock and the provisional date for her to start in the role was 1 July.

The Chairman explained that Mrs Puttock also had several other roles and responsibilities and had asked if the timing of the monthly meeting could be changed to the third Monday to enable her to attend. This was unanimously agreed.

The current Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer would officially step down on 30 June and for a short period during the transition from one to the other there would be two Clerks/RFOs. It was not anticipated that the transition would be lengthy as Mrs Puttock had a wealth of knowledge and experience in the roles. There was

also a desire to keep staff costs to a minimum.

10 Internal audit report 2025/6 and action plan

Due to issues with the availability of SALC internal auditors, the timing of the internal audit had been delayed by approximately two weeks, in total. The report was therefore not ready to be received at this meeting and was deferred to the July meeting.

11 Responsible Finance Officer's verbal report

The Responsible Finance Officer reported:

- As at 31 May, the balance of unreserved funds was £6170.14
- CIL balance was £1361.06
- General Reserve was £1,000

Invoices for authorisation and payment:

- £50 CIL for the cleaning and disinfecting of the bus shelters
- Gross salary for Clerk/RFO was £688.20 (including extra hours for the recruitment of a new Clerk/RFO and Internal Audit preparations/responding to queries of the auditor etc.
- Both payments were approved.

Balances after payments:

- Unreserved: £5481.94 (second instalment of Precept due in October)
- CIL: £1311.06
- General Reserve: £1000

The financial records above were reconciled.

12. Clerk's verbal report

There was nothing additional to report beyond updates within other agenda items.

13. Urgent items

The Council extended an invitation to the current Clerk to attend a future meeting to be wished a formal "farewell". It was agreed that this be scheduled for the start of the meeting in August.

14 Next meeting

The new date in July 2026 and indicative items for the agenda were noted.

The Meeting closed at 8.33pm