

Bildeston Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held Monday 5th January 2025, 7.30pm,
at Chamberlin Hall, Chamberlin Close, Bildeston.

Present:	
Cllr Ray McCann - Chairman	County Cllr Robert Lindsay
Cllr Robin Sidgwick	District Cllr Deborah Saw
Cllr Philip Alcoe	Clerk – Angela Chapman
Cllr Richard Lester	Tim Hooper representing The Bugle magazine
	1x residents
Apologies: Cllr Helen Alcoe, Cllr Virginia Tuck, Cllr Alex Banks	

C649/25/26 Chairman's Welcome & Apologies

Chairman McCann welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies noted.

C650/25/26 Vacancy for Parish Councillor/s.

2 vacancies remain.

C651/25/26 Declaration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests. Cllr Richard Lester – Kings Pightle Committee, St. Mary Magdalene church PCC, Sports Field Management Committee/Trustee

C652/25/26 Requests for dispensation in respect of pecuniary interests. None.

C653/25/26 Minutes of Last Meeting held 1st December 2025, approved as a true record of the meeting.

C654/25/26 Public Session – to include County Councillor and District Councillor reports.

Adjourned 1938hrs to receive reports from County and District Councillors and consider any matters raised by local parishioners.

DC Deborah Saw

Full report from Babergh **District Councillor Deborah Saw** can be seen on <https://bildeston.org/parish-council/county-and-district-councillors-report/>

Weavers Grove

At December's Parish Council I was asked to contact Orbit, the developers of the Ipswich Road site, about what its plans were for a footpath connecting the site to the High Street which would help residents partly avoid having to walk down a busy road. Orbit has confirmed that this footpath will go ahead and the construction company will be instructed to install it as per the plan below, the footpath is in grey.

We would all like a solution whereby residents would not have to walk by the side of the road at all. Orbit is willing to consider this, following the meeting with Councillors Sidgwick and Lindsay but there may be an issue with the Calor gas compound. However, once the main footpath has been laid then there will be clarity as to the actual gradients. I will follow-up on this more desirable option.

I have also contacted Orbit at the parish council's request to ascertain whether when the access for the Weavers Grove development was built in its permanent location, a pipe was laid under the access to take away the water coming down the hill in the ditch. If a pipe wasn't installed then the ditch would flood after heavy rain, leading to muddy water flowing down the road and eventually into the road drains farther down which would explain the muddy water running down the High Street.

As yet I haven't had a reply from Orbit but that is understandable. I will follow up. I have also contacted Planning Enforcement to ask them to check against planning permissions.

Still time for you to have your say

Don't miss your ONLY chance to tell the government what sort of council you want from May 2028

If you want to remind yourself of the different options, they are on the consultation website, link below.

You only have until Sunday 11th January to respond. You can use this link: Consultation on Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Norfolk and Suffolk - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - Citizen Space

We are expecting feedback from government in March.

News about Better Recycling

From June this year all councils in England and Wales must introduce a new household recycling system to meet the government's target of 65% recyclable waste by 2035. As well as the materials we already collect, we'll also start collecting the following from households directly:

- food waste (on a weekly basis)
- glass bottles and jars
- cartons e.g. Tetra Pak
- plastic bags, wrappings and film

Residents will receive the first information leaflet directly to their homes over the coming months to explain the new service. There will be an extensive communications campaign to ensure residents are confident about the changes.

We know that change on this scale will not be without challenges for some households, but we will work with anyone with exceptional needs on a case-by-case basis, to ensure we are adopting this government legislation in a way that works best for everyone.

Community Development Grants

Community Development Grants can be applied for towards revenue, capital or pre-project costs and activities. Grants are available to up to 100% of total project costs to a maximum grant of £10,000, for projects or activities taking place in 2026/27. Successful applicants will be required to deliver their project within 12 months of an offer being accepted.

Community Development Grants are currently open for applications until 18 January 2026, with one application window per financial year. Applications are assessed as part of a competitive application process, using a scoring matrix. View the scoring matrix used to assess applications.

More detailed information, terms and conditions and eligibility criteria can be found on our Guidance Notes. View Guidance Notes.

But before you start have a word with our grants team. Contact them first of all on BMSDCGrants@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

Goodbye Christmas Trees

If you have a garden waste (brown) bin, during January you can leave your real Christmas tree beside your brown bin on collection day. Make sure you have taken all your decorations off.

Large trees - trees over 7ft tall, or that have a trunk thicker than 7cm - cannot be collected. Instead, they can be taken to a recycling centre. The nearest one to Bildeston is at Crockatt Road, Hadleigh, IP7 6RD (Off Lady Lane Industrial Estate).

Hadleigh Young Farmers are collecting Christmas trees in aid of the East Anglian Air Ambulance charity for a minimum donation of £5 they will collect trees from Bildeston. Any donation goes to the Air Ambulance and the trees are chipped and put on the paths at Hollow Trees farm shop. Trees will be collected from 8am this Saturday, 10th January. You can use this link to book: [Hadleigh YFC Christmas Tree Collection](#)

Babergh District Council budget to be considered in February. There is slightly more funding than expected from Government. A fuller report will be available when finalised at the beginning of March.

Weavers Grove/ Ipswich Road development – sales are stagnant. Babergh DC are considering purchasing some of the properties for temporary housing.

CC Robert Lindsay

Full report from Suffolk County Councillor Robert Lindsay can be seen on <https://bildeston.org/parish-council/county-and-district-councillors-report/>

Hadleigh to Stowmarket Bus latest

I was told just before Christmas that TMS – a bus conglomerate known as Transport Made Simple - will be operating the new daily Hadleigh to Stowmarket route, probably under the KonnectBus brand.

The officer is hoping to make the timetable public shortly. A separate, unrelated email from TMS went out to all parishes covering their routes asking for ideas for the next round of bus funding – see later item. Funding for this route is already secured.

However, as this route appears to be going ahead it is probably worth the parish thinking about investment in better bus stops to support the route from the next £27m round of funding described below.

New Funding for Buses and Sustainable Travel

Suffolk has been awarded £27m of funding for bus services from the Government's Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG), this can be used for routes, ticketing or improving infrastructure like bus stops and shelters. Previously known as the Bus Services Improvement Grant, communities in Suffolk will be able to suggest improvements in their area and 'bid' for funding via the Suffolk on Board website: <https://www.suffolkonboard.com/>

The council has also been awarded just over £12m from Active Travel England to promote sustainable travel in the county. This can be used to invest in footpaths, cycle lanes and other infrastructure. Examples of how this funding has been used recently include pedestrian crossings in Bridge Street and College Road by Ipswich waterfront and improved cycle routes including from Ipswich Hospital to the waterfront area, Nacton Road in Ipswich, Main Road in Martlesham, and within Woodbridge as part of the town's current active travel project.

Suffolk Conservatives to decide whether to delay county elections again

The county's Conservative leader has called another extraordinary meeting for next Monday, 12 January. This meeting is called to debate whether to delay county council elections for the second year running. The Government announced just before Christmas that it will do so where county councils request it. The original delay was agreed to allow for the mayoral election to take place at the same time as the county elections. But then the mayoral election was suddenly postponed by the Government.

However, some of the funding attached to the mayoral office is due to be given the interim authorities next financial year and in future years. If this further delay is agreed, it would mean that new strategic funding would be given to Suffolk in years 2026, 2027 and 2028, based on a mandate last given by the public in 2021. My political group is lobbying the county council not to ask the government for any further delays in elections.

Protecting Suffolk's Rivers

At council on Thursday 11 December, my group proposed a motion to strengthen protection for rivers in the county via the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Rivers which include the right to flow naturally, be free from pollution or contamination and the right to recover from environmental harm. Unfortunately, the Conservative group opted to vote against the motion and it was not carried.

Review of SEND progress

On Thursday 4 December, the council's Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee convened to scrutinise progress on the action plan for improvement to Suffolk's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services. The action plan was developed following a poor inspection report from Ofsted and CQC in November 2023. Council officers and Cabinet members for children's services joined the meeting and acknowledged that although progress had been made to clear the backlog of EHCPs and improve the waiting times to produce them and review them annually, many families had not yet felt the benefit of improvements the council and health partners were trying to embed. The Cabinet member for Education and SEND apologised at the meeting for this. It was noted that some issues, like the shortage of speech and language therapists, were a national issue rather than specific to Suffolk. The council is also working closely with the Department for Education and in partnership with Bedford Borough Council on best practice and support with strategy. The government's Schools white paper, which is expected to include an overhaul of the SEND system nationally, is expected soon in 2026. Members of the committee included education professionals and parents of children with special educational needs who expressed their concern that the council was still not providing a good enough service to Suffolk families.

More Warm Homes Grants funding

Residents and landlords are urged to apply quickly for £1.38million in Warm Homes Local Grant funding secured at the end of November last year as the funding must be allocated by the end of March 2026.

It is only available to those with household income at or below £36k pa. and homes with an EPC below C. (you can find this out when you apply).

You can find out more and apply using this link: <https://www.warmhomessuffolk.org/>

In addition, Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk council have teamed up to provide Winter Warmth Packs to help vulnerable residents stay warm and healthy at home even if they are struggling with rising living costs. Referrals are via community groups, food banks, GP surgeries or hospitals and each pack includes items such as thermal hats, gloves, blankets and gilets, tailored as necessary – for example, children’s winter coats can be included. Although the Warm Homes Healthy People programme is delivered by East Suffolk Council, it is a county-wide programme.

Helping Older Drivers Stay Safe

Suffolk’s Fire and Rescue Service are holding workshops at fire stations around the county to advise older people on how they can stay safe while driving. Nationally, one in four car drivers killed on the roads last year were aged 70 or over, and as a rural county, many residents are reliant on cars to stay independent. The sessions are planned at the following venues for 11am-1pm:

- Tuesday 13 January – Woodbridge Fire and Police Station
- Wednesday 14 January – Stradbroke Fire Station
- Tuesday 27 January – Wrentham Fire and Police Station
- Wednesday 28 January – Ixworth Fire Station
- Tuesday 10 February – Holbrook Fire Station

To book a free place, please visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/suffolk-fire-rescue-service-road-safety-86298781223?msocid=1b58e35a30906c973b40f56031016d19>

Tim Hooper /Bugle – Tim advised the meeting the volunteers are now putting together a magazine with the help of Jenna Cox who edits the Roundabout magazine. Angela Chapman/ Clerk forwarded Jenna’s details to Tim after speaking with her. Tim expressed his thanks for this contact.

He advised Diane Brown put the Bugle together with little help, so Jenna’s input is invaluable.

The Bugle does not have a financial issue, but they obviously have to find a new editor if the magazine is to continue. Tim will organise a public meeting in February.

Reconvened 2020hrs.

C655/25/26 Planning Applications

Planning Appendix A - Items for comment

None.

Planning Appendix B – Items determined by Babergh District Council

DISCHARGE OF CONDITION(S)

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

Proposal: Discharge of Conditions Application for **B/15/01433** - Condition 4 (Fire Hydrants)

Condition 8 (Provision of footway) Condition 10 (Provision of village gateway)

Condition 22 (Illumination restrictions)

Location: Land East Of Artiss Close And, Rotheram Road, Bildeston, Suffolk

DC/25/04463

Proposal & Location of Development:

Planning Application - Addition of 12no. solar panels to West facing roof of the property

Dukes Hall, Duke Street, Bildeston, Ipswich Suffolk IP7 7EW

Grant.

DC/25/04464

Proposal & Location of Development:

Application for Listed Building Consent - Addition of 12 solar panels to west facing roof of the property.

Dukes Hall, Duke Street, Bildeston, Ipswich Suffolk IP7 7EW

Grant.

DC/25/04588

Proposal & Location of Development:

Householder Application - Installation of electric vehicle charging point on external wall of garage.

126 High Street, Bildeston, Ipswich, Suffolk IP7 7ED

Granted.

C656/25/26 Clerks Report

Welcome pack is progressing, there should be something to look at next meeting.

The grit bin for Brookfield has been refused, despite 2 applications and a previous one last year. The only other option is to locate one on private land with the landowners permission. The PC would be responsible for filling it.

I met with Charlie Buckle from the Crown, along with Cllr Robin Sidgwick to discuss the gateway from the Crown. We had a productive meeting, with the Crown in full favour of the gate, and offered to organise the work, purchase and install the gate and all other works including walkways either side of the gate. The PC will contribute the cost of the gate. After discussion, and a site visit, the location was agreed to be moved along the boundary line into the Chamberlin Hall car park, and will enter in the corner by the play area. The PC will be responsible for repairing the fence into the play area.

A fallen tree had blocked the Squirrels Mill footpath, I arranged for Paul Barham to clear it away.

Finances

Budget considerations sheet – the Finance Group met yesterday. The suggested precept figure is £39,000.

I have been liaising with Unity Trust Bank regarding unauthorised payments going out of the account. This has now been dealt with, and a refund has been paid to the PC for the overpayment.

C657/25/26 Projects and Progress Reports

- a. Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Philip Alcoe advised nothing further to add from December's meeting. The group is being led by the consultant.
- b. Orbit Housing, Weavers Grove – new footpath – see C654/25/26
- c. Environmental management – the work list was reviewed and approved. The only change is to reconsider the sports field grass cutting. Cllr Lester will discuss at the next the Sports Field committee meeting and report back to the PC. The grass will be cut in the meantime if that is after the start of the cutting season. Further, it was suggested and agreed that the PC organise a 'working party' of volunteers to clear and widen the footpath on Church Rd. Clerk to arrange a date and distribute for Councillors to enlist volunteers.
- d. Brooks footpath - Public Right of Way no. 1 & 2 – Cllr Sigwick is moving forward with the CIL funding application which could provide 75% of the costs, the PC providing the remaining 25%. The estimated cost is £20k.
- e. SID – still waiting for Suffolk Highways need to dig a test hole at the triangle.
- f. Welcome pack – see Clerks report
- g. Grit bin – Brookfield - see Clerk's report
- h. Village tidy up –Cllrs Ray McCann and Cllr Richard Lester gave feedback and some photos of areas for possible improvement, after a village walkabout. They will present a list of candidate sites at the next meeting
- i. Gate installation – see Clerk's report
- j. Playground monthly report – on SharePoint. Nothing to report
- k. update on village amenities
 - Norman Ruffell's memorial bench now installed. The family are hoping to have a private unveiling of the bench.

C658/25/26 Administrative, Finance and Governance Reports

- a. Payments for approval – authorised by Cllrs McCann and Sidgwick.

Payee	Description	Net of VAT
A Chapman – expenses	C’mas tree installation	£75.00
R McCann	Room hire & entertaining	£55.50
Ashtons Legal	Legal fees	£2,520.00
A Chapman	Clerk’s salary	-.-
Rougham Estates	C’mas tree	£282.50
Ashtons Legal	Legal fees	£1,500.00
Chamberlin Hall MC	Hall hire	£15.00
P Barham	Environmental management	£27.00
KGT Fencing	Environmental management	£72.00
HMRC	PAYE & NIC	£274 .71
A Chapman	Clerk’s expenses/ admin costs	£39.00

- b. Approval and signing Scribe of monthly accounting reports – checked and signed.
c. Budget considerations – budget sheet reviewed and approved. Budget for financial year 2026/27 set at £39,000.
d. Internal Control Statements 2025/26 & 2026/27 – approved and signed
e. CIL funding for the PRow Brooks footpath – see C657/25/26 9.d. above
f. ICCM membership and subscription – approved. To be reviewed annually.
g. Bugle magazine – see C657/25/26 Tim Hooper/ Bugle above.

C647/25/26 Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council

None.

C648/25/26 Items for next agenda

Neighbourhood Plan

SID

Welcome pack

Village environmental improvements

Playground report

Parish Councillor vacancies

Meeting closed 2129hrs.

Date of next meeting: Monday 2nd February 2026 7.30pm, at Chamberlin Hall, Bildeston.

Village website: www.bildeston.org