

# Bildeston Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2026, 7.30pm,  
at Chamberlin Hall, Chamberlin Close, Bildeston.

<b>Present:</b>	
Cllr Ray McCann - Chairman	Clerk – Angela Chapman
Cllr Robin Sidgwick	2x resident
Cllr Virginia Tuck	
Cllr Philip Alcoe	
<b>Apologies:</b> Cllr Helen Alcoe, Cllr Alex Banks, Cllr Richard Lester, County Cllr Robert Lindsay.	

## **C673/25/26 Chairman's Welcome & Apologies**

Chairman McCann welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies noted.

## **C674/25/26 Vacancy for Parish Councillor/s.**

2 vacancies remain.

Cllr Virginia Tuck handed in her resignation as from May 2026 after 7 years of service to the Parish Council. She will still be involved in the N Plan. Cllr Tuck confirmed the new bus service will start in April from the village, the route from Hadleigh, Bildeston, Hitcham, Finborough and Stowmarket will run several times a day. It is hoped this will help employees and apprentices working at TMJ on Ipswich Rd, as well as providing a bus to Stowmarket train station for students and those wishing to travel on to London. This bus service will also provide a service to Hadleigh from the village for the first time for some while.

**C675/25/26 Declaration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.** None.

**C676/25/26 Requests for dispensation in respect of pecuniary interests.** None.

**C677/25/26 Minutes of Last Meeting** held 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026, approved as a true record of the meeting.

**C678/25/26 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/> Report read out in DC Saw's absence.

## **Bildeston Issues**

I have been in contact with Orbit Housing and its contractors regarding footpaths at its Ipswich Road site and the construction of a ditch. There is now a temporary footpath running by the side of Artiss Close which matches the alternative the Parish Council wanted.

There have been residents' complaints about parking by Council contractors at Brookfield and damage to a grass verge. Thank you to Cllr. Robin Sidgwick for providing photographs. I have spoken to the project manager at the Council and he informed me that the work would finish around the end of March. He did speak to the contractors and initially parking improved but that did not last. I will report back to the Parish Council at the meeting .

## **The Joint Local Plan and the Call for Sites**

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils are proceeding with its new Joint Local Plan in response to significant changes in national planning policy and updated Government housing requirements which have led to an 86% increase in our annual housing target. Babergh has held two Call for Sites at the end of 2025/2026 and in 2024.

The Councils have published a map of all sites submitted during these Call for Sites exercises. It can be accessed here <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/web/babergh/w/call-for-sites>.

Let me stress this is not a list of preferred locations for development and all these sites have to be assessed and consulted on by communities. We have published it so communities have early visibility.

Assessments will be published through the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment in Spring 2026. Officer assessment does not determine allocations — that occurs at the draft plan stage, which will be subject to full public consultation.

### **The County Council Elections are back on!**

The Government has said that the County Council elections must be held after having told the County Council that it could cancel the election if it thought it had 'capacity issues.' It is the District Councils' officers who run the election on behalf of the County and fortunately given the policy backtracking we have experienced from the Government, did not stop preparations.

The election will be held on 7th May. To vote in person on 7 May, you must be on the electoral register by 23:59 BST on Monday 20 April.

You can register online with your National Insurance number, external, or by writing to your council's electoral registration office.

The rules about postal and proxy votes have changed, and you need to renew them every three years. Any postal or proxy votes set up before 31 October 2023 have expired.

### **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/> Report read out in CC Lindsay's absence.

### **New bus 51 Hadleigh and Stowmarket**

I have no new info on this timetable but the number and timing of services is limited because it is just one driver operating one bus going to and fro, and by law a single driver's shift is limited. The operator TMS apparently is prepared to flex the timings once the service is underway, within these limits, depending on demand.

Apparently HCT is not willing to ticket share on the route. I hope this may change if the route becomes successful.

### **County council elections back on**

As you probably heard, last month the Government suddenly U-turned on its move to scrap County Council elections and they are now back on with very little notice.

This is owing to a legal challenge which the Government found it could not defend itself against, although before its lawyers saw the challenge the Government was adamant that it had legal precedence on its side.

All in all this strikes me as representative of the cavalier way local government changes are being pushed through.

### **Vehicle Removal Trial for Resurfacing Works**

Often road works have been delayed and extra costs added because people fail to heed the warning to move their cars beforehand. Suffolk Highways have announced that they will trial towing away vehicles that have not been removed between March and June this year for about 19 specific planned resurfacing works. The council will a fortnight before place cards placed under windscreens and through residents' doors. Two days before the works are due to begin, cones will be put out along with signage warning that it will become a towing zone on the day. If there are cars parked on the road on the day, officers will knock on doors to try and find the owner and as a last resort, vehicles will be moved. There is a £70 fine to get it back. Essex County Council has been doing this for about a decade and found that it has worked to cut costs of road works.

County Council chief executive quits with no new job to go to

On 13 February, it was announced that Nicola Beach, the Chief Executive of Suffolk County Council, would be resigning after six years at the end of March. Because the council will be dissolved in May 2028, the administration will be appointing two existing directors – Andrew Cook (currently deputy CEO) and Mark Ash (currently director of local government reorganisation) – into new joint chief executive roles for the remaining two years of the council's existence.

### **Suffolk Sustainability Initiatives Nominated for Awards**

Suffolk County Council is one of 24 UK local authorities to be shortlisted for the first APSE Energy Awards, which are held in partnership with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. The nomination recognises the council's Warm Homes Suffolk Loan Scheme, and the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders group's Home Energy Efficiency Assessment Scheme (administered by Reed In Partnership). Both these schemes were a result of declaring a climate emergency. However the county has removed the word "climate" from its policy to deal with national strategic infrastructure projects.

Reconvened 1948hrs.

### **C679/25/26 Planning Applications**

#### **Planning Appendix A - Items for comment**

None.

#### **Planning Appendix B – Items determined by Babergh District Council**

None.

### **C680/25/26 Clerks Report**

Ashtons – update – Deed of Grant has been sent. Ashtons are awaiting a response from the landowner's solicitor.

Welcome pack – draft now completed. Feedback needed, together with distribution list. See C681/26/26 d. below.

Smith of Derby – letter sent, awaiting response.

Assertion 10 – this is a new digital and date compliance that the PC needs to adhere to. It will appear on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return AGAR 2025-26. You will see several items on the agenda relating to this.

The works being carried out by Babergh on some houses at Brookfield has caused some irritation to residents, as workman's vans have been parked in the residents' parking bays. Babergh DC have been contacted. The works will be finished by the end of March.

Environmental Improvement project – liaising with Councillors on works. I have compiled a list of work improvements which has been distributed. See C681/26/26 e. below.

#### **Finances**

All in place, ready for the end of the financial year.

### **C681/25/26 Projects and Progress Reports**

- a. Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Philip Alcoe received a NP document from Rachel Leggett Associates, consultants. He will distribute to all other NP group members, also to the Clerk, who will distribute to all Parish Cllrs for information. Work on the plan will not commence until June 2026. Central Government has changed the NPPF. Funding needs to be put in place. It is hoped CIL funds will be available, as well as funding from KBB. It was noted it is important to keep non-Cllr working group members informed.
- b. Orbit Housing, Weavers Grove – Cllr Robin Sidgwick inspected the area and the new footpath Sunday, there is no change. He is in contact with Will Harvey/ Orbit Housing.
- c. SID – awaiting pole installation
- d. Welcome Pack – Clerk distributed draft leaflet. One addition to be put on. Quote for printing distributed to Cllrs. Approved for printing.
- e. Village Environmental Improvement project – Clerk produced and distributed worksheet. Cllr Robin Sidgwick has completed several tasks. Other tasks still to be being carried out on this ongoing project. A group to be arranged to clear area at the end of Smock Meadow.
- f. Playground monthly report – on SharePoint. Nothing to report.
- g. update on village amenities – Clerk confirmed the PC had arranged levelling of a recent burial grave.

### **C682/25/26 Administrative, Finance and Governance Reports**

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

Payee	Description	Net of VAT
An Accounting Gem	Accountancy fees	31.25
Parish Council Websites	Website maintenance	60.00
P Barham	Cemetery maintenance	25.00
SMS	Microsoft 365 subs	43.46
A Chapman	Admin expenses	39.00
McAfee	Laptop protection	109.99
A Chapman	Clerks salary	-.-
HMRC	PAYE & NIC	274.71

- b. Approval and signing Scribe of monthly accounting reports – checked and signed.
- c. Assertion 10 – review and adopt new IT policy – approved and adopted
- d. Assertion 10 - Adopt Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) Publication Scheme, Freedom of Information Act Model Publication Scheme Version 1.2 (2015-10-23). Defer
- e. Assertion 10 - update and review GDPR Policy and Data Protection Act 2018 – reviewed and adopted
- f. Review policy list. Defer
- g. Waste bin emptying – considerable increase in emptying costs. Approved. Discussion on bins in Market Place which get full very quickly. Parcel boxes being put in the bins after being collected from the shop. Cllr Philip Alcoe offered to empty the bins of cardboard if they get too full
- h. Community First Responder Initiative – with Chelsworth and Monks Eleigh PCs. Chairman Ray McCann read out the email. Proposal to raise funds to equip CFR. The approximate amount needed is £3k. Chairman McCann will contact Chair of Chelsworth PC. Bildeston PC are happy to support and assist with fundraising and finding volunteers. The PC will put a piece in the Bugle and Roundabout.

**C683/25/26 Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council**

Clerk to contact DC Deborha Saw regarding damage to property on the High Street from water and debris off the road surface.

**C684/25/26 Items for next agenda**

Neighbourhood Plan  
 Welcome Pack distribution  
 Village environmental improvements  
 Playground report  
 Parish Councillor vacancies

Meeting closed 2050hrs.

**Date of next meeting: Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2026 7.30pm, at Chamberlin Hall, Bildeston.**

Village website: [www.bildeston.org](http://www.bildeston.org)