

Bildeston Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held Tuesday 7th April 2026, 7.30pm,
at Chamberlin Hall, Chamberlin Close, Bildeston.

Present:	
Cllr Philip Alcoe	County Cllr Robert Lindsay
Cllr Alex Banks	District Cllr Deborah Saw
Cllr Richard Lester	
Cllr Robin Sidgwick	Clerk – Angela Chapman
Cllr Virginia Tuck	5x residents
Apologies: Cllr Ray McCann, Cllr Helen Alcoe	

C685/26/27 Chairman’s Welcome & Apologies

Vice Chairman Richard Lester chaired the meeting in the absence of Chairman Ray McCann. Cllr Lester welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies noted.

C686/26/27 Vacancy for Parish Councillor/s.

2 vacancies remain.

Cllr Alex Banks gave his resignation to the Parish Council due to work commitments. Cllr Lester thanked Cllr Banks for his time, support and contribution to the Parish Council. Resignation accepted.

This now leaves 3 vacancies.

C687/26/27 Declaration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests. Cllr Richard Lester – St. Mary’s PCC, Kings Phightle Nature Reserve, Sports Field/ Pavilion committee.

C688/26/27 Requests for dispensation in respect of pecuniary interests. None.

C689/26/27 Minutes of Last Meeting held 2nd March 2026. A correction from the Bugle, then approved as a true record of the meeting.

C690/26/27 Public Session – to include County Councillor and District Councillor reports.

Adjourned 1937hrs 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/>

Bildeston Issues

I recognise the level of concern residents of Artiss Close have about the temporary footpath running along the side of their properties from the development at Weavers’ Grove. Orbit should have contacted residents and explained why there was a need for such a footpath before constructing it without informing them. As soon as I was informed, I asked the site manager to go and speak with the resident most directly impacted, Since then I have been in contact with Orbit on several occasions, Planning Enforcement and Environmental Protection. The Senior Planning Enforcement Officer is going to visit the site.

The temporary path was constructed because Orbit has not received Section 278 approval from the County Council to make alterations to the highway to construct a permanent footpath down Ipswich Road.

The initial assessment I have received from Planning Enforcement, and as I stated he has yet to visit the site, is that he does not consider the temporary footpath a “full-fledged Breach of Condition and there are some Permitted Development rights afforded to temporarily use land for purposes related to the development, which may be applicable.”

I understand residents' concern about the proximity of the footpath to the top of the LPG tanks . A representative from Calor visited the site of the footpath on 3rd February and did state that as long as the path was at least two metres from the tank tops he was satisfied. If that is not the case residents should contact the Health and Safety Executive although I am also following up with the Council's Environmental Protection Team, <https://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/ask-us-about-health-and-safety.htm>.

Local Government Reorganisation

The government confirmed that there would be three unitary councils for Suffolk.

The new authorities will cover Western Suffolk, Central & Eastern Suffolk, and Ipswich & Southern Suffolk.

Bildeston would be in Western Suffolk, click the link for

boundaries.<https://threecouncilsforsuffolk.org/proposed-council-boundaries/>

We would expect each unitary to have between 60 and 66 councillors. We would prefer the highest level of representation possible.

You can read the letter from the Secretary of State to council leaders in full, here. He noted "the strong, consistent local support from residents, named consultees and organisations for the three unitary proposals, in particular in relation to local democratic representation in new authorities."

Under the new arrangements, the new councils will come into operation on 1st April 2028, with elections scheduled next May to establish the shadow authorities responsible for shaping and overseeing the transition.

The Council's Budget

Councils have been asking successive governments for clarity over the level of funding they can expect over the medium term rather than waiting for the week before Christmas to receive notification of the funding level for the financial year ahead. This December the Labour government gave Babergh a three year settlement.

This would have been good news, however, like many rural councils across the country Babergh received a net funding cut of £717k for the next three years and our proportion of business rates will decline in addition.

Urban councils will receive 32% more per head than rural councils. By 2028/9 urban councils will have received a 20% increase in government funding compared to only 2% in rural areas.

We do not want to give our successor councils or council a poor financial position so we will have to take radical action to balance the budget. The net cost of providing Babergh's services in 2026/27 will be £13.7m, down

£1.3m from £15m in the current financial year. We had to make difficult decisions to identify savings and additional income. To balance the budget in 2026/2 we had to increase council tax by 2.99% which means a

Band D household will pay Babergh £199.52 per year, a total annual increase of £5.79 - or 11p a week.

It is important to stress that Babergh only takes 9 per cent of your total council tax bill. The majority goes to the County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Heating oil

I joined with the council leaders of Mid and East Suffolk and wrote to the Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero to demand immediate action to help our 30,000 plus residents reliant on oil to heat their homes.

Unlike gas and electricity heating oil is a completely unregulated market with little protection from unfair treatment such as the cancellation of orders, massive price hikes and suppliers demanding money upfront before delivery. Prices have risen by over 100%.

We laid out six actions they want the government to take now including immediate hardship payments and suppliers to publish their prices in real time to ensure transparent pricing.

We will also report any uncompetitive behaviour by heating oil companies to the CMA. If residents experience difficulties with heating oil suppliers such as existing orders being cancelled and then being offered new quotes at significantly increased prices, paying in advance, and not receiving oil or suppliers colluding to match prices please let me know.

There is a page on the council website with some helpful advice for residents facing difficulties.

Emergency support call for households hit by soaring heating oil costs - Babergh District Council - babergh.gov.uk/midsuffolk.gov.uk

The Government announced on 16th March a £53 million fund which will be "targeted" to help low-income households in rural communities. £27 million will be assigned to English councils. According to the Government

Suffolk has the third highest off-grid dependency in England and will receive £1.717m . The money will be available to applicants through the new Crisis and Resilience Fund which came into operation on 1st April and is administered by the County Council. Here is a link to the site:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/community-and-safety/communities/healthier/suffolk-local-welfare-assistance-scheme>

The fund is experiencing a high volume of applications which is affecting the time it takes to process and pay out.

Neighbourhood Development Plan Support

At the recent meeting of Cabinet, it was agreed that the Council would offer individual grants to Towns and Parishes which did not have any Neighbourhood CIL to support the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans and Reviews which seek to allocate sites for housing development that meet Babergh's housing need up to a limit of £20,000.

I should also point out that funds are limited and will be on a 'first come, first served,' basis. Parishes should receive documentation this month.

Better Recycling

A little more information about the changes to your waste and recycling service.

The Government requirement for households and workplaces will be four containers for:

- residual (non-recyclable) waste, (the black bin you have now)
- food waste, (new 23 litre bin which will be collected weekly) plus a 5 litre caddy to keep in your kitchen to collect food, peelings etc and take to the food waste bin. You will also receive a supply of recyclable cellulose liners for the caddy)
- paper and cardboard, (a new green lidded bin. Paper and card have to have their own separate bin to ensure it all stays dry. Paper mills won't take damp paper)
- all other dry recyclable materials (plastic, metal, and glass in the blue bin)

You will receive the green lidded bin, the food waste bin and caddy in the week commencing 18th May but please don't use them until 1st June when the new service starts.

The Council wants to keep your collection day the same and will be sending out further information after the County elections in May.

Future changes to bin collections - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk

CC Robert Lindsey

Full report from Suffolk County Councillor Robert Lindsey can be seen on <https://bildeston.org/parish-council/county-and-district-councillors-report/> Report read out in CC Lindsay's absence.

Government opts for three councils in Suffolk

The Government announced Wednesday 25 March that it has chosen the three unitaries option for Suffolk – advocated by the leaders of the all five district councils - rather than one single one, promoted by Suffolk Conservatives.

It means that from 2028, if the plan goes ahead, Bildeston will be in West Suffolk council, which will stretch from just west of Hadleigh all the way to Newmarket and Brandon. The three councils option will be the smallest councils the Government would allow. Having three smaller councils, I believe, gives the opportunity for an effective administration to be more responsive to people than Suffolk County Council ever was. There will be fewer councillors than before, but not as few as the One Suffolk proposal was proposing.

The other two areas are Ipswich & Southern Suffolk (including Hadleigh and Felixstowe) and Central and Eastern Suffolk (including Stowmarket).

There will be elections of "shadow unitary councillors" to the new unitaries in May 2027, a year before the unitaries actually begin operation.

Five month road closure of Bildeston High Street

As you are aware Anglian Water's open evening is on 14th April from 2pm to 6.30pm. I've had a number of questions about this closure and have asked AW about them. Below are the responses.

1. Archaeology and potential historic findings

You're right that Bildeston High Street could have historic interest beneath the surface. If anything of archaeological significance is uncovered, the team on site will stop work straight away. We would then contact Suffolk County Council's archaeologist and follow the correct process. We'll also make sure this is included in the letters we send out, so residents are aware of how this would be handled.

2. Sewer inspections during the works

We will do our best to avoid other utilities while carrying out our work. However, if we come across anything that we feel needs reporting or addressing, we will contact the relevant teams and leave it with them to assess and take forward if needed. Our road closure could also be used by other organisations if they wish to work alongside us.

3. Access to cable ducts

If there is interest from other utility companies in making use of our road closure, this would be an opportunity for them to do so. Access to ducts is fairly routine, so this could be coordinated if required.

4. Road reinstatement and lifespan

We have been working closely with Highways, and they are welcome to come in at the end of each phase if they would like to relay the full road. Our responsibility will be to reinstate the areas where we have carried out excavations, rather than resurface the entire road. We have also agreed that there are some areas near the clock tower that we will look to reinstate back to their original finish.

Crisis funding for heating oil

Suffolk has been allocated £1.7m by the Government in emergency funding for people unable to afford heating oil due to Trump's war on Iran. The county council says it will administer this through its existing Local Welfare Assistance Scheme which already provides funding for residents experiencing a "financial shock or crisis" – including spiking heating oil prices. Residents can access information about this process and how to apply here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/community-and-safety/communities/healthier/suffolk-local-welfare-assistance-scheme>

Extra Funding for Public Rights of Way

On 24 March, Cabinet agreed to allocate an additional £3.9m of capital funding to repair structures on Suffolk's Public Rights of Way network. Structures such as bridges and boardwalks have a limited lifespan, and the council undertook a review to create a priority list of structures that need replacing or repairing in the next five years. The additional funding is needed because the amount of money usually allocated for these works is no longer enough due to the increased costs of building materials and labour, which have gone up 50% in the last five years.

Libraries Decision Scrutinised

At Scrutiny Committee on 11 March, last year's decision by the council to move the library service back in house was reviewed. The council's contract with Suffolk Libraries ended on 31 May 2025 and following that date, the county's 45 libraries and three mobile libraries came back into council control. Libraries' Friends Groups remain in place, with the funds they have raised for individual libraries staying separate from Suffolk County Council's funding. There were no redundancies of front-line library employees, though there were redundancies in the "central team."

Library employees have had to undertake staff training, including on council platforms for IT, HR and procurement. The meeting also noted that borrowing of paper books was reducing, but that digital services such as eBooks and audiobooks were continuing to grow.

Support for Care Leavers

The council's support for young people leaving care has been found wanting in Ofsted inspection in summer 2024 and a ministerial visit in April 2025.

Education Scrutiny committee this March found that work was undergoing to improve planning with young people before they were coming up to the age where they had to leave care, to ensure support was available and of the right kind.

The ministerial visit in 2025 ordered an immediate review of its protocol for tackling homeless care leavers and the scrutiny committee heard that the council has as a result increased the number of advisors working with 17 year olds to prepare for leaving care and has nearly halved the number of care leavers in unsuitable accommodation, although they are still planning more work in this area, particularly for care leavers in custody.

If you want to know more about what help the council provides for young people leaving care, you can find it here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/children-in-care-and-care-leavers/services-for-young-people-leaving-care>

Residents – Two residents from Artiss Close brought to the attention of the PC the issue of the temporary footpath from new Ipswich Rd development, and the safety aspect of the LPG tanks. There was much discussion on this between the residents, Parish Councillors, DC Deborah Saw and CC Robert Lindsey. Residents pointed out the footpath/ pavements along the road should have been installed before any residents moved in, which hasn't happened. The temporary footpath along the side of houses in Artiss Close they believe does not meet the criteria for running alongside the LPG (liquified petroleum gas) tanks. Calor who own the tanks have been to inspect the tanks, whilst on site, they tried to speak with the Orbit site manager, but they were unavailable. DC Deborah Saw recognised the concern, she understood Orbit were waiting for a 278 agreement from SCC, but it was thought SCC had no knowledge of this. Orbit have applied and are waiting on SCC to approve. DC Saw has spoken with Planning Enforcement, Environmental Protection and Orbit Housing. Chair Richard Lester asked if DC Saw and CC Lindsey can take this forward. They agreed with DC Saw advising she will keep the residents informed.

Residents on the High Street attended to raise their concerns about vehicles, including lorries mounting the pavement along the High Street, almost knocking over one of them. There is worry about damage to mediaeval properties, and the safety of pedestrians particularly children going to school. They believe the situation is getting worse. CC Robert Lindsey pointed out the Parish Council should be installing SIDs very soon which should help with speeding vehicles. SCC Highways did not make any changes to the 10 year lorry review when it was carried out a couple of years ago, despite requests to stop lorries passing through Bildeston. DC Deborah Saw suggested the residents contacted Historic England, Babergh DC Heritage Dept, and Suffolk Preservation Society for advice on their property.

The lorry weight limit could be mentioned to Anglian Water, possible damage to underground pipes. One resident suggested when the road is resurfaced the kerb is made higher, or the road surface lower. The kerb is so low it is easy for vehicles to mount the pavement.

Resident – raised concern about the new bus service and the long diversion it will have to take when the AW waterworks start. This may put users off using the service.

The barrier at the end of Smock Meadow does not allow mobility scooters to pass through. This would be a good access point to the centre of the village when the waterworks are being carried out. CC Robert Lindsey will ask SCC to look at amending it.

Grove cemetery – the PC were advised by a resident that pot plants are being stolen from the graves. This has happened 3 times from one grave, and twice from another. The PC will put a sign up at the entrance to the cemetery.

Reconvened 2055hrs.

C691/26/27 Planning Applications

Planning Appendix A - Items for comment

APPLICATION FOR CONSENT TO CARRY OUT WORKS TO TREE(S) PROTECTED BY A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER - DC/26/01095

Proposal: Application for works to trees subject to Tree Preservation Order BT203/T1 - Fell 1 No. Beech (T1)

Location: 21 High Street, Bildeston, Ipswich, Suffolk IP7 7EX

No objections.

APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT - DC/26/00304

Location: 129 High Street, Bildeston, IP7 7EL.

Proposal: Application for Listed Building Consent. Replacement of 5no windows. Removal of cement and sand render and replace with lime render. Repaint the render original

cream colour. Repairs and maintenance as per Design and Access Statement.
No objections.

Planning Appendix B – Items determined by Babergh District Council

DC/26/00239

Proposal & Location of Development:

Application for Listed Building Consent - Installation of painted wood bi fold doors to (Southern elevation) rear of kitchen replacing large pane and single door

Tudor House, 7 Chapel Street, Bildeston, Ipswich Suffolk IP7 7EP

Granted.

DC/26/00120

Proposal & Location of Development:

Householder Application - The installation of Painted Wood Bi fold Doors to (Southern elevation)

Rear of kitchen replacing large pane and Single Door

Tudor House, 7 Chapel Street, Bildeston, Ipswich Suffolk IP7 7EP

Granted.

DISCHARGE OF CONDITION

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

Proposal: Discharge of Conditions application for **DC/24/04070** - Condition 12 (Landscaping)

Location: Land South West Of, Chamberlin Close, Bildeston, Ipswich Suffolk IP7 7EZ

Babergh District Council hereby gives notice that the details submitted in pursuance to the conditions referred to above have been determined as summarised below in relation to each relevant condition together with any appropriate comments, limitations or advice.

APPROVED CONDITION:

12. ACTION REQUIRED PRIOR TO SLAB LEVEL: LANDSCAPING SCHEME

No development above slab level shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of hard, soft and boundary treatment landscaping works for the site, which shall include any proposed changes in ground levels and also accurately identify spread, girth and species of all existing trees, shrubs and hedgerows on the site and indicate any to be retained.

Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area.

LPA Decision:

Details as specified by the Topographical Survey 2487 301 and Landscaping Plan 2487 300 received on 25 March 2026 have been considered by this Authority's Planning Officer and are acceptable.

C692/26/27 Clerks Report

No report.

C693/26/27 Projects and Progress Reports

- a. Anglian Water, High Street closure. Public meeting 14th April 2.00-6.30pm at Chamberlin Hall. Make land agent aware of road closures.
- b. Neighbourhood Plan – nothing to report.
- c. Orbit Housing, Weavers Grove – see C690/26/27
- d. Welcome Pack – Clerk distributed final leaflet. Clerk to arrange distribution.
- e. Village Environmental Improvement project – worksheet updated, Cllr Sidgwick has completed more tasks. The PC gave thanks to the group who cleared the Church Rd path, making it much wider and tidier. The triangle planters have been re-stained by Cllr Sidgwick.
- f. Speed concerns, High Street – see C690/26/27 above.
- g. Playground annual and monthly report – Cllr Sidgwick has been through the annual report. All in order, apart from a few minor things to attend to, which will be carried out soon. Some equipment is tired but functional. Soil around skate ramps to be replaced, Clerk to arrange.

- h. update on village amenities –
Brooks path – awaiting funding. The Crown has given permission for trees to be cut back, thus leaving a wider path between the trees and the railings. It is hoped to add more railings as part of the path improvement. Permission given by owner to improve the planting area at the vintage shop.

C694/26/27 Administrative, Finance and Governance Reports

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

Payee	Description	Net of VAT
Unity Trust Bank	Bank charges	7.00
Chamberlin Hall MC	Room hire	45.00
Suffolk CC	Street lighting	3,008.21
SMS	Microsoft 365 subs	43.89
P Barham	Environmental management	223.00
A Chapman	Clerks salary	-.-
A Chapman	Clerks expenses	39.00
HMRC	PAYE & NIC	274.71

- b. Approval and signing Scribe of monthly accounting reports – checked and signed.
c. Assertion 10 - Adopt Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) Publication Scheme, Freedom of Information Act Model Publication Scheme Version 1.2 (2015-10-23). Cllr Lester proposed, Cllr Alcoe seconded. Adopted.
d. Review policy list. Cllr Lester proposed, Cllr Alcoe seconded. Adopted.
e. Community First Responder Initiative – with Chelsworth and Monks Eleigh PCs. Chairman Ray McCann is dealing with this. Deferred in his absence.
f. Ex-gratia payment towards continued use of resident's van for the benefit of the community. Under Section 127 payments cannot be given to individuals, only to a group or charity.

C695/26/76 Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council

None.

C696/26/27 Items for next agenda

Neighbourhood Plan
Village environmental improvements
Playground report
Parish Councillor vacancies

Meeting closed 2125hrs.

**Date of next meeting: Monday 11th May 2026 7.30pm, at Chamberlin Hall, Bildeston.
(due to Bank Holiday)**

Village website: www.bildeston.org