

**BLYFORD AND SOTHERTON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of meeting held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 6.30 pm**  
**In the Committee Room of Wenhaston Village Hall**

**Councillors Present:** Cllr G Walker (Chairman), Cllr R Parry, Cllr B Martin, Cllr L Sharman, Cllr B Goldbart  
Cllr S MacDonald and Mrs A Donnachie (Clerk)

**In Attendance:** Suffolk County Councillor Annette Dunning

**Public Forum** 3 members of the public were in attendance at start of the meeting.

A resident of Blyford attended to seek clarification on the process for obtaining Latitude tickets for 2025. Subject to confirmation of availability from the Festival Management Company, tickets will be available on a first come basis from 1<sup>st</sup> March for residents on the Electoral Registers of Blyford and Sotherton Parishes. Requests should be made by email and are considered in date order. All the information required is contained in our Latitude Poster and information document which will be published on our Website, Notice Board and Facebook page.

**To receive reports from County & District Councillors:** Parish reports were duly received from Cllr Dunning and Cllrs Wakeling and Cllr Keyes-Holloway. Both included information on Government plans for Devolution and Council Reorganisation. Cllr Dunning highlighted the main changes proposed and answered any questions. **Action: Clerk to publish reports on our website.**

- 1 **Welcome, apologies and receipt of absences:** Cllr Bucknell sent his apologies for absence due to work commitments abroad. District Councillors Geoff Wakeling and Beth-Keyes-Holloway were unable to attend due to over-run of a previous meeting.
- 2 **Receipt of declarations of interest and any dispensations allowed:** Cllr Martin – Item 6a Planning Application.
- 3 **Minutes of previous meeting:** Resolution that minutes of Blyford and Sotherton Parish Council meeting held on 18/11/24 was a true record, proposed by Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Sharma with remainder of council in favour. Minutes signed by the Chairman. **Action: Clerk to post minutes on website and noticeboards.**
- 4 **Chairman and Clerk's report on progress of actions from last meeting(s):** All actions completed/designated to other Agenda items below but following noted:  
**Item 9 (16/09/24): Planting of bulbs on verges of Kings Lane:** Due to Cllr Bucknell's absence this item to go on the March Agenda.
- 5 **Finance:**
- 5a **Approval of Bank Reconciliation from 13/11/24 to 12/01/25:** The balance on the Current Account stands at **£4,515.15** and the balance on the Latitude Account at **£3,407.44** with combined total on accounts being **£7,922.59** which was verified against bank statements. Payments made over £100 were clerk's salary and allowance; £500 donation to Blyford Parish PCC towards church maintenance; £125 Website annual subscription and £265.52 reimbursement of refund of spend to Latitude Account. Acceptance of account proposed by Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Walker and all in favour. **Action: Clerk to post on website and noticeboard.**
- 5b **Approval of online payments:** Clerk/RFO (net salary + back pay and home office allowance), HMRC PAYE. All payments approved by Council. **Action: Clerk/RFO to action online payments.**
- 5c **2025/26 Draft Budget and setting of Precept:** To ensure that the Council is aware of its responsibilities and commitments and the need for forward planning and retaining adequate reserves, the Clerk as RFO presented the draft budget as part of the expenditure plans for the forthcoming year for final consideration by the Parish Council. Total expenditure budget will rise in 2025/26 due to the increase in staff and supplier costs and to ensure that adequate reserves are available to secure viability beyond the immediate future. The total 2025/26 budget spend from Parish Council funds being reduced to **£4,906** against 2024/25 budget

of £7,674 with any spending on donations and purchases which benefit the residents of the Parishes being taken from the ringfenced Latitude funds. The next year's budgeted spend will be met through cut in our reserves.

**Setting of Precept for 2025/26:** To ensure we have sufficient funds available to meet future costs it was proposed that we request a precept of £3,700 which would show as a 3.92% change or £1.77 change in the 2025/26 Council Tax bills against the Parish element and equating to a charge of £46.97 for a Band D property. Acceptance of setting the Precept at £3,700 was proposed by Cllr Goldbart, seconded by Cllr Walker with all in favour. **Action: Clerk to publish 2025/26 budget and submit Precept Request to the District Council.**

- 5d Consideration of 2025/26 Parish Council Insurance Quotes:** Three quotes requested and The Parish Council agreed to renew our policy with Zurich Insurance until March 2026 at a premium of £278.45 this being substantially cheaper than other quotes. **Action: Clerk to action renewal to start on 01/03/25.**
- 5e Signing of Clerk Contract:** Following adoption of General Update in National Pay Rates for Local Authority Payees at our meeting in November 2024, The Clerk's contract was amended and signed by the Chairman.
- 6 Planning – Public Access Link - <https://publicaccess.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications>**
- 6a New Applications**
- DC/24/4012/FUL – Single storey extension to rear of house at 8 Sotherton Corner, Sotherton:** The Parish Council had no objections to this application with this decision being agreed by using our delegated powers for any non-contentious planning application received between meetings and being dealt with by email.
- 6b Update on Previous Applications:** There are currently no outstanding planning decisions.
- 6c Planning Forum for Town and Parish Councils:** The Clerk will attend this meeting on 30/01/25 and report back to the Parish Council.
- 6d Planning Constitution Changes affecting how to respond to Planning Applications:** Changes from East Suffolk Head of Planning was distributed to Parish Councillors and duly noted.
- 7 Latitude Ticketing 2025:** Cllr Parry reported that confirmation of our ticketing allocation has not yet been received. Posters will be uploaded to our Website, Notice Boards and Facebook page when confirmed which is usually around 1<sup>st</sup> March. (see Public Forum notes above).
- 8 Flooding at Junction of Kings Lane and Southwold Road:** Cllr Goldbart reported this issue to Suffolk Highways but unfortunately there had been no rain and therefore no flooding when they carried out their assessment. Cllr Goldbart and the resident who brought this to our attention agreed to take photographs when flooding occurs to forward to the Highways department. Review again at March meeting.
- 9 Defibrillator Funding:** Cllr Goldbart wished to seek approval to apply for funding for a defibrillator unit to be sited within the telephone box at Blyford with arrangements for a unit at Sotherton at a later date. He proposed purchasing a unit which does not require a fixed power supply with a thermal cover to counteract changes in temperature. It was approved by the Parish Council that Cllr Goldbart go ahead and apply for funding. Arrangements for a defibrillator at Sotherton will **Action: Cllr Goldbart.**
- 10 Speeding in Blyford:** Cllr Goldbart is awaiting a reply from the Traffic Management Officer at Suffolk Police regarding adjusting the speed limit through Blyford village. Suffolk Highways have not yet replied to his enquiry regarding whether there had been a data collection exercises and what the result had been.
- 11 Correspondence Received:** All correspondence distributed to the Parish Council. Items of public information posted on our website/noticeboards. No further comments were received.
- 12 Any other items of information:** None.
- 13 Date of next meeting: Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March at 6.30 pm in the Committee Room at Wenhaston Village Hall.**

Meeting closed 8.00 pm