

Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham, and Ellough Joint Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held at Shadingfield Village Hall on 18th February 2026 at 7.00 pm

Present:

Councillors: R. Ellis (Chair), C. Ellis, D. Drane, A. Thornton, A. Chipperfield, J. Sheldrake, and Cllr J. Ward (arrived at 19:52)

In attendance:

V. Ellis (Clerk) and County Councillor J. Cloke

26.012 Apologies for Absence:

District Councillors A. Specca and T. Hammond.
RESOLVED: that the apologies be accepted

26.013 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations:

None

26.014 To sign as an accurate record the minutes of the previous meeting:

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 21st January 2026 be signed as a correct record.
Proposed by Cllr R. Ellis and seconded by Cllr A. Thornton.

26.015 Chair's Opening Statement:

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked SCC Cloke for taking the time to attend the meeting.

The Chair notified the council of the passing of Councillor Sylvia London, widely known as Robbie, noting her significant contributions to both the parish council and the wider community. Her loss will be felt throughout the community.

The Chair noted recent and ongoing village roadworks, specifically those arising from a leaking water main, repair of potholes on the A145 and works by OpenReach. Council and residents feel that the road closures and signage could have been handled better and noted the damage caused to the verges in Mill Lane by HGVs trying to circumvent the road closures. SCC Cloke clarified that contractors fix potholes based solely on portal reports. Cllr D. Drane expressed that reporting every pothole is nearly impossible due to their high number, while Cllr A. Thornton raised safety concerns about members of the public mapping potholes on the A145.

SCC Cloke stated that the portal can be used to report several potholes at the same time, members of the public can report these on the portal stating there are a number of potholes requiring repair on the A145 between points 'A' and 'B'.

	<p>CLlr A. Thornton expressed his view that these demands on the public are excessive, describing the system as inefficient and costly. SCC Cloke thanked the council for their comments, adding that she will review the matter and address it upon her return to work.</p> <p>SCC Cloke assured the council she would investigate the reasons behind this situation.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the public is frustrated by Suffolk County Council's lack of road maintenance, as local roads appear neglected despite frequent work taking place on the A12. SCC Cloke clarified to the Chair that Sizewell C, not Suffolk County Council, is funding the maintenance and improvements on the A12.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the main concern is being able to drive without risking damage to vehicles, but it appears that basic maintenance is not being carried out.</p> <p>SCC Cloke explained that vehicle road fund license goes directly to central government, and Suffolk County Council's maintenance budget has been significantly reduced. CLlr C. Ellis asked what percentage of the RFL is allocated to Highways vs. retained by the Treasury; SCC Cloke responded that this percentage is unknown.</p> <p>The Chair thanked SCC Cloke for attending and listening to the council's concerns.</p> <p>SCC Cloke confirmed she will be looking into the issues discussed when she returns to work.</p>
26.016	<p><u>Public Participation:</u></p> <p>None in attendance</p>
26.017	<p><u>Reports from County and District Councillors:</u></p> <p>The report prepared by County CLlr J. Cloke was distributed to Councillors 13th February 2026.</p> <p>SCC Cloke referenced the report previously submitted to the Clerk and noted that CEO Nicola Beech will be stepping down from her role effective 31 March. The announcement was postponed to accommodate significant council milestones, including the LGR consultation.</p> <p>SCC Cloke commented on the Secretary of States decision for the elections to go ahead, this has resulted in some pressure and employees will be overstretched during this time. SCC Cloke added, she is unsure of a Conservative candidate to date.</p> <p>CLlr C. Ellis asked SCC Cloke how long it would take to organise the elections in the local area.</p> <p>SCC Cloke informed the council that the polling stations have been booked, and employees are in place, this is managed by the district council. There will not be a big financial loss involved with the decision as the hire of buildings had not been cancelled when originally arranged.</p> <p>The Chair asked SCC Cloke if she will continue to attend Parish Council meetings in the future.</p>

	<p>SCC Cloke informed the council that she may attend but this depends on when the elections are, she then informed the council she will not be standing again.</p> <p>SCC Cloke left the meeting at 19:30</p>
26.018	<p><u>Community:</u></p> <p>(a) <u>Planning :</u></p> <p>DC/26/0284/VOC - Moat Farmhouse, Mill Lane Shadingfield – expiry date 24th February 2026.</p> <p>The Chair commented that the application involves changing the flooring inside the property and installing a door in a doorway that is no longer in use and stated there is nothing negative from the council’s point of view.</p> <p>Cllr C. Ellis commented that she had seen inside the building and the application looks faithful to the original building and bringing it into residential comfort for the inhabitants.</p> <p>Cllr D. Drane stated that the application was reasonable.</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr A. Thornton and seconded by Cllr A. Chipperfield</p> <p>RESOLVED: Unanimous decision to support the application.</p> <p>Proposed base station upgrade at Essex & Suffolk Water Company- Mill Lane, Shadingfield:</p> <p>The Chair clarified that this matter constitutes a notification of planning rather than a formal planning application. He informed the council that the notification pertains to the water tower located on Mill Lane and involves the installation of updated aerials for improved internet connectivity. He emphasized that no substantial changes are anticipated as part of this process.</p> <p>Cllr C. Ellis suggested that the council reach out to the company responsible for the work to clarify several points. They should confirm whether the upgrade will interrupt internet or mobile phone service, and if so, determine the duration of any disruption. It is also important to ask whether emissions, such as radio waves, might impact residents or nearby animals. If there is going to be an outage, the local community should be informed in advance.</p> <p>The Clerk will contact Avison Young to ask the questions. This will be reported back to the council.</p> <p>Cllr J. Ward arrived at 19:52</p> <p><u>(b) Newsletter</u></p> <p>The Chair asked the council for contributions to the newsletter; he stated that information on schemes and grants available will be added to the newsletter.</p> <p>Cllr C. Ellis stated that the vacancies for councillors should be included in the newsletter.</p>

The Chair noted that if no one in the community is forthcoming to fill the vacancies we have on the parish council, unfortunately the council may not be able to continue. If this is the case the Parish council and the SCPT will be within the Bungay constituency.

The Chair suggested that the newsletter be delivered by the parish council to enable us to talk to people about the vacancies.

Cllr D. Drane suggested promoting the community WhatsApp group via the newsletter.

The newsletter will include vacancies, the date for the picnic, the WhatsApp group and events in the village hall. The Clerk will reach out to SCPT, Sotterley Estate and the Churches to enquire if they would like to advertise any community events. This is subject to space on the newsletter.

It was agreed the newsletter should be printed and distributed to the community by Friday 3rd April (Easter weekend), Cllr A. Thornton will add the newsletter content to the original template and arrange for printing.

The Chair asked the council for potential dates for the picnic.

Cllr A. Thornton suggested following the same format as 2025, the weekend before Folk east Festival.

It was agreed the picnic will be held on Sunday 16th August, this date will be added to the Spring newsletter.

The Clerk will gather dates for community events to add to the newsletter; this will be subject to printing space.

The picnic was discussed, regarding the sound system, if the same arrangements as 2025 are not available, the Chair stated he has contacts as a backup, this can be arranged later. The Chair informed the council himself, and Cllr C. Ellis would be happy to run the BBQ again. Enquiries for Table 9 and the ice cream van availability will be made later.

Cllr J. Ward stated that the Friends of Brampton would be keen to support the picnic again.

The Chair commented that the basis of the picnic has been discussed here, further discussions can take place later.

26.019 Council Operations:

(a) To note the financial situation and bank reconciliation as at 31st January 2026:

Proposed by Cllr R. Ellis, seconded by Cllr A. Thornton, and RESOLVED that the report dated 31st January 2026 and attached to these minutes be accepted.

(b) Payment of outstanding invoices:

Proposed by Cllr A. Thornton , seconded by Cllr J. Ward and RESOLVED: That the payments listed in Appendix 1 be authorised.

(c) CIL :

The Chair referred to the short but interesting discussion around CIL funds at the January meeting, asking the council if there is anything highlighted for the CIL funds.

Cllr A. Thornton proposed the council draft a procedure for the CIL funding, including how CIL funds are allocated, and how they are accounted for, a procedure is required for transparency. It was proposed that CIL funds, allocations and transactions be added to the financial reports each month.

Cllr D. Drane suggested the document records the CIL funds, transactions, dates and carried over to ensure the spending of funds is visible to everyone.

Cllr J. Ward stated that there should be transparency on how the CIL is allocated within the four parishes, this will be important for audit and governance.

The Chair asked the clerk to action this.

The Chair then highlighted that the CIL guidance and checklist provided by the Clerk indicate the PC needs a process as Cllr A. Thorton has identified.

Discussions took place around on possibilities of CIL fund allocation, the NDP sets priorities for spending CIL funds, Cllr J. Ward highlighted that CIL funds can be used alongside other funds.

Cllr A. Thornton proposed allocating CIL funds to the playing field lease, Cllr D. Drane confirmed the CIL funds can allocated for the review of the playing field lease if the PC chooses to.

The Chair agreed, this would be an effective use of CIL funds.

The Chair commented on the guidance provided for allocating CIL funds, stating that the council can contact ESC to confirm the correct allocation of CIL funds if in doubt, as Cllr D. Drane has highlighted, the expenditure of the review of the playing field lease is integral to the playing field and the NDP.

CIL funds will be allocated for the review of the playing field.

Cllr D. Drane asked Cllr A. Thornton if there have been any recent discussions with Sotterley Estate regarding the playing field. Cllr A. Thorton informed the council the last contact with them was June 2025.

The Chair referred to communications between the Clerk and the law firm instructed to review the playing field lease, stating that the process is underway.

The Clerk will follow this up this week and report back to the council as soon as possible.

(d) SALC letter of engagement:

Proposed by Cllr R. Ellis and seconded by Cllr J. Ward.

	RESOLVED: unanimous decision to appoint SALC as the internal auditor for 2025/2026.
26.020	<p><u>Other items for discussion:</u></p> <p>Cllr D. Drane commented on the changes to Data Protection coming into effect in June 2026, stating that the PC needs to review the policy and statement. The Clerk will action this.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Cllr D. Drane for the work conducting an AI review of the playing field lease. This supported the view that the Council does require legal advice on its responsibilities for upholding the rights of the community. This document will be a good crib sheet when we receive the lease back from HKB Wiltshire and will also be useful for quality control.</p> <p>The Chair informed the council that the Clerk has completed the budget and gives apologies as this should have been distributed to be discussed at this meeting. This will be an agenda item for March; the budget will be reviewed and signed off at the March meeting. Could all councillors please review this prior to the next meeting.</p> <p>The Clerk will complete the contract of requirements for the council to Mr Waters regarding the playing field maintenance this will be presented to the Council at the March meeting.</p> <p>Cllr C. Ellis commented on partial blockage of drainage ditches leading to Ellough and stated she would contact Sotterley Estate to report this.</p> <p>Cllr A. Chipperfield will put the date of the picnic in the Sheaf.</p>
26.021	The meeting closed at 20:41
	Date of next meeting: Wednesday 18 th March 2026

Appendix 1 – Payments Authorised

To	For	Net	VAT	Gross
V. Ellis	Salary February	422.75		422.75
ICO	DD ICO Data Protection			47.00

Chair _____ Date _____

As at 31st January 2026

	Budget 2025/26	General Fund	All Earmarked	Total
RECEIPTS				
Precept	10,100	10,100.00	0.00	10,100.00
Cemetery Fees	0	847.00	0.00	847.00
Community Infrastructure Levy	2,500	3,254.53	0.00	3,254.53
Picnic	0	234.70	0.00	234.70
Miscellaneous Income	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Earmarked Funds - Receipts			0.00	0.00
VAT Recovered	570	601.22	0.00	601.22
TOTAL RECEIPTS	13,170	15,037.45	0.00	15,037.45
PAYMENTS				
Administration				
Staff Costs	5,950	4,918.97	0.00	4,918.97
Payroll Costs	100	90.00	0.00	90.00
Mileage	200	0.00	0.00	0.00
Printing Stationery & Postage	460	32.60	0.00	32.60
Insurance	701	766.89	0.00	766.89
Hall Hire	220	0.00	0.00	0.00
Web Hosting & Domain	290	344.00	0.00	344.00
Membership & Subscriptions	460	344.11	0.00	344.11
Audit	185	183.00	0.00	183.00
Laptop	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Data Protection	35	0.00	0.00	0.00
Training	336	0.00	0.00	0.00
Miscellaneous Expenses	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
VAT Paid	0	352.72	0.00	352.72
	8,937	7,032.29	0.00	7,032.29
Maintenance				
Playing Field Maintenance	1,500	1,354.80	0.00	1,354.80
Playing Field Improvement	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Notice Board Repairs	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Playground Inspection	70	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bin Emptying	55	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pest Control	200	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cemetery Management	950	370.00	0.00	370.00
General Maintenance	400	0.00	0.00	0.00
Vehicle Sign		0.00	0.00	0.00
	3,175	1,724.80	0.00	1,724.80
Community Events				
Raising the Parish Profile		30.00	0.00	30.00
Grants and Donations	1,000		0.00	
Earmarked Funds - Payments		644.25	0.00	644.25
	1,000	674.25	0.00	674.25
TOTAL PAYMENTS	13,112	9,431.34	0.00	9,431.34
Surplus (-Deficit) to date	58	5,606.11	0.00	5,606.11
Brought Forward 1.4.2025	6,242	2,292.97	9,366.52	11,650.49
Transfers between funds			0.00	0.00
			0.00	0.00
			0.00	0.00
Surplus/Deficit	58	5,606.11	0.00	5,606.11
Carried Forward	6,300	7,899.08	9,366.52	17,265.60
Playing Field			7,437.64	
Luncheon Club			433.38	
Ellough Village Sign			1,000.00	
Picnic			495.50	
			9,366.52	

Recent Transactions		
Previous Bank		18,862.79
Credits		
Debits		
V. Ellis Salary December	-422.75	
V. Ellis Salary January	-422.75	
V. Ellis Expenses Ink	-11.99	
HMRC P30 Quarter 3	-228.51	
Lloyds Service Charge	-4.75	
V. Ellis WFH Allowance	-100.00	
Vertas Field Maintenance	-406.44	
		-1,597.19
Net Bank Account		17,265.60

Bank Reconciliation	
Lloyds Current Account Statement Balance	18,862.79
Add: unrepresented credits	0.00
Less: unrepresented items	0.00
Net balance	17,265.60
Difference	0.00

Chairman		
Clerk		
Date		