

Minutes of Ufford Parish Council Meeting
Held on 16th December 2025 at 6.00pm
The Community Hall, The Avenue, Ufford

Present

Cllr. David Findley (Chair)

Cllr. Keith Bennett

Cllr. Nick Crocker

Cllr. Pat Edworthy (until 7.20pm)

Cllr. Rilla Forge

Cllr. Angela Linforth

Cllr. Nigel Smith

Cllr. Vincent Smith

Cllr. Tig Thomas

Judi Hallett (Clerk)

County Councillor Alexander Nicoll

One member of the public was present

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting

1. Apologies for absence:

- a) To Receive Apologies: Apologies had been received from Cllr. Tim Buxbaum (Away).
- b) To Accept Apologies: The apologies of Cllr. Buxbaum were proposed as accepted by Cllr. V Smith, seconded by Cllr. Linforth and all were in agreement.

2. To receive any:

- a) Declarations of Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Items
 - None
- b) Declarations of Non-Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Items
 - Cllr. V Smith – Item 12 – Treasurer to the Community Hall
 - Cllr. Edworthy - Item 12 – Committee Member to the Community Hall
 - Cllr. Findley – Item 10 d) – Recipient of refund
- c) Applications for Dispensation on Agenda Items
 - None
- d) Declarations of Gifts or Hospitality received over the value of £50.00
 - None
- e) Notification of Lobbying with reference to any Planning Application to be discussed
 - None

3. Public Session:

- a) Reports or comment from any member of the public (notes only):
 - Gas Works on A12 – A member of the public raised concern at the impending A12 Gas works (starting in January 2026) and the impact it would have on Ufford, with drivers endeavouring to circumnavigate the restrictions on the A12. The Clerk and Cllr. Nicoll gave details of the project and work undertaken to mitigate the possibility of additional traffic in the village

Chair's initials.....

- Slip Road on to A12 – A member of the public asked if it was possible for future development in the village to fund a new slip road on to the A12 at the north of the village. Cllr. Findley explained that although many people felt this was a very good idea, the costs would be very high, running into multi-millions - and so would be way outside the funds available to the Parish Council. Cllr. N Smith recalled an outline quote approximately 20 years ago being in the region of £3-4m.
- Christmas Card from Patrick Spencer MP – The Clerk displayed a Christmas Card from Mr Patrick Spencer MP and was asked to acknowledge receipt of it.

b) Reports or comment from ESC and SCC Councillors (notes only):

- East Suffolk Council - Cllr. Noble was not in attendance but Cllr. Findley reported that she had been present at the ESC Planning Committee (South) meeting earlier in the day – see report at item 9. d).
- Suffolk County Council – Further to Cllr. Nicoll’s contribution regarding the A12 Gas works, he updated the Council on:
 - The Rights of Rivers and the effect of Storm Babet
 - SCC Minerals and Waste Plan Review, of which he was Chair
 - Thames Water sewage sludge being transported to Suffolk

4. Council Administration:

- a) To discuss co-option of a Councillor – Cllr. Findley reported that he had spoken to a number of residents and although many were interested, none had time to commit to becoming a Councillor at the present moment. It was agreed that the item would remain on the agenda until the position was filled.
- b) To agree the dates and venues of the 2026 Full Council meetings – It was agreed that the dates of the UPC meetings would remain the 3rd Tuesday of each month, winter months in the Community Hall and summer in the Parish Hall, with all meetings starting at 7.00pm, except the December meeting, which would start at 6.00pm. Clerk to advertise and circulate.

5. To sign Minutes of meeting dated 18th November 2025:

The minutes of the Full Council meeting dated 18th November 2025 had been circulated. The minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr. Bennett, seconded by Cllr. Linforth and all Councillors, who were in attendance at the meeting, were in agreement that they be signed. The Clerk agreed to publish the minutes on the website.

Action: Clerk

6. Highways:

- a) To discuss resident's request for the Parish Council to consider a southbound slip road on to the A12 north of the village – This matter had been discussed at length in the public session and it was agreed that the Clerk should write to the requestor thanking him for his suggestion and giving details of past conversations on the matter and the likely costs. If he wished to pursue the matter he would be advised to speak directly to SCC Highways as the body responsible for roads in the County.
- b) To receive update on Gas works on the A12 (Jan to May 2026) – A full update had been given during the public session and details of the A12 overnight road closures would be communicated to residents a week before the closure.
- c) Additional Item – 20mph Speed Limit on some Ufford roads – Cllr. Findley had circulated an email exchange he had had with Cllr. Nicoll. This had shown that it was unlikely that SCC would approve a 20mph speed limit on some roads in Ufford. After discussion it was agreed not to take this matter further at the current time, whilst reorganisation of the County/ District Councils was underway.

7. Local Government Review and Devolution – To discuss latest consultation and if UPC should make a collaborative response:

Members discussed making a combined response to the government consultation but felt the timescales made it impractical and it may be difficult to come to conclusions. This was agreed by all present. It was agreed that members should respond as individuals, should they be inclined. The Clerk was asked to place the matter of taking on assets or services from SCC and ESC, on the January agenda.

Action: Clerk

8. Planning To discuss and agree responses to the following Planning Applications:

- a) DC/25/4443/FUL - Extension and change of use of existing outbuilding to form annexe for ancillary use to main dwelling - The Gables, Byng Hall Road, Ufford – The following comments were made:
 - There is nothing in the UPC Neighbourhood Plan regarding annexes and very little in the Local Plan.
 - We have not supported these in the past as they usually finish up being used as separate dwellings
 - It is a very small plot and I doubt they would be able to squeeze the four cars on, as shown in the plans
 - Converting a building in to an annexe does allow families to live together to support each other and the building is existing with only a very small addition.
 - Conclusion: '**No Objection**' (Prop: Cllr. V Smith, Sec: Cllr. Thomas, all in agreement) but Clerk asked to request a condition is placed on any permission to ensure the annexe is ancillary to the main building.

- b) [DC/25/4699/FUL](#) - Erection of Mansard Oak-framed Orangery to the rear - St Annes, Lower Street, Ufford - The following comments were made:
- A good quality additional building and completely hidden from view
 - Conclusion: '**No Objection**' (Prop: Cllr. Bennett, Sec: Cllr. V Smith, all in agreement)

9. Other Planning Matters:

- a) To acknowledge previous months list of ESC Planning decisions – There were no further questions.
- b) To discuss the latest position with Landex regarding Crown Nursery site development – Cllr. Findley reported that nothing further had been heard from Mr Short or Landex but that he would make contact with them in the new year.
- c) To discuss creating a Biodiversity Action Plan in conjunction with Melton Parish Council – Members felt the establishment of a BAP would be the next logical step, following the construction of the Neighbourhood Plan. It was agreed that it would be logical to work with Melton PC, if they wished to participate. It was agreed that the first step would be to invite Mr Keith Dickerson (Chair of the Kelsale cum Carlton BAP Project Team) to speak to the Council before either the January or the February meetings.
- d) To receive notification of decisions made on Pettistree Solar Farm application by ESC Planning Committee (South) earlier in the day – Cllr. Findley reported that the application had been approved, on the Chair's casting vote. Many powerful representations had been put forward on the day, including from Cllr. Sally Noble. Cllr. Findley was thanked for his efforts in trying to prevent this development.

Action: Clerk

10. Finance Matters:

- a) To receive and agree Accounts to 30th November 2025 – The Accounts had been prepared and circulated. There were no questions.

Cllr. Edworthy left the meeting at 7.25pm

- b) To discuss and agree the budget for 2026/27 – [Items b and c were debated simultaneously] Members further discussed the proposed budget and the proposal that the Precept request should rise by 4.94%. This figure was felt to be too high and, following three unsuccessful proposals, Cllr. Findley proposed a rise of 4.5% to the Precept. This was seconded by Cllr. Linforth and members voted 5 For, 2 against and 1 abstention. This percentage increase will result in a Precept request of £27,725.00.

The Clerk was asked to amend the figure, and reduce the funds set aside for managing the Crown Nursery land by £117.00, in order to balance the budget. With this amendment agreed, Cllr. Findley proposed the Budget be agreed. This was seconded by Cllr. V Smith and all were in favour.

Chair's initials.....

- c) To discuss and agree the Precept request for 2026/27 – See above.
- d) To authorise the following Invoices for Payment:
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| i. J Hallett (Salary and Expenses) | £890.46 |
| ii. SCC Pension Fund (Clerk’s Pension) | £222.72 |
| iii. East Suffolk Services (Grass cutting for 2025) | £688.80 |
| iv. D Findley (Water Testing Consumables) | £67.20 |
| v. Suffolk Building Soc (Transfer to Friends Parklands Wood) | £200.00 |

The above payments were proposed by Cllr. N Smith, seconded by Cllr. Thomas with Councillors voting all in favour that the payments be paid. Cllrs. Bennett and Findley agreed to authorise the online payments and inspected the invoices.

- d) To note Payments made since last meeting:
- i. None
- e) To note Payments received since last meeting:
- | | |
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| i. Letheringham PC (Water Testing Consumables) | £100.00 |
| ii. Alford Storage (Clothes Bank) | £12.00 |

Action: Clerk

11. Recreation Ground/Woodlands:

- a) To receive an update on Woodlands Management (report from Cllr. Forge) – Cllr. Forge reported on the following items:
- Bad News – Sooty Bark disease had been found in the woods. Advice had been received from ESC and an article explaining the action to be taken would be in the January PUNCH. Additional PPE had to be purchased but most of the work could be undertaken by the FPW
 - Good News – The Saturday work sessions had proved very popular and over 240 ‘man hours’ work had now been recorded since mid-November
 - Cllr. Forge had recently attended an event in Wickham Market village hall, regarding woodland and waterway management.
- b) To discuss replacement of the Swing Chains at the Recreation Ground – The Clerk reported that this matter was still ongoing and she was hoping to speak to Kompan after Christmas.
- c) To discuss the present license for Football on the Recreation Ground, and a possible revision at renewal (21st Feb 2026) – After discussion on the present license, it was proposed by Cllr. V Smith that the use of the pitch be revised to 9.00am - 1.00pm on a Saturday and/or Sunday, with training usage during the summer months as previously agreed. It was further proposed by Cllr. V Smith that the fee was raised to £250.00 from 1st April 2026 and £350.00 from 1st April 2027. These proposals were seconded by Cllr. Forge and all were in agreement. The Clerk was asked to advise the Football club.

- d) To discuss quote from East Suffolk Services for grass cutting in 2026 – After discussion Cllr. Findley proposed that the quote from ESS for grass cutting in 2026 was accepted. This was seconded by Cllr. Forge and all were in agreement.

Action: Clerk

12. Community Hall:

- a) To receive an update on the Hall and replacement main entrance project – Cllr. V Smith reported that the Hall Doors should be installed in February 2026. After discussion it was confirmed that laminated glass was not required, frosted toughened glass was acceptable.
- b) To discuss the quotes for renewing the CCTV at the Recreation Ground – The Clerk reported that she was still awaiting 2 further quotes for this upgrade and the matter was deferred until January 2026. Cllr. Bennett reported that the Ufford Charities were presently advertising the availability of a grant of £1,250 for community buildings and it was suggested that the Clerk apply for the CCTV upgrade [Cllr. V Smith did not take part in this discussion as he is a Trustee of the Ufford Charities (Non-Ecclesiastical Charities)]

Action: Cllr. Findley and Clerk

Cllr. V Smith proposed that Standing Order 3. X) be suspended to allow the business of the meeting to conclude. This was seconded by Cllr. Crocker and all were in agreement.

13. Quarterly Health and Safety Review – To receive notification of any H&S matters and to add to Action List:

It was agreed that the acknowledgement of the Sooty Bark Disease should be added to the Actions List and relevant communications distributed.

Action: Clerk

14. To receive reports on meetings attended on behalf of the Council:

- SZC Southern Transport Forum – *Cllr. Findley* – Cllr. Findley gave a report on a recent forum attended.

15. To receive agenda items for next meeting and agree date of Next Meeting (20th January 2026):

It was agreed to include the following items on the agenda of the January meeting:

- IT Policy
- LGR and Devolution
- CCTV at the Recreation Ground
- Talk by Keith Dickerson

Action: Clerk

The meeting was closed at 8:10pm

Signed:.....
Cllr. David Findley - Chair

Date:

Judi Hallett
Clerk to Ufford Parish Council