

Minutes of Ufford Parish Council Meeting

Held on 17th March 2026 at 7.00pm
The Community Hall, The Avenue, Ufford

Present

Cllr. Vincent Smith (Chair)

Cllr. Keith Bennett

Cllr. Tim Buxbaum

Cllr. Rilla Forge

Cllr. Angela Linforth

Cllr. Nigel Smith

Cllr. Murray Thomas

Judi Hallett (Clerk)

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. Pat Edworthy (away), Cllr. Tig Thomas (unwell) and Cllr. David Findley (away). District Councillor Sally Noble had also sent her apologies.
- b) To Accept Apologies: The apologies of Cllrs. Edworthy, T. Thomas and Findley were proposed as accepted by Cllr. M. Thomas, seconded by Cllr. Forge 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
- 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):
 - Ref Item 7 B – A member of the public explained to Members that he had been a resident in Ufford for 14 years, and was a developer. He had agreed to purchase a parcel of land between 1 and 3 Nicholls Close, subject to planning permission, for the purpose of building a home for a family member. He had spoken to the ESC Tree Officer, who had confirmed that the lime tree on the land, which he wishes to remove to allow the house to be built, was not part of the Area TPO and that he would not therefore require permission to remove it.

Chair's initials.....

However, he suggested he would like to replace it with two others or make a donation for other trees to be planted. [The member of the public was thanked for his time and informed the matter would be discussed later in the meeting].

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

- East Suffolk Council - Cllr. Noble had sent a report which had been circulated.
- Suffolk County Council – Cllr. Nicoll was not in attendance.

4. To sign Minutes of meeting dated 17th February 2026:

The minutes of the Full Council meeting dated 17th February 2026 had been circulated. The minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr. N Smith, 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

5. Annual Parish Meeting – To discuss the Annual Parish Meeting (28th April 2026 – 6.00pm:

The Clerk confirmed that Mr Trevor Gill from Lower Deben Owners Group would be pleased to be the guest speaker at the APM. It was agreed that Cllrs. Findley and V Smith would prepare an item on the 20Mph Speed Limit process, with a view to gathering comments from attendees. It was felt sensible that neither A nor B classified roads would be included, and that it should be made clear that a reduction in the speed limit would not reduce volume of traffic. The financial implications for the Council (and therefore for council tax payers in the parish) would also need to be made clear.

Action: Clerk

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

a) DC/26/0256/FUL - Replace a window on the existing first floor dormer room, and various other matters – Brindles, Ufford Place, Ufford – The following comments were made:

- There have been no comments from neighbours
- This work will improve the dwelling
- Conclusion: **'No Objection'** (Prop: Cllr. V Smith, Sec: Cllr. N Smith, all in agreement).

Action: Clerk

7. Other Planning Matters:

a) To acknowledge previous months list of ESC Planning decisions – There were no further matters.

- b) To discuss request from Ufford land owner to remove a tree from land within Nicholls Close and replace it with two more in Parklands Wood – The Clerk read the confirmation from Mr Nicolas Newton (ESC) that the tree in question was not part of the Area TPO. Members discussed the proposal and concluded that the resident should be thanked for his offer of replacement trees but that a donation to the upkeep of Parklands wood (offered as an alternative) would be more beneficial, as this would fund a significant number of saplings, more likely to survive as they would need less maintenance when first planted (Prop: Cllr. Forge, Sec: Cllr. M Thomas, all in agreement). The Clerk was asked to write to the resident accordingly.
- c) To discuss the ESC Call for Sites results, if received by that time – The Clerk reported that the results of the ESC Call for Sites had not been received as yet.
- d) To discuss refurbishment of the Stocks and Whipping Post, and possible planning implications – Cllr. Buxbaum had drawn up plans for the refurbishment of the Stocks and Whipping Post and he was thanked. It was agreed (Prop: Cllr. Buxbaum, Sec Cllr. Linforth, all in agreement) that these plans, along with photos, should be sent to Robert Scrimgeour (ESC Heritage Officer) for his comment. If a favourable reply was received, the necessary applications (including Listed Building Consent) could be made and the work undertaken.

8. Finance Matters:

- a) To receive and agree Accounts to 28th February 2026 – The Accounts had been prepared and circulated. There were no questions.
- b) To review the Earmarked and General Reserves held by the Council – The Clerk explained the principle of the Council having certain ‘Earmarked’ reserves and then ‘General’ reserves. After discussion, the following immediate adjustments were proposed by Cllr. Bennett, seconded by Cllr. V Smith and all were in agreement:
- Add £1,000 to the Legal Fees Reserve
 - Create new Reserve for ‘Neighbourhood Plan Review’ and allocate £1,000
- c) To review investment returns on CCLA funds and discuss whether to continue with the investments – It was acknowledged that the Clerk had had to request funds from the CCLA to cover recent expenses, but that these could be returned once the first half of the Precept had been received. It was also acknowledged that the return on the investments was better than with Lloyds and the risk was low. It was agreed to retain the investments with CCLA (Prop: Cllr. Bennett, Sec: Cllr. V Smith and all in agreement)
- 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. | Coastal Building Supplies (Post Fix for Sogenhoe Chapel Cross) | £6.30 |
| iv. | SALC (Payroll for 6 months) | £57.60 |

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

- d) To note Payments made since last meeting:
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| i. Suffolk Prestige Security Ltd (UCH CCTV) | £2,540.74 |
| ii. R Forge (Trees for Woods) | £187.49 |

- e) To note Payments received since last meeting:
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|--|---------|
| i. Alford Storage (Clothes Bank) | £21.00 |
| ii. G Lynch (BMX Track Ins contribution) | £200.00 |
| iii. Lloyds Bank Plc (Interest) | £1.35 |

Action: Clerk

9. Highways:

- a) To discuss the latest Footpath Report – The Footpaths Warden was congratulated on another excellent report. It was further reported that a large heavy gate on Path 20 prevented many people from using the whole path. It was suggested a smaller pedestrian gate was installed and the Clerk was asked to contact Mr Foskett, who it was believed farmed the land.

It was acknowledged that the hand rail on Path 29 had been removed, but was not needed. Members were asked to report any missing finger posts to the Clerk.

Action: Clerk

10. Recreation Ground/Woodlands:

- a) To receive an update on Woodlands Management (report from Cllr. Forge) – Cllr. Forge reported on the following items:
- 50% of the grant from a resident had now been spent, with over 100 trees planted recently
 - Tree protection had also been purchased and good feedback had been received from residents
 - A recent work party had completed substantial work around the BMX track, with help from some local young people. New benches will now be made from wood cut and a small amount of expense (approx. £70.00)
 - Volunteer hours (since 25th Oct 2025) now total 339
 - A recent meeting with a resident of Melton proved successful and knowledge of how to run a woodland group was passed on.
- b) To review the license for Football on the Recreation Ground – The Clerk reported that the Football Club were happy with the new license. Cllr. Bennett had suggested a small addition to clause 3.3 and this was agreed. It was proposed by Cllr. Bennett that the license be finalised and adopted. This was seconded by Cllr. N Smith and all were in agreement.

Action: Clerk and Cllr. Forge

11. Neighbourhood Plan – To receive update from consultant of original plan, with reference to a review in 2030/31

The Clerk referred to correspondence she had received from Rachel Leggett, stating that she would be delighted to review the Ufford NP, in 2030/31. She had suggested that costs would be in the region of £13,000 to £18,000, depending on whether land was allocated for development or not as a result of the district level local plan review. It had previously been agreed to move £1,000 into a reserve for NP Review (*see item 8 b*), and it was suggested that this should be increased by £2,000/£3,000 each year to create a fund. The Neighbourhood plan implementation group was invited to consider further what the scope of the work on the review should be and an item to discuss this be put on the agenda for the September meeting so that it can be discussed when budgets were agreed in October/November.

It was acknowledged that the revision of the ESC Local Plan and Local Government Review would probably change the way planning was managed. The Clerk advised that Eyke PC were in the process of writing a NP and would be contacting her about wildlife corridors.

Action: Clerk

12. Community Hall:

- a) To receive an update on the Hall and replacement main entrance project – It was reported that the doors should be completed the following week, when the final invoice could be paid. The Hall committee would then turn their attention to other projects, including the heating, and considering loft insulation.

Action: Clerk

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

- None

14. Documentation – To acknowledge review the following policies and procedures:

- a) Asset Register (March 2026) – No amendments suggested
- b) Risk Assessment (Financial) – Amendments suggested to:
- Item 9 – Reduce impact to 2 – resulting in overall score reducing to 2
 - Item 14 – Amend ‘Managed by...’ to show monthly reports at UPC meetings
- c) Risk Assessment (Non-Financial) - No amendments suggested

With the above amendments taken into account, the documents were taken together and Cllr. V Smith proposed their adoption. Cllr. Bennett seconded and all were in agreement. Clerk to finalise and publish.

Action: Clerk

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

The Clerk was asked to add the issue with the gate on Footpath 20 to the list.

Action: Clerk

16. To receive agenda items for next meeting and agree date of Next Meeting (21st April 2026):

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

- Annual Parish Meeting
- Payment of Grants
- SCC Elections

Action: Clerk

17. To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed:

- a) Former Crown Nursery – To discuss information regarding the Highways drainage pond on the former Crown Nursery land – Members acknowledged information received from the SCC Asset Manager (Drainage), acknowledging that there was no agreement between the owner of the Crown Nursery site and SCC, with refence to the A12 drainage pond on the land. It was acknowledged that it may be appropriate to leave the dense brambles around the pond, to deter access, and that signage and fencing would be required. It was suggested that a Risk Assessment was undertaken in due course and the Clerk was asked to investigate possible suitable companies to do this.

It was acknowledged that there was no requirement for this item to be heard in camera in future, unless confidential contractual terms were being discussed.

The meeting was closed at 8:52pm

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

Date:

Judi Hallett
Clerk to Ufford Parish Council