Minutes of Ufford Parish Council Meeting

Held on 15th September 2026 at 7.00pm
The Parish Hall, Church Lane, Ufford

Present

Cllr. Vincent Smith (Chair)	Cllr. Keith Bennett	Cllr. Tim Buxbaum
Cllr. Nick Crocker	Cllr. Pat Edworthy	Cllr. Rilla Forge
Cllr. Angela Linforth	Cllr. Nigel Smith	Cllr. Murray Thomas
Cllr. Tig Thomas		

District Councillor Sally Noble
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. David Findley (away). Apologies had also been received from County Councillor Stephen Molyneux.

   b) To Accept Apologies: The apologies of Cllr. Findley were proposed as accepted by Cllr. Forge, 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 – Trustee to the Community Hall
      - Cllr. Buxbaum – Item 7. B) – Professional interest in work to Stocks
   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) Discussion with Mr Graham Lynch, Redwood BMX Track Manager:
      - Mr Lynch was not present and the Clerk agreed to contact him and invite him to the October meeting.

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

- East Suffolk Council - Cllr. Noble's August report had been circulated and she expanded on the following items:
  - AP/26/0050/REFUSE – With reference to this appeal, the expected El Nino will bring a wetter stormier winter and flooding may be greater
  - LGR – This is now on hold for Suffolk and Norfolk. Much work has already been done and we hope it will not all be wasted. This now means the administration will need to hold elections for the District Council in May 2027.
  - Community Energy Projects – I would urge you to be involved in this project, even if it is for very small ventures
  - NSIPS – We are endeavouring to hold each Energy project to account and, now that they are approved, we are trying to get positive outcomes for towns and villages affected by them (for example, a Community Park at Saxmundham, close to the Lion-link distribution centre
  - Bins – Still some issues (investigating a recent issue in School Lane) but most problems are caused by staff issues
  - Tree Warden Conference – A conference that your Tree Warden may be interested in is happening at East Suffolk House on 19th November, between 10.00am and 1.00pm

- Suffolk County Council – Cllr. Molyneux's report had been circulated and he offered to take questions outside of the meeting.

c) *Additional Item* - Public Session (notes only):

- Planning Appeal Consultation - AP/26/0050/REFUSE – I am a neighbour of this appeal and I would like to ask the Council if they would consider enhancing their submission to the Inspector. My main concerns are:
  - The site is NOT isolated and therefore the applicant cannot rely on Para 84 of the NPPF
  - The site has flooded every year for the last four years (and I am told frequently before that), I have video evidence
  - Heavy machinery will affect the flood plain
  - If the property becomes uninhabitable (due to flooding), it will become an eyesore
  - There are some mature Oaks on the plot, and there does not seem to be anything to stop the site being cleared of trees completely
  - The recent work to the Deben has resulted in a greater flow rate and this will mean greater flooding in the winter
  - The wildlife that is there, is abundant: marsh harrier, barn owl, deer, newts, woodpeckers, bats; the evidence of these is very good.

4. To sign Minutes of meeting dated 21st July 2026:

The minutes of the Full Council meeting dated 21st July 2026 had been circulated. The minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr. M Thomas, seconded by Cllr. N Smith 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. Community Emergency Plan Review – To receive details from working group:

a) To review progress of the revised Plan – The Clerk reported that she had amended the Plan in line with discussions of the group and had recently made a call for residents to register if they could help in an emergency. Eight residents had responded so far, and these details would be added to the Plan. The Plan would be sent to the group early next week and then to all Members for review.

It was acknowledged that, when the Plan was ready, a trial run-through would be sensible, and the Plan (with personal details redacted) would need to be published and promoted, alongside the latest household guidance for being prepared.

It was also agreed that the Clerk should endeavour to speak to the Clerk of Westleton PC, to ask what lessons they learnt during the recent wild fires.

b) To discuss responsibilities of residents living next to watercourses – The Clerk confirmed that the October PUNCH article would include a paragraph on requesting that all water courses were kept clear. It was reported that the gullies on Barrack Lane (over Byng Brook) were blocked and the Clerk agreed to report. The Clerk was also asked to speak to Cllr. Stephen Molyneux to request that the culvert on High Street, which was blocked in 2023 causing extensive flooding, was checked by SCC.

c) To consider communication of plan to Ufford residents and relevant bodies outside village – In addition to this (see above) it was agreed that a register of households who relied on well water might be important. The Clerk was asked to enquire if the Fire brigade already had a list, and if this was not available to send out a PUNCHLine.

Action: Clerk

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

a) DC/26/2933/TCA - 1no. Oak (T1 on plan) - Crown reduction by up to 2.5 metres, 1no. Ash (T2 on plan) - Re-pollard to previous pollard points, 1no. Willow (T4 on plan) - Pollard to first main union, 1no. Unknown species (T5 on plan) - Fell 2no. Ash and, 2no. Sycamore (T6 on plan) - Pollard at 6 metres above ground - The Old Rectory, Church Lane, Ufford – The following comments were made:

- [Comments from the Tree Warden had been circulated]
- In light of the comments from the Tree Warden, suggest we request a TPO is placed on the Oak (T1) to protect it, the work to the other trees is required and there is no objection
- Conclusion: **Request TPO on T1 and state no objection to the other work** (Prop: Cllr. M Thomas, Sec: Cllr. Forge, 8 For, 2 Abstentions).

b) DC/26/3012/TCA - 2no. Oak (marked T1 on submitted plan) - Remove major dead wood 1no. Holm Oak (marked T2 on submitted plan) - Reduce crown by 2m 1no. Ash (marked T3 on submitted plan) - Pollard just above main stem union 2no. Willow (marked T4 on submitted plan) - Pollard at 5m from ground level - Willow Farmhouse, East Lane, Ufford – The following comments were made :
   - [Comments from the Tree Warden had been circulated]
   - In line with the Tree Warden's comments, no objection
   - Conclusion: **'No Objection'** (Prop: Cllr. V. Smith, Sec: Cllr. Bennett, all in agreement).

c) DC/26/3086/TPO - 1no. Unknown species (T1 on plan) - Reduce in height by 4.5 metres and reduce in radial spread by 4 metres - 20 Parklands, Ufford – The following comments were made :
   - [Comments from the Tree Warden had been circulated]
   - In line with the Tree Warden's comments, support
   - This tree is far too big for this garden
   - Conclusion: '**Support'** (Prop: Cllr. Buxbaum, Sec: Cllr. V. Smith, all in agreement).

d) Planning Appeal Consultation - AP/26/0050/REFUSE - DC/25/2945/FUL - Single-family dwelling and associated landscaping works - Land At Dingley Dell, Lower Road, Melton – The following comments were made :
   - [The Clerk explained the process of an Appeal to all Members and confirmed that the Council's earlier objection would have been passed to the inspector]
   - Further information should be provided to the Inspector on the following points:
     - Changes to the Deben – The recent work to de-silt the Deben has resulted in more water flowing close to this site, when the Deben is in flood, it will be closer to the site. The predicted El Nino over the next six months may make the situation worse
     - Trees - There is a plan available to protect some of the trees, but how can this be enforceable? A TPO must be placed on the mature oaks on the site.
     - Wildlife – The existence of the wildlife (as listed in the public session) must be emphasised to the inspector, and a full independent bat survey must be carried out.
   - Conclusion: the Clerk was asked to draft a letter on the above lines, and send for urgent review (Prop: Cllr. Forge, Sec: Cllr. T Thomas, 9 For, 2 Against).

Action: Clerk

7. Other Planning Matters:

a) To acknowledge previous months list of ESC Planning decisions – There were no further comments about this report.

b) To receive update on the refurbishment of the Stocks and Whipping Post – Cllr. Buxbaum reported that the planning application for the works to the stocks was likely to be permitted, as there were no negative comments from any of the statutory agencies.

It was remarked that the plans suggest 2m^3 (*weighing approx. 5 tonnes*) of concrete was required to secure the brace that will hold the whipping posts; and that these seemed extremely excessive, given the weight of the post. Concern was also raised that a hole of this magnitude would almost certainly find tree roots and possibly undermine the wall behind the post. It was established that moving the stocks and post was not an option.

In conclusion Cllr. Buxbaum was asked to thank Robertsons for their plans and ask them to confirm that that volume of concrete was required. If it was, it was anticipated that a test hole would be needed to ascertain root and drain coverage.

c) To discuss draft letter constructed by Chair of Campsea Ashe PC, to region's MPs – After discussion it was proposed by Cllr. V Smith at the suggestion of Cllr N Smith (the council's member of the JPTI) that UPC support the sending of the letter to the MPs (subject to small grammatical amendments suggested by the Clerk). This was seconded by Cllr. Edworthy and all were in agreement.

Action: Clerk, and Cllr. Buxbaum

8. Finance Matters:

a) To receive and agree Accounts to 31st August 2026 – The Accounts had been prepared and circulated. Cllr. V Smith queried why the Community Hall rental payment did not seem to be included in the accounts. The Clerk explained that the payment had been received and was included in the account, but that another payment was also received that month so the Budget document showed the total amount received under that budget heading. It was agreed that the Clerk should distribute the Cash Book, which showed the individual payments received and made.

b) To officially receive 'Section 3 of Part 3' and the 'Notice of Conclusion of Audit' of the 2025/26 AGAR, from PKF Littlejohn LLP – The Clerk reported that, to her delight, the Section 3 of Part 3 of the AGAR had been returned from PKF Littlejohn LLP, with no comments (this being a good thing). In accordance with the instructions she had published Section 3 of Part 3 and the Notice of Conclusion of Audit. Receipt of these two documents was proposed by Cllr. V Smith, seconded by Cllr. N Smith and all were in agreement.

c) To review Reserves, including returns from CCLA – The Clerk ran through the Reserves allocation and there were no suggested amendments. It was further acknowledged that the investment income rate from CCLA was presently 3.8543%, where it had been as high as 5.0003% two years ago. It was still felt appropriate to continue to invest the bulk of our excess funds with CCLA given their rate of return was much greater than holding the funds on deposit with Lloyds Bank who were currently only paying interest of 0.5% on our deposit account with them

d) To review the estimated costs on the UPC Projects List and adjust accordingly – After discussion it was agreed to amend the estimate for the 'Replacement of the Village Gateway' to £5,000, from £2,500. It was acknowledged that some of the other costs may also be underestimated, but that they would be revised once funds were received. The Clerk was asked to amend the list and re-circulate.

e) To discuss the NJC 2026/27 National Salary Award and implications for the Clerk – After explanation from the Chair that the proposed annual pay rise for Local Authority staff was 3.3%, Cllr. Edworthy proposed the rise was implemented for the Clerk (back dated to 1st April 2026). This was seconded by Cllr. V Smith and all were in agreement.

   Cllr. V Smith reported that both he and Cllr. M Thomas had questioned if the Clerk was on the correct Pay Scale and that he was seeking advice from SALC. It was agreed the matter is to be discussed at the October meeting.

f) To open discussions on the budget for 2027/28 and discuss possible projects – The following comments were made in opening discussions about the 2027/28 budget:
   - There are a number of large projects coming up (NP revision, BMX Track improvements, village gateway, etc.) and we will need to start to save for them
   - There may have to be a substantial increase in the Precept
   - Climate change is affecting the woods and more work is needed (Cllr. Forge to consider what the Woodlands budget should be)
   - There are others funds we can call on, and we may have a considerable CIL pot, if the development at Crown Nursery goes ahead
   - We do have two SZC traffic monitoring stations in the village, this may mean their funds are available to us

   The Clerk was asked to draft the first budget for the October meeting, a month earlier than usual.

g) To authorise the following Invoices for Payment:

i.	J Hallett (Salary and Expenses)	£768.46
ii.	SCC Pension Fund (Clerk's Pension)	£196.52
iii.	Coastal Building Supplies Ltd (Woodlands Group items)	£63.59
iv.	East Suffolk Services (Refuse Bin at BMX Track)	£50.51
v.	S Churchyard (Maintenance Expenses)	£315.00
vi.	Thurlow Nunn Standen Ltd (Safety Equipment for Woods Group)	£35.62
vii.	G C Robertson and Assoc (Technical drawings for Stocks)	£540.00

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

d) To note Payments made since last meeting:

i.	J Hallett (Salary and Expenses)	£768.46
ii.	SCC Pension Fund (Clerk's Pension)	£196.52
iii.	St Mary's Church Hall Ufford (Hall Hire)	£100.00
iv.	Zurich Town and Parish (Insurance)	£1,412.01
v.	D Findley (Water Testing Consumables)	£192.12

e) To note Payments received since last meeting:

i.	Alford Storage (Clothes Bank)	£22.00
ii.	Lloyds Bank Plc (Interest)	£5.54
iii.	CCLA Investment Income	£103.83
iv.	HMRC (VAT Refund)	£320.31
v.	Suffolk County Council (Stocks Grant)	£450.00

Action: Clerk

9. Highways:

a) Ufford Hole Breach and PRoW – To receive update on the breach and Phase I of the repair work – Cllr. V Smith gave a summary of a report produced by Cllr. Findley regarding the first stage of the project to desilt the main channel as part of a multi-year restoration of the River Deben in the Eyke/Ufford area.

It was acknowledged that SCC PRoW had confirmed that they would pay for the footbridge to be repaired, but only at the more narrow crossing point, not the original location. Concern was raised that work to the hole may result in the deep section used for swimming and fishing to change; the Clerk was asked to clarify this with LDOG and place details in to a PUNCHLine, if appropriate.

[Addendum – *supplied by Cllr. Findley after the meeting* - Detailed scheme designs are still being developed with EA, WMA and LDOG and no decisions have been made. Due to complexity of plans and number of stakeholders involved, it is likely that the next update will be in November. Please see additional comments received at the October meeting.]

b) To note concerns from residents of Lower Street regarding traffic volumes, vehicle sizes and speeds – The Clerk reported that she had received a number of communications from a resident of Lower Street, regarding the large tractors and speeding vehicles. It was felt inappropriate to discuss the matter whilst the 20 MPH consultation was still ongoing, but the Clerk was asked to collate all the comments and present them to Councillors at the October meeting.

c) To receive initial feedback in relation to the consultation on implementing a 20 MPH speed limit within certain parts of the village (*to conclude on 30th September*) – The Clerk reported that she had received 14 responses to the consultation so far. She was asked to promote it on PUNCHLine one more time.

d) To consider purchasing a replacement grit bin for Barrack Lane/Spring Lane junction (£202.00 Net) – After discussion it was agreed to replace the Grit Bin on the Barrack Lane/Spring Lane junction (Proposed by Cllr. N Smith, seconded by Cllr. Crocker and all in agreement.

Action: Clerk and Cllr. V Smith

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. M Thomas and all were in agreement.

10. Recreation Ground/Woodlands:

a) To receive an update on Woodlands Management (report from Cllr. Forge) – Cllr. Forge reported:
- The ground is hard at the moment so volunteers have been tidying, removing non-native species, and replacing dead hedging
- The concrete bases from the old army huts are very visible at present and there is a fallen tree to be removed
- Of 108 saplings planted earlier in the year, most have survived.
- 740 man hours have been recorded by the volunteers, a huge effort and saving on labour costs
- There is now 2 days work for Tim Clarkson – Authorisation of this spend (up to £1,250) was proposed by Cllr. V Smith, seconded by Cllr. Crocker and all were in favour.
- ESS had been brilliant in assisting with path cutting and had cut the steep bank next to the football pitch
- Fly tipping and ASB had been recorded (with one young man identified and his parents spoken to) and all scrap metal found had been disposed of.

b) To review proposal from BMX Manager on improving the track in light of further information – This item was deferred until the October meeting.

Action: Clerk and Cllr. Forge

11. Documentation – To receive details of the Annual Asset Review and any maintenance issues:

The Clerk reported that the annual asset review had been completed and a small number of maintenance issues had been reported. It was further reported that the gate post at Sogenhoe Chapel was very tight to close and the Clerk was asked to add this to the list of jobs.

Action: Clerk

12. Community Hall - To receive monthly update on management of the Hall:

Cllr. V Smith reported on the following items:

- Heating – Needs replacing soon. Cllr. Forge suggested speaking to Mr Churchyard, who had experience of modern electric heating.
- Football Pitch – has not been cut for many weeks – Clerk to chase football manager
- Refuse Bins – Often not collected, may have to move to a commercial arrangement – Clerk suggested speaking to ESS
- Committee – The committee members are very restive at present and more will need to be found – Cllr. V Smith to send details to all regular users.

Action: Clerk and Cllr. V Smith

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

Three amendments to the Health and Safety record were agreed and the Clerk was asked to update and re-circulate.

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

- Planning Committee (South): Melton Care Village – Cllr. V Smith reported that he had attended and spoken at the ESC Planning Committee (South) meeting, with reference to the proposed Melton Care Village on Yarmouth Road. The application was permitted, but included a Grampian condition, which would mean the site could not be occupied until the water services were upgraded (condition in place until 2030).

- SZC Southern Transport Forum – Cllr. Findley had circulated a written report on the recent September Forum meeting. Cllr. M Thomas reported that he had also attended the meeting. The project was on track. Upgrades to the rail network would mean no trains between 24th Oct and 1st Nov. The major upgrade to the Melton crossing was scheduled for Easter 2027. The work to the River Deben breach at Ufford had been raised and engagement with SZC and Network Rail was positive.

- Clerk's Annual Appraisal – Cllrs. V Smith and M Thomas confirmed they had carried out the Clerk's annual appraisal; this would be discussed further at the next meeting.

- JPTI – Cllr. N Smith reported that a meeting of JPTI had been held in July. SCC had offered to hold a separate session to show how traffic modelling was calculated and a separate group had been set up to arrange this. The next SZC traffic data was expected in November.

Action: Clerk

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

It was agreed to include the following items on the agenda of the October meetings:

- Budget 2027/28
- Clerk's Pay Grade
- BMX Track Proposal
- 20 MPH Consultation results

Action: Clerk

The meeting was closed at 9.28pm

Signed:…… Date: ……..
Cllr. Vincent Smith - Chair

Judi Hallett
Clerk to Ufford Parish Council