

Great Blakenham Parish Council Minutes



Minutes of Gt Blakenham Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 15th April 2026 at Parish Rooms. Present: Chair Nick Leonard, Cllr Matt Powell, Cllr Debbie Kemp, Karen Grimwood (Parish Clerk), SCC Cllr Chris Chambers, MSDC Cllr Adrienne Marriott and 6 members of the public

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1. To receive and approve any apologies for absence.- [Cllr Karen Wheeler](#)
 2. Declaration of any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests – [None](#)
 - a. *Councillor's declaration of interest appropriate to any item on the agenda.*
 - b. *To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interest (if any).*
 - c. *To grant any requests for dispensations as appropriate.*
 - d. *Co-option of parish councillor(s) / to sign declaration of acceptance.*
 3. Public Forum
 - a. *To receive the report from the County Councillor.- [see attached](#)*
 - b. *To receive the report from the District Councillor.- [see attached](#)*
 - c. *To receive questions from members of the public. Update on the situation at Chalk Hill Lane. There are no further updates regarding Chalk Hill Lane closure at present, other than that the Suffolk County Council are still investigating ownership of the site. Residents of Blueleights have also reported ongoing issues with parcel deliveries, with several parcels not being delivered. In particular, DHL have reportedly stated that they will not deliver to the area at all.*

Will the landfill site still continue to operate at its current height. Noted that the site is not visually appealing and raised concerns regarding litter, as well as noise occurring outside of permitted working hours. The Environment Agency currently has an ongoing investigation into the matter. SCC Chis Chambers is aware of the issues and has pushed for a response. The Parish Council is awaiting a response from the Environment Agency to provide a further update from the investigations.

Asked whether there is any known explanation for the lighting and noise being observed at the rear of the Boltons site, adjacent to Birds during the night. It was believed that the activity was related to works being carried out by Network Rail on the nearby railway tracks. It was noted that nearby residents had not been notified of these works.

4.To approve the Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 12th March 2026 – [Approved](#)

5.To note the Clerk's update from previous meeting.

NJE 14/5/2026

6.Planning

a. To consider the following planning applications:

Ref	Location	Proposal	Comment Date
DC/26/01043	Part Land Adjacent To Units 36 & 37 , Claydon Business Park, Gipping Road, Great Blakenham Ipswich IP6 0NL	Application under S73 for Removal or Variation of a Condition following grant of Planning Permission DC/24/02130 dated 25/07/2024 Erection of B2 unit for use as a motor vehicle workshop / garage services and associated works. Cllrs have no objection to this application	Extended to 17.04.2026

b. To note decision notice

Ref	Location	Proposal	Comment
DC/2600065	Units 5 To 6, 29 Gipping Road, Great Blakenham, Suffolk	Retrospective planning application for the stationing of a Portakabin and use as an office (Use Class E(g)(i)) in conjunction with the existing uses on the site and the creation of 5 associated parking space	Granted Noted

7.Growth, Highways, and Infrastructure

a. **Gipping meadow update** - It was noted that some maintenance works have already been completed at the Meadows site. Further maintenance works are scheduled to take place over the next few weeks. The Management Plan was discussed with Mid-Suffolk Biodiversity Manager, who commissioned the plan. The Gipping Meadow Management Plan has now been shared with the Parish Council.

b. **Port One** - Local parishes councils were invited to attend a meeting at Endeavour House. Representatives including MSDC, ecologists, transport specialists, and landscape consultants were present, allowing attendees to ask questions directly.

It was noted that a number of species surveys have not yet been completed. One survey of particular importance relates to the five-banded digger wasp, which is considered unusual in this area. Parish representatives expressed a preference for an independent specialist ecologist to either complete the report or attend future surveys. It was also noted that some surveys cannot be undertaken until the winter months or later; as a result, any new proposals from Port One are likely to be delayed.

In relation to transport, it was noted that the transport department does not model scenarios involving the closure of the A14 within its reports. Port One will be required to submit updated transport plans and modelling for travel, with congestion impacts to be recorded. Suffolk County Council (SCC) has indicated that it does not support the proposed roundabout on Lime Way.

c. **Landfill site** – See 3c

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d. Chalk Hill Lane – See 3c

8. Governance

- a. SALC Internal Audit – PC approved service letter of engagement for Salc 2026. Internal audit has been booked for week of 18th May 2026.
- b. PK Littlejohn External Audit – PC agreed the appointment of PK Littlejohn to complete the external audit 2026.
- c. Parish Room Donation – A request was made for the PC to fund the replacement of pads and battery for the defibrillator located in the Parish Room, at a cost of £240 + VAT. MSDC Cllr Marriott advised that she would be willing to cover this cost from her available funds rather than the Parish Council.
- d. Website provider - The PC noted that its website provider, Suffolk.cloud, is now known as Pear Space and has joined the Freethought Group
- e. CIL - The PC noted that it will receive £9,344.19 in Neighbourhood CIL for the financial year 2026–2027.
- f. Finance - The Parish Council reviewed the end-of-year financial statements and agreed them in principle, subject to minor amendments to earmarked reserves. The Clerk will make the necessary amendments and present the revised figures for approval at the next meeting.
The Clerk requested renewal of the finance software package with Realtis at a cost of £252.00. The Parish Council approved the renewal.
- g. Precept - The PC noted receipt of the first precept payment for 2026–2027 in the sum of £28,941.00.
- h. Local Reorganization Review

9. Finance

To consider approving and making the following payments: **Approved**

Payee	Method	Description	Amount	Legislation
Suffolk County Council	Bacs	Street light maintenance - 9569132	£1360.94	LGA 1972 s111
ICO	DD	ICO renewal fee	£52.00	LGA 1972 s111
Payroll	Bacs	Payroll ends 31.03.2026	£1075.63	LGA 1972 s111
HMRC	Bacs	P30 ending 05.04.2026	£376.45	LGA 1972 s111
Nest	DD	Month 12 ends 31.03.2026	£53.99	LGA 1972 s111

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Payee	Method	Description	Amount	Legislation
Shades	Bacs	Street/litter cleaning as per tender 2839	£1213.33	LGA 1972 s111
Shades	Bacs	Grounds maintenance as per tender 2840	£758.33	LGA 1972 s111
Lloyds Bank	DD	Card fees	£3.00	LGA 1972 s111
Unity Trust	DD	Service charge	£7.00	LGA 1972 s111

Income Received @31.03.2026

23.03.2026 – HMRC £1159.76
05.03.2026 – Allotment Shed £50.00
31.03.2026 – Bank Interest £855.03
Total: £2064.79

Bank Balances @ 31.03.2026

Unity Trust Current Account: - £10868.12
Unity Trust Saver Account - £168,016.58
Total: £178,884.70

10. Reports

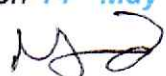
- a. Village Hall

11. Correspondence

- a. Sackers – Council was advised that there was a very large explosion from the Sackers site again this month. This was notified to the Environment Agency on the same day. The Environment Agency, SCC, and Chris Chambers are all aware and have notified the relevant departments.

12. Future Meetings

- a. To note invitation for items to be considered in the next meeting.
- b. To note the date of the next scheduled meeting on **14th May 2026** and any items for the agenda.

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Local Government Reform Decision: Three Councils for Suffolk

On Wednesday 25th March we heard that the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government had announced that Suffolk would have three unitary councils. These would replace Suffolk County Council and the five district and borough authorities: Babergh, Mid Suffolk, East Suffolk, Ipswich and West Suffolk. The new councils will come into operation in April 2028. Ahead of this, elections scheduled for next year will establish three shadow authorities responsible for guiding, shaping and overseeing the transition within their respective geography.

In the meantime preparations are going ahead for the Suffolk County Council Elections which are, after all, going to be held this May. The pre-election period began on Friday 28th March after which there would be restrictions on some council activities, in particular regarding publicity and use of council resources during a period of heightened political sensitivity.

Mid Suffolk Culture Fund

Ten organisations in Mid Suffolk have been awarded a share of nearly £120,000 through this fund. The grants support people of all ages, including youth art festivals, intergenerational music and dementia-friendly dance workshops.

The Stowmarket Culture Group will receive £15,000 for its Jubilant Youth summer arts festival whilst more than £8,000 has been awarded to Orchestras Live to support an intergenerational orchestral project in Eye and nearby areas. Wingfield Barns will use £12,000 to host four-day Easter drama workshops. Other beneficiaries include the East Anglian Traditional Music Trust and the Association for Suffolk Museums.

The next application round will open this autumn for the 2027/28 cycle, with £110,000 available.

Former Council Office Site Sold

Mid Suffolk District Council has sold the remainder of its former office site in Needham Market to Hatch Homes. The deal will see the completion of the site's regeneration, as well as realising funds for reinvestment into council housing.

The transformation of the first part of the site was successfully completed by the council and created 32 homes, including affordable housing, as well as a new retail unit which the Co-op moved into in 2023. Hatch homes will now be delivering the second phase of the project which will include 48 homes for the open market and the redevelopment of grade II listed Hurstlea House into apartments.

Work is expected to begin on site during March, with completion expected by 2029.

Food waste action week 2026

This year, the UK's annual food waste reduction campaign runs from 9 – 15 March and the theme is 'Make Your Food Go Further: for your pocket, for our planet'.

<https://www.wrap.ngo/take-action/love-food-hate-waste/food-waste-action-week>

The week inspires simple, practical action that helps food go further – saving money, time and stress, while protecting the planet.

By preventing food waste, using up leftovers, and recycling anything that can't be eaten, we can unlock more value from the food we already have by helping it to stretch further.

The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) is giving tips to make food go further on each day of Food Waste Action Week.

Voter information resources for the May elections

The Electoral Commission has produced a suite of resources that councils and civil society partners can use to help provide voters with the information they need to cast their vote with confidence in the upcoming elections in England on 7 May.

The Electoral Commission has updated its digital and print static resources which councils can use to raise awareness of:

- ways to vote
- when the elections are happening
- finding your polling station
- getting help at the polling station
- what to do if you need help to vote
- polling station opening times
- respecting polling station staff

The voter information resources for use in England includes posters, email signatures and social media graphics.

Pride in Place Strategy funding announced

On 21 March, The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government announced £319 million of government funding to help communities to restore pride and opportunity in neighbourhoods:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/high-streets-revived-and-children-given-safe-places-to-play>

The investment is delivered through four strands:

- High streets reinvigorated – £301 million High Streets Innovation Partnerships programme to help support local communities to revive high streets
- Safe places for children to play – £18 million of government funding to buy new and improve playgrounds
- Local progress accelerated – Plans are also moving forward for areas in the first phase of Pride in Place, providing communities with up to £20 million over 10 years
- Tearing up the rulebook on public spending – Five projects will test a new initiative to get local agencies such as councils, the NHS and schools to pool their cash and work together instead of operating in silos

Government review into park homes commission charge

On 5th March, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government launched a review of the 10% commission fee charged on the sale of park homes:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/calls-for-evidence/park-homes-reasons-for-commission-payments>

The Mobile Homes Act 1983 requires park home residents to pay a site owner a commission of up to 10% of the sale price of their home.

The call for evidence will seek to establish:

- The reasons given initially for charging a commisWhat the commission pays for and how it is calculated
- How the commission is linked to other aspects of the Mobile Homes Act 1983
- A better understanding of the sector's business model

The consultation closes on 29 May. If you have any questions, please contact: parkhomes@communities.gov.uk

Press release:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-review-launched-into-park-homes-commission-charge>

The Renters' Rights Act Information Sheet 2026

It's a six-week countdown until the Renters' Rights Act takes effect and improves the lives of private renters in England.

On 20 March, MHCLG published a Renters' Rights Act Information Sheet 2026:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69bc04b8f7b1c24d8e23ce60/The_Renters_Rights_Act_Information_Sheet_2026.pdf

to give tenants helpful, practical advice on each of the changes and what it means for their tenancy agreement.

It simply breaks down the key information that renters need to know – from stronger protections against rent increases to better rights to request pets – and scrapping Section 21 evictions, fixed-term assured tenancies and more.

Tenants won't need to do anything but read the information carefully. Landlords and their letting agents must legally give this information to tenants by 31 May to avoid risking a fine.

Landlords can give this information to tenants as a hard copy or attached electronically as a PDF to an email.

Public health update

Individuals eligible for free shingles vaccine urged to come forward

On 26 February, the UK Health Security Agency (UKSA) highlighted that fewer than half of adults are taking up their free shingles vaccine in the first year of being eligible.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/millions-eligible-for-free-shingles-vaccine-urged-to-come-forward>

Shingles is a painful condition caused by reactivation of the chickenpox virus. It can cause weeks of severe pain and long-term complications including nerve damage.

The Shingrix For All immunisation programme began on 1 September 2023. The programme offers two doses of the Shingrix vaccine to all immunocompetent individuals turning 65 or 70, and severely immunosuppressed individuals turning 18 and over.

Eligible people can check if they qualify and book their vaccine through their GP or by visiting NHS.uk. More information can be found on UKSA's shingles blog page.

<https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/tag/shingles/>

*Adrienne Marriott
Blakenham District Councillor
31/03/26*