BRADFIELD ST CLARE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2026 AT 7PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Parish Councillors present: Chair Cllr John Kirk, Vice-Chair Cllr Malcolm Hignett, Parish Councillors Sue Partridge and Paul Foster. Parish Clerk Nicola Sturgeon present.

County Cllr Bobby Bennett present. Isobel Payne present to be considered for co-option to the Parish Council.

1. Apologies for absence:
   Alex Duchesne has stood down as a Parish Councillor since the last meeting so was not present. All other Parish Councillors present.
   District Councillor Sara Mildmay-White sent her apologies to the meeting as it coincided with a West Suffolk Council meeting but she aiming to come along to the Parish Council meeting scheduled for the 10th November 2026.

2. Acceptance of Apologies for Absence:
   This relates to Parish Councillors only. There were no absences from Parish Cllrs.

3. Declarations of Interest:
   Isobel Payne, whilst not considered for co-option until Agenda item 4, did state that if the Parish Council did co-opt her then she would declare an interest in the speed review at the junction with Bury Road as she resided in one of the homes that would be within the boundaries of the speed reduction that was being requested. After discussion it was agreed that it was a non-pecuniary interest.

   At this stage in the meeting the Chair Cllr Kirk agreed for County Cllr Bennett and Parish Cllrs to have a very brief discussion about the details of the speed review the Parish Council are currently undertaking, a report has been requested to be prepared by SCC Highways to be approved before putting forward to a Speed Panel. If successful at the Speed Panel then the PC would need to raise funds to carry out the necessary works that highways would need to do to reduce the speed limit on that section of road. The PC would at that stage have a more indepth discussion with County Cllr Bennett, who at this stage was not sure that she would have ay money to give to the project as she had a small Highways budget that had to be shared amongst a number of villages that she represented. The PC would be making the point of it being a safety concern if the Speed Panel approved a reduction in the speed limit.

4. Co-Option: to consider the co-option of a parishioner to the Parish Council.

   The Clerk confirmed that Isobel Payne had expressed an interest in being co-opted to the Parish Council. This was after all the relevant Notices provided by Democratic Services at West Suffolk Council had been provided, displayed on both the website and the village notice board, and thereafter, the Parish Council had received notification from WSC that they were now in a position to co-opt a Parish Councillor.

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The Clerk had been in email contact with Isobel some days prior to the meeting to ask her to consider the Qualifications and Disqualifications to being a Parish Councillor as set out on the Electoral Commission website. Isobel Payne has confirmed to the Parish Clerk via email dates 7 October 2026 that she fulfilled three of the Qualifications (only one is required), and that she had no disqualifications to the position of Parish Councillor.
The Clerk explained to the Parish Council that they were able to co-opt Isobel Payne to the Parish Council, if they so wished.
Following discussion Cllr Partridge proposed that Isobel Payne be co-opted, and Cllr Hignett seconded the proposal. Cllrs Kirk and Foster both agreed. Motion carried.
Cllr Payne confirmed her declaration of interest in the current speed review matter being discussed at this meeting.
Clerk advised Cllr Payne that she had emailed to her details of the 'Councillors Basics' course at the Suffolk Association of Local Councils. It was a very helpful course for new Parish Councillors to understand their role and the role of the Parish Council. The course was held online and in two sessions. The Clerk had emailed the various dates available for the course and if Cllr Payne wished to attend the course online then to let the Clerk know which dates suited her best and the Clerk would book the course for her. Parish Councillors agreed that it was a helpful start to learning the roles and responsibilities of being a Parish Councillor and that the PC would pay the cost of the training.

5. Public Forum:
   No members of the public were present at the meeting.

6. To consider and approve the Minutes of the meeting on 23 July 2026:
   Cllr Hignett proposed that the draft Minutes of the meeting on 23 July 2026 were a true and accurate record. Cllr Partridge seconded. Motion carried. Chair Cllr Kirk signed and dated the Minutes.

7. Matters arising:

Matter	**Update**	**Any next steps**
Planning: DC/26/1090/HH 2 St Clare Hall Cottages, a. relocation of front door to side elevation b. single storey front extension c. single storey rear extension.	West Suffolk Council approved the planning application.	No further steps for the Parish Council under this application.

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Planning: DC/26/0890/HH Clarecote. Single storey detached annexe.	West Suffolk Council refused this application. The decision was issued on 8 October 2026.	14/2026 No further steps for the Parish Council under this application.
Funding for bus service.	The Parish Council are looking to reinstate a bus route in the village using the advertised central government monies given to County Councils to improve bus infrastructure across the country. Cllr Hignett prepared a substantive application and liaised with Cockfield Parish Council who also submitted an application and both Parish Councils gave support for the others application. Bradfield St George also gave their support to the applications. The application was submitted to SCC in August 2025. Simon Barnett is the Officer at SCC dealing with this. Funding had already been allocated for that financial year and it was a case of waiting to see how those new bus routes managed or if further funding was not viable due to low numbers using those bus services. As requested the Clerk emailed Simon Barnett on 25 July 2026, but received no response. Clerk emailed again on 12th October 2026. Mr Barnett is out of the office until 13th October 2026.	The funding of this application is entirely in the hands of SCC. Clerk will continue to request updates as to whether funding has become available to consider the Parish Councils application. ***Clerk will also check that there is no time limit to our application being submitted before it becomes out of date and a new application has to be submitted.***
Speed reduction	Ongoing matter. County Cllr Bobby Bennett and Matthew Fox at Highways have now spoken and confirmed that there are no new relevant policies that would have an impact on the Parish Councils application to the Speed Panel review. Clerk finalised the matters affecting the speed review document to include the fact that a resident indicated at a	Once the draft report for the Speed Panel is received then Matthew Fox at Highways is happy to meet with the Parish Council and parishioners that want to attend that meeting to go through the report to see if there are any areas to amend before it is submitted to the Speed Panel for review, asking for

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	meeting with Highways Officer in December 2025 that some residents had had their cat killed on that part of the road due to speeding motor vehicles. Clerk took photographs of the junction and from the public footpath on the field opposite the junction that the scouts and walkers use. Demonstrating no footpaths along the road and the wide nature of the road so that drivers feel that they can pick up speed along that part of the road where there are homes. Parish Council gave Highways the go ahead to commission a draft report for the Speed Panel on 17th September and at the time of the meeting the PC are awaiting the draft report.	15/2026 a preferable 30 mph speed limit but if not agreeable to that then a 40 mph speed limit. The PC have noted that IF successful at getting a speed reduction with the Speed Panel then the next hurdle will be funding, but have for several years been saving some monies from the Precept levied, and will have further discussions with the County Cllr regarding her budget for projects in villages.

8. Correspondence: All relevant correspondence has been forwarded to Parish Cllrs. Nothing to discuss at this meeting that is not covered under Agenda items.

9. To consider and approve a draft Precept for 2027-2028

	Precept 2026-27	Draft Precept 2027-28
INCOME		
Precept to be levied	**4100.00**	**4448.00**
EXPENDITURE		
Administration		
Clerk's salary (incl tax and NI)	1750.00	2000.00
Admin costs (postage/paper)	30.00	30.00
Audit fee	0.00	0.00
PC council insurance	280.00	350.00
SALC subscriptions	120.00	130.00
CAS website	60.00	66.00
ICO subscriptions	40.00	52.00

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Services		
Grass cutting (PCC)	120.00	120.00
Grass cutting (Pitchers Green)	100.00	100.00
Grapevine grant	200.00	200.00
Village Hall hire for meetings	100.00	100.00
Mr Spall (grass cutting)	200.00	200.00
Sundries	100.00	100.00
Highways Project	900.00	900.00
Election costs	100.00	100.00
(4 yearly local PC elections)		
	4100.00	**4448.00**

To explain some of the increases: Clerks salary has increased due to several increases in minimum wage over the last few years. The Clerk works 3 hours per week. Current minimum wage is £12.71 per hour. 156 hours per year x £12.71 = £1982.76

The PC Insurance has increased as most types of insurance have increased over the last few years. CAS remain the most competitive.

SALC subscriptions have increased slightly over several years.

CAS website hosting fee has increased by £6

Information Commissioner Office fee is required to be aid because the PC holds data, and the fee has increased slightly.

Following discussion and agreement, Cllr Foster proposed the Precept for 2027-2028 be £4448 as set out in the figures provided by the Clerk. Chair Cllr Kirk seconded. All Cllrs agreed.

10. Clerks Report

(i) To consider and approve items of expenditure:

Payments made since last meeting

IT at Community Action Suffolk	£189.50	chq516	LGA1972
N Sturgeon – Clerks salary (From 13/05/26 To 31/07/27)	£366.30	chq517	LGA1972

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Schedule of Invoices

Community Action Suffolk (PC Annual Insurance)	£337.68	chq518	LGA1972
Information Commissioners Office (annual data protection fee)	£52.00	chq519	LGA1972
N Sturgeon (From 01/08/20 To 13/10/26)	£305.04	chq520	LGA1972

All Cllrs agreed the schedule of invoices and payments made.

(ii) To consider way forward with regards to one area of grass cutting that a parishioner used to kindly carry out for the Parish but is no longer residing in the Parish.

The PC understand that the parishioner is going abroad to help pass on farming knowledge and that the farm has been sold. It was agreed that the PC would wait for the new owners to settle in as the grass etc near the road at the farm would not need cutting again until the Spring time now and that would hopefully give the new owners time to become more familiar with the village and hopefully want to help out in this regard.

11. Cllrs Reports (if any available)

Cllr Payne enquired about what areas and how frequently did West Suffolk Council on behalf of Highways cut roadside verges. Mr Morley had cut the verges by her home for some years, along with her husband as the frequency of the Council cut would mean that the verges grew too high and become dangerous when pulling out of their driveway. *Clerk will enquire and get back to Cllrs as soon as she has a response.*

Sara Mildmay-White (West Suffolk Council Councillor) had sent a short report to the Clerk for the meeting as follows:

Electoral registration: Final reminder to check your electoral registration details are correct. From 4th September trained canvassers will visit properties where no response has been received to previous communications sent by e-mail, text or post. If a canvasser is unable to contact a resident, they will leave a calling card advising the steps the resident needs to take. Easiest way to register is online at GOV.UK-Register to vote

West Suffolk Local Plan: Following the call for sites developers and landowners have put forward sites for consideration for housing, employment, infrastructure etc. West Suffolk Council will now be assessing each of the 328 sites in line with Government guidance. A map including details of all 328 sites will be published later this month. West Suffolk will then publish its assessment of each site. No decisions have been made on any of the sites and there will be opportunities for residents to have their say during two stages of public consultation, the first of which is due to take place next year. Once adopted the local plan

will govern future development in West Suffolk. The council has to allocate land for the delivery of around 1200 homes a year to meet the Government's housing targets. Residents are encouraged to register on the council's local plan consultation system to make sure they are kept informed at every opportunity. Alternatively, you can view these on find my nearest link on WS website. https.//westsuffolk.inconsult.uk/system/register

Rougham Airfield master plan consultation: Thank you to those who attended the consultation meetings regarding this development. This site was allocated for homes and employment growth in the current local plan. Once the master plan is adopted by West Suffolk Council it will inform the developer's planning application for this site.

Crucial Crew: A record 1,100 primary school students from 33 West Suffolk schools, attended the West Suffolk initiative Crucial Crew this summer. They gained invaluable life skills to help keep them safe. The programme featured 10 different scenarios a day. These included Abbeycroft Leisure on how to stay safe in water, Suffolk Fire and Rescue about fire prevention and what to do if trapped in a bedroom fire, Restore Womens Aid worked with students to explore respect and what it means for a healthy relationship, Suffolk Police exploring on-line safety, CPR with the East Anglian Air Ambulance. These are just some examples of the topics covered at this increasingly popular event run by West Suffolk Council.

RAF Barnham: West Suffolk Council has written to the Home Office setting out why it believes the RAF Barnham site is both unsuitable and unlawful for use as asylum seeker accommodation. We are awaiting a response. Meanwhile, we have now been informed that the Home Office has submitted an Urgent Crown Development application to the Ministry of Housing and Local Communities for the use of RAF Barnham for asylum seeker accommodation. This means that West Suffolk Council will not be asked to decide any planning application but will only be a consultee.

Planning and Infrastructure Act 2026: The Government has introduced changes to the way planning applications are dealt with by Councils. It sets a maximum number of committee members of 13. At present West Suffolk have 16 members. There will be a nationally prescribed 2 tier system for deciding which planning applications must be decided by officers, and which could go to committee. The types of applications will be in Schedule 1, Schedule 2 and own interest applications. Schedule 1 are all household applications, minor residential and commercial development, discharges of conditions and reserved matters for non-phased development. These applications must be decided by officers. Schedule 2 will go to a gateway test decided by an officer and nominated member who may agree to refer a proposal to committee if in their view it raises one or more issues of economic, social or environmental significance to the local area. This means that not all applications would be eligible to go to committee or delegation panel. Further training will be put in place for all members and Parish Councils to bring them up to speed with these changes.

Rougham Hill development: Planning permission was granted in August for the redevelopment of Rougham Hill former household waste site. Plans include a new Aldi

supermarket to support the nearby housing development as well as the wider area, alongside a drive through Wendy's restaurant.

Locality Budget: I have £1,650 left in my locality budget, please contact me if you have any plans for community projects that I could assist with. The money needs to be allocated by January 2027.

Unity Councils: the Government has withdrawn its decision made in March 2026 to create three unitaries in Suffolk. But, at the same time, has re-stated its commitment to effective and sustainable local government, and to simplifying council structures in the future.
The government has also clarified that local elections in May 2027 will go ahead on existing council boundaries i.e district council elections for the current West Suffolk Council will take place, alongside town and parish council elections.

Sara Mildmay-White sara.mildmay-white@westsuffolk.gov.uk Tel: 01359 270580

12. Date of next meeting: 10th November 2026 at 7pm in the village hall, unless an Additional Meeting is organised to discuss any draft Highways Report that may be received.

Meeting closed: 8.10pm

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Signed: Dated: