

FINNINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

*DRAFT Minutes for the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on
Monday 10th November 2025 in St. Bartholomew's Church, Finningham, starting at 7:30pm*

Present: Cllr Charter, Cllr Saunders, Cllr Pope, Cllr Davies, Cllr Trew, Cllr Black

In attendance: Miss J. Challis (Clerk), Cllr Mellen, Mr Kilbee former Chair of the Parish Council, 2 members of the public

25.224 Chair's welcome and to consider and approve apologies for absence

Cllr Charter welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies received from Cllr Winter were approved unanimously.

7:31pm Cllr Trew arrived.

25.225 District and County Councillor Reports

Cllr Mellen read through his District and County reports, which can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

He highlighted BMSDC's call for sites and sustainable communities food fund.

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/web/babergh/w/call-for-sites>

Cllr Mellen will also send information on MSDC's Community Asset Fund which has been established to help the creation of community enterprises such as community pubs and shops, and 'the Pub is the Hub', a not-for-profit organisation, which offers independent specialist advice to publicans on rural services diversification so they can all provide viable local services or activities which add social value in their local area.

<https://www.pubisthehub.org.uk/>

Cllr Charter thanked Cllr Mellen for his reports and additional information.

25.226 Footpath Warden's Report

Mr Aiken's report can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

25.227 Public Participation Session

Mr Kilbee reminded the council that the annual mower servicing is usually carried out at this time of year, and indicated that he is happy to continue managing the grass cutting rota.

25.228 To receive any pecuniary or non-pecuniary declarations of interest from Members and any Gifts of Hospitality.

None.

25.229 To consider requests for dispensations on agenda items

None.

25.230 To approve minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on 13th October 2025

Cllr Saunders proposed approval of the minutes of the Parish Council meetings held of 13th October 2025. Seconded by Cllr Trew and approved unanimously with 1 abstention (councillor who was not present at the meeting).

25.231 Chairman's Report

A huge well done to our Parish Councillors and our Clerk for their continued campaigning and success in securing the funds that mean all four major roads into the village now have speed-aware electronic signs — with three of them solar-powered!

Your hard work and persistence have really paid off and are helping to make our village safer for everyone.

A special thank you to Cllr Perry Saunders, who kindly gave up his time last week to help erect the new signs.

Thank you all so much for your dedication and community spirit.

Within just three days of the new signs being erected, I've personally had five residents approach me wanting to say thank you for helping to make our village safer — a real sign of how much this project is appreciated.

Looking ahead, we will endeavour to add another Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) on the remaining road into the village as soon as possible, continuing our commitment to improving road safety for all.

25.232 Clerk's Report

- As already reported by Cllr Charter, the two new VAS devices have been delivered and installed. The purchase was kindly part funded by Cllr Mellen's Suffolk County Council locality budget. Cllr Mellen indicated that he could support the purchase of a fifth device for Gislingham Road as he still has funds available from his MSDC locality fund.
- Cllr Saunders has requested the council continues to look at the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan. This will be a future agenda item and the Clerk will investigate alternative funding sources as the Government has withdrawn funding.
- River Waveney Trust 'Building Resilient Communities' public information event on the 23rd October 2025 in Mellis Memorial Hall – Cllr Trew attended this event and engaged with Dawn Wnukoski, the local MSDC Emergency Planning Support Officer who has been invited to attend a future meeting. The Clerk is also preparing a draft Biodiversity Action Plan for councillors' consideration at a future meeting.
- A donation request has been received from CAB mid Suffolk. This will be an agenda item for the next meeting as it arrived too late to be included this evening.
- Cllr Saunders attended Suffolk County Council's One Suffolk online briefing, and has shared a slide representation from the meeting with councillors.
- Cllr Winter has advised that the defibrillator battery is currently out of stock. The defibrillator will be reported as out of use with the Circuit, the national network, if there are any issues in the meantime. – CW will mark defib as out of use if any issues in the meantime.
- The Clerk has a meeting with Josh Holmes MSDC Community Grants Officer to discuss funding opportunities.
- The deadline for inclusion in the Friends of Finningham newsletter is 20th November 2025. The Clerk will prepare a draft on behalf of the parish council.
- Consultation Telecoms Site BACTON SUFFOLK (Ref: CS 11157827) - PROPOSED BASE STATION UPGRADE AT BACTON SUFFOLK, WATER TOWER, BACTON, SUFFOLK IP14 4TH (NGRs: E 606480 / N 268520). Notification has been received from Cornerstone in relation to works to remove 3 no. existing antennas, and install 03 no. new antennas, 3 no. transmission dishes, and ancillary development on Bacton Water Tower.

25.233 National Grid (Norwich to Tilbury) Development Consent Order (Application Reference: EN020027) representation.

A submission to the Planning Inspectorate reiterating the council's OBJECTION to NG's Norwich to Tilbury proposal was prepared by Cllr Saunders and the Clerk, and can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

The deadline for registering with the Planning Inspectorate as an interested party and submitting a response is 11:59pm 27th November 2025.

<https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/norwich-to-tilbury>

<https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN020027>

25.234 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Call for Sites 2025

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/web/babergh/w/call-for-sites>

Site submissions must be received by 5pm Friday 9th of January 2026.

The parish council does not own any suitable land, and after discussing it was agreed that there are no other sites within the parish the council wishes to put forward.

25.235 MSDC Community Governance Review

MSDC has commenced a Community Governance Review to enable councils and residents to consider what changes are needed to parish arrangements for effective future governance.

[Community Governance Review - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk](https://www.babergh.gov.uk/midsuffolk.gov.uk)

Initial requests may be submitted between Monday, 27 October 2025 and Friday, 7 November 2025.

Community Governance Reviews are usually held every 10 years, with the last being 2022, however this one has been called in response the LGR (local government restructuring) proposals.

After discussing, councillors agreed unanimously that they do not have any requests to submit, commenting that it is hard to do so prior to the LGR details being confirmed.

Churchyard Maintenance responsibility update

25.236 Ongoing; no further update at present.

Consideration of quotations for tree work and cemetery hedge

25.237 Following the previous meeting, when quotations received to remove the fallen limb in the churchyard, cut the cemetery hedge back to a manageable level, and carry out work to trees on the green were presented to councillors, the contractor has been asked to proceed with the approved work to the hedge, and the member of the public given permission to remove the fallen tree limb in the churchyard.

Councillors discussed the quotations for the remaining tree work, and agreed to proceed with work to fell the beech tree, which has been highlighted as posing a public health and safety risk, at a cost of £680.00 plus VAT. Proposed by Cllr Trew, seconded by Cllr Charter and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to advise contractor as above.

Pride in Your Place application for village improvements

25.238 Cllr Saunders suggested the council submit a funding application to purchase additional benches for the play area on the green, following verbal feedback he has received from residents.

Councillors agreed this would be an excellent addition to the green, providing a benefit to many members of the community. The Clerk shared details of benches made by a company in Ipswich supporting adults and young adults with learning or physical disabilities. After discussing, it was agreed for this to be deferred to the next meeting, to allow councillors time to consider bench options.

ACTION – Councillors as above.

Correspondence received

25.239 None.

Electricity supply renewal

25.240 Deferred.

8:11pm Cllr Black arrived.

Draft Budget 2026/27

25.241 A draft budget 2026/27 was prepared by the Clerk and circulated to councillors. After discussing, Cllr Charter proposed approval, seconded by Cllr Charter and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to update draft budget 2026/27 and publish.

Finance

25.242 a. RFO's report (bank balance, receipts, and payments)

Balances as of 29th September 2025

Community Bank Account: £4,569.36

Deposit Account: £10,527.57

b. Requests for payment

Clerk admin payment November	£497.04
Clerk expenses (mileage)	£18.70
HMRC PAYE/NIC November	£124.26
P. Saunders expenses – wreath	£31.94
CAS (Community Action Suffolk) – annual hosting	£66.00
J. Charter expenses – VAS sundries	£31.85
Elancity – 2 x new VAS device	£5,614.78
Defibrillator battery	£330.00

Councillors noted that the expenses request of £25.00 submitted by J. Challis at the previous meeting has been cancelled, as the remembrance wreath was not received.

Cllr Davies proposed authorisation of the above payments, seconded by Cllr Trew and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Cllr Davies and either Cllr Winter or Cllr Trew to pay approved payments above, online, (dual authorisation).

Planning

25.243

To consider applications: None.

- DC/25/04398 - Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Remove to ground level one very unbalanced oak. Martins, Church Lane, Finningham, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 4JB – **NO OBJECTION.**
- DC/25/04288 - Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Walnut (T1) trim and reshape; Walnut (T2) trim and reshape by 3 metres. Orchard House, Gislingham Road, Finningham, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 4HT – **NO OBJECTION.**
- DC/25/04121 - Householder application - Replacement windows, replacement / refurbishment of fascias and soffits, re-cladding of dormer window. Lautrec, Gislingham Road, Finningham, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 4HY – **AWAITING DECISION.**
- DC/25/03856 - Householder Application - Erection of a detached double garage. Riverside, Gislingham Road, Finningham, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 4HY – **AWAITING DECISION.**

To discuss date of the next meeting

25.244

The next meeting will be held on Monday 8th December, at 7:30pm in St. Bartholomew's Church, Finningham.

Items to be discussed at the next meeting and included in the December agenda.

25.245

As per agenda.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8:18pm.

