

OTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 21st July 2025. This meeting was held in Otley Village Hall (Back Room).

Present:

Clerk: Mrs Mary Hunt (Clerk & RFO)
Chairperson: Mr Michael Bowers (MB)
Mr Anthony Ling (AL)
Mr Gavin Grant (GG)
Mrs Emma Flint (EF)
Mr Miles Ellis (ME)
Mr Martin Hunt (MH)
Mrs Claire Gasson (CG)

Meeting started at 7.30pm

District Councillor Mr Dan Clery arrived at 7.33pm

County Councillors Elaine Bryce hoped to attend this meeting but has other Parish Council meetings to attend tonight.

AGENDA

1.) Chairman's Welcome, Apologies and Approval of Absences – Apologies received from Mrs Jenny Ellis, these apologies were accepted.

2.) To receive Declarations of Interest and Consider requests for Dispensations. CG declared an interest in Planning Application DC/25/1478/ARM Approval of Reserved Matters of DC/23/2323/OUT Browngates, Ashbocking Road this application has been submitted by her company but she is not directly involved.

3.) Public Forum (For any matters on the Agenda) – a) Mr James Tanner from Hollins Architects, Surveyors & Planning Consultant based at Framlingham attended to give a presentation following initial pre-application feedback from East Suffolk Council regarding consideration for an application from Felix Thornley Cobbold Trust for a small-scale employment use at Stanaway Farm, Charity Lane. Preliminary plans for the site were circulated to the Councillors prior to this meeting.

Mr Tanner explained that his company are doing some work with the Felix Thornley Cobbold Trust at Stanaway Farm they are looking to do some diversification around what to do with the site. They have put together some basic proposals and have had an on site pre-application meeting with East Suffolk Council along with written feedback. It was felt the next step was to come to the Parish Council to discuss the matter to see if there are any comments or questions about a possible application that may need to be considered. As yet the plans have not been finalised. The managing agent would be prepared to arranged for Councillors to have a site visit.

Went through the drawings on the plans, There is still a working farm there which is a listed building, as well as exiting agricultural and commercial units. While the Trust want to keeping the agricultural side of things running, the diversification for commercial units for income stream to add to the viability of the farm.

The interventions on the presented plans numbers 10, 8, and 3 to 6 are the areas to be changed. Planning records show Number 7 is for B2 for heavier industrial / manufacturing. Number 2 is change of use from Agricultural to BH for storage.

Vehicle movement were discussed due to traffic and lorries and car parking on the site, when looking at the impact of traffic a suggestion of spaces for 43 cars would be needed, and would the road cope with this. The Neighbourhood Plan which is due to go to a referendum in September 2025 and includes planted buffers around perimeters so things look nestled, is there going to be enough coverage, will the exciting trees be kept, there is the possibility of adding planting further, a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment will have to be done. Visibility splay would have to be looked at as the road is presently single track. Other areas discussed water drainage and Lighting, low level wildlife sensitive.

The question of whether if the site was not successful around the commercial side of things, there was not the demand, would the situation arise that it will end up changing to residential use? This is not Mr Tanner's instruction and has not been talked about for the strategy for the site. The Trustees for the site are keen that the site is not put to extreme commercial use but rather keep it low key.

The time scale for putting in an application is not urgent maybe in the next 6 to 8 weeks although there are ecological appraisals that need to be done. Mr Tanner again offered for the Councillors to come and do a site visit if they wish. He was thanked for his time and left the meeting at 19.57pm.

If anyone wishes to do a site visit to let Clerk know who will liaise with Mr Tanner.

b) AL wanted to share with the Councillors that his father Mr Russell Ling who is nearly 96 years old has been awarded a British Empire Medal from the King in his recent Birthday Honours List. He read out an extensive list of all the things that Russell has achieved and be involved in. In particular reorganising the Otley Footpath Network in the 1990's which took over 5 years to achieve, working with Farmers, Ramblers Association and County Council to do this scheme, and is one of only three in the whole Country. AL thanked the Parish Council for nominating his father for this award.

4.) To resolve that the minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 19th May 2025 are a true and correct record. Proposed by AL and Seconded by GG..

5.) To receive reports from Elaine Bryce County Councillor & District Councillor Dan Clery. These reports were circulated prior to this meeting.

Dan Clery gave a summary of his report – Local Government reorganisation - The County Council wish to have a single Unitary Authority over the whole county, whereas the District Council and Borough would prefer three unitary alternative Southern, Eastern and Western. As yet the boundaries are not known, but one could be in Ipswich, another Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft. People who responded to a consultation indicated that they preferred things to be as local as possible, have councillors who come to meeting and know the area, rather than a big organisation running services from a distance.

There would be no County Council but a Mayor covering both Norfolk and Suffolk. The debate is, you either end up with one big large unitary authority, that provides / deliver s all service or three authorities. The Boundaries for the different unitary authorities eg southern are also still in discussion. Proposals will be put in by September then the Central Government will decide. Mayoral elections is due to take place next year 2026, and the unitary authorities should be decided by 2027.

The other items discussed at County Council meeting recently was the renewed interest in the Ipswich Northern By Pass. They are now looking at other options such as another low level bridge, improving rail junctions at Haughley and Ely have also been discussed but the government has rules this out.

Dan Clery left the meeting at 8.25pm

6.) MATTERS ARISING – To receive progress on the following -

a.) Neighbourhood Plan / Referendum – Third but last version of plan completed tonight and the decision statement goes in tomorrow from East Suffolk Council. The referendum is due to take place on 18th September 2025. Village Hall is booked for it from 7am to 10pm. It runs the same as if you were doing a proper election. If the plan goes through the Neighbourhood Plan will be made by sometime in October 2025.

b.) Sport and Play Fund – The application has been completed and sent in. AL has been waiting for Sarah Shinnie from East Suffolk Council to get back to him to confirm that the money from this fund has been released. He has emailed them and will be making contact again this week to obtain an update.

c.) Village Hall Roof – A new roof and all works connected to it, have been completed and invoices.

d.) Grit Bin on Otley Hill – Clerk contacted Paul West Cabinet Member for Highways and got the same response as before that its the Parish Councils responsible for removing old grit bins and purchasing a replacement. Other options regarding this matter will now be looked into.

e). Deer Signs – Clerk has approached the District Councillors and County Councillor to see if they have any funds available to make a contribution towards the cost of purchasing deer signs, the Parish Council have previously been quoted costs of between £1,500 to £2,000. District Councillors have advised this is not a project they can use their grants for. We await a response from County Councillor. A discussion about whether deer signs could be added to existing poles such as the one near the bowls club and the one between the junction and cattery. Clerk to contact Highways to enquire whether this is possible.

f.) 30MPH Otley Bottoms - Clerk made request to Highways that the 30MPH limit to be extended from bottom of Otley hill to Otley Parish Boundary. *THE RESPONSE was the Speed Limit Policy states when and why we would extend a speed limit and this is applied across the County. Request to change a speed limit needs to meet the following criteria -*

Rural Situation – Villages

-A clear village character with 20 or more houses (on one or both sides of road)

-If just fewer than 20 houses, extra allowance should be made for key buildings such as a church, shop or school.

-Where the character of a village falls outside this definition, discretion should be used in deciding the appropriate speed limit

-A normal minimum length of a new speed limit would be 600 metres

-This maybe reduced to 400 metres where the density of development over this shorter length exceeds 20 houses and, in exceptional circumstances, it could be reduced to 300 metres.

There would need to be significant evidence that within the area intend to extent the speed limit into, that the above criteria are met. At present, there is a spattering of properties, akin to a rural environment, with large areas of hedging, fields and open countryside. This policy is there to provide consistency across the County, and to ensure that road users are given a consistent message. Speed limits need to ‘feel’ right to the road user, and there needs to be a clear reason why they are being asked to drive at that respective speed.

Existing traffic speeds would need to be determined as well as formally assessed against the above policy. At the moment there does not appear to be any significant development in this stretch of road to justify an extension.

Furthermore every speed limit has a legal order associated to it, a Traffic Regulation Order which are legal orders that allow the Police / Authorities to prosecute an offending driver. These legal orders need to match exactly what is on the roads eg If a speed limit is 1000m in length on the road and as stated in the legal order, but someone moved a sign so it is now 1200m in length, the legal order and speed limit would be unenforceable and not legal, and there could be no prosecution. This would be because the legal order and what is on the road no longer match. Therefore a legal process is required to change a speed limit and its associated legal order, to ensure they match, and it’s enforceable. This can take up to a year to undertake, and can cost many thousands.

Following a discussion Chairperson MB agreed to contact Joshua White at Highways Department to discuss this matter further.

g.) Village Map – AL to discuss with the Community Council regarding finding a suitable event when the Map could be unveiled.

7. OTHER MATTERS -

a.) Replacement Parish Clerk – The present clerk has put together a list of all the tasks they do throughout the year for Otley Parish Council and handed this out at tonight’s meeting, They have also contacted SALC for some advise regarding seeking a new clerk. There are a few things SALC may be able to help. They have a very small pool of locums, at present there are three, one of whom is only available to assist with meetings / minute-taking. If someone expresses an interest in the post SALC can share their CV for the Council to review and decide whether to proceed. If using a locum hourly rate is agreed directly between them and the Parish Council. SALC can provide a template for a temporary employment contract. SALC can also advertise the vacancy for you on our dedicated vacancy webpage. There is no cost to advertise with SALC.

Other options include advertising on the council website, newsletters, asking neighbouring councils if they can promote the vacancy also consider advertising with Suffolk Jobs Direct, a service through Suffolk County Council which advertises jobs in the public sector. The fee for the standard advertising is £75.

GG has discovered that there maybe a couple of local people who Clerk for other local parish councils that could be approached. It was felt that in the first instance the post should be advertised in the village, on the notice boards, website, post office etc. Other matters that need to be considered are, an advert for the job, a job description, number of hours per week and contract of employments. Clerk will look on SALC website as they have templates for these. They will also work out the average number of hours they have worked in the last year, to give an idea of how many hours a week is needed to cover the work of the Parish Council.

b.) Westerfield Quarry – Clerk advised that they have linked in with the clerk at Swilland and Witnesham to ask if they can let us know when they have been notified of the planning application for the Quarry, so we can put in our comments.

8.) Finance – To Authorise BACS payments, acknowledge any receipts received and payment made since last meeting.

a) To agree Clerks Salary for May & June 2025 = 26.5 hours at agreed rate = £344.50 Proposed by ABL and Seconded AL

b) To agree cost of internal Audit via SALC = £338.40 Proposed by GG Seconded by CG

Since the last meeting the following payments have been made

Clerks Salary for March & April 2025 = £416

Cost of ink jet cartridges and 1 ream of paper = £ 89.38

Cost of Annual SALC Membership Subscription for 2025/26 = £348.84

Cost of Hire of Otley Bowls Club for APM and AGM meetings = £30.00

Cost of Hire of Village Hall from November 2024 to March 2025 = £67.50

Cost of yearly cost of mobile phone for Community First Response = £250

Other Payment made -

Cost of email system for Councillor JE = £12.00

Sweets purchased for Stall at Village Fete = £9.00

Dates for period of exercise of public rights 30th June to 8th August 2025 has been advertise on Parish Council Website.

Documents for the External Audit were sent to PKF Little John on 3rd June 2025.

Current Account = £720.97

Business Account = £9,546.30

9.) Planning Matters -

DC/24/4253/FUL

Address: Otley College Of Agriculture And Horticulture Charity Lane Otley Suffolk

Proposal: HGV training facility for Otley College for HGV's up to 18.75m. The Parish Council have Objected to this application. **Awaiting Decision.** Waiting to hear if this application has gone to the planning committee.

DC/25/1478/ARM Approval of Reserved Matters of DC/23/2323/OUT

Address: Browngates Ashbocking Road Swilland Ipswich Suffolk IP6 9LJ

Proposal: Outline Application (with some Matters Reserved)- Construction of 3 Bungalows and Garages on land to the south and west of Browngates- Condition 2, 4, 5, 7 10, 11, 12, 13, 15. The Parish Council submitted a No Objection to this application. **Awaiting Decision**

Felix Thornley Cobbold Trust - Stanaway Farm, Charity Lane, Otley – To discuss - Following initial pre-application feedback from East Suffolk Council, considering submission of a planning application for small-scale employment use at Stanaway Farm. Site plan which is a preliminary version only and not publicly available. This plan was sent round prior to this meeting. See item Public Form 3 a)

10.)HIGHWAYS MATTERS

Request to extend 30MPH Speed limit from Otley Bottoms into the village from the Cattery going out of Village to beyond the junction/ Otley Boundary. See items 6 Matters Arising items f)

11.) RIGHTS OF WAY / FOOTPATHS -

Report reference number is: 00500483

CHAPEL ROAD, OTLEY

Date reported: 20/12/2024

Description: Otley Parish Council report the No Stopping sign has been bent over by unknown vehicle. Also the narrow footpath that it is sighted on prevents parents passing it who have pushchairs. Can the sign be moved up against the school hedge to the benefit of everyone?

This was reported again on 2/6/ 2025 directly to Josh White from Highways -

This morning I have received an email from a parent who was taking their child to the school, who hit there head on it, quite hard, causing a big lump and lots of tears. It is also quite difficult to walk along this already fairly narrow path with pram and children. Could the sign post be moved to the one at the end of the path near the car park.

Please could this this be looked into as a matter of urgency so we don't have another child hitting their head.

Updated photographs were sent to show the angle of the post. Clerk has chased this up.

12.) SPEED WATCH & SID RESULTS –

One session took place on Helmingham Road, slowed all the traffic down because of warnings. A couple of cars going over 40MPH.

13.) COMMUNITY COUNCIL REPORT – The fete made approx £1,500 and was reasonably well attended. Going forward the next project is to put in a disabled toilet, refurbishment of the present toilets and have a painting session of the inside of the hall.

14.) COUNCILLORS REPORTS & ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Clerk pay review.

Date of next meeting Monday 15th September 2025 Otley Village Hall Back Room.

Meeting closed at 9.15pm

