

BLYFORD AND SOTHERTON PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of meeting held on 15th September 2025 at 6.30 pm
In the Meeting Room of Wenhaston Village Hall

Councillors Present: Mr G Walker, Mrs R Parry, Mr B Martin, Mrs L Sharman,
Mr B Goldbart, Mrs S MacDonald, Mr R Bucknell and Mrs A Donnachie (Clerk)

Others In Attendance: 6 Members of the public
Mr Mark & Mrs Lindy O'Hare – new owners of Blyford Estate

- 1 **Welcome, apologies and receipt of absences:** The Chair welcomed everyone and started the meeting. Apologies received from Suffolk County Cllr Annette Dunning who had a previous engagement.
- 2 **Declarations of interest and any dispensations allowed:** None
- 3 **The Chair welcomed the new owners of the Blyford Estate, Mrs Lindy and Mark O'Hare to the meeting.** They gave us a brief insight into the changes they are looking to make to improve the estate and answered questions. The Parish Council appraised them on the loss of historic mapped footpaths and the more recent loss of a short permissive footpath between Blyford Hall and Blyford Church. Lindy and Mark listened to our concerns and suggested the Parish Council should write to their local land agent, Jason Cantrell copied to them. They undertook to supply his contact details to the Clerk. The Parish Council thanked them for attending our meeting and listening to our concerns; they then left the meeting. **Action: Clerk to advise councillors when Agents contact details have been received so a response can be made.**
- 4 **Public Forum:** No issues raised by members of the public who had attended
- 5 **District and County Councillors Reports:** Cllr Dunning was unable to attend but provided us with her Parish Report which included - guidance and information on 20mph speed limits; a review of Suffolk transport infrastructure; Suffolk food waste processing plant to be sited near Southwold and more.
- 6 **Minutes of previous meeting:** Resolution passed that minutes of Blyford and Sotherton Parish Council meeting on 21/07/25 were a true record. Proposal to approve Cllr Goldbart, seconded by Cllr Parry with all in favour. **Action: Clerk to publish on our website.**
- 7 **Chair and Clerk's report on progress of actions from last meeting(s):** All actions completed or designated to other Agenda items to follow.
- 8 **Bus Stops in Blyford:** Cllr Goldbart has submitted a bid to Suffolk County Council for funding to erect physical bus stop signs at two locations on Southwold Road in Blyford. The application has been acknowledged but no decision made as yet. **Action: Cllr Goldbart will keep PC informed on progress.**
- 9 **Footpaths:** Ongoing.
- 10 **Highways:** Cllr MacDonald reported that she had retrieved the VAR equipment from a neighbouring village and that this was now up and running. Work on providing the Parish Council with statistics is ongoing. Cllr MacDonald will look into possible grants to purchase batteries/solar panels for our VAR equipment. The Parish Council expressed their thanks to Cllr MacDonald for her efforts with this project on this project.
- 11 **Finance:**
- 11a **Bank Reconciliation from 13/07/25 to 12/09/25:** The balance on the Current Account as at 13/07/25 was £6,566.95 with receipts (transfers from Latitude account) totalling £2,044.00 and less expenditure of £2,667.89, the account balance as at 12/09/25 was £5,943.06. The balance on the Latitude Account as at 13/07/25 was £5,419.98 with receipts totalling £19.52 (bank interest) less expenses of £2,044 (transfer to Current Account), the account balance as at 12/09/25 was £3,395.50. Payments over £100 included Clerk salary; Payments made from the Latitude Account were donations of £100 to Halesworth Museum; £250 to East of England Air Ambulance; £500 to Blyford Church PCC; £500 to Sotherton Church PCC and £1,044 on

Community Event at Henham Barns. Figures were verified against invoices and bank statements.
Acceptance of accounts proposed by Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Parry with all in favour.

- 11b Approval of Online Payments:** Clerk/RFO's salary/home office allowance/Expenses; Folk & Fare Community Event as above (prior agreement of Council by email) £1,044.
- 11c 2025/26 Budget at Half Year:** Clerk/RFO presented the budget to Council. Half year budget to September 2025 shows a total spend of £4,217.49, offset by transfer of £1,350 from Latitude funds and within a full year budget of £7,674. There was a slight increase in the HMRC spend otherwise all other budgeted items were within spend limit. Received by Council with no objections received. **Action: Clerk to post on website.**
- 11d Adoption of General Update in National Pay Rates for Local Authority Payees:** The Council noted the NJC scales applicable to the Council had been uplifted by national agreement and agreed to adopt the scales as amended with backdated salary for the Clerk from 01/04/25.
- 11e Consideration of Donations from Latitude Funds:** Donation request received from The Headteacher at Brampton CE Primary School to cover the costs of an outdoor stage with props for role play small wooden pergola, a water tray and some construction equipment, at a cost of £750. It was confirmed that several children from the parishes attend the school. Cllr Bucknell proposed a donation for the full amount of £750 from Latitude funds, this was seconded by Cllr Sharman with all in favour. **Action: Clerk**
- 12a Planning:** There were no new or outstanding planning applications to consider.
- 12c** The Clerk attended the East Suffolk Planning Forum for Town and Parish Councils on 23/07/25 and gave a report to the Council. Slides from the event had already been forwarded to the Parish Council.
- 13 Annual Inspection & Report on Assets:** Cllr Martin carried out the annual inspection and report on Assets. Except for some minor maintenance works which Cllr Martin will carry out, all other assets were in good order. Prior to the annual replenishment of grit by Suffolk County Council, all grit bins were checked and found to be full. The Parish Council thanked Cllr Martin for carrying out this inspection.
- 14 Report on dangerous tree situation land in Blyford:** Ongoing. Cllr Sharman has contacted the Housing Officer at East Suffolk District Council regarding this issue and awaiting a response. **Action: Agenda Nov.**
- 15 SAPP 2025 (Small Authorities Proper Practice Panel), Assertion 10 – Digital and Data Compliance.** This new requirement places a clear and strengthened focus on how smaller authorities manage their digital presence, data protection, and IT systems. The clerk attended an online presentation and outlined some of the areas where the Parish Council will need changes in order to comply with accessibility, transparency, and the need for up-to-date, compliant council websites, IT & Data Policies for Councils - Minimum IT policies now expected under Assertion 10. The Parish Council approved the move to .gov.uk domain and email address for the Clerk. **Action: Clerk to contact website hosts Suffolk Cloud and review all our IT policies to comply.**
- 16 Any General Correspondence Received:**
Correspondence received was distributed to the Parish Council with items of public information posted to our website/noticeboards and no further action required.
- 17 Any Items of Information –** The Pizza Night at Henham Barns was a great success with a good turnout of residents who enjoyed good company and delicious food.
- 17a Suffolk Highways Self-Help Scheme:** The clerk attended a presentation on setting up a scheme where volunteers are given training and equipment to carry out certain works around their parishes such as cleaning of signage, clearing vegetation on paths, maintaining green spaces. The Parish Council have no plans to join this scheme at the present time.
- 17b Halesworth Climate Conference 26-28th September:** Poster to go on our website and noticeboards.
- 17d** Cllr Goldbart requested approval to attend a SALC event on Grant Applications and Sourcing Funding on 04/12/25. Approval proposed by Cllr Bucknell, seconded by Cllr Martin with all in favour. **Action: Clerk**
- 18 Date of next meeting: 17th November 2025 at 6.30 pm in the Tardis Room due to Christmas Shop**

Meeting closed at 8 pm