

BLYFORD AND SOTHERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held on 16th March 2026 at 6.30 pm

In the Committee Room of Wenhaston Village Hall

Councillors Present: Cllr G Walker (Chair), Cllr R Parry, Cllr B Martin, Cllr L Sharman,
Cllr B Goldbart, Cllr V Bucknell and Mrs A Donnachie (Clerk)

Others In Attendance: 0 members of the public; Suffolk County Cllr Annette Dunning and East Suffolk District Cllr Beth Keyes-Holloway.

Public Forum – to raise issues or matters of concern:

- 1 **Welcome, apologies and receipt of absences:** The Chair welcomed everyone and started the meeting. Apologies received from Cllr MacDonald and accepted by Parish Council.
- 2 **Declarations of interest and any dispensations allowed:** Cllr Bucknell Item 7a
- 3 **District and County Councillors Reports:** Both Councillors submitted their Parish Reports. It was noted that the Suffolk Council elections will take place on 7th May 2026. The Clerk will post these reports on our website.
Cllr Sharman raised the matter of a dangerous tree leaning into the District Council car park in Blyford. Cllr G Wakeling was dealing with this and Beth will follow-up on progress.
- 4 **Minutes of previous meeting:** Resolution passed that minutes of Blyford and Sotherton Parish Council meeting on 19/01/26 were a true record. Proposal to approve Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Parry with all in favour. **Action: Clerk to publish on our website.**
- 5 **Chair and Clerk's report on progress of actions from last meeting(s):** All actions completed or designated to other Agenda items to follow.
(09/01/26) Damaged stile on Blyford Lane on Footpath Blyford 6: Cllr Goldbart uploaded this to the Suffolk Highways reporting tool. They have replied saying that that over Summer 2026 they plan to carry out improvement works which include installing *pedestrian gates instead of stiles, steps and wider footbridges*. However, this will be subject to the securing of improvement funding and agreement with the various landowners. Information about how Suffolk's highways are managed can be found on their website here: www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/
- 6 **Finance:**
 - 6a **Bank Reconciliation from 13/01/26 to 12/03/26:** The balance on the Current Account as at 13/01/26 was £4,703.91, there were no receipts, expenditure was -£865.09 with account balance as at 12/03/26 being £3,838.82. Payments over £100 included Clerk and Zurich Parish Insurance renewal of -£278.45. The balance on the Latitude Account as at 13/01/26 was £2,655.72 with receipts totalling £9.27 and no expenses, the account balance as at 12/03/26 was £2,664.99. Figures were verified against invoices and bank statements. Acceptance of accounts proposed by Cllr Walker, seconded by Cllr Martin with all in favour.
 - 6b **Approval of Online Payments:** Clerk/RFO's salary/home office allowance/Expenses; HMRC PAYE; SALC Payroll Service to 31/03/26 £27. Payments checked against invoices and approved. **Action: Clerk to make online payments.**
 - 6c **Preparation for 2025/26 end of year accounts – appointment of internal auditor:** The Clerk/RFO presented 2 quotes for consideration with the decision being that we appoint Heelis and Lodge as suitably qualified internal auditors. Proposed by Cllr Walker and seconded by Cllr Martin.

7 Planning:

7a New Applications: DC/26/0217/VOC – Conversion of listed barn into 3 dwelling houses at Sotherton Hall, Kings Lane, Sotherton: The Parish Council had no objection to this variation of condition application but with condition that resident bats be protected. All in favour.

7b Update on Previous Applications: All decided.

7c East Suffolk Design Code Engagement Workshop on 18/03/26: Noted. No further action.

7d East Suffolk Planning Forum 09/02/26: Cllr Goldbart attended this forum and gave a summary of what had been presented, such as the National Planning Policy, the new Local Plan etc. Slides from the forum were distributed to the Parish Council.

8 Latitude Festival: Cllr Parry reported that only a few day tickets were still available for residents. The cut-off date for payment will be 31/05/26.

9 Highways/Speeding issues/VAR & SID signage/Slow down road signs: Traffic speed monitoring at Sotherton was carried out with data taken from SID signage between 26/01/26 to 22/2/26. Highest speed recorded was 40 mph at 7.20 pm. 1-way Vehicle count was 1,805. Average speed was 32.5 mph over peak hours 8am-9am and 5 to 6pm. Signage will be erected at Southwold Road east to west for a few weeks. VAS signage continues to work intermittently. Cllr Goldbart has been in touch with Highways, originally to see if there was guidance on how to get the Blyford VAS sign working. The outcome of this is Highways will remove the VAS and post and, on request, install a SID post in the same place. There will be no charge for the SID post as Blyford is entitled to two and only has one. All in favour. **Action: Cllr Goldbart.**

10 Suffolk Highways – Town, Parish Council & Parish Meeting Survey: The Parish Council has provided feedback on how Suffolk Highways can improve communications, support and delivery for the council.

11 Any General Correspondence Received: Correspondence received was distributed to the Parish Council with items of public information posted to our website/noticeboards with no comments raised and no further action required.

11 Governance Documents: Clerk presented the following documents for consideration and adoption by the Parish Council: Internal Control Statement; Updated version of the Internal Control Report was reviewed by Cllr Goldbart. Cllr Walker proposed adoption of these 2 policies, seconded by Cllr Sharman with all in favour. **Action: Clerk to post documents to our website.**

12 Any Items of Information/Reports from Parish Councillors: Clerk has received a request from the Clerk at Holton to borrow our SID signage. Subject to certain requirements, insurance and agreed dates of use to be confirmed. **Action: Clerk**

13 Dates set for 2026 meetings:

Meetings to take place at 6.30 pm on 3rd Monday of every other month in Wenhaston Village Hall on:

18th May – Annual Parish Meeting followed by Annual General Meeting

20th July

28th September (delayed by 1 week)

16th November

Meeting closed at 8.00 pm