

BLYFORD AND SOTHERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held on 18th May 2026 at 7pm

Immediately following Annual Parish Meetings

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, Cllr S MacDonald and Mrs A Donnachie (Clerk)

Others In Attendance: Two members of the public; Suffolk County Cllr Annette Dunning

Cllr MacDonald brought to our attention that this year was the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Blyford and Sotherton Parish Council. Some non-alcoholic refreshments and cakes, generously provided by Cllr MacDonald were enjoyed to celebrate this milestone.

- 1 **Appointment of Chair for 2026/27:** Appointment of Cllr G Walker was proposed by Cllr Martin with all in favour. Cllr Walker accepted the Chair and has signed the Declaration of Appointment of Office.
- 2 **Welcome, apologies and receipt of absences:** The Chair welcomed everyone and started the meeting. Apologies received from District Cllr Beth Keys-Holloway and Cllr G Wakeling due to other commitments.
- 3 **Receipt of Declarations of interest and any dispensations allowed:** None.
- 4 **May 2026 Suffolk County Council Election Results:** Cllr Annette Dunning was welcomed back as our Suffolk County Councillor following the May elections and presented her Parish Report. Cllr Dunning will shortly be attending a meeting with the Highways Engineer on road safety and Parish Councils will be informed of any actions agreed. District Councillors Reports were received. No comments were received. **Actions: Clerk to post reports on our website**
- 5 **Minutes of previous meeting:** Resolution passed that minutes of Blyford and Sotherton Parish Council meeting on 16/03/26 were a true record. Proposal to approve Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Goldbart with all in favour. **Action: Clerk to publish on our website.**
- 6 **Chair and Clerk's report on progress of actions from last meeting(s):** All actions completed or designated to other Agenda items to follow.
- 7 **Matters Arising since last meeting:** None
- Finance:**
- 8 **Review & Adoption of Governance Documentation:** Standing Orders and Financial Regulations reviewed and adopted. Risk Assessment and Management (Financial): Cllr Goldbart carried out the review which was adopted with all in favour. Our thanks to Cllr Goldbart. **Action: Clerk to post all documents to our website.**
- 9 **Finance:**
- 9a **To Receive RFO's report on Accounts for year ended 31/03/26:** There were no comments and the Parish Council thanked the Clerk/RFO for this report. **Action: Report to be published on our website**
- 9b **Approval of Receipts, Payments & Budget Accounts for year ending 31/03/26:** Reviewed and accepted by Council before presentation to the Internal Auditor.
- 9c **Bank Reconciliation:** Reconciliation of accounts for Blyford and Sotherton Parish Council from 13/03/25 to 31/03/26 (end of financial year) showed balance on the Current Account of £3,401.93 and on the Latitude restricted account of £2,664.99, giving a combined total on account of £6,066.92. Reconciliation checked against bank statements, approved by Council and signed by Cllr Walker and Cllr Parry.
Bank reconciliation of accounts from 01/04/26 to 12/05/26 showed a balance on the current account of £3,401.93 with receipts of £4,100 for 2026/27 Precept and payment of £96.79 with account balance as at 13/05/26 of £7,405.14. The 01/04/26 balance on the Latitude restricted account was £2,664.99 with receipts totalling £644.36 from Latitude ticketing with account balance as at 12/05/26 of £3,309.15. Reconciliation checked against bank statements, approved by Council and signed by Cllr Walker and Cllr Parry.

- 9d Approval of Online Payments:** Clerk/RFO's salary/home office allowance/Expenses; HMRC PAYE; SALC subscription for 2026/27 £130.47 and ICO subscription of £47. Payments checked against invoices and approved. **Action: Clerk to make online payments.**
- 9e Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26 approval prior to submission to the Internal Auditor:** Page 3 – Review of Certificate of Exemption: Completed, approved by the Parish Council, signed by Clerk/RFO and Chair.
- 9f** Page 5 – The Annual Governance Statement approved by Parish Council, signed by the Clerk/RFO and Chair.
- 9g** Page 6 – Accounting Statement previously signed by Clerk/RFO, approved by Parish Council and signed by the Chair at this meeting.
- 9h** The following documents were reviewed and approved by the Parish Council and signed by the Chair: Explanation of Variances; Assets Register; Supporting Statement & Reserves Policy for 2025/26.
Action: Page 3 of the AGAR – Certificate of Exemption to be forwarded to the External Auditor. All above documents to be forwarded to the Internal Auditor, published on our website and on our notice board.
- 9i Request for donations:** There were several requests received by the Clerk. Decision made to defer any donation payments until Latitude funds received and final decision on purchase of traffic calming equipment is made later in the year.
- 10 Planning:** Public Access Link – <https://publicaccess.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications>
- 10a New Applications:** There were no new applications for consideration.
- 10b Update on Previous Applications:** All decided.
- 10c East Suffolk Local Plan:** The results of the “Call for Sites” were received.
- 11 Latitude Festival:** Cllr Parry reported that there were a few tickets still available for residents but no child tickets with the deadline for payment being 31/05/26.
- 12 Footpaths:** Cllr Goldbart proposed that we defer any action for two months in order to allow time for the new owners of the Blyford Estate to reach any decisions on our request for footpath access.
- 13 Highways/Speeding issues/VAR & SID signage/Slow down road signs:** County Cllr Dunning reported that she has brought the issue of the lack of bus stop signage to the attention of Suffolk County Council. Cllr Goldbart will be applying to Highways for removal of the VAS post to be replaced by a SID near the telephone box. Traffic speed monitoring on Southwold Road, Blyford with data taken from SID signage between 02/03/26 to 29/3/26 showed the highest speed recorded at 75 mph with around one-third over the limit. Of those over the limit the average was c34 mph. Vehicle count was 68,101. **Action: Cllr Goldbart.**
- 14 Mandatory Accessibility Requirements for Parish website:** To ensure our website is fully compliant with WCAG and accessibility rules and to comply with Assertion 10 of the 2025 Practitioners' Guide we are required to carry out an accessibility audit and fix any areas of non-compliance. **Action: Obtain more information and add to July Agenda.**
- 15 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.
- 15a Pollution of the river Blyth – Call for urgent action to reduce pollution by Wilder Wenhaston River Group:** Request for the Parish Council to consider being part of a collaboration of Parish & Town Councils by taking the issue up with the Environment Agency and Anglian Water. Proposed by Cllr Goldbart with all in favour.
- 16 Any Items of Information/Reports from Parish Councillors:**
- 16a Annual Community Event:** Decision at next meeting. **Action: Cllr Bucknell to obtain quotes.**
- 17 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:
20th July; 28th September (delayed by 1 week) and 16th November

Meeting closed at 8.45 pm