

Minutes of Rendham Parish Meeting
Held in the Village Hall on Monday 12th May 2025 at 7:00pm

Present:

Cllr Willett (chair), Cllr Morford, Cllr Field, Cllr Bennion, Cllr Stollery, Cllr Field

Visitors:

County Cllr Stephen Burroughs

two members of public: Charles Seeley and Mary Gregory

In Attendance: Clerk/RFO Dana Brice

1. Chairman's welcome – The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending

2. Apologies – Cllr. Silvester, Cllr McFawn, Cllr. Gleeson

3. Minutes of the last Parish Meeting held on 15th May 2024 - The minutes of the last Parish Meeting having been circulated, were confirmed and signed as a true record.

4. Parish Council Chairman David Willett Annual Report

It feels like the last 12 months have flown past, and once again it's time for the annual Parish Council Meeting.

In November we co-opted one new member to the council, following Jacquie Normans departure, and I would like to publicly welcome Alan Stollery to the Council.

As I'm sure most of you are aware, Trevor Salmon has stood down as our neighbourhood watch co-ordinator, and Mary Gregory has taken over the reins of this important role in the village.

At Trevor's leaving do in the White Horse pub, we presented him with an inscribed tankard on behalf of the Parish Council. Enjoy your retirement, Trevor.

We are in the process of changing our banking arrangements to save costs and the new account with The Bank of Scotland is now up and running and we are starting to pay some of our bills through it.

After considering future expenditures, looking at reserves and planned income, Councillors agreed to approve a precept of £3074.00 This has been achieved without increasing the tax charge, so once again the cost will remain the same as last year.

John Carrington once again acted as independent reviewer of the PC accounts for no fee.

The Council addressed various planning applications and issues regarding the highways in and around the village and considered reports from Local Government representatives.

Regular reports have been received and discussed from our District Cllr and County Cllr, copies of these can be found on the village website.

The "Keep the Heat" project in December was organised and administered by our Clerk, Dana. She surveyed six properties in the village with the thermal imaging camera and was able to provide feedback to the homeowners on ways to improve energy efficiency.

The Park Committee continues to oversee the playing field and is fund raising for new facilities and the maintenance of the current equipment, and what excellent weather we had for the VE day celebrations last weekend.

This spring we again saw the results of all last year's hard work planting bulbs on Knoll, with another beautiful display of daffodils

Rendham Green is continuing to mature and settle down and the footpaths are showing signs of regular use. For Health and Safety reasons, we have had to carry out some work on dangerous trees on the Green which was completed in January.

I would like to thank the fete committee and team for all the hard work they put into organising and running the village fete every year, this has certainly become a village staple.

In conclusion I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their help and support in the last twelve months and especially express my thanks to our parish clerk whose knowledge, help, guidance and support have been invaluable.

5. Parish Council Financial Report

Introduction:

This report provides an overview of Rendham Parish Council's financial position over the past financial year (31.03.2024 -01.04.2025), detailing income, expenditure, and budget considerations (Current accounts, Savings Account and Amenity Fund together).

Income:

The Parish Council's income is primarily derived from the annual precept and other funding sources. Additionally, the Amenity Fund, which receives mainly contributions from Fete proceeds, has played a role in supporting local initiatives. Also grants for PARK Committee have been used for local projects, including playing field improvements and construction of boules court.

Total income received: £8,274.61

- Precept: £ 2,842.34
- PARK Committee received grants for Playing Field Projects: £4,560
- Amenity Fund (including Fete proceeds): £675
- Other Income: £197.27

Savings Account:

The Parish Council maintains a savings account, which accrues a small amount of interest each year. Over the past year, this generated £42,67, providing a modest but steady addition to available funds. While not a significant income source, it remains part of the Council's financial management strategy. At the end of the financial year, the Parish Council's savings account held a total balance of £1,416.38.

Expenditure:

Council expenditure has been carefully allocated to maintain operations, support community projects, and ensure financial sustainability. Key areas of spending include:

- PARK Committee Projects (Playing Field Developments): £5,479
- Clerk's Salary & Administration: £1,496.99
- Playing Field and Rendham Green Maintenance: £1,487.10
- Insurance & Subscriptions: £584.26
- Amenity Fund Allocations: £293
- Other Expenses: £577.74

Project Investments & Community Development:

Grants for the PARK Committee have funded enhancements to playing field facilities, ensuring continued improvements for recreational spaces. Meanwhile, the Amenity Fund has specifically supported community communications, financing last year's newsletters and the Rendham website.

Budget Considerations:

Moving forward, the Council remains committed to responsible financial management, ensuring adequate reserves while seeking further funding opportunities. Sustainable investments in community projects and efficient budget planning will remain a priority.

Conclusion:

The Parish Council's finances remain stable, allowing for ongoing support of essential services and local initiatives. Financial records are available for review, and any questions or clarifications are welcomed.

6. Village Amenity Fund

See item 5 – where clerk's report presents all PC funding, including Amenity Fund

7. County Councillor's Report

County Councillor Stephen Burroughs attended this meeting and have sent a report. Full report is available on the Rendham village website.

The following are the main points of the report:

- Campaign urges drivers to switch their engines off
- Funding boost for new and existing bus services across Suffolk
- Suffolk to benefit from huge £7.3 million EV investment
- Even more potholes filled as roadmender trial hits Suffolk
- Highways report and statistics
- Local authorities appeal for more foster families
- Residents advised – don't do business with cold callers
- Council backs youth justice plan to focus on keeping families together
- Councillors to approve an extra £9.1 million for send services
- New technology comes to the wilds of the brecks
- New all-age autism strategy launched in Suffolk
- Major flood investigation report published
- Small improvements needed for children's services
- Uncertainty looms for winter fuel payments
- Energy projects and the wellbeing of communities
- £500 million investment in Suffolk scrapped by government
- Plans unveiled for a12 major road network improvements
- Suffolk county council calls on government to 'step up'
- Suffolk launches good health at work programme
- Stronger families partnership keeps children out of care
- Nautilus interconnector project will not be coming to Suffolk
- Suffolk's new gritting fleet to keep county moving
- Royal opening for Lowestoft's gull wing bridge
- New study considers impacts of nuclear and other projects
- New deputy chief fire office for Suffolk is appointed
- Suffolk's rural communities hit by loss of £3 million in funding
- Cabinet approves bold new vision for Suffolk's future
- Council calls to prevent scrapping of influential department
- Councils seek fairness in the face of energy projects
- Council's budget prioritises vulnerable residents and essential services
- Unique landscape to be changed forever by pylons
- New cabinet lead on devolution and local government reform in Suffolk
- Suffolk prepares for another significant solar farm proposal
- £1.6 million investment proposed for Suffolk fire and rescue

- Funding made available for safer, healthier and accessible travel
- Suffolk county council confirms 2025/26 budget
- Arts organisations and museums get £500,000 funding boost
- Suffolk communities to suffer from lack of energy project coordination
- County leaders to propose one council for Suffolk
- Council confirms decision to bring library services back in-house
- 200 new specialist send places for Suffolk

There was a discussion and County Cllr spoke about following topics:

- High demand in children and adult services – and it is increasing.
- Devolution process in Suffolk and Norfolk
 - Due to on 5th February 2025 announced new fast-track Devolution Priority Programme (DPP) in Suffolk resulting in the election of a Mayor (covering Suffolk and Norfolk) in May 2026, planned County Council elections in May 2025 have been postponed.
 - A series of workshops will be organised, offering Town and Parish councillors and clerks the opportunity to receive updates on the devolution process and access relevant support.
 - Concept of One Suffolk implementation.
- When Former Saxmundham Free school will restart to convert into a specialist SEND facility.
- Available funding opportunities for Parish Councils to support planned projects. PC is welcome to apply.

8. District Councillor's Report

District Councillor Owen Gray not attended personally, but has sent a summary of East Suffolk Council activity for the year 2024-25 which is available on the Rendham village website.

9. Suffolk Constabulary - East Suffolk Area Policing Command

No report received, no representative present

10. PARK Report

Cllr Field (member of the PARK committee) informed that report will be sent in June after and it will be available on Rendham village website. He also commented on planned fundraising events intended to help raise funds for the installation of an accessible path to the boules court.

11. Village Hall Report

Denis Moore (Chairman Rendham Village Hall Management Committee (RVHMC)) has sent the following report: The previously reported subsidence claim continues to progress. The drain inspection has been completed and they were found to be clear and without fractures thus eliminating that aspect. We await further contact from the insurance company and their appointed contractor.

The RVHMC note the comments of the Parish Council from the last meeting concerning the future improvement to the effluent waste disposal (septic tank etc). No further action will be taken until the subsidence is resolved. It has since been reported that one of the rainwater downpipes does actually feed into the septic tank system and not to a natural soakaway. This again is a matter for future consideration.

A recent bout of wind with rain has dislodged a roof tile and there has been some water entering the roof space and resulted in minor pooling onto the hall floor. A contractor was contacted but failed to attend the agreed appointment. The relevant repairs will be undertaken as soon as possible. One of the valued art works has been removed for safe storage due to its proximity to the water damage.

The community café has now held its final morning and will recommence in the autumn.

A recent social event with an Italian theme took place in early April and the hall was filled to capacity. A temporary event notice was purchased enabling alcohol to be sold and together with food served and a live band a sum in the region of £900 was achieved.

The RVHMC AGM was held in April and attended by a number of local residents. The chairman, secretary and treasurer remain in post alongside the existing committee members. Two further residents have now joined the committee.

12. Neighbourhood Watch Report

No written report was received; however, the representative, Mary Gregory, was present and noted that she has signed up to the Neighbourhood Watch scheme after taking over the role from Trevor Salmon.

13. Rendham Parochial Church Council Report

Rendham Parish Parochial Church warden Charles Seeley has sent the following report:

Our usual bi-weekly services have continued with the addition of a service of Holy Communion on the first Wednesday of each month. Our evensong service on Easter Day included the decoration of the church with lilies, and the reading of the names of those whose life each lily commemorates. Work has been done to repair a fall of plaster in the vestry and further work is needed to dig a new soakaway. A Spring Coffee Morning to raise money for the church was very successful and made over £500. We would like to thank all who took part and gave their support.

Charles Seeley commented on current issues with sewage water overflow in the car park near the Village Hall and that there is no water supply in the church and has never been.

14. Tree Wardens' Report

Rendham Parish Cllr Tracy Gleeson has sent the following report:

It's been a busy time both with trees and hedgerows- maintenance and planting. May 5-11th was National Hedgerow Week and the Government hopes for 45,000 miles of new or restored hedgerow by 2050. That's a lot of planting and a lot of maintenance.

It is essential to plant good old fashioned hedgerows not just miles of hawthorn and blackthorn. Good old fashioned hedgerows that have a variety of species to support a diverse wildlife habitat crucial for increased biodiversity.

Hedgerows really are multipurpose they store carbon, alleviate flooding, secure borders, aid in air purification, provide shelter and food for animals, medicinal plants for both humans and animals, filter water, aid in pollination and help regulate climate. Additionally, Hedgerows are fabulously culturally important in their visual aesthetic and aid our mental health with their beauty. Adding trees into that hedgerow and there are even more benefits.

It is very important to consider that all these trees and hedgerows will need maintenance. However, with rural labour in short supply and the necessity for machinery in good condition to care for them it is going to be a hard, time consuming and expensive task.

Hedgerows have always predominantly been manmade creations and in generations past were used by villagers for medicine, shelter, food and fuel for themselves and their animals. This communal utility of the hedgerow meant villagers helped in keeping the hedgerows maintained and it is this role has been diluted over time due to changes in agriculture and labour. Nowadays hedgerows are predominantly looked after by landowners and governmental assistance.

Our trees also face many threats in today's world. To name but a few: -pest and diseases on the increase, Storm damage, natural aging and decline meaning some have to be cut down, light competition, water competition, flood waters, buildings insurance damage claims, housing development agricultural expansion and soil compaction, BBQ fires, poor tree surgery, open access unintended consequences of massive footfall and leisure use.

There is a real need for current and future generations to be educated in schools about these issues, and I think this is happening.

Our region has seen many projects helping trees and hedgerows over the last year. The most exciting being the new inventory being compiled of Native Black Poplars of which we have at least three Ash die back is still an issue and is predicted to become visually noticeable as time passes. Other trees in our village, as elsewhere, are being affected by disease such as Oak and Yew and if the current drought continues, we may lose some field and garden trees. Sadly, when a tree gets a disease there is very little, we can do about it.

On a lighter note, The Village Greens are looking lovely at this time of year with plantings of flowers and wildflowers making a superb display. Especially lovely, and early, are the Cowslips and Primrose around the village and the Daffodils on the Knoll.

15. Rendham Village Website

No representative in attendance, no report received

16. Town Estates Charity Report

No representative in attendance, no report received

17. Alde Community Council Report

No representative in attendance, no report received

18. Any Other Matters

None

19. Chairmans Closure of Meeting

The Chairman thanked all those present for attending. The meeting closed at 19:46.