

Swilland and Witnesham grouped Parish Council

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Minutes

Parish Council Meeting

**Wednesday 19th November 2025 at
Witnesham Village Hall 7:30 p.m.**

Present – Paul Sharples (Chair), Susan Ross, Jo Pratt, Jerry Hindle, Richard Nicol, Kim Shaw, Tim Burrows

Also present – 2 members of the public

Clerk – A J Burrows

92. Chair's welcome and Introduction – Chair welcomed all and opened the meeting.

93. To receive apologies from Councillors not attending – Apologies received from Andy Dungey, Chris Collings, David Roots and SCCllr Elaine Bryce

94. To Receive Councillors Declarations of Interest

Agenda item number	Councillors name	Reason for interest
104	Jerry Hindle	Member of PCC
104	Tim Burrows	Village Hall Car Park – family interest

95. To approve Minutes from the Parish Council meeting 17th September 2025 - all agreed minutes accurate, signed by chair.

96. Questions or comments on Reports from SCCllr Elaine Bryce & ESC Cllr Dan Clery. ESCllr Dan Clery advised that small grants are currently available for bio diversity projects. Jerry Hindle requested the Councillors support regarding enforcement action on Wittens Meadow. Clerk to send email with outstanding matters. Richard Nicol bought the grant application process to the Councillors attention for him to take forward regarding the complex nature of the application in comparison to the amount of funds being requested.

Chair passed on matters advised by SCCllr Elaine Bryce, she encourages members of the public and parish councils to have their say and sign up to the Local Government Reform consultation.

SCC budget consultation remains open till 25th November and helpful to encourage everyone to sign up and have their say. Helpful reminder that out of every £1 which SCC spends, 77p goes on providing statutory services for

the most vulnerable - adult social care and children/young people. 23p therefore left to cover everything else including highways, Trading Standards, Fire and Rescue etc. It's a stark reminder that although we'd all love highways to be better; the simple truth is that the money just isn't available.

Jerry Hindle to request that as our County Councillor Elaine Bryce to pursue matters the Stop the Quarry Campaign have raised with Planning Officer Andy Rutter and to arrange meeting with other SCCllrs.

To date no further action has been taken by SCC with regard to the S19 report. Parish Council to ask SCCllr Elaine Bryce to chase Highways Department for results of CCTV investigations and consultants actions.

97. Proposed Council Structure for Local Government Restructure –

Further to discussion at last PC meeting – an open consultation went live from today for residents and Parish's to submit comments. Consultation to close 11/01/2026. SCCllr Elaine Bryce is backing the One Suffolk model.

Following a vote for either OneSuffolk or three Unitary Councils – all Parish Councillors present chose OneSuffolk as their choice - Chair to formulate a response for the PC.

98. The current Financial Situation – Clerk reported:

Unity Trust bank account balance as at 31/10/2025 £51,133.61 which includes £21,645.01 CIL money

Suffolk B/Soc account balance £88,449.24 CIL funds and interest of £322.21
Bank Statement for Unity Trust signed by Susan Ross.

Chair of Finance Committee, Richard Nicol, reported the current years financial position and presented the proposed budget for 2026-2027.

99. To approve the following payments (including VAT if applicable):

Payment Reference	Payment to	Amount in pounds £
A	Admin Sept	459.80
B	Employers Contributions Q2	415.72
C	Village Hall Hire STQ	51.00
D	Village Hall Hire Parish Council	90.00
E	CAS Ansvar Insurance Annual Premium	2238.92
F	T Burrows Wood for replacement hand rail lower rec	64.26
G	Boston Bulb Company Daffodils	198.00
H	SALC 6 months payroll service	54.00
I	PKF Littlejohn External Audit fee	378.00
J	Harts Flooring - VH floor removal	420.00
K	Alison Burrows printer cartridges	27.07
L	Bank charges September 2025	6.00
M	D Roots Allotment work – Fuel reimbursement	40.05
N	D Roots Allotment work – belt x 2	21.42
O	Harts Flooring part payment VH new flooring	2400.00
P	Admin Oct	459.60

Q	Bank Charges Oct 2025	6.00
R	Spencer Wix War Memorial Repair	720.00

Approval of the above payments was proposed by Richard Nicol and seconded by Jo Pratt.

100. Annual Review of Clerks Pay

As discussed at Finance Committee Meeting 23rd October 2025, Richard Nicol proposed the Clerks pay be increased in line with the SLCC annual pay rise and to move Clerk two steps up the pay scale, from level 7 to level 9, from £13.69 to £14.13 with effect from 18th September 2025.

Seconded by Jerry Hindle.

Meeting paused to take comments from members of the public regarding current planning applications.

Meeting resumed.

101. Annual Review of Playing Field and Allotment Rent Amounts for 2026

As discussed at the Finance Committee Meeting on 23rd October 2025, Richard Nicol proposed:

- to increase the rent for the Playing Field from £950 to £975 and
- due to the changes and disruption at the allotments to keep the rent the same as last year: Hall Lane £11, Coopers Close £18 each plot.

Seconded by Tim Burrows

102. East Suffolk Council Local Plan – Call for Sites

As discussed at Planning and Property Committee Meeting on 3rd November 2025, possible areas include an extension of Wittens Meadow development, possible development at back of wood year and a small area of land opposite the school in Swilland.

PC does not currently have the resources to be able to submit the complex proposals to East Suffolk Council.

At the Annual Parish Meeting discuss the possibility for a neighbourhood plan for Swilland and Witnesham, support from the community would be needed and additional Parish Councillors.

103. Playing Field Future Plans

The PC expresses its thanks to Chris Gain of Plaice Architects who prepared the plans and was proactive in contacting potential parties who might be interested in using any proposed building at the Playing Field. The PC believed the user base would be the WASPS and the Pre - school. This may not now be of interest to them.

Tim Burrows presented the proposed plans and explained them.

Consideration by PC - do we pursue a new building or altering car park to increase parking spaces, new play area.

Jerry Hindle suggested we look at this in stages – next step back to Chris Gain for planning consultant details, highways and obtain topographical report.

104. Village Hall and Car Park Repairs

Thanks to Richard Nicol for all his work on the repairs to the building and the car park, without his support the project would not have got as far as it has.

Car park – need to confirm if planning is required, altering the entrance to the parking near to the road. Drainage/soakaways needs approval from planning. Depth of tarmac should be sufficient to allow for vehicles turning round and levels correct to avoid flooding.

Next steps pre planning application to submit after next VHMC meeting.

A maintenance plan needs to be considered by the VHMC to remove autumn leaves and keep area clear around the VH to help prevent flooding and further damp problems to the building.

105. Keep The Heat - Thermal Imaging

PC are being offered the opportunity to hire camera to image properties to identify where heat is lost – Chair attended presentation in relation to this, currently the PC doesn't have the resources to take part in this.

106. Westerfield Road Closure

Update that road is now open, with traffic management until mid-December. Chair to contact Belway and other stakeholders for an update.

107. Parish Council Matters:

- Gov.UK email addresses – Chair to assist those who haven't changed over.
- Parish Council Website – Thanks to Andy Dungey for all his work on the new website, which will go live shortly. Clerk to email Cllrs to see if they are happy provide a photo for the website.
- Parish Noticeboards – All agreed not to replace the notice board Weyland Rd which has been removed as it was unsafe.
- Allotments Update – will discuss at next meeting.
- War Memorial Update – Spencer Wix to complete repair to cracked concrete.

108. Councillor issues to be brought to the attention of the Parish Council

Each Councillor is requested to use this opportunity to report minor matters of information not included elsewhere on the agenda and to raise items for future agendas. **Councillors are respectfully reminded that this is not an opportunity for debate or decision-making.**

- Request that Minutes to be distributed as soon as possible
- Clerk to look into costs of Signs for car parks re no parking long term, bbqs, overnight parking. No fires.
- Richard Nicol reported broken glass in telephone box, he will source and repair.
- Reports of Signs being put up in the bus shelters, not being removed and leaving marks on the sides.
- Noted that Royal British Legion wreaths missing this year from the War Memorial as the local RBL branch has closed.

Meeting closed 10pm