

Swilland and Witnesham grouped Parish Council

Clerk: Alison Burrows

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Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday 21st January 2026 at

Witnesham Baptist Church 7:30 p.m.

Minutes

Present: Paul Sharples (chair), Chris Collings, Kim Shaw, David Roots, Andy Dungey, Susan Ross, Jerry Hindle, Richard Nicol, Tim Burrows

Also present: ESCllr Dan Clery, SCCLlir Elaine Bryce

Clerk: A J Burrows

109. Chair's welcome and Introduction – Chair welcomed all to first meeting of 2026.

110. To receive apologies from Councillors not attending - Apologies with consent received from Jo Pratt, absent without consent Faye Ellis.

111. To Receive Councillors Declarations of Interest – none received.

112. To approve Minutes from the Parish Council meeting 19th November 2025 - Minutes Approved and signed by Chair.

113. Questions or comments on Reports from SCCLlir Elaine Bryce & ESC Cllr Dan Clery.

ESCLlir Dan Clery reported that currently waiting to hear results of government reorganisation from Government, a reminder of new system of refuse bins, leaflets have been distributed by ESC.

Jerry Hindle thanked him for consistently attending PC meetings and could his reports include information on crucial issues like power lines and planning.

SCCLlir Elaine Bryce advised that her report includes more about the Ipswich Northern Bypass, a 6 million spending gap and news that lots more female firefighters have been recruited recently.

She also advised that she still has funds for grants available, applications to be submitted by end of March.

114. Proposed Council Structure for Local Government Restructure – further discussion. Chair submitted response on behalf of PC following comments received from Parish Councillors. Suffolk County Council expect to hear by of 2nd week in February as to whether SCC elections will go ahead in May 2026.

115. The current Financial Situation – Clerks report:

Unity Trust Bank Account balance as at 31/12/2025 £53,904.44

Suffolk Building Society account balance as at 30/11/2025 £90,560.44 – this balance is made up of CIL funds of £88,127.01 and interest of £2,433.43.

Bank statement and Building Society book signed by Andy Dungey confirming figures reported above.

Although the Unity Trust bank account shows a healthy balance, this includes some CIL funds and will show a truer figure once the repair bills for the Village Hall have been paid.

Clerk advised that she had submitted an application for a 'field to fork' grant of £2,000 towards the costs of the clearance work and new benches for the Coopers Close allotments.

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

Payment Reference	Payment to	Amount in pounds £
a	WAVE allotment water rates	32.05
b	REJB Annual inspection lower rec	54.00
c	REJB Annual Inspection play area nr school	54.00
d	R Nicol re glass for phone box	27.36
e	Admin A Burrows Nov 25	459.80
f	Witnesham Village Hall Hire	124.00
g	Donation for allotment grass cutting to	20.00
h	New Lap Top for Clerk	299.00
i	Admin A Burrows Dec 25	657.75
j	HMRC Employer Contributions Q3	502.25
k	Bank charges Nov 25	6.00
l	R Nicol re VH vent covers	13.87
m	A Burrows PC Phone top up	10.00
n	ESC Grass Cutting Apri to Nov 2025	2940.00
o	Hudson Media Group VH signs for car park	390.00
p	Bank Charges Dec 2025	6.00

Approval of payments proposed by R Nicol and seconded by Andy Dungey.

117. To consider and adoption of 2026/2027 budget

Draft budget circulated prior to meeting for consideration, proposal to approve and adopt by Richard Nicol Chair of Finance Committee, seconded by Tim Burrows.

118. To consider and approve 2026/2027 Precept Figure as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Draft budget 2026/2027 formulated with a precept figure of £19,499.15, a 4.99% increase on last year's precept figure. Proposal made by Richard Nicol, seconded by Tim Burrows. Clerk to submit precept figures to ESC.

Action point Clerk

119. To review and approve the Financial and Data Protection Risk

Assessment for 2026-2027 – Risk Assessment circulated prior to meeting for consideration, proposal to adopt made by Richard Nicol, seconded by Andy Dungey, signed by Chair.

120. Playing Field Future Plans and repairs to play equipment

Tim Burrows advised that following the November PC meeting there appears to be more interest to move the play area from its current site and increase the car parking area. A meeting with play equipment provider is booked for next week Thursday at 9.30am, Tim Burrows and Clerk will attend.

Tim Burrows is making enquiries regarding costs to increase car park area and repairs to existing car park.

Jerry Hindle raised concern that lines of sight at entrance and exit could be a problem, Richard Nicol advised that the Contractor for VH car park repairs may be able to assist.

Clerk advised that the RoSPA report for the play area at the playing field, identified that the trees around the area are overgrown and need to be at least 2 metres from the play equipment. A Quote has been obtained and shared prior to the meeting, following discussion Cllrs agreed not to proceed with this or obtain further quotes at present. Review again after a future plan is secured.

121. Update on Village Hall and Car Park Repairs

Richard Nicol reported that the electricity is being monitored to try to reduce costs, further works have been completed to deal with damp, new floor to be fitted beginning of February. Car park going well, running a week late due to bad weather, should be completed by end of January. The VHMC needs new members, an increase in bookings.

Jerry Hindle advised that the PC and VHMC should ensure a plan is in place so that the car park is managed properly in future and the ditch to be kept clear to avoid further damp problems.

122. Proposal re Location of Parish Council and Committee meetings

In Jo Pratt's absence the Clerk delivered Jo's proposal that all Parish Council and Committee meetings be held at the VH. After consideration when the clerk reported that the Parish Council has used the VH seven times in 2025 and the Baptist Church twelve times. This matter will be revisited later in the year with points to consider, short notice availability, long term bookings at the VH, length of meetings.

123. To consider and approve donation to Witnesham Baptist Church

Further to the October 2025 Finance Committee meeting it was agreed that a donation should be considered to the Baptist Church of £120.00. Proposal to approve donation by David Roots, seconded by Richard Nicol. Action Point Clerk

124. Parish Council Matters:

- **Gov.UK email addresses** – a couple left to sort out
- **Parish Council Website** – new website goes live 7th February 2026.
- **Allotments Update** – one new tenant has taken 2 plots; clerk has advertised that plots are available on the PC website and notice boards.
- **War Memorial Update** - resolved

125. 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.**

Richard asked for volunteer to replace glass pane in phone box at Church Lane – Tim Burrows volunteered.

Jerry Hindle asked if a meeting was required for planning app for Low farm – Planning Committee agreed no meeting needed.

ESC planning forum 2 Feb, Jerry and Clerk to attend

Clerk to add to agenda for next meeting - S19 Flooding Update.

RBL – Susan Ross advised that we can purchase a poppy wreath for £20 from RBL for next November.

Tim Burrows advised that pre-school has or is moving to Otley.

Chair asked for short paragraphs to be sent to him with items to include in the Annual Parish Report by the PC.

Meeting closed 21.05