

**OUSDEN PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting**  
**13th May 2025**

**PRESENT:** Parish councillors John Gale (Chairman), Sylvia Pettitt (Vice-chairman), Edward Page-Turner, Fiona Bills and Geoff Ingham.

**Also present:** Joanne Kirk (clerk), Chris Ingham (Ousden Village Hall).

**APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received from County Councillor Bobby Bennett, District Councillor Mike Chester and Helen Gale (Neighbourhood Watch).

**The meeting was chaired by Parish Council Chairman John Gale.**

All the reports presented at the meeting are available on Ousden Parish Council's website at <https://ousdenparishcouncil.gov.uk/parish-council/annual-parish-meeting/annual-parish-meeting-2025/>

**1. Approval of the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024 were confirmed and signed as correct by the Chairman.

**2. District Councillor's Report by Mike Chester.**

The full report is available on Ousden Parish Council's website as detailed above.

**3. County Councillor's report by Bobby Bennett**

County Councillor Bobby Bennett was unable to attend but presented her report at the Parish Council Annual Meeting. She spoke about:

- Pothole repairs have increased by 34%.
- SCC has purchased a new gritting fleet.
- Their summer road resurfacing programme has started.
- They have received £7.3 million of funding for improving electric vehicle charging points.
- They are trying to improve air quality by encouraging vehicles not to idle especially outside schools, carparks and in town centres.
- Adult and social care takes up a large amount of SCC funding.
- SCC is supporting families through its Strong Families Partnership.
- Funding continues to be a challenge. Suffolk is one of the poorest funded counties for education.
- Local Government reorganisation will move to a unitary model. SCC has proposed one unitary council, district councils have put forward alternative proposals.

**4. Ousden Village Hall Report**

Chris Ingham presented her report.

- There have been heating problems in the village hall. It is very expensive to run.
- The hall is being used regularly as is the playing field.
- The Ramblers use the carpark regularly.
- There is currently no cleaner for the village hall.
- There are only four trustees at the moment which is a lot of work for a few people. Julie Pryke will be standing down from the village hall committee.
- They are having regular meetings and the new build working party meets monthly as well.
- They have held several fundraising events to raise money.
- They have a new fundraiser who they are hoping will make a lottery bid for the Village Hall Committee.
- You can donate money online to the village hall.

The clerk updated Chris Ingham on the Unauthorised Encampment training she attended. She agreed to send through information about what to do in the case of an unauthorised encampment.

A location for a new tree and the circular bench was agreed, on the other side of play equipment (Littly Wood side). John Gale agreed to install the circular bench there. A new tree will be planted in the autumn.

**5. Neighbourhood Watch Report.**

*Over recent years I have been able to report that crime has been very low in Ousden with only one or less real incidents. This year is much the same with no actual burglaries reported although we do seem to get more reports of people looking to commit crime. Below are two recent incidents that could have ended in a worse outcome.*

**28th March 2025** – Incident SC-28032025-1 – After being disturbed a dark pick-up truck with a cab over the back (possibly a Nissan Navarra) came down the byway at speed between Hoyes Cottage and Beechwood at Lady's Green at midnight and smashed through the barrier at end of byway before taking off at speed towards Hargrave. It was reported to the Police but no action was taken.

**Tuesday, 15th April 2025** – Break in to a garage building at Ousden House at around 9.45pm. It is believed that nothing was taken when the burglar was disturbed by a passing neighbour, the neighbour then alerted the owners. The burglar fled in a vehicle – no description of the vehicle was reported. It is not known if the owner reported the incident to the Police.

There were other issues in and around the village which were not officially reported but it's clear that we need to keep an eye out for suspicious activity.

Finally, please contact Helen Gale your 'neighborhood watch coordinator' if you see or hear any suspect activities in or around your village as she is regularly in contact with the police and other enforcement/support groups and can get messages to other villagers quickly when required.

**6. Chairman's Report**

The Parish Council Chairman, John Gale presented his report. The full report is available on Ousden Parish Council's website.

**7. Financial Report 2024/25**

The full report is available on the parish council website.

**8. Any other issues or concerns which residents would like to bring to the attention of the Council.**

No issues were raised.

**The meeting closed at 7.45pm**

Signed .....

Dated.....