OUSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 12th May 2026.

Councillors present: John Gale (Chair), Guy Holland Bosworth, Jess Pettitt; Jo Wright and Sylvia Pettitt.

Also present: Joanne Kirk (Clerk).

1. **Election of Chair.**
   John Gale was nominated and following a vote, it was resolved that he would be Chair.

2. **Signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office form and agreement to abide by the Council's Code of Conduct by the Chair.**
   The Chair signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3. **Election of a Vice-chair.**
   Sylvia Pettitt was nominated and following a vote, it was resolved that Sylvia Pettitt would be Vice-chair.

4. **Register of Members' Interests form.**
   Councillors reviewed their Register of Members' Interest forms. No amendments were necessary.

5. **Acceptance of apologies for absence**
   Apologies were received from parish councillors Fiona Bills and Edward Page Turner and the reason for absence accepted.

6. **Declaration of Interest in items on the agenda and dispensation requests.**
   No councillors declared an interest in any items on the agenda and no dispensation requests were received.

7. **Approval of minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 11th March 2025.**
   It was resolved that the minutes were correct. The Chair signed them.

8. **Public session.**
   No issues were raised.

9. **To receive an update on the list of actions agreed at the last meeting.**
   There were no outstanding councillor actions.

   Update on clerk's actions
   - A Community Self Help form was submitted on 8th April 2026 but no response was received. The clerk agreed to follow up with Suffolk County Council.
   - 30mph stickers for repeater signs. A company in Bury St Edmunds quoted £40 a sticker, whereas to replace individual signs would cost £12.55 + VAT from Start Safety for a 300mm repeater sign. It was resolved that the Parish Council would investigate alternative options and if none are available a payment of up to £150 would be authorised to order from Start Safety at a cost of £12.55 + VAT per sign. John Gale agreed to confirm how many signs would be needed.

10. **To discuss any Police issues.**
    No crimes were reported in Ousden in April.

11. **Finance.**
    a) **Approval of any payments and signing of Schedule of Payments**
    It was resolved that the following payments would be approved:
    - JP Kirk - expenses - LGA 1972 111 - **£19.88**
    - SALC annual subscription – LGA 1972 111 - **£185.38**
    - C Whitaker – internal audit of PC accounts **-** LGA 1972, s111 – **£85.00**
    - McGregor Services – grass cutting - Open Spaces Act 1906, ss 9 & 10 - **£168.00**

    Payments agreed in the budget:
    - Ousden Village Hall - annual donation as agreed in the budget - Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s.19 - **£5,000** plus **£300.00** for the insurance for the playpark.

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b) Approval of payments authorised between meetings:
No payments were authorised between meetings.

c) Statement of receipts and payments made since 1st April 2026.

Receipts

Date	Description	Supplier	Total
07/04/2026	VAT refund	HMRC	£382.83
30/04/26	Precept	West Suffolk Council	£12,627

Payments

Date	Minute	Description	Supplier	Total
08/04/2026	449/8a	PAYE	HMRC	£142.80
15/04/2026	446/10h	Pension payment	Risby Parish Council	£16.00
20/04/2026	446/10h	Bank charges	Lloyds Bank	£4.25
30/04/2026	446/10h	Clerk's salary	Joanne Kirk	£211.17

d) Bank balances as of 30th April 2026.

Lloyds Bank Current Account	£13,108.47
Lloyds Bank reserve account	£6,061.16
Total in Banks	**£19,169.63**

Sylvia Pettitt and Jess Petttitt verified and signed the bank statements.

e) Update on the inspection of parish council property carried out by John Gale.
This item is ongoing.

f) Internal auditor's report.
No issues were raised.

g) To approve the Receipts and Payments summary for the financial year 2025 – 2026 and the explanation of significant variances (over 15%).
It was resolved that the receipts and payments summary for the financial year 2025 – 2026 and the explanation of significant variances would be approved.

h) To approve sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).
It was resolved that sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26 would be approved. The Chairman and RFO signed sections 1 and 2.

i) To decide whether Ousden PC should submit a Certificate of Exemption from an external audit.
It was resolved that Ousden Parish Council would submit a Certificate of Exemption from an external audit as its income in 2025/26 was £11,347 and its expenditure was £10,914 which is below the £25,000 threshold for an external audit. The Chairman and RFO signed the Certificate of Exemption.

j) Confirmation of the dates for the notice of the period for the exercise of public rights.
It was resolved the dates for the exercise of public rights would be Wednesday 3rd June 2026 – Tuesday 14th July 2026.

k) To approve the Financial Report which the Council needs to publish as part of the Transparency Code.
It was resolved that the financial report would be approved.

l) Precept information for 2025/26.
A precept payment of £12,627 was received from West Suffolk Council on 30th April 2026.

m) Email from One Suffolk about changes to their website server and a £4 price increase.
It was resolved that the price increase would be approved.

12. Planning

a) Email from West Suffolk Council about the new Local Plan and call for sites.
West Suffolk Council is in the early stages of looking at the next local plan to meet future local housing and employment growth needs in West Suffolk until 2045. They have issued a call for sites for land suitable for new homes, employment, mixed use sites and for infrastructure growth such as community

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facilities, education, health and transport, and green infrastructure such as parks, allotments, play areas and other open space.

Sites submitted during the call for sites will be assessed to ensure they are suitable, available, and achievable for potential development. These assessments will be used to inform the preparation of the local plan which will cover the period to the year 2045.

b) Adoption of the West Suffolk Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) as part of the updated West Suffolk Local Plan – for information only.

13. Highways/rights of way matters/tree or transport issues.

a) Update from the Suffolk Parish Road Safety Group.

Suffolk County Council's new 20mph policy should make it feasible for more communities to implement 20mph schemes, however for smaller parish councils in particular, the cost of the legal process and any additional highways work would be prohibitive. A group of parish councils in West Suffolk are working together to put in a combined scheme with a view to sharing the costs to make it more affordable. A further update will be sent once more information is available as to how the scheme is progressing.

b) Clearing the drains on The Hill in the autumn.

The clerk agreed to contact Community Highways Liaison Engineer Matthew Fox to find out if the Parish Council could pay for their own contractor to clear the drains.

14. To discuss any village issues.

No issues were raised.

15. Correspondence.

a) Email from SALC about their 2026 AGM which will be held online on Thursday, 9th July 2026, starting at 7 pm – for information only.

b) Email from West Suffolk Council about a reduction in the cost of pavement licences to help support local businesses - for information only.

c) Any other business for noting or including on the agenda.

No issues were raised.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.54pm.

Signed …… (Chairman) Dated ……

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