

**Metfield Parish Council**

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting  
Held at Metfield Village Hall on 12 January 2026 at 7.30 pm**

**Present:** Councillors P Mortimer (Chair), Mr J Gadson, Mr C Osborne, Mrs C Pryce, Mr P Schwier, Mr P Smith, County Councillor H Lloyd and District Councillor Mrs L Hadingham

**In attendance:** Mr S C Blackburn (Clerk), no members of the public.

- 1 **Apologies for Absence:** Councillors Fowler, Hall and Lee-Harwood.

RESOLVED: that the apologies be accepted.

- 2 **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

Cllr Mortimer declared an interest in item 9, planning application DC/25/05455, Cherry Tree Farm as they are neighbours of this property.

- 3 **To sign as an accurate record the minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2025 be signed as a correct record.

- 4 **Matters Arising:** None.

- 5 **Reports from County and District Councillors:** Reports had been circulated to Councillors as and when received.

Discussion took place about water supply and the links to proposed developments at Eye and Lowestoft.

County Councillor Lloyd reported on discussions at County Council regarding the capacity for holding elections in 2026. Their response to government proposals concentrated on the technical issues rather than the democratic principles.

Pothole repairs: The accuracy and statistical basis which had placed Suffolk as amongst the worst-performing councils had been queried by most of the councils involved.

- 6 **Matters raised by members of the public:** None.

- 7 **To consider purchasing a third speed indicator device**

The Chair thanked Cllr Henry Lloyd for his agreement to additional funding, now totalling £1,500. The clerk reported that a discount of £200 had been negotiated with the proposed supplier bringing the cost down to £2,381 and that the net cost to the council would be £889.

It was noted that only statistical information would be collected, this could be used to seek more enforcement from the Police.

The cost of mowing the cemetery had amounted to £1,300 and was paid from the general account. Whilst this cost could not be borne by the cemetery account on a regular basis, an option would be to transfer some or all of the cost to the cemetery account leaving additional funds available in the general account.

RESOLVED: to proceed with purchase of a third machine at a cost of £2,381.

RESOLVED: to transfer £1,300.00 from the cemetery account to the general account.

- 8 **Finance**

Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(a) To confirm payments made since the last meeting

RESOLVED: that the payments listed in Appendix 1a be confirmed.

(b) To approve payments due

RESOLVED: that the payments listed in Appendix 1b be confirmed.

(c) To receive a budget and bank reconciliation as at 31 December 2025

RESOLVED: that the situation be noted.

(d) To consider the Council's budget and to set a precept for 2026/2027

The Clerk presented a proposed budget for 2026/27 (Appendix 2) using possible uplifts of 5% and 8% together with a summary of how any change would affect council taxpayers. Information supplied by the district council showed that the tax base had decreased by 5%, from 187.02 to 177.58, the effect being that the parish council would be spread over fewer people and that even an unchanged precept would appear as an 'increase'. Discussion included the likelihood of larger uplifts being required from suppliers and an increase of £500, to £8,250 was proposed.

Proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Schwier and RESOLVED: to accept the budget and to set a precept of £8,250.00 for 2026/2027.

(e) Barclays Bank mandate

The clerk reported that changes to remove the previous clerk and to change the correspondence address had not been actioned. After a 52-minute conversation with the Bank's mandate department, new forms had been received from the Bank and were signed.

## 9 **Planning**

(a) To confirm decisions made since the last meeting

DC/25/05119 – Discharge of conditions (biodiversity report), Hattens Farm  
No objection had been raised.

(b) New applications

DC/25/05536 – Installation of solar panels, Street Barns  
RESOLVED: to support this application.

DC/25/05455 – Replacement of 7 fire-damaged buildings, Cherry Tree Farm  
Discussion took place on this application including consideration of a letter to BMSDC signed by nearby residents expressing concern about the scheme and its likely use for storage rather than agricultural uses. The Parish Council understood the concerns raised but, as the proposals were on a like for like re-building, the Parish Council has no grounds to object and the final decision was a matter for BMSDC as the planning authority.  
RESOLVED: to respond to the consultation by making no comment on the proposals, Cllr Mortimer abstaining.

## 10 **Maintenance of roadside hedges**

Complaints have been received about the hedge at Captain's Farm, Fressingfield Road. Although some cutting back had taken place last year, the overgrowth was such that vehicles had to avoid overgrowth and, as a result, were driving on the verge beneath which was the main water supply to the village.

It was agreed that the matter would be taken up with Suffolk County Council's Highways department, initially via Cllr Henry Lloyd.

**11 Playground report**

Cllrs Mortimer and Hall will replace a leg on the fireman's hoist. A formal inspection is due in the near future.

**12 Proposed review and adoption of Council Policies**

The Clerk presented proposed revisions to the Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders and the adoption of a Data Protection Policy and Publication Scheme, neither of the latter two were found during the loading of information to the new website.

The Financial Regulations and Standing Orders were based on NALC and SALC recommended templates which are in considerably more detail than the current versions. In discussion it was noted that there had in the past been a deliberate decision to delete all non-relevant material. It was agreed that adoption of both would be deferred to allow further consideration of what is required.

For the Data Protection Policy and Publication Scheme, it was RESOLVED to adopt the policies.

**13 Update on transfer to a .gov domain and email addresses**

The new website is now live and has been populated with minutes, agendas and policies. The next step will be to notify all of the Council's contacts of the new address.

For email, it was agreed that there was little direct contact between councillor and members of the public and, for data protection purposes, that any contact would be shared with the clerk.

**14 Matters raised by Councillors**

Comment was made on the publicity for the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) precept for the Police and Fire services; it was noted that the post of PCC was to be abolished in due course.

Noted that a car had been stolen from a resident over the Christmas and New Year period.

The Parish Council supports the cost of defibrillator servicing, but concern was raised about servicing as some suppliers had withdrawn from maintenance. It was agreed that enquiries would be made of the Village Hall committee as to who owns the equipment, who services it, when it was last serviced and whether a weekly check was taking place.

Dates for Council meetings for the next twelve months would be circulated.

**15 Correspondence:** Nothing further for discussion.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

Date of next meeting: Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

Appendix 1

To	For	Net	VAT	Gross
<u>Payments Confirmed</u>				
S C Blackburn	Salary Sept- Nov 2025	587.96	-	587.96
S C Blackburn	Microsoft 365 subscription	70.83	14.16	84.99
BMSDC	Lottery license	20.00	-	20.00
<u>Payments Authorised</u>				
Hugo Pryce	Petrol costs etc for grass cutting	200.00		200.00

Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2

## Budget and Precept for 2026/2027

	Budget (General)	Variance to date (General)	General Account	Cemetery Account	Total	Likely outturn 2025/26	Agreed 2026/27 8%
<b>RECEIPTS</b>							
Precept	7,750.00	0.00	7,750.00		7,750.00	7,750.00	8,250.00
Cemetery Fees				1,450.00	1,450.00		
SCC – Locality grant for Laptop	383.00	-0.32	383.32		383.32	383.32	
SCC - Locality grant for third SID			0.00		0.00	1,500.00	
BMSDC – grant for .gov	1,138.00	0.00	1,138.00		1,138.00	1,138.00	
BMSDC – grant for Village Sign	800.00	-352.00	1,152.00		1,152.00	1,152.00	
Miscellaneous Income	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	
VAT Recovered	117.00	117.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	217.00
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>10,188.00</b>	<b>-235.32</b>	<b>10,423.32</b>	<b>1,450.00</b>	<b>11,873.32</b>	<b>11,923.32</b>	<b>8,467.00</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>							
Clerk's Salary	2,579.72	81.98	2,497.74		2,497.74	3,470.00	3,060.00
Clerk's Expenses	50.00	42.62	7.38		7.38	50.00	50.00
Chairman's Expenses	31.83	31.83	0.00		0.00	50.00	50.00
Village Hall hire	50.00	50.00	0.00		0.00	50.00	65.00
Insurance	483.84	-53.00	536.84		536.84	536.84	580.00
SALC subscription	251.35	18.23	233.12		233.12	233.12	242.00
Data Protection/ICO	35.00	-12.00	47.00		47.00	47.00	47.00
Training	50.00	50.00	0.00		0.00	50.00	75.00
Software licence MS365	64.79	-6.04	70.83		70.83	71.00	71.00
New Laptop	382.49	0.00	382.49		382.49	382.49	
Website/email management	260.00	0.00	260.00		260.00	260.00	360.00
Lottery Licence	21.60	1.60	20.00		20.00	21.60	24.00
Laptop		0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	
Refurb of Village Sign		0.00	0.00		0.00	1,152.00	
Third SID, net			0.00		0.00	890.00	
Grass Cutting – meadow	825.00	650.00	175.00		175.00	375.00	220.00
Grass Cutting – cemetery/play area	1,800.00	-150.00	1,950.00		1,950.00	650.00	1,950.00
Street lighting	378.43	378.43	0.00		0.00	378.43	340.00
Bin Emptying	268.46	71.60	196.86		196.86	196.86	220.00
Defibrillator maintenance	120.00	120.00	0.00		0.00	120.00	130.00
Donations	400.00	-20.79	420.79		420.79	441.00	450.00
VAT Paid	2,168.97	1,985.84	183.13		183.13	217.00	128.00
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>10,221.48</b>	<b>3,240.30</b>	<b>6,981.18</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>6,981.18</b>	<b>9,642.34</b>	<b>8,062.00</b>
Surplus (-Deficit) to date	-33.48	-3,475.62	3,442.14	1,450.00	4,892.14	2,280.98	405.00
Brought Forward 1.4.2025 (AGAR)			7,123.66	7,290.84	14,414.50	7,123.66	9,800.71
Prior year adjustments			396.07	-426.41	-30.34	396.07	
Add Surplus/(-Deficit) YTD			3,442.14	1,450.00	4,892.14	2,280.98	405.00
Current position			<b>10,961.87</b>	<b>8,314.43</b>	<b>19,276.30</b>	<b>9,800.71</b>	<b>10,205.71</b>

Represented by: Bank Accounts

		<b>10,961.87</b>	<b>8,314.43</b>		
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Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_