

Metfield Parish Council

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
Held at Metfield Village Hall on 9 March 2026 at 7.30 pm**

Present: Councillors P Mortimer (Chair), Mrs D Fowler, Mr J Gadson, Mr D Hall, Mr B Lee-Harwood, Mr C Osborne, Mrs C Pryce, Mr P Schwier and District Councillor Mrs L Hadingham

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

1 **Apologies for Absence:** County Councillor H Lloyd.

2 **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations:** None.

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

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2026 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.

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

7 **Finance**

(a) To confirm payments made since the last meeting

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

(b) To approve payments due

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

(c) To note funds received

See Appendix 1.

(d) To receive a budget and bank reconciliation as at 28 February 2026

RESOLVED: that the situation be noted.

(e) Review of Cemetery Charges and plot arrangements.

The Clerk presented a table of charges in similar-sized parishes together with a note of charges in larger towns and in the Church of England.

New charges were discussed, to take effect from new enquiries with immediate effect. It was agreed that burial of a child under 18 would continue to be free of charge and that in specific circumstances charges may be changed or waived at the discretion of the Parish Council.

Chair _____ Date _____

It was RESOLVED that charges should be increased as follows:

| | | Residents | Non-residents |
|---------------------------|--|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Exclusive Right of Burial | | £180.00 (was £100.00) | £360.00 (was £200.00) |
| Burial of a coffin | | £250.00 (was £225.00) | £500.00 (was £450.00) |
| Burial of ashes | | £125.00 (was £100.00) | £250.00 (was £200.00) |
| Headstones | | £100.00/£75.00 (unchanged) | £200.00/£150.00 (unchanged) |

Row H is now full and it was RESOLVED that plots in Row I should now be offered. Spaces at the hedge end of rows C to H were felt to be too close to the hedge and may impede mowing, so would not be used.

(f) To note revised charges for litter and dog waste bin emptying for 2026/2027

BMSDC have advised that the cost of bin emptying will rise in 2026/2027 subject to final cabinet approval. Currently £50.00 per bin (dog waste or litter), Proposed £51.50 per bin, an increase of 3.0%, to £206.00, budget £220.00

RESOLVED: that the situation be noted.

8 Planning

(a) To confirm decisions made since the last meeting

DC/25/04729 – Rose Cottage – change from holiday to residential accommodation – Granted

DC/25/04861 and 05536 – Street Barns – Installation of solar panels – Granted

DC/25/05119 – Hattens Farm – Discharge of biodiversity conditions – Granted

(b) New applications

DC/26/00420 – Discharge of condition 3, access surface treatment- Skinners Cottage

In discussion it was not clear what ground this application referred to and no comment was possible. A decision was deferred until this matter had been clarified.

9 Maintenance of roadside hedges

The Chair summarized the situation in that the higher-level overgrowth was such that vehicles were driving on the opposite verge beneath which was a valve controlling the main water supply to the village. A local resident has placed cement-filled buckets on the latter verge and the issues have been referred to the County Council for attention.

10 Playground report

A post and the ramp on the fireman's hoist need attention and this will be attended to locally. A formal inspection is due in the near future.

A seat currently located at the bus shelter would be relocated to the playground, to be replaced by a seat in memory of Sylvia Waerham.

11 Proposed review and adoption of Council Policies

Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Councillors have carefully considered the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. These are shorter in form than the recommended documents, but it was RESOLVED that they continued to meet our needs and no changes were proposed.

Risk Assessment and Statement of Internal Control

Chair _____ Date _____

The Clerk reported that the consideration by Councillors of the risks faced by the Council is of considerable importance; such documents would be expected to be available and current in any external audit review and also by our insurers. The Clerk presented a review document setting out risks typically faced by parish councils and shows the likelihood and impact of an occurrence, together with the measures currently taken.

CLLr Price suggested some minor additions which she would forward to the Clerk for future inclusion.

The Internal Control Statement is based on a SALC specimen and summarises the means of control of the Council's business. There is some overlap, but the latter is expressed at a higher level.

RESOLVED: that the Risk Assessment and Statement of Internal Control documents be received and noted.

12 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.

It has been suggested by the webmaster of the Village Website that its Parish Council page should only carry brief details of the role of the Parish Council, its meeting dates and then a link to the Parish Council website. It was agreed to proceed on this basis.

13 Matters raised by Councillors

A resident of a nearby parish had reported discoloration of water discharged by the local treatment works. The pollution is in Mendham Parish and has been reported to the Environment Agency for attention.

(later) Defibrillator: It was agreed that the Clerk should approach the Village Hall committee to establish who owns and maintains the defibrillator.

14 Correspondence: Nothing further for discussion.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

Date of next meeting: Monday 13th April (Annual Parish Meeting) and Monday 11th May (Parish Council).

Appendix 1

| To | For | Net | VAT | Gross |
|----------------------------|--|----------|--------|----------|
| <u>Payments Confirmed</u> | | | | |
| Suffolk County Council | Post for 3 rd speed indicating device | 600.00 | - | 600.00 |
| Elan City Ltd | 3 rd speed indicating device | 2,389.99 | 478.00 | 2,867.99 |
| J Schwier | Restoration of village sign | 1,152.00 | - | 1,152.00 |
| <u>Payments Authorised</u> | | | | |
| S C Blackburn | Salary and expenses to March 2026 | 819.01 | - | 819.01 |
| HMRC | PAYE Collected | 196.00 | - | 196.00 |
| P D Mortimer | Chair expenses 2025/26 | 100.00 | - | 100.00 |
| <u>Funds Received</u> | | | | |
| Susan Whymark td | Cemetery Fees | 650.00 | - | 650.00 |

Chair _____ Date _____