

Metfield Parish Council

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
Held at Metfield Village Hall on 11 May 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 Mr P Smith and District Councillor Mrs L Hadingham.

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

1 Election of Chair of the Council for 2026-2027

CLlr Mortimer was proposed by CLlr Fowler, seconded by CLlr Schwier and elected unanimously.

2 Declaration of Acceptance of Office: CLlr Mortimer signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office

3 Appointment of Vice Chair of the Council for 2026-2027

CLlr Schwier was proposed by CLlr Mortimer, seconded by CLlr Smith and elected unanimously. A suggestion of a second vice chair to aid succession planning was left on the table.

4 Apologies for Absence: None.

5 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations

CLlr Pryce declared an interest in planning application DC/26/01470 as she is owner of the property

6 To sign as an accurate record the minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2026 be signed as a correct record.

7 Matters Arising: None.

8 Reports from County and District Councillors

Reports had been circulated to Councillors as and when received.

It was reported that refuse collection lorries were damaging the grass on The Common by driving over it. The exact location would be established and sent to CLlr Hadingham for attention.

CLlr Gadson commented on the high quality of the speed indicator devices. He also referred to the lack of Police resources for speed monitoring. CLlr Lee-Harwood offered to look at how effectiveness of the Christmas Lane site could be monitored.

9 Matters raised by members of the public: None.

Finance

10 (a) To confirm payments made since the last meeting

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

Chair _____ Date _____

- 11 (b) To approve payments due: None at present.
- 12 (c) To note funds received: See Appendix 1
- 13 (d) To receive a budget and bank reconciliation as at 30 April 2026

RESOLVED: that the situation be noted.

- 14 It was confirmed that the recent burial with cremated ashes should be charged at the non- resident but that only a single fee would be charged for a headstone.
- 15 The Clerk referred to the balance of the Cemetery account, the need for a reserve for future memorial inspections and the previous discussions about creating a firmer surface for access to the cemetery extension, and trimming back of the trees near the entrances. It was agreed that quotations should be sought for tree work and the provision and laying of matting.
- 16 (e) Community Infrastructure Levy

The District Council require an annual return of Community Infrastructure Levy receipts and payments. For 2025-26 this was a nil return. The Chair and Clerk signed the return form.

- 17 (f) Insurance Premium for 2026-27

Notification was expected but had not yet been received. The Council is bound by a long term agreement with the insurers which is still in force.

Annual Governance and Accountability Return

- 18 To confirm the Council's exemption from External Audit

The Council meets the criteria for exemption, namely that receipts and payments did not exceed the £25,000 and that no issues had been raised in previous audits. RESOLVED: that the Certificate of Exemption be signed by the Chair and Responsible Financial Officer.

- 19 To receive and note the receipt of the report of the Council's Internal Auditor

The Council's Internal Auditor had completed and signed her review. RESOLVED: that the report be accepted.

- 20 To approve and sign the Annual Governance Statement

RESOLVED: that the Annual Governance Statement for 2025-2026 be approved and signed.

- 21 To consider, approve and sign the Accounting Statements for the year 2025-2026

The accounting statements were presented by the Responsible Financial Officer. RESOLVED that the Accounting Statements for the year 2025-2026 be approved signed.

22 Planning

- (a) To confirm decisions made since the last meeting

DC/26/01546 – Ivy Cottage, works to trees. The application has subsequently been approved.

DC/26/01470 – Nut Tree Farm, construction of agricultural access

Cllr Pryce referred to her declaration of interest as the applicant and took no part in the discussion. RESOLVED: to support the application, Cllr Pryce not voting.

(b) Recent applications: None.

(c) Other matters

It was noted that a touring caravan had been parked behind houses in Field Close on land to which, previously, permission for vehicular access had been refused. It was agreed to leave a note on the vehicle asking for the owner's intentions and that the Parish Council's concerns should be logged with the District Council's enforcement team if there is no response within two weeks.

Wakelyns. There was concern about whether appropriate licences were in place for food, alcohol and entertainment. Details of our report will be sent to Cllr Hadingham who would follow up with the appropriate officer.

23 **Playground report**

Cllr Mortimer felt that the condition of the equipment was not as bad as portrayed in the recent report and that repairs could be undertaken locally. The fireman's lift had been repaired and repairs to the swings and basketball hoop would be done locally. Cllr Hadingham offered to support the cost of works upto £2,000. Additional rubber chips would be purchased to refill the chipped area.

Cllr Pryce felt that due diligence required a local inspection to be signed-off on a regular basis and had tried to establish what use is made of the facilities by local children.

RESOLVED:

- (1) To develop a monitoring system for local inspections (supported by an annual professional inspection)
- (2) To order 1.5 tonnes of rubber chips from the previous supplier, EcoPlay, for delivery to Cllr Mortimer
- (3) At a later date, to consider replacement rubber caps from the supplier, Playdale
- (4) To arrange an external re-inspection when the work has been completed.

24 **To consider an offer of trees for local planting**

BMSDC have a plan to increase tree coverage and have contacted us asking us to identify Parish Council-owned areas where trees could be planted. After discussion it was agreed not to proceed at present.

25 **Emergency Planning**

Following the presentation at the Annual Parish Meeting, it was agreed that the creation of an Emergency Plan would be explored further. Councillors Mortimer and Pryce will be present at the Community Café on 6 June and others may attend with a view to recruiting volunteers to create a plan.

26 **Matters raised by Councillors**

The defibrillator at the Village Hall is maintained by the Village Hall committee and checked and re-registered from time to time.

The Parish Council welcomed the donation of the commemorative seat and agreed to send the family a letter of thanks.

27 **Correspondence**: None.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

Date of next meeting: Monday 13th July 2026.

Appendix 1

To	For	Net	VAT	Gross
<u>Payments Confirmed</u>				
Suffolk Garden Services	Grass Cutting, No3	150.00	-	150.00
<u>Funds Received</u>				
Rosedale Funeral Home	Fees			1,100.00
BMSDC	Precept first instalment			4,125.00
HMRC	VAT Claim re 2025-26			720.05

DRAFT

Chair _____ Date _____