

Metfield Parish Council

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
Held at Metfield Village Hall on 13 July 2026 at 7.30 pm**

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

In attendance: Mr S C Blackburn (Clerk) and one member of the public.

1 Apologies for Absence: Cllr Paul Smith.

RESOLVED: that the apologies be accepted.

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 11 May 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.

County Councillor Mittuch was welcomed to her first meeting since the recent County Council elections. She asked what the biggest issues were facing the community to which the response was (a) an overgrown hedge in Fressingfield Road which had already been reported to the County Council, (b) the need for passing places and signs (c) long-standing damage to road signs. It was agreed that the clerk would provide a list to Cllr Mittuch who referred to the County Council self-help scheme on the SCC website. She then referred to her monthly report including road works on the A140 at Eye, new fire engines at Eye and ongoing discussions about local government reorganisation and the Ecopower proposals.

6 Matters raised by members of the public

Concern was expressed about speeding traffic. It was noted that recent complaints about motorcycles speeding and making excessive noise had been received and would be mentioned in the next edition of Six Sense.

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:

The Chair clarified the existing procedure for payments to be made between meetings. Invoices would be circulated to all Councillors with a request for confirmation or otherwise, the latter to be cc'd to all Councillors. On receipt of a quorum (minimum 4) in favour the Clerk would set up the payment with Barclays bank and arrange for the payment to be authorised (one from Cllrs Mortimer, Smith and Fowler).

Chair _____ Date _____

Cllr Mortimer presented a bill for materials and labour for repairs to the Play Area at a cost of £836 compared to new equipment estimated at £4,500.

The meeting thanked Cllr Mortimer for the extensive work done at the play area.

RESOLVED: that payments be authorised.

Cllrs Fowler and Pryce had decided on the safety materials which would 2 x 750kg bags of brown rubber chips, sourced from the previous supplier at a cost of £1,166.

RESOLVED: that the purchase to be ordered by the Clerk and payment to be made in due course.

(c) To note funds received: See Appendix 1

(d) To receive a budget and bank reconciliation as at 30th June 2026

RESOLVED: that the situation be noted.

8 Planning

(a) Recent applications

DC/26/02753: 2 Doctors Lodge, Skinner's Lane, Refurbishment of the main roof.

RESOLVED: to support the application.

(b) Other matters

Wakelyns: No progress at present.

Withersdale Hall: Court action has been postponed until September. The Environment Agency have asked for victim statements from any affected residents.

9 Playground

(a) Update on improvements to date

Cllr Pryce referred to her summary of the work identified by the recent inspection.

(b) To agree further works

Work on the fireman's lift and basketball backboard was still to be done.

Quotations had been obtained for RoSPA approved signs at each gate to the playground but it was decided that signs would be made locally.

(c) To consider arrangements for local inspections

It was agreed that this would be arranged once remedial work had been completed.

10 Cemetery

Cllr Mortimer had obtained quotations and a third opinion for tree works adjacent to Hunters Lane.

RESOLVED: to accept the quotation from Tree Fellas at £1,400 plus VAT.

It was noted that enquiries have been made of some local cemeteries as to the price of exclusive rights of burial and interments, seemingly with the intent of buying a plot based on price. . It was agreed that applications from people with no connection to Metfield would be referred to the Council for a decision.

11 **Emergency Planning**

The possible creation of an Emergency Plan was aired at the recent Community Cafe and two names had come forward.

It was agreed that Cllr Gadson and Mr Darren Honey would take the matter forward.

12 **Consideration of the appointment of a second Vice Chair of the Council**

RESOLVED: that Cllr Gadson be appointed Vice Chair of the Council.

13 **Matters raised by Councillors**

A member of the public referred to a potential trip hazard in the passageway from Skinner's Lane to St John's Meadow and suggested that the area be painted white. It was agreed that the precise location would be defined, that the Clerk would attempt to establish ownership and then seek to have the work done.

Cllr Gadson reported on data extracted from the speed indicator device at Low Road. 25% of 'inbound' traffic was over the limit of which 40% were in the range 31-35 mph. 58% of outbound traffic exceeded the limit.

Six Sense: It had been decided that the monthly article would be written by Councillors in rotation. The current article has been submitted, the next to be by Cllr Gadson.

Caravan near The Close: there had been no response to the letter affixed to the caravan but an alternative address had been found, and it was agreed that the Clerk would write the same letter. It was also agreed to contact the District Council via Cllr Hadingham to establish whether the siting of the caravan was an enforcement issue.

Complaints about road visibility caused by a van parked near Honeymoon Row would be dealt with informally.

Staff Matters: Following a meeting between the Clerk and Cllrs Mortimer and Smith, it was agreed that an appraisal would take place later in the year.

14 **Correspondence:** None.

15 **Vacancy for a Parish Councillor**

Only one application had been received, Mr Darren Honey.

Proposed by Cllr Mortimer, seconded by Cllr Schwier and RESOLVED: that Mr Darren Honey be co-opted to the vacant position of Councillor.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

Date of next meeting: Monday 14th September 2026.

Appendix 1

To	For	Net	VAT	Gross
<u>Payments Confirmed</u>				
Suffolk Garden Services	Grass Cutting, Ns 5, 6 and 7 3 x £150	450.00	-	450.00
CAS Insurance Services	Premium for 2026-27	538.37	-	538.37
S C Blackburn	Net Salary April-June 2026	601.55	-	601.55
HMRC	Income tax due on the above	150.20	-	150.20
<u>Payments Approved</u>				
P Mortimer	Works at playground	837.54	167.51	1,005.05
Eco Rubber?	Tbc £1166.00			
<u>Receipts</u>				
CAS Insurance Services	Adjustment to prior year premium	8.05	-	8.05
Susan Whymark Funeral Services	Interment fee	250.00	-	250.00
Bierton & Woods	Memorial fee	100.00	-	100.00