

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF CONEY WESTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 5 MAY 2026 AT CONEY WESTON VILLAGE HALL

Present: Cllr B Francis (Chair), Cllr P Clarke, Cllr Patrick Sullivan (Vice Chair), Cllr P Hines and Cllr Charlie King, Cllr Andrew Smith (WSC), Cllr Joanna Spicer (SCC), L Hibbert (Clerk). 3 residents.

Cllr Francis announced that the meeting would be recorded. No objections were made.

1. Election of Officers

- 1.1 Cllr Francis was unanimously elected Chair of the Council for 2026/27.
- 1.2 Cllr Sullivan was unanimously elected Vice Chair of the Council for 2026/27
- 1.3 The Clerk reported that he had the necessary documents.

2. Apologies for absence

- 2.1 None

3. Members Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

- 3.1 As a Bowls Club officer, Cllr Clarke declared an interest in any matters relating to the Bowls Club. Cllr Francis declared an interest in the proposed re-imbursement to her of the cost of the skip hired to remove items from the Playing Field following the removal of the membrane.

4. Minutes

- 4.1 The draft Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Council on 3 March 2026 and the Ordinary meeting of the Council on 5 March 2026 were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record.
- 4.2 Cllr Francis reported on progress on Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Council on 5 March. Item 9.2.2 - she will post the Able Community Care leaflet to the Noticeboard and put it on Facebook. Item 9.2.10 – see Item 8.2.7 below. Item 9.2.11 – see Item 8.2.8 below.

5. Meeting open to the Public

No member of the public wished to speak.

6. Report from SCC Joanna Spicer

- 6.1 Cllr Spicer will be standing down as a Suffolk County Councillor. She expressed her thanks to current and previous members of the Parish Council and community for the support and generosity of spirit she had received during her many years as the SCC Councillor for Coney Weston and other local villages. Cllr Francis presented Cllr Spicer with a gift and card signed by former and present Parish Councillors and the Clerk and expressed the Council's thanks for Cllr Spicer's many years of service.
- 6.2 An issue remains around the bus service. Continued funding is dependent on a sufficient

number of people using the buses.

7. Report from WSC Cllr Andrew Smith

- 7.1 Cllr Smith expressed his thanks for the service given by Cllr Joanna Spicer. Cllr Smith reported on the current status of the Local Government Re-organisation, including that SCC's attempt to have a single authority had been rejected and there would be 3 unitary authorities

8. Parish Councillor reports

8.1 Report of Cllr Clarke:

- 8.1.1 Defibrillator - No incidents, the device is working satisfactorily. The Cabinet needs replacing and 2 sets of electrode pads need to be purchased by September 2026. A grant from the County Councillor will be dealt with after the upcoming election.
- 8.1.2 Bus Stop – The unofficial bus stop outside the Swan is no longer available because the pub has been converted to a private house. Cllrs Francis and Clarke met with a Transport Development Manager, Suffolkonboard last week to discuss a suitable location for 2 concrete bus-standings. He is proposing 1 outside the entrance to the playing field and the other immediately opposite (outside the house, Enniskerry) – both on the grass verge. Other locations in the village were examined but none are suitable. Cllr Clarke has tried to contact the owner of Enniskerry to seek his views, but there was no reply. Suffolkonboard is looking for Parish Council's approval of the project. This was given, subject to Suffolkonboard contacting the owner of Enniskerry to seek his views. It was asked that consideration be given to installing another bus stop on the other side of the road.
- 8.1.3 Playing Field – Grass has been successfully sown by Vertas. The Council has agreed to become Sole Trustee on the basis set out in the Minute of the Extraordinary Meeting on 3 March, particularly the Charity Commission, the Trustees and the Parish Council being happy with a new Governing document. The Trustees had been asked to submit a draft of a new Governing document to the Charity Commission for their approval.
- 8.1.4 Suffolk Parish and Town Councils group on speeding and safety - The group is seeking to elevate the residents' concerns around speeding and safety to the relevant authorities. The current focus is on reducing the cost the Highways Department charges for installing traffic-calming measures. There is a significant push to introduce 20mph speed limits across Suffolk. It has previously been raised that as the current 30mph speed limit is not adequately enforced there seems little point in introducing a lower limit at this stage.
- 8.1.5 Support Our Buses – in line with Cllr Spicer's report, Cllr Clarke reported that a continuation of the bus service is dependent on sufficient numbers of the public using it.
- 8.1.6 Village Group liaison – construction work at the Bowls Club has started and the appeal for donations is continuing

8.2 Cllr Francis gave the following reports:

- 8.2.1 Community Development – nothing to report

- 8.2.2 Drainage and Highways – the position remains that SCC still has not completed the legal work with the landowner although there has apparently been progress. Subject to this the works should take place in 2026/27.
- 8.2.3 Village Hall car park – Cllr Francis still has not received a response from the land owner's agent to her request for a call to discuss the lease of the Village Hall car park which expires in a number of months. Cllr Francis will call the agent again.

ACTION: CLLR FRANCIS

- 8.2.4 Churchyard grass cutting – discussions had taken place with the Parochial Church Council ('PCC') regarding the fact that the Council's grant for grass cutting made at the start of the last financial year had not been spent by the PCC. As a result of those discussions, Cllr Francis had requested that the grant be repaid. Repayment has been received.
- 8.2.5 Emergency Plan – some information has been received in respect of Bardwell Parish Council's Emergency Plan. However, further work is required to enable Cllr Francis to update Coney Weston Parish Council's Emergency Plan.
- 8.2.6 Noticeboard – nothing to report
- 8.2.7 West Suffolk Council consultation on Public Space Protection Order – Cllr Francis has emailed West Suffolk Council about whether there is a Public Space Protection Order in place in respect of the Playing Field. The position is that there is a PSPO in place. The recommendation was to make the play area a dog free zone. The signs need updating and Cllr Francis has the replacement labels to put in place.

ACTION: CLLR FRANCIS

- 8.2.8 New residents – copies of the Parish News have been delivered to all new residents.

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9. Policies

- 9.1 Website Accessibility Statement – Suffolk Cloud have confirmed that all the issues they had previously identified as preventing the Council's website from complying in full with regulations had now been resolved. As such, the Clerk has produced a draft Website Accessibility Statement stating that the website is now compliant with regulations. The Council unanimously agreed that the draft Website Accessibility Statement be approved.
- 9.2 Asset Register – the Asset Register approved at the Council's meeting on 15 January 2026 valued the Council's assets at £40,444.67. The Clerk advised that there had been no changes to the Council's assets. As such, the Council unanimously RESOLVED that the Asset Register valuing the Council's assets at £40,444.67 is approved.
- 9.3 Standing Orders – the Clerk reported that the Standing Orders had been updated and adopted by the Parish Council at its meeting on 11 September 2025. The Clerk is not aware of any advice suggesting any amendment to Standing Orders. As such, the Council unanimously RESOLVED to re-adopt the existing Standing Orders for the

coming year. The Clerk will keep the position under review.

- 9.4 Financial Regulations – the clerk reported that the Financial Regulations had been updated and adopted by the Parish Council at its meeting on 11 September 2025. The Clerk is not aware of any advice suggesting any amendment to Financial Regulations.. As such, the Council unanimously RESOLVED to re-adopt the existing Financial Regulations for the coming year. The Clerk will keep the position under review.

10. Clerk's Report

10.1 The Clerk reported as follows:

- 10.1.1 many of the issues he would have reported on had been covered by the reports given by Cllrs Francis and Clarke.
- 10.1.2 during the 2025/26 financial year, the Council had undertaken a detailed review of its Policies. During the 2026/27 financial year, the intention is that the Council will review several of its Policies at each meeting to ensure that they are up to date, and adopt other policies as appropriate.
- 10.1.3 some progress has been made with Vertas regarding the cost of cutting the grass at the Playing Field this year. Vertas have now confirmed that the Clerk's understanding of the price is correct. However, whilst they have credited their invoice that was incorrect, Vertas have still not provided a replacement invoice in the correct sum. The Clerk will keep chasing Vertas.

ACTION: CLERK

10.1.4 the Council's insurance is valid until September 2026.

10.1.5 the grant for £500 agreed by SCC Cllr Joanna Francis in respect of defibrillator costs was put on hold because of the Council elections in May. Now that the elections have taken place, the Clerk will follow up on the grant.

ACTION; CLERK

10.1.6 Cllr King has recently joined the Council. He is booked to attend SALC's training for new councillors.

11. Disclosure of the grant applications made by the Bowls Club and the Church

- 11.1 In line with his declaration of an interest in respect of a resident's request for disclosure of the Bowls Club grant application, Cllr Clarke left the room for this discussion.
- 11.2 a resident has requested disclosure (suitably redacted) of the grant applications by the Bowls Club and the PCC. The Councillors were minded to agree the request. However, to ensure that the issue was dealt with correctly, the Clerk had sought guidance from SALC. SALC's guidance is that the request must be dealt with at a meeting of the Council. As such, the issue had been put on the Agenda for this meeting. The Council RESOLVED to disclose the grant applications made by the PCC and the Bowls club redacted to exclude any personal data and any other content that can be legitimately withheld and that the

Council wish to withhold.

ACTION: CLERK

Finance

- 12.1 Application by the PCC for a grant of £1,000 for a Noticeboard and maintenance of the Churchyard – the PCC has made an application for a grant of £1,000 for 2026. This is broken down as (1) £100 for fuel for the mower, (2) £300 for annual maintenance of the mower, (3) £400 for a replacement Noticeboard, (4) £250 for a gate and gate posts, and (2) £200 for replacement of part of the churchyard fence. However, the PCC has already raised £250 and the grant request has been reduced by this sum. The Council discussed whether it would be appropriate to make a grant to the PCC in the light of the issue surrounding the PCC grant in 2025. That grant had now been repaid in full. It was noted that the Church warden had made considerable effort to involve in maintenance of the Churchyard volunteers from across the village, not just members of the Church. The Vicar had confirmed that the Noticeboard would be available for village notices, not just notices relating to the Church. Furthermore, the Churchyard receives regular visitors. The PCC has raised funds itself to go towards the costs through a coffee morning such that the amount of grant requested had been reduced by an equivalent amount. The conclusion of the discussion was that (a) the Council would not make the grant of £400 for the Noticeboard as it was understood that those costs had already been incurred by the Church, (b) the Council would make a grant of £400 in respect of fuel and servicing costs of mowers – they would be used by volunteers from the village, and (c) the Clerk will seek advice on whether the Council has the power to make a grant in respect of the balance or the request being physical parts of the Church grounds. The Council could re-consider this part of the PCC's grant application at the next meeting.

In the meantime, the Council agreed that should a resident request a copy of the grant application, it could be disclosed on the same basis as disclosure of the grant applications identified in Item 11 above.

- 12.2 Banking arrangements - Cllr Francis proposed that the Council open an interest bearing instant access account with Lloyds bank. The Councillors unanimously agreed to the suggestion and that £15,000 be deposited in the account.

ACTION: CLLR FRANCIS AND CLERK

- 12.3 Reserves – the Councillors agreed to re-state its Reserves at £2,050 for election expenses. This is the amount of the existing reserve, a figure WSC Cllr Smith (who is also a Bardwell Parish Councillor) had previously advised is appropriate. Given, for example, that the Council is funding the Playing Field grass cutting and insurance a reserve of £4,000 for Village Amenities is appropriate. This will be kept under review.

- 12.3 To review income and expenditure from 1 April 2026 to 30 April 2026 – the Councillors had previously been provided by the Clerk with a Budget Update. There were no questions.

- 12.5 To approve payments and receipts:

The Bank Reconciliation and Schedule of Payments were reviewed. Cllr Francis did not take part in the vote to approve the payment to her as set out below. This payment was agreed by the rest of the Councillors. The other payments identified below were unanimously agreed by the Council:

Administration	Online	782.71
Village Hall (Playing Field Meeting and Extraordinary Meeting – 3 March)	Online	26
Village Hall (meetings 26/27)	Online	160
Parish Online (annual website fee)	Online	70
Suffolk Cloud (website accessibility)	Online	50
Pear Space (formerly Suffolk Cloud) (website hosting and support for the year)	Online	120
SALC (Subscription 26/27)	Online	218.63
Councillor Bren Francis (reimbursement of Skip Hire for Playing Field)	Online	319.20
Lloyds (Bank charge)	Online	4.25
SALC (training)	Online	43.20
SALC (Payroll)	Online	28.80
SALC (training)	Online	84.40

13. **SALC Internal Audit Report**

13.1 The Internal Audit report has not yet been received.

14. **Annual Governance and Accountability Return**

14.1 The Clerk reported that because the Internal Audit report had not yet been received, the Council could not complete and approve the AGAR in final form. This was particularly relevant to Assertion 7 in the Annual Governance Statement '*We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from Internal and external audit*'. To seek to address the issue, SALC had advised that the Council can complete its sections of the AGAR in draft at this meeting. For the

purposes of Assertion 7, the Clerk is of the view that all recommendations in previous audit reports had been dealt with. If the Internal Audit does not make any recommendations, the sections of the AGAR for the Council could be considered 'final' and there would be no need for a further meeting to review and approve the AGAR. On the basis of SALC's advice, the Council considered, approved and the Chair and Clerk signed Section 1 of the AGAR for 2025/26 (Annual Governance Statement)

14.2 the Council considered, approved and the Chair signed Section 2 of the AGAR 2025/26 (Accounting Statements) previously provided signed by the Clerk

14.3 the Council approved and the Chair and Clerk signed the Certificate of Exemption. The Clerk will deal with all publication requirements.

15. Date of meetings of the Parish Council for 2026/27

15.1 The Council confirmed the date of the next meeting as Thursday, 2 July 2026

15.2 The Council confirmed the dates of subsequent meetings of the Parish Council for the 2026/27 financial year as: Thursday, 3 September, Thursday, 5 November, Thursday, 14 January, Thursday, 4 March and Thursday 13 May (Annual Parish Council Meeting)

15.3 The Council confirmed the date of the Annual Parish Meeting as Thursday, 20 May 2027.

Exclusion of the Public and Press

14.1 The meeting was closed to the public and press to consider Legal Personnel Issues (Clerk's contract).

Approved as a true and accurate record

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Cllr Bren Francis
Chair

2 July 2026