

TOSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the full Council held on 8 September 2026 at 7.30pm in Tostock Village Hall

Present: Cllr Jane Storey (Chair), Cllr Michael Baulby, Cllr David Blundell, Cllr Paul Callow, Cllr Roger Cross, Cllr Julian Kearsley, Cllr Glenn Lebbon and Cllr Andrew Sharkey.

In Attendance: One member of the public; and
Parish Clerk: Doug Reed.

26.09.01 Apologies for Absence

Accepted from Cllr Sue Smith who was absent due to a family bereavement.

26.09.02 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

02.1 Interests: None.

02.2 Dispensation Requests: None.

02.3 Dispensation Decisions: None.

26.09.03 Minutes of the Last Parish Council Meeting

It was resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council, held on 21 July, be signed as a true record.

26.09.04 County and District Councillors' Reports

04.1 County Councillor: Cllr Bentley was not present. His report, circulated to all councillors, was noted.

04.2 District Councillors: Cllr Richardson was not present. His report, circulated to all councillors, was noted. Cllr Bradbury had sent apologies.

26.09.05 Public Comment and Questions

None.

26.09.06 Correspondence

Cllr Storey reported on items both sent to and received by the Council. She noted the following in particular:

- ◆ Communications with several residents regarding fire risks associated with The Leys which the Council was seeking to address.

- ◆ A poor response from Suffolk Highways (no action) following her report that the northern side of the road near Ticehurst Farm had become very overgrown to the extent that it obscured the view so posed a danger to vehicles, walkers and horse-riders.

- ◆ Resident issues relating to a village site put forward for development consideration through the 'call for sites' by Mid Suffolk District Council as part of its process towards a new Local Plan (due for completion in April 2029). The Parish Council had not submitted any locations

26.09.07 Finance

07.1 Responsible Financial Officer: It was noted that the NatWest current account stood at £7,568.41 and the reserve account at £64,881.46 further

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to which it was resolved that the reconciliation be approved. Of the total £54,452.01 was Community Infrastructure Levy funding.

07.2 Payments and Income: It was resolved that the schedule of payments be approved. The schedule comprised the following:

- ♦ Clerk: salary (July) - £357.48;
- ♦ HMRC: PAYE and NI (July) - £93.65;
- ♦ Clerk: homeworking allowance (July) - £26.00;
- ♦ Gipping Press Ltd: "Tostock Chronicle" (August/September) - £267.00;
- ♦ Clerk: salary (August) - £357.48;
- ♦ HMRC: PAYE and NI (August) - £93.65;
- ♦ Clerk: homeworking allowance (August) - £26.00;
- ♦ Clear Insurance: mower insurance renewal - £233.89;
- ♦ Clerk: NatWest complaint - reimbursement - £75.00; and
- ♦ Cllr Roger Cross: reimbursement of diesel cost for mower - £35.01.

Income received was duly noted as follows:

- ♦ NatWest: reserve (deposit) account interest (July) - £46.78; and
- ♦ NatWest: reserve (deposit) account interest (August) - £42.28.

07.3 Community Infrastructure Levy: The funding position was noted.

07.4 Village Hall Charity: It was resolved that the £40,000.00 from Community Infrastructure Levy funding committed by the Council to the Village Hall redevelopment project now be paid.

07.5 "Tostock Chronicle" Advertising: The Council approved, by a vote of four to three in favour with one abstention, small increases to the cost of advertisements, to be implemented for 2026-2027, as follows:
quarter page £100.00 per year from £90.00 (£20.00 per single issue);
half page £175.00 per year from £160.00 (£35.00 per single issue); and
full page £325.00 per year from £300.00 (£65.00 per single issue).

07.6 New Pay Scales: The Council resolved to adopt the newly agreed NJC pay scales, as contractually applicable to the Council post of Clerk, to be applied retrospectively from 1 April 2026 with the resultant salary implication (increase of £0.57 per hour). The Clerk was thanked for his efficient and effective ongoing work in administering Council business.

26.09.08 Ongoing Matters

None.

26.09.09 Planning

09.1 New Applications:

None.

09.2 Decisions: The following application results were noted:

DC/26/02765 The Court House, Tostock Place, Church Road - application under Section 73 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - variation of condition 2 (approved plans and documents) DC/26/00434 dated:

10/04/2026 - erection of a driveway entrance gate and fencing along the property boundary. GRANTED; and

DC/26/02942 4 Perkins Way - erection of a single storey, orangery infill extension. GRANTED.

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09.3 Applications Awaiting Decision:

DC/26/01840 The Medieval Barn, Norton Road - erection of single storey pitched roof outbuildings. The Council OBJECTED (with comments); and Appeal Reference: 6013592 Gable End, Leys Road - appeal to the Secretary of State against the decision of Mid Suffolk District Council to refuse permission - erection of double garage and workshop/workroom and associated external works. The Council had NO OBJECTION.

26.09.10 The Leys

The Council considered matters identified and raised by its working group of Cllr Callow, Cllr Cross and Cllr Sharkey who had met to discuss how best to manage the whole location given fire and other risks posed especially by climate change. After careful and considered discussion, various actions were agreed. Initial work would be carried out on the pond, tackling bulrushes and saplings and with the aim of securing the edges to the pond and tackling its base to ensure effective water retention. Cllr Sharkey also noted that he had contacted the Suffolk Wildlife Trust and that a representative would be meeting with him to discuss pond management for the future. The Leys itself would be cut more regularly going forward, seeking to restrict grass height to three inches with, as far as possible, weeds and cut grass removed from the site, thereby minimising the fire risk. Cllr Cross would speak accordingly with those who kindly cut the site. The 'Best Kept Village' sign, dating from 1977, would be removed at the earliest as, in its current state, it represented a serious safety concern. It was agreed that it be offered to the Village Hall (charity) for potential incorporation as a feature in its redevelopment. Finally, given wider concerns about fire risks to village fields, it was felt that the Council should write to local landowners to highlight, on behalf of residents, the need for their help in taking climate change mitigation measures.

26.09.11 Matters for the Attention of the Council

None.

26.09.12 Next Meeting

It was noted that the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council would be held on Tuesday 12 January at 7.30pm in Norton Village Hall.

26.09.13 Meetings 2027

Given the redevelopment of Tostock Village Hall, meetings in early 2027 would be held in the Committee Room at Norton Village Hall with each starting at 7.30pm. The meetings in question were as follows:
Tuesday 12 January - Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council;
Tuesday 9 March - Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council;
Tuesday 13 April - Tostock Annual Parish Meeting; and
Tuesday 11 May - Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.37 pm.