

Felsham Parish Council

Minutes of the MEETING of FELSHAM PARISH COUNCIL held on 13th January 2026 in the Village Hall

- Present:** Cllr Simon Garrod (Chairman), Cllr Ken Sparkes, Cllr Paul Kearney, Cllr Mark Tavernor, Cllr Karen Hubbard;
- In attendance:** SCC Cllr Penny Otton, Clerk & RFO Miss Isabelle Reece
- Apologies:** Cllr Beverley Williams, Cllr Jason Stringer
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2025/081 Chairman's Welcome & to receive apologies for absence – Chairman Cllr Garrod welcomed everyone to the meeting and received apologies from Cllr Jason Stringer & Cllr Beverley Williams

2025/082 Declarations of interest & requests for dispensation – Cllr Sparkes for the Felsham Charity

2025/083 Minutes of the Previous Parish Council – The Minutes of the meeting of 9th December 2025 were considered, **APPROVED**, and signed by Cllr Garrod as a true record. (The Clerk had amended the header date in the final copy for publication)

2025/084 To receive reports from SCC & MSDC Cllrs
a. **SCC Cllr Penny Otton**

Cllr Otton's report, previously circulated, was noted and is available on this website, under Agendas and Reports. Cllr Otton highlighted the decision arrived at an Extraordinary Meeting of Suffolk County Council to leave to Central Government the decision over whether to further delay County Elections. The SCC drainage maps had been received with thanks by Cllr Tavernor

b. **MSDC Cllr Nicky Willshere**

Cllr Willshere had sent her report prior to the meeting and is available on this website, under Agendas and Reports.

2025/085 Public Forum – There were no members of the public in attendance

2025/086 To receive Clerk's Report – Given the deadlines surrounding the Budget and Precept requirements the Clerk had yet to investigate the Orchard Greensward matter and the revision to the Street Sign Policy; a query from the Community Store & Post Office Committee had necessitated a lengthy 'archive search' for documents to provide the answer; the additional dog bin had been ordered, though the quest to obtain a proper invoice for the order had proved somewhat more difficult than anticipated. In spite of repeated attempts to update contact information, a proportion of correspondence still arrives addressed to a previous clerk.

2025/087 Finance & Governance

a. **To receive a financial update (RFO's Report)** – The Clerk had circulated a Financial Report; the bank reconciliation was signed by Cllr Tavernor. Cllr Tavernor had liaised with the grass cutting contractor & Clerk and provided revised invoices as per the December Meeting.

b. **Payment orders totalling £1277.10 were APPROVED** – Blackthorn (Hartley's) Garden Services £994.50, Clerk's Salary December £282.60

c. **To consider draft Budget 2026-27** – the updated draft Budget 2026-27 was discussed as well as the implications for the Precept, the Council **RECEIVED & AGREED** the second draft of the Budget 2026-27

d. **To set the Precept 2026-27** – The Precept was discussed in the light of the Agreed Budget and the reduced Tax Base for Felsham. Proposed by Cllr Garrod, seconded by Cllr Kearney, the Council **RESOLVED** to retain the Precept at £7000. The Chairman and Clerk signed the Precept Request

e. **To receive Internal Auditor's Report** – The Internal Auditor had not yet provided his report

f. **Any other Finance & Governance matters** – a new but unnecessary Bank Account Authenticator card had been received by Cllr Garrod. **ACTION** – Clerk to investigate; while investigating the query referred to in Item 086, the Clerk had discovered a very comprehensive albeit extremely outdated Parish Action Plan, which seemed to have fallen away from circulation as a formal Working Party and

document, especially during the two COVID Years, though clearly followed in spirit, viz. the Village Sign Project. The Parish Action Plan was a much more thorough document than the existing 'Parish Projects' Plan. Cllr Kearney suggested that both documents be compared, amalgamated and refreshed **ACTION** – Clerk will circulate the latest available version of the Parish Action Plan

2025/88 Planning

a. Planning Application DC/25/05432 - Monks Park Cottage, Cockfield Road, Felsham, Suffolk IP30 0QP Installation of W.C, Shower and basin to form ensuite – **NO COMMENTS**

b. The following decision was NOTED – DC/25/04572 & 04573 Six Bells Public House, Church Rd Felsham IP3 0PJ – Installation of external signage and lighting **GRANTED**

c. The Conservation Officer Report – Nothing to report

d. Further Planning matters – There were no other Planning Matters

2025/089 Village Maintenance – Trees & Greens

a. To receive a report from the Tree Officer – Nothing to report

b. To consider matters reported & updates – Cllr Tavernor had dealt as far as possible with the tree reported at the December Meeting: he had reported the remaining danger to Suffolk Highways; however, lacking the relevant expertise in arboreal matters they would have to seek advice elsewhere. It seems that the tree may be the property of MSDC.

A parishioner had offered an 8-foot pot grown Christmas Tree to the Parish Council, with a view to perhaps planting it on one of the village Greens: while thanks were expressed for the generosity of the offer, after discussions it was **AGREED** not to be appropriate to increase the trees stock on any of the Greens **ACTION** – Clerk to contact parishioner concerned

c. Projects update – at this point Cllr Hubbard reported recent road sweepings and a need to request a visit from gulley pump to deal with some of the flooding and drainage pump as per Item 084a, Cllr Tavernor had received the SCC Drains Map and had begun work on updating it; at the time he reported a blockage he was informed that the gulley pumps come round once per year. **ACTION** – Cllr Hubbard to contact Cllr Otton to investigate gulley pumps.

Parking on The Orchard: it was reported that there had been no further incidence of the driving causing damage to MSDC Public Realm greensward though an EV charging wire is now being run over the pavement and is cause for concern; the Clerk had yet to contact either MSDC or the residence concerned to investigate a constructive solution;

2025/090 Highways & Footpaths

a. To receive a report from the Footpath Officer – footpaths are all in surprisingly good order for the time of the year, in spite of recent heavy rainfall. The root growth on Footpath 8 previously reported was considered to be something one might naturally expect to encounter on any country footpath

b. To consider any matters reported – the Clerk suggested that an application to the Active Travel Fund be considered to upgrade the footpath that runs alongside the Church & Post Office **ACTION** – Clerk to circulate information

c. c. To consider roadside signs policy – not yet available

d. Projects Update – no updates available

2025/091 Correspondence

a. Parish Council Suggestions Box – nothing in Box; Cllr Hubbard reported concerns about location of the Box **ACTION** – Cllr Hubbard to request official Community Store Committee view

b. To note correspondence & consider action – nothing requiring further action

2025/092 Matters to be brought to the attention of the council/future agenda items – The Community Store website has no up-to-date list of officials

2025/093 Date of next Meeting – Tuesday 10th February 2026

The Meeting was closed by Cllr Garrod at 20.32hrs

Signed _____ Chairman Dated _____