

COTTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 11th February 2026 held in
Cotton Village Hall, Cotton.

Councillors Present: Paul Howlett (Chairperson) (PH), Richard Bullock (RB) Chris Ellis (CE), Peter Gibbs (PG), Sarah Wenban (SW), Trevor Woods (TW).

In Attendance: Emma Cribb (Meeting Clerk) (EC), Andy Mellow (AM) (District Councillor), Andrew Stringer (AS) (County Councillor) and 2 members of the public.

110226/01 **Apologies for absence:** No absences.

110226/02 No acceptance required.

110226/03 **Declarations of Interest and Dispensation considerations:** No declarations of interest received prior to or at the meeting therefore no dispensations for consideration

110226/04 **Minutes of previous meeting:** Councillors confirmed receipt of the draft minutes from meetings held on 14th January 2025 agreeing these accurately reflected the decisions made.

110226/05 **New Councillor:** Samantha Stanley not present to sign declaration of independence, deferred to 11th March 2026 meeting.

Public Forum:

110226/06 **To receive a report from Andrew Mellen District Councillor:**

Mid Suffolk to support Ipswich bid for city of culture 2029.

Budget available to support community nature recovery grants.

Residents should start to hear more over the coming months regarding the better recycling update to start in June.

110226/07

To receive a report from Andrew Stringer County Councillor including an update on the pilot planning document:

Local elections that were due 2025 have been postponed to 2027.

Local council budget has been set by government, to include a 90% grant of the special educational needs and disabilities negative reserves on account.

Net Zero cost savings is totalling 4.5 million per annum for SCC.

SCC have contested with the Government the RED rag (Red, Amber, Green) reporting of Suffolk roads as they documented that SCC have not spent the entire road budget, although they have spent over budget on road maintenance, this would likely result in a rating of Amber.

20 mph speed limit policy application process has been reviewed and streamlined for local communities to apply for.

SCC re looking at alternative solutions/operators of the 320 bus route to Bury St Edmunds that has recently been withdrawn.

Flooding in and around Cotton Chapel is being investigated.

110226/08

To receive comments or questions on matters of interest from members of the public: No comments or questions from members of the public.

Planning:

110226/09 0 new planning application received. No updates for DC/25/05444 - Menton Cottage, Church Road, Cotton, IP14 4RA.

110226/10 **Norwich to Tilbury:** SW spoke at the Planning Inspectorate Open Floor Hearings 10th February along with residents who spoke on 11th to vocalise the PC opposing of the pylons plan. Highlighted many harmful aspects of the National Grid's scheme such as to the visual landscape, property, heritage assets, agriculture, the environment and wildlife.

Finance: (supporting papers attached):

110226/11 Councillors all approved the finance report for the period ended 31 January 2026: PH confirmed the bank reconciliations as presented agreed to the bank statements, totalling £10,360.05.

110226/12 Councillors all approved the budget to actual payments.

110226/13 Councillors all approved the reserves.

110226/14 Councillors all approved receipts since the last meeting. All Councillors resolved to make/ratified the following payments:

110226/15	HMRC	Clerk	£52.40
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110226/16	Emma Cribb	Clerk	£235.36
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110226/17 **Banking mandates:** CE & EC awaiting documents and equipment to access banking. PC trading address has now been updated.

110226/18 **Neighbourhood Plan:** AS confirmed correspondence will be sent imminently to PH for confirmation of how much funding is required for Cotton PC.

110226/19 **Risk Assessments:** Financial, Parish Clerk and SIDS: Confirmation required of how to store passwords securely in event of PC being unavailable. How to manage IT and Email security. PG to receive update from Martin Yates regarding the SIDS.

110226/20 **Code of Conduct:** To be reviewed in March alongside risk assessments.

- 110226/21 **Cotton Church:** All Councillors agreed to contribute £750 towards the running of the Church in April from the 26/27 budget.
- 110226/22 **Memorial Bench:** All Councillors agreed in principle to contribute 50% to the cost with the Village Hall for a bench in memory of John Doherty.
- 110226/23 **Footpaths:** PH discussed with the landowner of the footpaths in query, All the paths to the north of Brookhouse Road and Cotton Hills towards Dandy Corner are Public Footpaths, not bridleways. The landowner has confirmed that he does not want horses using these paths and will be putting up new signs to make this clear.
- The wider grass track from the top of Cotton Hills towards the sewage works is also officially a Public Footpath, but as it's quite wide and has been used by horses for many years, the landowner is happy for that route to continue being used by riders.
- 121125/24 **Mendlesham Road:** AS confirmed SCC have a live enforcement case in relation to the blocking of the ditch, the MSC has a live enforcement case in relation to planning permission, in addition the traffic enforcement commission has been emailed regarding parking.
- 121125/25 Any other matters for inclusion on a future agenda:
- 121125/26 To note the next scheduled meeting set for 11th March 2026
- 121125/27 Chairman closed the meeting at 8.35pm

update for information

Following the meeting there was an announcement from Steve Reed, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, has withdrawn his decision to postpone the council elections of 30 local councils due to take place in May 2026. This means that both Suffolk County Council and Ipswich Borough Council elections will go ahead as scheduled.