

WESTLETON PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of the **Annual Meeting of Westleton Parish Council** held on
Monday 18 May 2026 at 21:00 in Westleton Village Hall.

Richard Green
Clerk to Westleton Parish Council

MINUTES

26/61 Election of Chair

Cllr Andrew Turner was duly nominated and elected as Chair of Westleton Parish Council.

26/62 Election of Vice-Chair

Cllr Ian Johnson was duly nominated and elected as Vice-Chair of Westleton Parish Council.

26/63 Attendance and apologies for absence

In attendance

Cllr Alexander
Cllr Banks
Cllr French
Cllr Holmes
Cllr Johnson
Cllr Overton
Cllr Shearme
Cllr Turner (Chair)
Cllr Watson
Cllr Webber

Apologies for absence accepted from

Cllr Fisher
District Councillor Paul Ashton
County Councillor John Matthews

Also present

1 member of the public

26/64 Declaration of interests

Cllr Watson declared a pecuniary interest in items 26/64(b) Allotments and, by extension, 26/71(g) Payments.

26/65 Reports from County Councillor and District Councillor

County Councillor John Matthews and District Councillor Paul Ashton both circulated reports in their absence, which were read out in the Annual Parish Meeting that preceded this meeting, and will be published as part of the reports and minutes for that meeting.

26/66 Public forum

The one member of the public present did not take the opportunity to speak.

26/67 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2026 were **agreed by all** to be an accurate record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chair.

26/68 Matters arising from the minutes

Cllr Turner and Cllr Johnson have sought clarification on the amendments contained in planning application DC/26/1342/VOC. The amendments relate to support for a gable wall. Councillors were sympathetic to the concerns of neighbours, and mentioned the need for improved sound insulation in order to mitigate any noise issues. On balance, councillors **agreed** to continue with the Parish Council's 'no objection' stance. Cllr Webber queried the CIL liability for the development. The Clerk will investigate this further.

The Clerk noted that he had received no acknowledgement or response from RSPB Minsmere in respect of new unauthorised signage at various locations in the village. It was **agreed by all** to lodge this as a complaint with Suffolk Highways for further investigation.

26/69 Parish matters

- (a) **Updates** – The Clerk circulated a report in advance of the meeting (see Appendix 1 to the minutes). The Clerk reported on a potential solution to accept mobile/card-based donations at the Community Field, and it was **agreed by all** to proceed with this solution.

- (b) **Allotments** – It was **agreed by all** to provide a plot to Cllr Watson at no cost in exchange for tending to communal areas. It was also **agreed by all** for Cllr Watson to serve as the liaison officer between the Parish Council and the plot-holders. Cllr Watson provided a brief update (see Appendix 1 to the minutes) and requested the installation of tanks/troughs for the supply of water. Cllr Watson will provide costs for consideration at the next meeting. Cllr Watson also requested a noticeboard, and it was mentioned that there is a spare noticeboard in the sheds at the Community Field which can be used. The Clerk asked Cllr Watson to remind plot-holders to return their signed tenancy agreements.
- (c) **Affordable housing project** – The Clerk circulated a letter to be sent to the parties in order to progress the project. It was **agreed by all** to serve the letter to the parties.
- (d) **Village Hall** – It was **agreed by a majority** to purchase a St George's Flag to be flown on St George's Day at the Village Hall. It was noted that the decision as to whether to fly the flag will ultimately rest with the Village Hall.
- (e) **War Memorial** – It was noted that a group of councillors will provide interim garden maintenance at the War Memorial. The Clerk will produce a formal quote to take on the maintenance of the War Memorial garden on a self-employed basis for consideration at the next meeting.

26/70 Planning

The following application was revisited and an amended response agreed as detailed below:

Details
Consulted by: <i>East Suffolk Council</i> Planning ref.: <i>DC/26/0935/FUL</i> Details: <i>Change of use from a 7 bedroom 2 storey dwelling to an 8 bedroom hotel with restaurant bar and commercial kitchen housed in converted shipping containers to front of property. Erection of a gazebo adjacent to the existing outdoor pool and associated groundworks and landscaping.</i> Site: <i>Potton Hall, Blythburgh Road, Westleton, IP17 3EF</i> Link: https://publicaccess.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=TBMTFAQXHF800 Response deadline: 30 April 2026 (extended on agreement) Discussion and response: The Parish Council acknowledges that it did not give the application due consideration at its last meeting. It was noted that a pagoda has been erected without permission and that, although due to be clad, shipping containers to the front of the building will look out of place in the wider context. Councillors have serious concerns regarding access due to the increase in simultaneous bi-directional traffic onto an already increasingly busy road. Councillors were particularly concerned that this issue was not addressed in Suffolk Highways' consultation response. Councillors also cited environmental and ecological concerns, given the site's proximity to a designated Natural Landscape, and again commented on the lack of detail in East Suffolk Ecology's response. In summary, a majority of councillors agreed to amend the Parish Council's response from a 'no objection' stance to one of objection, in light of the above concerns.

26/71 Council finances and administration

- (a) **Standing Orders** – The Parish Council's Standing Orders as reviewed and amended were adopted for 2026/27 and will be duly published on the website.
- (b) **Code of Conduct** – The LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020 was re-adopted for 2026/27 and will be duly published on the website.
- (c) **Register of interests** – Members were reminded to review their declaration of any interests.
- (d) **Audit** – Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2025/26 financial year were reviewed, **approved by all**, and duly signed by the Chair and Clerk.
- (e) **Insurance** – Two insurance quotations were circulated in advance by the Clerk. After discussion, it was **agreed by all** to proceed with the quotation from CAS/Ansvar on a three-year undertaking. As an aside, members also discussed documenting safety measures relating to the New Year bonfire and fireworks event, with Cllr Shearme to explore options for training.
- (f) **Financial position** – The Parish Council's financial position correct as at 15 May 2026 was noted (see Appendix 2 to the minutes).
- (g) **Receipts and payments** – Receipt of the first instalment of the Parish Council's precept for 2026/27 was noted, with the Clerk noting that East Suffolk District Council had

acknowledged that it had made an error with the payment, which was made as two payments. This has been recorded for audit purposes. The Clerk circulated a schedule of payments for authorisation in advance of the meeting (see Appendix 3 to the minutes), and it was **agreed by all** to approve the payments.

26/72 Correspondence to the Parish Council

Cllr Turner reported that he has received a request from the B1125 Action Group for a donation of £30 in order to rent Westleton Village Hall for a meeting. Cllr Banks suggested to contact the Village Hall to see whether this cost could in fact be waived. Regardless of this, it was **agreed in principle** to approve the donation.

26/73 Questions to the Chair / Items for the next agenda

The Clerk requested help in fixing the locks on the Parish Council noticeboard. After some discussion, it was agreed to place on the next agenda to consider the purchase of two new noticeboards – one for the existing location, and one to be sited in the bus shelter. The Clerk will prepare quotations ahead of the next meeting.

Cllr Banks requested that items be placed on the agenda to consider a contribution to the Westleton Archives Group and for a discussion on a village map.

26/74 Date of next meeting

The parish council next meets on Monday 29 June 2026.

Meeting closed 22:05

Signed by: _____

Signature: _____

Date: 29 June 2026

Minute reference: 26/79

Appendix 1 – Clerk and councillor reports

Item 26/68 – Matters arising

The Clerk has had no acknowledgement or response from RSPB Minsmere r.e. problematic signage. I would now advise that this is formally lodged as an issue for Suffolk Highways to investigate, subject to councillors' approval.

Item 26/69(a) – General

The Clerk has had further correspondence with a mobile-based donation payment provider, "GiveTap" – they would be able to produce weatherproof vinyl stickers that contain an NFC tag for visitors to make card-based donations using their phone. These stickers could simply be affixed to the new aluminium die-bond signs and require **no** power and **no** internet.

GiveTap would take care of the administration, which would be priced at 2.5% of each donation. There would also be a card processing fee of 2.5% + 20p per donation. If someone donated £10, for example, the council would pay £0.70 in fees and receive £9.30. I am awaiting a cost of the stickers themselves, but they estimate around £15 per sticker.

This solution would be more professional and more simple to manage than the previously suggested "JustGiving" solution.

Common

Correspondence to Cllr Shearme from the BTO:

"We are really finding Westleton Common to be an excellent site and we have now caught a total of 8 Nightingales on site, one of which we had been previously ringed at Minsmere RSPB reserve in May 2024. It is exciting to see birds that have bred at Minsmere moving to the Common. We were particularly excited to catch a female Dartford Warbler last week. This adult bird exhibited a brood patch meaning it is certainly breeding in the immediate locality. Good news!

We have been discussing a variety of plans going forward especially as a member of the community asked if we would be willing to do a talk to in the Village Hall. This is definitely something we could schedule in for the winter if you feel it would be a good idea.

Another thought we have had is that it we could plan a date to do a 'Ringing Demonstration' on the Common which you could pre publicise and perhaps drum up support to come and see our work?

Finally, as you know we hope in the future to add tracking devices to a small number of birds. We have also planned to add a small colour ring to some birds to aid us with identifying which territories the birds are holding and whether they return to the same spot each year.

Our next planned visit is going to be Wednesday 13th."

Item 26/69(b) – Allotments

The lease agreement between the Parish Council and the landowner was signed on 1 May and tenancy agreements have been submitted to plot-holders. A number of queries were raised by plot-holders, which the Clerk, Cllr Webber, and Cllr Watson have responded to. The return of signed tenancy agreements has so far been slow. The Clerk will start issuing invoices for rent in the next week.

The water supply has been inspected and found to be non-compliant. Cllr Watson has agreed to undertake the necessary rectifications, but this will require the fitting of taps where hoses cannot be used. Some plot-holders have expressed concern about this. Cllr Watson has asked for clarification from Essex and Suffolk Water as to whether cattle troughs would be an acceptable solution. The water supply will be reinspected later in the month.

Cllr Watson has requested that councillors' give consideration to allowing him to have one half-plot (one bed) free of charge in exchange for the upkeep of the communal areas at the allotment site and general monitoring.

Appendix 2 – Financial position

Financial Position – pro forma

Prepared for:		Westleton Parish Council	
Financial year ending 31 March 2027			
Prepared by:		Richard Green, Clerk and RFO	
Prepared on:		15 May 2026	
For the period:		26 April – 15 May 2026	

2026/27 FINANCIAL YEAR							
	Period 26.04–15.05.2026	Financial year to date		Budget		Variance	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Receipts							
Precept	8,412		8,412		16,823		(8,412)
CIL			0		0		0
Grants			0		2,509		(2,509)
VAT			0		2,141		(2,141)
Interest			0		1,500		(1,500)
Bonfire			0		500		(500)
Community Field donations			41		240		(199)
Wayleave			0		181		(181)
Allotments			0		960		(960)
Total receipts	8,412		8,452		24,854		(16,402)
Payments							
Community Field							
Cricket nets & table tennis table repairs			0		550		550
Grass cut			0		1,020		1,020
Health and safety			0		250		250
Maintenance			0		2,345		2,345
Picnic tables			0		50		50
Play area repairs			0		400		400
Toilets			0		968		968
Water			0		200		200
Total	-		-		5,783		5,783
Common							
Maintenance			0		1,600		1,600
Toilets			0		125		125
Total	-		-		1,725		1,725
War Memorial							
Path and hedges			0		500		500
General maintenance			0		1,750		1,750
Total	-		0		2,250		2,250
Council operations							
Archive			0		200		200
Audit fees			0		800		800
Bank account	7		7		84		77
Clerk salary & expenses			0		10,000		10,000
Data protection & website			0		596		596
Hall hire			0		375		375
Insurance			0		1,500		1,500
Scribe software			0		300		300
Subscriptions & memberships			0		260		260
Sundries/S137	255		255		750		495
Training	36		36		350		314
VAT paid (to reclaim)							
Total	298		298		15,215		14,917
Parish activities							
Fireworks			0		1,500		1,500
New assets			0		300		300
Allotments	403		403		960		557
Christmas tree			0		150		150
Parish maintenance			0		560		560
Contingency			0		1,000		1,000
Donations			0		250		250
Total	403		403		4,720		4,317
Total payments	701		701		29,693		28,992
Cash in hand per cashbook							
Unity Trust Current Account	11,295						
Unity Trust Savings Account	86,855						
Barclays Bank Current Account	CLOSED						
Barclays Bank Savings Account	CLOSED						
Total	98,149						
Earmarked reserves							
CIL 2024-25	7,851						
CIL 2025-26	33,997						
Community Field fund	10,000						
Common donation	9,288						
Common fund	3,000						
Common RPA unused	3,853						
Total earmarked reserves	67,989						
Total unallocated reserves	30,161						

Appendix 3 – Schedule of payments

Schedule of payments for authorisation

Prepared for:	Westleton Parish Council
Prepared by:	Richard Green, Clerk and RFO
Prepared on:	15 May 2026
For meeting on:	18 May 2026
Agenda item:	26/71(g)

Payee	Details	Amount (net)	VAT	Total	Power
Community Action Suffolk	Temporary email mailbox for Village Survey	£ 11.25	£ 2.25	£ 13.50	LGA 1972, s.142
Toilets+	Toilet hire, delivery + servicing at Community Field (2/4 - 29/4)	£ 165.00	£ 33.00	£ 198.00	PHA 1936, s.87
D Watson	Lease of allotment site	£ 1,000.00	NIL	£ 1,000.00	Small Holding & Allotments Act 1908, ss.23, 25
Clerk	Consumables for village survey (paper, boxes, laminating pouches)	£ 29.12	NIL	£ 29.12	LGA 1972, s.142
Westleton Village Hall	Inv 25/084 – Hall hire Apr-Jul 2025	£ 112.50	NIL	£ 112.50	LGA 1972, s.133
Westleton Village Hall	Inv 26/040 – Management of Westleton Archives (2026)	£ 200.00	NIL	£ 200.00	LGA 1972, s.137
Westleton Village Hall	Inv 26/039 – Hall hire Sept 2025 - Mar 2026	£ 331.00	NIL	£ 331.00	LGA 1972, s.133
				£ 1,884.12	

Authorised on:	18 May 2026
Authorised by:	
Signature:	