

LINDSEY PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK TO THE COUNCIL

The Annual Parish Meeting for Lindsey was held on 15th May 2025 and commenced at 7.04pm in the Village Hall, Church Road, Lindsey. The chair of the parish council, Councillor Arthey took the chair for the meeting.

1. Welcome: Councillor Arthey welcoming all to the meeting. In attendance were parish councillors: Rhett Corcoran; Mark Hainsworth; Ben Howe; James Moore and Andrew Sturgeon, as well as Mrs Vicky Waples (Clerk); County Councillor James Finch (in part) and eleven members of the public.
2. Apologies for absence: apologies for absence were received from the Headteachers of Kersey C of E Primary School, Councillor Ruth Howe and District Councillor Leigh Jamieson.
3. Minutes of the previous meeting: The minutes of the previous meeting of 8th May 2024 were approved by all present and signed by the chair of the parish council as a true and accurate record.
4. To receive a report on Village Issues that have arisen over the past year: there were no issues raised at the previous Annual Parish Meeting.

The following reports were then given as follows:

5. MR JAMES FINCH - COUNTY COUNCILLOR – County Councillor James Finch was invited to submit his report in which he covered the following matters:

New Independent Chair appointed to drive forward SEND reform - April 25 – Suffolk County Council can announce that Kathryn Boulton has been appointed as the new independent chair of the Local Area Partnership's SEND Improvement Board. She has 37 years of experience working in children's services, most recently acting as Corporator Director of Children and Family Services at Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision is delivered by the Local Area Partnership in Suffolk, which includes Suffolk County Council, NHS Suffolk and North-East Essex Integrated Care Board and NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board.

- The SEND Improvement Board was set up in response to the inspection of SEND services in Suffolk in November 2023
- Councillors approved an extra £9.1 million for SEND services in July 2024
- In January 25 - Department for Education welcomes SEND improvements and

evidence of impact, but all recognise there are still challenges to overcome.

Over 400 Suffolk roads set for upgrade as largest ever surfacing project gets underway – May 2024 - Residents across Suffolk are set to benefit from 421 newly surfaced roads this year (1 April – 31 March) - almost doubling the number of roads completed last year, as Suffolk Highways' largest ever resurfacing programmes got underway. This will be completed in early April 25.

East of England local authorities collaborate to appeal for more Foster Families - June 7000 in care - 150 new per month Eleven local authorities across the East of England have joined forces in a bid to collectively recruit more foster carers to look after some of the region's most vulnerable children. Suffolk is taking part in a new initiative for fostering under the banner Foster East. There is an urgent need for foster carers in the East of England with more than 7,000 vulnerable children already in the care of their local authority, and a further 150 children coming into care every month. This has led to having access to powerful new films promoting the importance of local fostering. Visit fosterandadopt.suffolk.gov.uk

Suffolk County Council Backs Youth Justice Plan with a focus on keeping families together - Suffolk County Council has backed the Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 at a meeting of Full Council on 11th July. The plan has a focus on supporting young people into education, training and employment and reducing the numbers of young people offending, supporting the council's ambition to keep more families together and to keep Suffolk safe. Each year the Suffolk Youth Justice Management Board produces a Youth Justice Plan for Suffolk.

Council's shock at £600m Sunnica solar farm go-ahead in West Suffolk – August 2024 – post election Suffolk County Council has expressed its extreme disappointment that a huge solar farm has been approved in West Suffolk. The Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, Ed Miliband MP, has announced that approval had been granted for the Development Consent Order, as proposed by

Sunnica Ltd. The project will see 2,792 acres of solar panels and battery storage, installed across parts of West Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. – Surrounding 3 villages.

Suffolk residents will be able to access electric vehicles on a short-term basis, from next summer
September announcement - A trial of electric community vehicles is set to launch next summer in Suffolk, with the tender process beginning this autumn. Plug In Suffolk Car Clubs will be placing sixteen electric vehicles across eight locations in Suffolk which local residents can book by the minute, hour or day. Planned locations include Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket, Sudbury, Needham Market, Stowmarket, Lowestoft and Woodbridge. Members of the public interested in this project are urged to sign up to the mailing list to receive updates as the project progresses – search: Plug in Suffolk Car Clubs - Mailing List.

Solar Together launches in Suffolk – September 2024 - Residents of Suffolk can come together to invest in renewable energy sources through a group-buying scheme for solar panels and battery storage. Solar Together Suffolk helps homeowners feel confident that they are paying the right price for a high-quality installation from qualified installers. Over 3000 residents had signed up by October 24 Richard from Bures, near Sudbury, recently shared his experience with Solar Together Suffolk and said: "Excellent! Solar Together Suffolk took all the hassle of finding a provider, and the group-buying secured me a better discount than trying to do this on my own. It was a no-brainer."

Suffolk County Council set on major investment to further protect Suffolk from flooding as it calls on Government to 'step up' - October 24 – 12 months on from Storm Babet.

- SCC set to agree £1.5 million to deliver first phase of works identified in initial flood investigation reports
- Authority calls on Government to recognise ongoing impact of Storm Babet and fund £20 million of further prevention work urgently needed
- Extensive work already completed since Storm Babet including more than 111,000 drains cleared and significant road repairs

The County Council leaders have proposed one council for Suffolk - One council for Suffolk would make delivering public services simpler, cheaper and quicker, and better meet the needs of residents and businesses, county leaders have said. Following a recent government announcement that Suffolk's County, district and borough councils will be replaced with a single-tier system, Suffolk County Council argues that consolidating all services under one unitary authority is the only effective way to deliver against the government's criteria for local government reform.

The move would see all council services, such as waste collection and disposal, housing, social care, planning, highways maintenance, leisure, school placements and travel and street cleaning, all provided by one authority - rather than the six that currently exist in Suffolk. Bringing together district, borough and county council functions is expected to reduce duplication, lower administrative costs and ensure a more coordinated and cost-effective approach to delivering essential services.

The council warns that splitting services among multiple bodies would force the duplication of essential functions - such as social care, highways maintenance and schools - currently managed at a county level.

The key benefits of one council are:

- Simpler for residents – one council would make it easier to understand and contact local government
- Clearer accountability – there would be less confusion over who is responsible for what
- Better use of funding – a more coherent, strategic, financially sustainable, county wide approach to budgeting
- Better alignment of services – since everything is under one roof, services can be more easily coordinated, creating opportunities to improve services for residents
- More efficient decision-making – with just one council, decisions can be made more quickly
- Stronger leadership – a single, visible and accountable body providing a clear strategic voice for Suffolk.

The council submitted its initial proposal to the government by 21 March, with a more detailed business case to follow later in the year. The government will then undertake a public consultation.

Council's budget prioritises vulnerable residents and essential services - Suffolk County Council has unveiled its proposed budget for 2025/26, with a strong focus on supporting vulnerable residents across the county.

Under the proposals, the council's net budget would rise by 6.7%, from £752.9 million in 2024/25 to £803.7 million in 2025/26. Key allocations include:

- £18.1 million extra for children's services, ensuring continued support for young people and families in need

- £35.2 million extra for adult care, aimed at addressing the growing demand for social care services.

To help fund these essential services, the council is proposing a 4.99% rise in Council Tax. This would consist of a 2.99% increase in general Council Tax and an additional 2% specifically for adult care services.

In conclusion may I thank all the parish council members and parishioners for their support to me during the year.

All were reminded that when the local council leaders from Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council expressed their interest in taking forward devolution within their area, it was stated that this would include the establishment of a Mayoral Combined County Authority, with the first election for a Mayor taking place in May 2026.

Speeding incidents along the Monks Eleigh to Semer – could the area be reviewed for either a speed reduction or more signs? It was acknowledged that the county council applied specific criteria relating to the lowering of speed limits to assist with the prevention of accidents.

6. **MR LEIGH JAMIESON - DISTRICT COUNCILLOR** - Councillor Jamieson had previously submitted his report in which he commented on the following items:

Car parks - Babergh, unlike all other districts in Suffolk, had long been able to provide free parking in our main towns. It was a concession that we all cherished but it was something that the council was struggling to continue to fund. While the last administration initially put forward the proposals, continued pressure on the council budget meant that the council had to instigate the charges this term.

Finalised in the early autumn the charges came in to affect in January this year with charges in Hadleigh starting at £1 for one hour in the short stay car park or £1 for two hours in the long stay. Green Party councillors in Hadleigh and Sudbury strongly opposed the implementation of the charges, and I do feel that a free period of an hour or thirty minutes could have been worthwhile. However, although it is too soon to ascertain if there has been any detrimental effect on the towns, early reports indicate that takings are in line with the councils' predictions. The council will monitor the situation, and the Scrutiny Committee will review progress later this year.

The properties at **Corks Lane** finally started to go up for sale with some properties already purchased. The development, which has been a difficult project for the council, will eventually see the original buildings transformed into new high-quality homes, with a mix of one, two, three and four-bedroom apartments and one cottage. Unfortunately, due to a number of factors including the pandemic and the rising costs of materials the cost of the project continues to rise. As the only party not to have been directly involved in the sell off, Green Councillors have called for a full independent inquiry into the way the whole venture has been handled.

Green Party cabinet members identified **Housing** as a serious concern early on and by working with the new housing team they have implemented a number of new policies. Also, more importantly, the full housing stock assessment is now almost complete. At the start of the current administration the team were saying that this would take at least four years to complete. The Green Party head of housing did not accept this target and through her persistence the stock check is now 80% completed already.

Another success for the council is the introduction of **Listed Building Consent orders** and **Listed Building Development orders** which allow owners of listed buildings to upgrade windows and install PV panels and other renewable technologies. Full council approved the initiative put forward by Green Party councillors, in Babergh and Mid Suffolk, back in the autumn.

Other topics discussed over the last year included the proposed changes to **waste collection**. Back in September the cabinet agreed that the collections will change to a three-weekly cycle with two separate recycling bins, for different materials, along with the introduction of new weekly food waste collections from 2026. The plan is for one recycling bin for things like glass and cartons, while the other will be for cardboard and paper. The general waste bin will be the third bin, and one bin will be collected each week along with the food waste bin.

Kingfisher Leisure Centre in Sudbury has also been a big issue this year. Following routine maintenance to the roof in August contractors discovered more complex problems that left the pool closed until the New Year. The repair costs were unbudgeted and have placed an unexpected burden on the already difficult finances.

In terms of finance, the **budget** is a continuing concern to members and officers alike. Despite making savings and additional income totalling £2.6million, the council still had to use £630k from its financial resilience reserve to plug a budget gap and still faces a budget shortfall of £14.6m over the six years from 2024/5 to 2029/30. Further savings and, unfortunately, additional increases in council tax, fees and charges are unavoidable.

Late in the year came two big announcements from national government. Firstly, The new Labour governments commitment to build 1.5million homes has resulted in 86% uplift in Babergh's **housing delivery commitments**. The council now has a requirement to build 775 new homes a year across the district - 16,275 properties in 20 years including a 5% buffer requirement. This is a huge ask for the council and will have ramifications for every parish in the district. The Green Party head of planning is working with the planning team to encourage parishes and towns to develop neighbourhood plans. In this way the residents can have a direct say on where they will accept development and what that development will look like.

This announcement was shortly followed by the **Devolution and Local Government Reforms** plans that will see the creation of a single Mayoral Combined Authority for Suffolk and Norfolk, with Unitary Councils replacing County and District Councils in 2028. Following their acceptance onto the fast-track program, both Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils cancelled elections, planned for this May. Instead, elections for the new Mayor will take place in May next year. National government will decide the size and number of unitary councils at some point in the future. The Suffolk district and Ipswich borough councils have submitted a case for two or three unitary councils as their preferred choice.

Multiple unitaries are vital in order to keep councils truly local to the people they serve and to meet the differing needs and aspirations of our county's diverse communities. Providing a locally based unitary authority big enough to deliver but small enough to care.

The interim report submitted to Government by the borough and district councils said creating multiple unitary authorities for Suffolk would achieve greater outcomes for residents, grow the economy and provide flexible solutions to meet the needs of local communities – in a way that a single mega-council covering a vast geographical area would fail to do.

Babergh has teamed up with Mid Suffolk and Suffolk Councils to offer companies access to the successful **Solar for Business initiative**. Businesses can now reduce their carbon emissions and save money on energy bills by signing up to have solar panels provided and installed on their premises, for free.

Electricity generated by the panels will be sold to the business at a rate lower than their current tariff, helping to slash energy bills and improve their bottom line.

Solar for Business has been running successfully in West Suffolk for nine years – helping more than a hundred companies to save a total of around £700,000 and 2,000 tonnes in harmful CO2 emissions per year.

To be eligible, businesses must be within West Suffolk, Babergh or Mid Suffolk's district boundaries, and must have a minimum electricity consumption of 5,000kWh per year. For a firm paying 25p/kWh this would mean electricity bills of around £1250 per year.

To find out more about the scheme, email: environment@westsuffolk.gov.uk , call 01284 757631 or visit: www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/solarforbusiness

Communities continue to receive funding from the **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**. Developers pay a fee when work starts on a development, which the councils then reinvest in neighbourhoods via their towns and parish councils. Twenty-two of Babergh's town and parishes receiving a portion of £274K. A community development fund has been introduced to coincide with the start of the 2025/26 fiscal year and aims to streamline the administration of council grants.

The new Community Development fund encompasses both capital and revenue funding, making the application process simpler for organisations to complete and receive the funding they need.

Local VCFSE (voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise) organisations could apply for up to £20,000 toward new or existing projects that provide important services and support to their communities.

Two new electric bikes can now be hired in Sudbury thanks to a new partnership between the council and Suffolk-based electric bike company **EEZYBIKE**

From May this year, residents and visitors in Sudbury can hire an electric bike to make their journeys more environmentally friendly.

Two new electric bikes have been located by Kingfisher Leisure Centre, Situated within a solar-powered pod, the bikes make for an exciting new way to enjoy the local cycle routes and surrounding area.

7. REPORTS FROM THE COMMUNITY:

- i) Village Hall Management Committee - on behalf of the Committee, Mr Clive Arthey reported that regular users of the Village Hall include Zumba on Mondays and table-tennis on Tuesdays. The hall also has other occasional bookings, including as a polling station for elections, and is also the venue for parish council meetings. The EV charger, which is very slow by modern standards, is not used very often.

Our thanks to Ron and Anita Mills for their continued support with bookings, cleaning, maintenance and grass cutting. Another year has passed, and we are still in desperate need of a treasurer and committee members and would appreciate anyone interested getting in touch.

The Village Hall continues to be a valuable facility for our community, and we thank the parish council for its continued support and grant contribution toward our overheads.

- ii) St Peter's Parochial Church Council – on behalf of the Parochial Church Council, a report was read out from the Churchwarden and Treasurer, Mr Frank Taylor, which stated that there were no restrictions on the holding of services and the church was open to the public throughout the year. Seven services were held in 2024. A funeral service was held for Christine Bull in January attended by twenty-six family members and friends. A Service of Holy Matrimony held in December attended by 95 adults and four children. The regular services held were an Easter service of devotion in March attended by ten adults; a Patronal service in June attended by eighteen adults and four children; a Harvest Festival service in October attended by seventeen adults and a Carol service attended by forty-two adults and ten children. Before the appointment of Rev. Nicola Tindall as incumbent for the benefice in October who officiated at the Carol service, we relied on Teresa Lester, Rev. Janice White, Rev. Canon David Atkins, Rev. Simon White and the Very Rev. Jo Delgou to take the services. We were also supported by organists Henry Gold, Andrea King and Laura Wallace. The Copt Hall choir continued to rehearse in the church throughout the year. The churchyard was maintained throughout the year by Lister Countryside Services. The organ was repaired and tuned in October by Mike Osborne.

When questioned, it was confirmed that the aim was to have six or seven services in the year.

- iii) Parish Council - on behalf of the Parish Council, Mr Clive Arthey, Chair, submitted his report in which he stated that reported that as well as our regular business conducted during the year we are pleased that some ongoing initiatives have been completed. The village sign has been re-sited, and we thank Jason Hurd who carried out the work at no charge. The notice boards outside the village hall and Church have also been re-furbished and re-attached to the fence outside the Village Hall. In a joint initiative with the Lindsey Rose we were pleased to provide 50% funding for a defibrillator outside the Lindsey Rose. We are still committed to stone sett reinforcement of corners to the triangle at the Drakestone Lane Junction and outside Old Forge Cottage but unfortunately progress during the year has been slow. I am hoping next year we can report it has been completed.

Our beacon has had a busier year than usual, being part of last year's D-Day anniversary, Remembrance Sunday in November and the recent VE Day celebrations. These events attract residents from other villages who seem to recognise and appreciate what we do here in Lindsey. Even people sitting outside the pub in the evening comment on how wonderful our beacon and Tommy statue look silhouetted against the setting sun. Special thanks to Councillors Rhett Corcoran, Ben Howe and Andrew Sturgeon for their help with preparations for our beacon events.

The Parish Council continues its work on the global issue of Climate Change with Councillors James Moore and Andrew Sturgeon leading on raising awareness within the village and helping householders with energy efficient measures in their homes. They also keep up to date with Community Energy projects elsewhere in the hope that a project might be possible in Lindsey.

My thanks to all our Parish Councillors, Rhett Corcoran, Mark Hainsworth, Ruth Howe, Ben Howe, James Moore and Andrew Sturgeon for their attendance and support throughout the year. Also, thanks to our District and County Councillors for their regular attendance and reports.

My final thanks are to our clerk, Vicky Waples, who ensures everything we do is done properly and is fully compliant.

We continue into 2025-2026 with a full complement of councillors who are available to everyone in the village, both individually and together at our regular meetings. We don't get very many parishioners attending our meetings, but maybe we can be satisfied that what we do is what they expect of us to help keep Lindsey the wonderful place it is.

- iv) Friends of St Peter's Church – on behalf of the Friend's Committee, the Chair submitted a verbal report in which it was stated that the committee continued to support the upkeep of the church during the year and should the PCC need further funds for the upkeep and repairs of our beautiful medieval church, the Friends will continue to provide support.

- v) Kersey Village School – on behalf of the Headteachers, a short report had been submitted about the school. Since our last report we received our Ofsted inspection which took place on 25th and 26th June 2024. We are pleased to share our report grading of 'good' and in particular, two fundamental areas of primary school life: behaviour and attitudes and personal development, which were both judged as outstanding.

The inspector's visit coincided with our 150th celebrations but this did not stop us from having a fabulous time. Bishop Mike attended a formal service at the beginning of the week and various events took place, culminating in an afternoon tea for current families, alumni and Kersey residents. We were overwhelmed by the number of people who attended and the treasures that surfaced, including photographs and behaviour registers over a century old.

We are currently attracting families from north of Kersey, (Hitcham, 8.13km from school), the east (Somersham, 9.61km), the south (Shelly, 5.62km) and the west (Edwardstone, 4.8km). This shows the draw of our wonderful school, perched on the hill by the church. We have 6 pupils in our Reception class. They are all now well and truly settled into Kersey life, enjoying their first year of school and all it has to offer.

Early in the autumn term, we held Sports Week which as usual was a huge success. The children's favourite climbing wall returned once again, along with 'Spider Mountain,' an extreme climbing frame and inflatable slide! They also experienced a range of activities during the week, such as ultimate frisbee, yoga, archery, dodgeball, skateboarding and scootering.

We marked Remembrance Day with a Service at St Mary's. We laid the children's homemade wreath by the font with others from the local community. Each year, new pupils who have joined our school add their own poppies and our wreath grows as the school does. It also allows us to remember the pupils who once attended Kersey but have now moved on.

Our Kersey Outdoor Explorer sessions are a real highlight of our week. We are grateful to be able to use an area of the churchyard which we have now developed into a little spot that the children love and care for passionately. We all get so much out of it, and it is now an established part of our school timetable which allows youngsters to go outside in all weathers to explore and learn.

We held an Open Afternoon in November, though without the church craft fair which has often coincided in the past, it did not attract as many people. We are considering moving it to a school day when pre-school children and their parents may visit and see the school in action, enabling them to meet pupils and see lessons in action and join in with some activities and learning.

St Mary's was the perfect performance venue for us to stage last year's nativity. Vicar Geoffrey led our Candlemas and Christingle service in January. Once again it was a very special service and a magical moment to hear the children softly singing while holding their lit Christingles.

The spring term began with our annual pantomime trip to the New Wolsey Theatre, this year to see 'Sleeping Beauty'. This performance was accessible to all and every one of our pupils thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

We celebrated World Book Day with our popular annual literary quiz; the children's costumes were once again a real treat to see!

Pancake races took place on Shrove Tuesday, marking the start of Lent. Vicar Geoffrey led our Easter service last week.

There are a number of residents from the village who give their time and skills to support the school. Our thanks go to Jane Morgan who leads Stave House music sessions and Lynn English who hears readers. We are so very grateful for their visits each week.

Our new school website has now been launched, and we are delighted with its new look. Video footage will soon be added to showcase our school; this will be filmed later in the summer term.

We are also expecting our SIAMS inspection this term. To prepare for this, we have been thinking about how pupils show courageous advocacy through their actions and ensuring that we have a number of spiritual areas located throughout the school.

The summer term ahead is looking exciting - we will be commemorating VE Day with afternoon tea in the playground, enjoying Sports Day and performing our summer production of The Three Little Pigs!

- vi) Lindsey Newsletter – on behalf of the Editorial Team, Cllr. Corcoran reported that the Lindsey Newsletter is now issued four times per year. Spring, Summer, Autumn & Winter. They are keen to print articles submitted by village residents, whatever their ages! They also hope to create a book of Lindsey stories, capturing life in the village and the diverse experiences of Lindsey folk. They would love to hear more from you! Ideally, it would be wonderful to have more suggestions for articles, jokes, drawings, pictures, games, recipes etc. The Newsletter is posted on the Lindsey Residents site and on WhatsApp. They are proposing to include small business adverts at no cost. However, they might ask for small donations to local charities. Please remember to send them dates for your events and interests, so they can help amplify your news. Please contact Jacqui Delhaye if you have any

questions or want to chat about ideas. Andrew is happy to interview people if it makes telling us your stories easier!

vii) The Red Rose Community Farm - a report would be added to these minutes once received.

8. **PUBLIC FORUM:** the following issues were raised within the public forum:

i. Speeding:

- Along the A1141 and in particular the area from Hollow Farm Shop through to Monks Eleigh in the vicinity of Canada Cottages – could the area be reviewed / considered for either a speed reduction or appropriate signage? Given the increase in traffic as well as the speeds at which vehicles are travelling could this area be revisited? Would the following warning signs, such as bends ahead, SLOW sign in the hedgerow, be allowed to be installed?
- Along the road from Church Road to Lindsey Tye – speeding and lack of centre road markings i.e. white lines

It was noted that the county council applied specific criteria relating to the lowering of speed limits to assist with the prevention of accidents. Their policy has been developed to provide a framework to consider whether changes to existing speed limits are appropriate or not and give guidance on speed limits for any new roads.

It was agreed that Cllr. Finch would undertake the following measures and report back to the parish council and residents directly:

- request that SCC Highways attend site to review the area and ascertain whether further preventive measures could be introduced to raise the profile in terms of speed and safety. This would also be extended to the C720 which runs through Lindsey from Church Road to Lindsey Tye.
- Cllr. Finch to commit to a full speed survey which would measure not only speed but also the volume of traffic on the A1141.

ii. Vehicle Activated Speed signs within the 30mph limits of the village:

- These were effective if they displayed speed and smiley / unhappy faces

It was agreed that the parish council would progress the purchase and installation at appropriate places within the village once suitable sites had been identified during the coming year.

There being no other business, the Chair closed the meeting at 8.26pm by thanking all for their attendance.

Signed.....

Date: (TBC)

Chair of Lindsey Parish Council