LINDSEY PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK TO THE COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 12th March 2025 in Lindsey Village Hall, Church Road, Lindsey which commenced at 7.31pm.

In attendance: Cllrs. C Arthey (in Chair), R Corcoran, M Hainsworth, B Howe, R Howe, J Moore and A Sturgeon. Mrs V Waples, Parish Clerk, County Cllr. Finch (in part) and District Cllr. L Jamieson (in part).

1. OPENING AND WELCOME

The Chair, Cllr. Arthey, opened the meeting and thanked all for attending. The statement on reporting at meetings of the parish council was taken as read.

2. APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE:

i. To receive apologies of absence – there were no applicable apologies of absence.

3. <u>DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTEREST:</u>

- i. To receive declarations of registrable, other and non-registerable interests as detailed in Appendix B of the LGA Model Code of Conduct Model Code of Conduct 2020 Cllr. Arthey declared an "other registerable" interest for agenda item 9ii. There were no other declarations of interests.
- ii. There were no declarations of gifts of hospitality received exceeding £50.
- iii. There were no requests for dispensations for the agenda under discussion.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

i. To approve the minutes of the following Council Meeting: 15th January 2025 - the meeting agreed that the circulated minutes, were a true and accurate record of the meeting that took place, and agreement was forthcoming for the Chair to sign the minutes, aif.

5. PUBLIC FORUM: (maximum 10 minutes)

- i. To receive a report from County Councillor James Finch Cllr. Finch was invited to submit his report in which he commented or drew the meeting's attention to the following: *a copy of the written report submitted can be seen at Appendix A*
 - Devolution versus local government review two different processes.
 - Timelines for devolution given.
 - 18th March SCC cabinet to debate matters relating to the proposal to be submitted to the government.
 - Mayor to oversee both Suffolk and Norfolk on strategic matters detail not yet known.
 - Libraries shared the situation that he was able to share but would be unable to give anything further.
 - Budget increased.

Questions:

- Budget to fight for one Suffolk? There will be cost implications for both county and district. Government will give some funding.
- Will council tax be reduced? Doubtful given the costs that are continually rising.
- How independent will the leader be? Will there be an issue with local democracy in particular national infrastructure projects. Streamlining decisions from government as opposed to devolving democracy.
- ii. To receive a report from District Councillor Leigh Jamieson Cllr. Jamieson was invited to submit his report in which he commented or drew the meeting's attention to the following: *a copy of the written report submitted can be seen at Appendix B*
 - Devolution Districts are all working together and feel that a single unitary is too big. Take away the local from local councillor.
 - Large wards too large to be serviced properly. 3 unitaries / 2 unitaries –3 BDC/MSDC/West versus Greater Ipswich including Woodbridge and Hadleigh and East Suffolk 2 unitaries west and east.

- Elections postponed until 2026.
- Budget difficult and BDC faces a fiscal challenge over the coming year.
- Consultation notification changes to planning notifications for neighbouring properties.
- BMSDC good building control service won an award.

Questions:

- NHS alignment will there now be a move from East Suffolk to West Suffolk?
- Waveney NHS stays with Norfolk it is assumed, but under government matters it aligns with Suffolk Coastal.
- Local Elections postponed until 2026.
- iii. To receive comments from the public on the agenda as published the clerk reported that no matters had been raised.

6. PARISH MATTERS

- i. Climate Awareness / climate emergency
 - to receive an update / information on climate related issue coming forth the thermal imaging project had been made available to the village with 5 dwellings taking up the offer. All who used it had been very enthusiastic and thought it had help them understand heat loss in their own dwellings.
 - Community Energy Regeneration for scale of the operation from which Lindsey would benefit from, the kit is not currently available. This is likely to change as the take-up expands. He confirmed that he was still involved in the Heat Bildeston project.

7. <u>STATUTORY MATTERS:</u>

i. To review and adopt the Council's Policies and Procedures - Papers - Review of Policies and Procedures 2025 - council confirmed that it had reviewed the above polices and noted that there were no legislative changes requiring amendments. As such it resolved that the council would adopt them with a review date of March 2026 confirming that they are updated, fit for purpose and that it agrees to adhere to them as written, aif.

8. PLANNING MATTERS:

- i. To consider the following planning applications: there were none pending at the time of the summons being served. However all noted that an extra meeting would be called to discuss the following application:
 - DC/25/01063 Full Planning Application Erection of 2 no. crop storage buildings, new vehicular access from Priory Hill, concrete pad/yard, 1.8 high security fencing and associated works. Location: Seagers Cottage, Kersey Road.
- ii. To note the following planning applications determined by the local planning authority: none received.
- iii. Council to consider whether it might be appropriate to develop a neighbourhood plan for either Lindsey or to consider the merits of creating a plan with neighbouring parishes the meeting noted the invitation from James Cartlidge, MP, to attend a meeting in Sudbury on 21st March to discuss how Babergh and he as MP could support those wishing to progress a neighbourhood development plan. All were encouraged to attend to learn more. The meeting discussed whether it would be more beneficial for Lindsey to consider a stand-alone neighbourhood plan, or whether it should join forces with other councils. If council was minded to look at a neighbourhood plan, it was agreed that it would be advantageous to have BMSDC come to talk in more detail rather than attend a generic meeting. It was agreed that the council should seek to use a neighbourhood plan to set up a systematic way to have control over the location, manner in which the village is developed; type of development, protection of certain characteristics etc. It was agreed that the Clerk would speak to Paul Bryant at BMSDC to discuss the possibility of attending a further meeting to discuss the production of a Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- iv. BMSDC Adoption of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils Joint Local Development Scheme March 2025 council noted the adoption including information the councils' strategy for guiding development over the period to 2044.

9. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

- i. To consider schedule of receipts received and payments made since the last meeting *Paper A* all confirmed receipt of Paper A (*details can be seen at Appendix C*) noting that no receipts had gone through the account since the last meeting. Payments that had been made covered the direct debit to HMRC for 3rd quarter of PAYE due
- ii. To consider and approve the verified items awaiting authorization as per the schedule submitted *Paper B* all confirmed receipt of Paper B (*details can be seen at Appendix C*) having reviewed the paper submitted, all approved the payments awaiting authorisation for settlement via online transfer, aif.
- iii. To consider the Council's financial position to date *Paper C* Council noted the reconciled position of £10,406.20 once the accounts awaiting payment had been settled, aif. Cllrs. Corcoran and Howe confirmed that they had verified the position against the bank statements and cashbook. (*Details can be found at Appendix C*). A review of the council's reserves indicated that some CIL reserves had an expiry date of April and October 2026 which would be spent if the stone setts to the remaining triangles in the village were carried out in a timely manner. All noted the earmarked reserve for the council election fund which would be called upon at the next council elections as there would be no split with the district council (assuming that Devolution came about).
- iv. To consider the council budget versus actual statement to 15^{th} March 2025 Paper D all reviewed the submitted paper noted that there could potentially be a small overspend for the year subject to final accounts approval.
- v. To note confirmation of the precept served on the Charging Authority to be levied on the parish of Lindsey £6,127 which will be paid to the Parish in two instalments, 50% in April 2025 and 50% in September 2025. This precept gives the Parish a Council Tax Band D amount of £63.76. This is an increase of 4.82% on 2024/25.

10. YEAR-END PROCESSES FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2025:

- i. To consider the following as part of the Council's Year-End Process:
 - a) To review the Council's Financial Risk Assessment for the year 2024-25 Paper E 12.03.2025 council, having reviewed the above risk management procedures, confirmed that they were in practice by the parish council and that there were no regulatory or contractual issues that may impact on the council for which a further risk assessment was required. It was resolved to approved and adopt the risk assessment for the year ending 31 March 2025, aif.
 - b) To review the Council's Risk Management Strategy for the year 2024-25 Paper F council reviewed the narrative document on the risks faced by the parish council as part of its risk management process and acknowledged that it had taken appropriate steps to manage the risks and where able it has brought in an insurance service from an external body to transfer the identified risk. It was resolved to adopt the statement in its entirety, aif.
 - c) To review and approve the Asset Register for the year ending 31st March 2025 Paper G having reviewed the risk register produced by the Clerk, the meeting resolved that the register represented fairly the assets under the control or remit of the parish council for ownership and maintenance for the year ending 31st March 2025, aif.
 - d) To review and agree the effectiveness of Internal Control for the year 2024-2025 Paper H having reviewed the Statement of Internal Controls, council resolved that the controls currently in place were effective and appropriate for Lindsey Parish Council in its management of public finances and that its system of internal control was sound and provided an adequate foundation to mitigate the risks associated with the operation of public money, aif.
 - e) To review the effectiveness of Internal Audit for the year 2024-2025 Paper I council, having reviewed internal audit in terms of independence, competence, proportionality and effectiveness (refer to Appendix A), resolves that it has complied with its duty under the 2015 Regulations and met the standards of audit provision, aif.
 - f) To confirm the appointment of the Council's Internal Auditor for the year ending 31st March 2025 Paper J see Appendix B Draft Audit Plan council resolves that, having regard to the Audit Plan as per Appendix A, Mr Trevor Brown CPFA be appointed to carry out the internal audit on Lindsey Parish Council at a maximum cost of £175 plus pro rata travelling expenses at £0.45 pence per mile. It is

anticipated that the audit will take place in late April 2025. The work planned to be completed is as per Appendix B, aif.

g) To receive indicative year-end figures for the year ending 31^{st} March 2025 - Paper K – council noted the indicative figures for the year which showed a carried forward balance of £10,406.20. It was confirmed that the final accounts would be presented to full council at the meeting schedule for 14^{th} May 2025.

11. CORRESPONDENCE: TO CONSIDER / NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

- i. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government Norfolk and Suffolk Devolution consultation Establishing a Mayoral Combined Authority across Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council closing date 13th April 2025. At this stage, council had no comments to raise on this matter and did not wish to respond to the consultation.
- ii. BMSDC Spring Litter Picks <u>council to consider the contents of the letter regarding litter picks</u>. It was noted that Cllr. Moore regularly carried out local litter picks and encouraged all to carry out such tasks within their locality. Council discussed the issue of the amount of litter that was collecting in the verges of the A1141 and the inherent dangers for those trying to clear the rubbish that had accumulated. The clerk agreed to discuss with the district council as to who had the responsibility for cleaning the verges along the A1141.
- iii. BMSDC to note all monthly bulletins are emailed to councillors for their perusal.
- iv. SALC to note the next Babergh Area Forum is scheduled for 1st April, online, to commence at 7.00pm.
- v. SALC council confirmed that all weekly news bulletins are emailed to Councillors for their perusal. Councillors to contact the Clerk if there are any items of interest / training courses they wish to attend.
- vi. Enhanced Partnership Passenger Group meeting of 08.01.25 council confirmed receipt of the minutes from this meeting which had the mandate to provide a collaborative approach for community initiatives for improving passenger transport.

12. CLERK'S REPORT

- i. To receive an update on the improvements to the two triangles near the Rose Pub nothing to report as a start date was still awaited. The clerk and Cllr. Sturgeon confirmed that they would continue to chase the approved contractor.
- ii. To discuss further remedial works to the village sign all were in agreement that the sign require extensive renovation in terms of painting and renovation to the frame in which the sign sat. It was queried as to whether the works could be split with different parties undertaking the work required. The Clerk agreed to do a call-out to other clerks via SALC to see if similar works had been commissioned. Cllr. Hainsworth agreed to enquire whether such work could be commissioned locally.
- 13. PARISH COUNCILLORS' REPORTS: there were no reports on village issues received from Councillors.
- 14. <u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING:</u> all meetings will take place in the Village Hall, Church Road, Lindsey.
 - i. To note the Annual Parish Meeting is scheduled for 14th May 2025 to commence at 7.00pm.
 - ii. To note the next meeting will be the Annual Council Meeting which is scheduled for 14th May 2025 to follow the Annual Parish Meeting.
- 15. <u>CLOSE OF MEETING:</u> There being no other business the Chairman declared the meeting closed 9.12pm

APPENDIX A - COUNTY COUNCILLOR JAMES FINCH REPORT:

The County Council leaders to propose 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 will submit 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.

New cabinet role to lead on devolution and local government reform in Suffolk - A new Suffolk County Council cabinet role responsible for devolution and local government reform has been created. Cllr Richard Rout has been appointed to the role – which comes as Suffolk is one of only six areas in the country chosen by the government to be fast-tracked for devolution and local government reform.

The reforms will see all six of Suffolk's district, borough and county councils disbanded, to be replaced by one or more unitary (singular) authorities responsible for delivering all local services that are currently delivered by the different tiers of local government.

It will also see the election of a mayor (covering Suffolk and Norfolk) in May 2026, who will take control over strategic policy areas like transport infrastructure, economic development, health improvement and blue light services – along with devolved government funding to deliver positive change. The mayor would not run the unitary councils or have oversight of them.

£1.6 million investment proposed following inspection of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service - Further funding is earmarked for the county's fire service following a key report by Government inspectors. Suffolk County Council (SCC) is proposing to invest an extra £1.6 million over two years into Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) following a government inspection. Inspectors from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) found SFRS effectively operates its 35 stations, 43 fire engines and a range of specialist vehicles strategically situated around Suffolk.

The inspectors rated the service as good at preventing fires and risk, and protecting the public through fire regulation, and that it met requirements for responding to major incidents, plus managing and developing its leaders.

However, the assessment highlighted some areas where inspectors feel the service needs to improve — leadership, culture, commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and IT infrastructure. A targeted action plan is already being developed with staff to drive improvements in areas highlighted within the report. These include IT infrastructure, staff cultural changes and risk management.

Suffolk's 45 libraries see new investment as Suffolk County Council plans to take service back in house - All Suffolk's 45 libraries would remain open, see no change to opening hours and have new mobile libraries and computers as part of a plan to bring the service back into Suffolk County Council. Subject to a formal Cabinet decision on 18th March 2025, staff running Suffolk's library service – along with their years of experience and love for libraries - will transition to the direct employment of the County Council on 1st June 2025. The county council would invest £200,000 in replacing Suffolk's aging mobile libraries with a further £157,000 for new books and to

replace public computers in libraries across Suffolk. This is in addition to the £6.6 million a year budget available for Suffolk's libraries.

It follows an attempt to secure an external provider for a new year contract (with the option to extend for up to a further six years) which had to be abandoned due to difficulties in aligning submissions with the service requirements and budgets. Following the end of the procurement process, Suffolk County Council entered negotiations with Suffolk Libraries (the current provider) to reach agreement on a shorter-term contract. The intention was to secure the immediate future of the library service from 1 June 2025, while the longer-term future was considered. However, Suffolk Libraries were unwilling to accept those terms and proposed different terms which were not acceptable to Suffolk County Council and would have breached procurement law. In addition, serious concerns about the viability of Suffolk Libraries also surfaced. The concerns included their proposal to reduce opening hours by 30% and issues with the financial stability of the organisation. There is also concern about the cost of their head office, including senior managers, which equates to 33% of their annual staffing costs. Suffolk County Council believes that more of the library budget should be invested in frontline services.

Suffolk County Council confirms 2025/26 budget - Suffolk County Council has confirmed how it will spend its money in the forthcoming financial year - an £803.7 million plan focused on protecting essential services and supporting the county's most vulnerable residents.

The council's budget for 2025/26 was approved at a meeting of all councillors on Thursday 13 February, with an emphasis on meeting rising demand for children's and adult care services. For every £1 the council spends in the next financial year, 77 pence will go directly toward Adult Care and Children's Services which support the health and wellbeing of people in Suffolk. The remaining 23 pence will fund other critical areas such as fire and rescue, highway maintenance, climate initiatives, waste management and bus services, as well as the infrastructure, staff, and technology required to keep services running efficiently.

Virtual Fostering and Adoption Sessions for the Stour Valley - Fostering is a flexible role with options for short term care from a weekend a month to longer term opportunities, all providing life-changing support for local children. If you want to find out more about what it's like to foster or adopt with us, please call a member of the team on 01473 264800.

APPENDIX B – DISTRICT COUNCILLOR LEIGH JAMIESON REPORT:

Devolution & Local Government Reform (LGR) - At the moment devolution and local government reform seems to be all encompassing at Council. Meeting after meeting, for some on a daily basis, are arranged to discuss the many permutations and possibilities of the proposals.

Babergh has engaged KPMG on a consultancy basis to assist with the development of proposals for LGR and they are working with other district and borough councils across the region to ensure that their interim plans are ready by the 21st of March target date. The councils will then need to firm up the initial proposals for submission by September this year.

Initially, they have agreed that 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 council covering a vast geographical area would fail to do.

There is also no evidence that bigger councils with less councillors will provide you with a better service. Local government should be what it says – 'local.' The closer councillors are to their residents the more responsive they can be to local issues. In large councils with many more residents to serve, the councillors will become more remote with less local knowledge.

The governments reasons for doing this is supposedly to save money, reduce councillors and drive its growth ambitions. What it is currently doing is costing officer time and diverting everyone's attention. The Cumbria devolution deal cost them £19m so how this is saving money is questionable.

There is currently a government's consultation open until 13th April on this, and I would encourage everyone to have their say, if you have not already done so.

Budget - Last month the Council agreed a 2.99% increase to its share of council tax bills raising Babergh's element of the bill for a Band D home from £188.10 a year to £193. 73. Unfortunately, the major financial challenges facing the council made the budget difficult, with many fees and charges also increasing. However, it was necessary in order to protect services.

Babergh keeps less than 10% of the total council tax bill, to assist with services that include waste collection, planning, maintaining green spaces, supporting the local economy, culture, and communities, and helping those at risk of homelessness.

Despite making savings and additional income totalling £2.6million, the council had to use £633k 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 – at this rate it is due to run out of useable reserves by 2028/29.

It was also necessary to increase social rents by £3.01 a week, on average, along with increases on garage rents, sheltered housing service charges and sheltered housing utility charges.

The net cost of providing Babergh's services, after income and the use of earmarked reserves are considered, will rise by 8% to just over £15m in the next year. Despite this Rural Councils generally get less government grants than urban councils, which means that our residents pay, on average, 20% more per head in Council Tax. As an example, the Government's sudden removal of the Rural Services Delivery Grant just before Christmas, without notice, has left a £308,000 gap in Babergh's budget.

The plans to restructure the Councils is unlikely to resolve the funding crisis that local authorities face.

Planning notification consultation - At last month's Council meeting members also agreed to undertake a consultation on whether, to stop sending out notification letters to residents where minor planning applications or householder applications may affect them. There will be notifications posted on lamp posts, parish councils will receive notifications and they will also be available on the councils' website. The consultation will also propose that the Council continues to send out letters for major applications.

The reduction in printing and postage costs will generate savings subject to the level of planning activity in year. Forecasting based on previous years activity indicates that this could result in potential savings of c£18,000.

Remembering the impact of the pandemic - Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils planted special memorial trees at Beaumont Park in Hadleigh and in Green's Meadow, Stowmarket for the national Covid-19 Day of Reflection this Sunday (March 9) — marking five years since the pandemic and its impact on families, businesses, and communities. The cherry trees will provide a lasting legacy, commemorating lives lost or forever changed by the pandemic, as well as honouring the dedication of our districts' key workers and community volunteers who worked tirelessly to support others.

National recognition for building control - Judges crowned Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' building control team winners of the prestigious 'Local Authority Building Control Team of the Year' award at the 2024 LABC Building Excellence Awards grand finals. They cited the team's dedication to raising industry standards, its exceptional problem-solving skills, and customer services.

BABERGH'S BRIEFING NOTES FOR TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS

Government warned over funding crisis for councils as Babergh sets budget to protect services. The Government's planned reorganisation of local councils should not distract from the need to fix a severe funding crisis, it has been warned.

National recognition for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' building control team

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' building control team has been named as the best in the business.

£150k boost to community projects across Babergh and Mid Suffolk

Funding towards a new football club stand and play area improvements are among 21 grants to support community groups and organisations in Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

Wildlife Wise announces new grant project support

A new small grant scheme has been announced by Wildlife Wise, supporting projects that aim to prevent recreational disturbance and damage to Suffolk's coast and its important wildlife and habitats.

Government launches public consultation on Suffolk and Norfolk devolution

The Government has launched a public consultation on proposals to create a Mayoral Combined County Authority across Norfolk and Suffolk.

Back for half-term! Reopening date for Kingfisher Leisure Centre swimming pool confirmed

The swimming pool at Kingfisher Leisure Centre in Sudbury reopened on Saturday, 15 February after repair work was completed.

Covid-19 day of reflection

On Sunday 9 March 2025, the UK will recognise a Covid-19 Day of Reflection. If your community wishes to take part, you can find a full list of resources about the day of reflection on our website.

New tenant handbook

Housing Services have launched a new tenant handbook, providing information about tenants' rights and responsibilities, as well as setting out what the council's responsibilities are as their landlord.

Items received since the last meeting:

Income	Description	Nett	VAT	Gross	Ref
	Total Income			£NIL	

Items Paid out since the last meeting:

Income	Description	Nett	VAT	Gross	Ref
23.01.25	HMRC – PAYE due 3 rd Qtr 2024	228.40	0.00	228.40	DD
	Total Expenditure			£NIL	

Items Authorized for Payment:

Expenditure	Description	Nett	VAT	Gross	Ref
Clerk	Clerk's Salary & Expenses	634.99	0.00	634.99	BACS
SARS	Donation	50.00	0.00	50.00	BACS
Headway Suffolk	Donation	50.00	0.00	50.00	BACS
Lindsey Village Hall	Hire of Hall	80.00	0.00	80.00	BACS
	Total Expenditure			£814.99	

Financial Report

	Date	£
Opening Balance	09.01.25	11449.59
Add Income Received	January to March	0.00
Less Expenditure Incurred	January to March	228.40
Less Verified Expenditure	12.03.25	814.99
Closing Balance	12.03.25	10406.20

Bank Reconciliation

Community Account	Statement at 03.03.25	11221.19	
Less uncleared payments	At 12.03.25	814.99	
Plus unaccredited income	At 12.03.25	0.00	
Reconciled Total	At 12.03.25	10406.20	

Within the balance above are the following reserves: (Restricted) CIL reserve - £7,185.18 Earmarked Stone setts - £1,500.00 Earmarked General reserve - £ 663.41 Election reserve - £ 836.59