

Debenham Parish Council
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
Monday 16th February 2026
Dove Cottage, Debenham

Present: Cllr Winrow-Giffin (Chair), Cllr Sweet (Vice-Chair), Cllr Alexander, Cllr Cockerton, Cllr Collins, Cllr Grimshaw, Cllr Haddon, Cllr Hammond, Cllr Potter, County Councillor Hicks, District Councillor Davis, Parish Clerk/RFO Ginny O’Hegarty, and 14 members of the public.

Chair’s Announcement: Welcome to this meeting of Debenham Parish Council, The Council, members of the public and the press may record / film this meeting when the public and the press are not lawfully excluded. Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being filmed should advise the Parish Clerk. Please switch all mobile phones to silent. May I remind all those present to be courteous and not to have private conversations whilst the meeting is in progress.

Council thanked the Clerk for the work undertaken in preparing the meeting, the work on the budget, and for taking on the Council’s procedures so well.

DPC/26/534 To consider Apologies for Absence. Cllr Faggionato (apologies approved).

DPC/26/535 Declarations of Interest with regards to items on the Agenda. Cllr Sweet expressed interest in DPC/26/543.1 regarding expenses. Cllr Hammond declared a non-pecuniary interest in DPC/26/543.10 and had been advised by SALC that he could participate and vote if he wished to do so.

DPC/26/536 Public Participation section

- 1) A representative from a local organisation wished to speak about why the Parish Council had rejected an application for funding and the reasons the applicant believed this should be reconsidered. Council confirmed the applicant’s response letter had been received and circulated to Councillors. The matter was covered later in the Agenda under item **DPC/26/543.10**.
- 2) A member of the public thanked the Parish Council for visiting Gardeners Road to look at the issues. The footway has now been repaired however the issue of water flowing down from the green near the garages has not yet been addressed. The resident had ascertained that the area where the cars are parked is owned by Suffolk County Council. The resident also requested an update on a streetlight which was covered later in the Agenda under item **DPC/26/540.11**.
- 3) A representative from an organisation looking at supporting natural flood management in the upper Deben wished to let the Parish Council know they would be interested in working with the Council on this and that the remit area will be from Kettleburgh north into the upper parts of the catchment.
- 4) A representative from a local business with a large number of employees thanked the Parish Council and noted its team felt supported and valued.



DPC/26/537 Reports

1. **District Cllr Davis addressed the meeting.** Her report had been circulated previously, and a copy can be viewed on the Parish Council website. District Cllr Davis wished to highlight:
 - a. The Jobs Fair will be taking place in March.
 - b. The Waste Team will be meeting with the Debenham Green Team early next month.
 - c. The Landscape Nature Recovery Grant will soon be formally launched.

Question to District Cllr Davis:

A query was raised regarding ownership of the car parking area on the corner of Chancery Lane. District Cllr Davis will investigate.

2. **County Cllr Hicks addressed the meeting.**
 - a. Suffolk County Council has set its budget for the coming year at £850 million. 77p in every £1 will be spent on looking after the most vulnerable adults and children in the county; and 23p in every £1 will be spent on everything else which includes the fire service, highways, waste and all the other services the County Council delivers. The County Council has saved £46.5m through transformation and efficiencies.
 - b. Residents are encouraged to keep reporting potholes via the reporting tool. 1,600 potholes were repaired in January; 400 were repaired last week; 25% more potholes have been repaired this year than in the same period last year.
 - c. Suffolk County Council is actively seeking more foster carers. There is a YouTube clip available to view about how a family in Suffolk got involved and what it has meant to them.
 - d. The Chief Executive resigned last week. In the interim, two existing directors will jointly fill the post for the next 18-24 months.

Question to County Cllr Hicks:

A query was raised why only one of two blocked drains on the High Street had been attended to (one outside no. 3, the other outside no. 6). County Cllr Hicks will try to find out why.

Council thanked County Cllr Hicks for his outstanding work noting he has been very good to the Parish Council and the village in progressing matters and getting issues resolved.

DPC/26/538 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2026.

The Minutes were agreed and signed.

Proposed Cllr Sweet, **Seconded** Cllr Collins, **Approved** 8 in favour, 1 abstention (unread)

DPC/26/539 Action Plan of Outstanding Matters (Resolved):

1. Repairs to Gardeners Road footway. Council noted the work had been completed.
2. Barleyfields boundary / hedging. Work is in progress. 30+ blackthorn bushes have been planted; more bushes are required to fill the gap. See **DPC/26/543.7**.



DPC/26/540 Action Plan for Outstanding Matters (ongoing):

1. Proposed Flood Management Initiative and presentation of report by Sustainable Water Solutions:

Suffolk County Council as freehold owner of the land have indicated their support in principle but require sight of the details before entering into discussions to amend the lease. Cllr Hammond to forward the written confirmation to the Clerk.

An overview of the proposal was presented by Sustainable Water Solutions: creation of an earth bund across the valley making use of natural topography, effectively building a bank to retain flood water and control it with various sized pipes. The site appears to have potential although one site will not stop a Storm Babet type event whereas several together could provide a collective benefit.

Funding for the outline design, survey work and costing of the project will be available from the Rivers Trust and Environment Agency in the new financial year. Once that work has been completed, delivery funding can be sourced from several places including a local levy funding pot administered by the Regional Flooding Coastal Committee, and possibly from the new Landscape Nature Recovery Grant.

The landowner, Suffolk County Council, would be responsible for maintaining the site which will eventually require de-silting.

- 2. Parishioner Correspondence Market Green:** Cllr Sweet and the Clerk are continuing to work on this matter with a view to registering the piece of village green with the Land Registry.
- 3. Parking on Green Space Coopers field:** An application for Pride in Your Place funding for two oak benches will shortly be submitted, one for Coopers field, and one for Gardeners Road.
- 4. Churchyard maintenance and Yew tree reduction:** Three quotes have been received for a tree survey to be conducted in the parish. Council agreed to proceed with the company that provides the best value and meets quality assurance.
Proposed Cllr Hammond, **Seconded** Cllr Alexander, **Approved** Unanimously
- 5. Installation of Defibrillator at Dove Cottage:** Cllr Collins will obtain quotes and talk to the first responders for recommendations.
- 6. Water Lane “No Through Road” Signage:** Council had been provided with two options and agreed to proceed with “Unsuitable for Heavy Goods Vehicles” combined with a “No Through Road” sign, and keep the existing sign if possible.
- 7. Party Wall repairs Churchyard / 43 High Street:** Several quotations for the repair work had been received and Council proposed proceeding with the middle quote which is in the region of £2,000 and seek a contribution from the resident. The Clerk to follow up with the PCC and Mid Suffolk District Council for copies of documentation relating to the transfer of responsibility for the maintenance of the churchyard.
- 8. Priory Lane flooding and sandbag quotations:** A site visit is being arranged with a representative from Suffolk Highways to ascertain what work is required and the cost.

Clearing out the back side of the bank was put forward as an alternative suggestion to sandbags.

9. **Bench Sponsorship Scheme:** See **DPC/26/540.3**.
10. **Development of lower Gardeners Road and additional play equipment:** Update regarding quotes for play equipment and a bench. Given there is already a play area at upper Gardeners Road, Cllr Sweet requested this item be discussed with DPC/26/544.7.
11. **Update on street lighting and drainage at Gardeners Road:** Due to the lack of power, only solar lighting would be suitable. County Cllr Hicks is liaising with the department responsible for street lighting. SCC Highways is thought to be the owner of the area in front of the garages but this needs to be confirmed.
ACTION: Cllr Collins to liaise with Highways.

DPC/26/541 To consider planning applications received from Mid Suffolk District Council

1. **DC/26/00437** Works to trees in a conservation area at 19 High Street. No objections.
Proposed Cllr Haddon, **Seconded** Cllr Alexander, **Approved** 8 in favour, 1 abstention
2. **DC/25/05282** Erection of a single storey rear extension and related works at 36 Henniker Road. No objections.
Proposed Cllr Alexander, **Seconded** Cllr Grimshaw, **Approved** Unanimously

DPC/26/542 To note planning decisions. None received.

DPC/26/543 Finance

1. To approve February 2026 payments schedule and note receipts
Proposed Cllr Sweet, **Seconded** Cllr Collins, **Approved** Unanimously
2. **Finance Working Group report:**
Cllr Grimshaw presented the Finance Working Group's **2026/27 budget** recommendations for Council approval.
Proposed Cllr Winrow-Giffin, **Seconded** Cllr Sweet, **Approved** Unanimously
3. Update on refund of Debenham Angel unused grant: **This matter is ongoing.**
4. To approve £4,900 contribution towards cost of replacement fencing on High Street.
Proposed Cllr Collins, **Seconded** Cllr Haddon, **Approved** Unanimously
5. To approve £870 grant support for river water testing
Proposed Cllr Collins, **Seconded** Cllr Winrow-Giffin, **Approved** Unanimously
6. To approve £420 for skip hire for allotments March tidy up from allotment funds
Proposed Cllr Collins, **Seconded** Cllr Sweet, **Approved** Unanimously
7. To approve purchase of additional blackthorn for recreation ground and cemetery gaps infill in the region of £180
Proposed Cllr Collins, **Seconded** Cllr Grimshaw, **Approved** Unanimously
8. Council noted receipt of SALC Internal Audit Service Letter of Engagement.
9. Update on the process for removal of the rateable value of the cemetery. **This matter is ongoing.**
10. To consider the grounds for reconsidering a request for CIL funding from a previous applicant. After discussion, the Council agreed to receive the application in March.
Proposed Cllr Grimshaw, **Seconded** Cllr Alexander, **Approved** Unanimously

DPC/26/544 Administration

1. **Councillor/Employee expenses policy** Approved and adopted by the Parish Council. **Proposed** Cllr Cockerton, **Seconded** Cllr Alexander, **Approved** 8 in favour, 1 abstention (unread)
2. **Venue for uniformed groups in the village.** Council agreed to set up a working group (Cllrs Winrow-Giffin, Alexander, Collins, Haddon, Hammond) to engage with young people to find out which venues are currently meeting their needs, whether there are any gaps, and what interventions can the Council usefully do to help. This agenda item to be combined with **DPC/26/544.6.**
3. **To consider membership and balance of responsibilities of Committees and Working Groups.** Deferred to March. Cllr Alexander volunteered for attachment to Sir Robert Hitcham School Trust.
4. **To consider Councillors' accessibility of messages circulated via Slack.** Councillors agreed to interact more with messages.
5. **To consider Council's participation in river focus event in May/June 2026.** Cllrs Haddon and Potter volunteered to represent the Parish Council.
6. **To explore the possibility of a dedicated space within the village for youth groups to use.** See DPC/26/544.2.
7. **To investigate the feasibility of repurposing some green areas within the village.** It was agreed for Cllr Sweet to investigate the feasibility with The Green project group. **Proposed** Cllr Alexander, **Seconded** Cllr Winrow-Giffin, **Approved** Unanimously

District Cllr Davis recommended any proposed development be included in the Neighbourhood Plan review.

8. **To consider registration of parish council .gov.uk domain name and email addresses.** Deferred to March.

Committees, Working Groups and Representatives Reports:

DPC/26/545 Neighbourhood Plan:

1. **To consider approval of the publicity postcard for March event.** Approved
2. **To consider membership of Neighbourhood Plan working group.** All Councillors and volunteers.
3. **To consider volunteers for delivery of publicity postcards.** Cllrs Alexander and Collins offered to join the group of volunteers.
4. **To consider engaging a Landscape consultant.** Two recommendations had been received.
5. **To consider researching a Flooding consultant.**
With reference to DPC/26/545.4 and DPC/26/545.5, Cllr Hammond will draft suggested terms of reference for consideration by Councillors.



DPC/26/546 Allotments:

1. Update on the purchase of posts to fix fences, and chicken wire to create a new plot and boundaries where plots have been divided from allotment funds. **Work completed.**

DPC/26/547 Flooding:

1. Update from Environment Agency on future management of erosion boards and residents' riparian obligations EA REF: TOCOR2026/03354. The Environment Agency aim to provide a response by 20th February 2026.

DPC/26/548 General Maintenance topics.

DPC/26/549: Highways:

1. **Update on parking enforcement at High Street/Cross Green pavement.** It was noted that cars had been ticketed for parking on the double yellow lines near the primary school.
ACTION: Cllr Winrow-Giffin will follow up regarding Cross Green
2. **Update on Chancery Lane road safety signage.** Whether a TRO is still in existence is being investigated.
ACTION: Cllr Allexander will follow up regarding enforcement and speak with the primary school.
3. **Update on proposed Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).** Many of the Councillors had attended a very useful and informative Teams meeting with County Cllr Hicks prior to the Parish Council meeting. A report is to follow.
4. **Bid for pavement repairs via central funding budget.** Compilation of list of pavement repairs. Councillors to email Cllr Hammond if they have anything to report before the next meeting.
5. **EV charging points.** Four EV charging points are to be installed on Sackville Street.
6. **Update on Water Lane flooding and lack of drainage.** See DPC/26/540.8.
7. **Update regarding potential car park location and investment** A letter will be sent to the landowner.
8. **To discuss request for a gate on Barleyfields development** to the lake and Hoppit Wood, and response to District Cllr Davis re residents' access to open spaces and the Open Spaces Act. An excerpt from an email from the developer was read out which stated the developer is not permitted to create an access way across someone else's land without consent and ownership of the strip of land the other side of the fence is unknown. Also, as creating a new access may be detrimental to the homes nearest to that point, the developer will be not be making any changes to their approved plans.

The Parish Council reiterated it has no influence over the request for a gate.

DPC/26/550: Correspondence received:

1. Request for action about the parking on and damage to the grass at Lock Close. Deferred to March.
2. Request for two grit/salt bins to be located on the Greensleeves estate. The purchase of one grit/salt bin was supported.
Proposed Cllr Winrow-Giffin, **Seconded** Cllr Alexander, **Approved** Unanimously
3. Request for gents public toilet to be unlocked between 7am-7pm. Council confirmed the gents public toilet has never been opened from 7am-7pm. There would be a cost involved in paying for someone to open and close the toilets each day, and installing an

electric door would cost £5,500. There is already a perfectly good toilet available therefore the second toilet will remain closed.

4. Concern raised about crumbling wall between Vicarage Gardens and Gardeners Road area.

ACTION: Cllr Sweet will report it.

DPC/26/551 To receive any report from Councillors/requests for addition to a future Agenda (no decision can be made unless exempt or under delegated power)

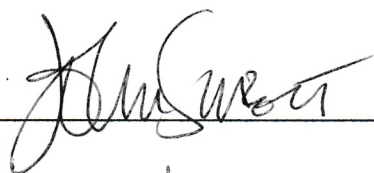
Cllr Hammond requested the natural flood management report be submitted as a formal agenda item.

DPC/26/552 Date of next Parish meeting: Monday 16^h March 2026, 7pm Dove Cottage, High Street, Debenham.

Meeting closed 9:21pm

Signed: _____

Chairman



Date: _____

16/03/2026