

STURMER PARISH COUNCIL

Karen Simmons
Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Email: clerk@sturmer-pc.gov.uk

19, Woodcock Close
Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 0JP
Tel: 07814339155

MINUTES MEETING OF STURMER PARISH COUNCIL held at STURMER VILLAGE HALL on THURSDAY 3RD APRIL 2025 AT 7:30PM.

COUNCILLOR	IN ATTENDANCE
Cllr David Porth - Chairman	YES
Cllr Terrie Jones	YES
Cllr Sean Mercer	YES
Cllr Gareth Morley	APOLOGIES SENT
Cllr Matthew Porth	YES
Dist Cllr Diana Garrod	YES
Cnty Cllr Peter Schwier	YES

24/122	NOTE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
	DONE
24/123	WITH REFERENCE TO THIS AGENDA MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO DECLARE ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS, NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS AND OTHER REGISTRABLE INTERESTS
	NONE
24/124	APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD Thursday 20th February 2025
	DONE
24/125	RECEIVE COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS
	<p>PLEASE SEE ATTACHED REPORT FROM CLLR GARROD</p> <p>Additionally, Anglian Water have completed their works in our area.</p> <p>Rowley Hill is due for closure on 19th May for roadworks</p> <p>New medical centre being developed in Sible Hedingham for our resident's use.</p> <p>Devolution consultation 13th April – make sure you have your say.</p> <p>New building sites to be revealed by BDC this summer.</p> <p>CLLR PETER SCHWIER –</p> <p>Council tax increase 3.75% works out as an increase of £1.09 per week on Band D</p> <p>Priority is to highways resurfacing – had 40% less complaints – does this mean less holes?</p> <p>Residents need to be aware of the scrap scheme and methods of disposal.</p> <p>Microgrants are available for the support and development of new skills and careers.</p> <p>There are now areas in Essex for the disposal/recycling of paint. This is being collected by charities for their use.</p>
24/126	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION
	<i>This provides an opportunity for members of the public to raise questions and comment on items on the agenda or of import. Time for this session is limited to 15 minutes (03 minutes per person)</i>
	NO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE
24/127	REVIEW & COMMENT ON CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS/APPEALS
	<p>VG52/ Retirement home current status – building work likely to start 2026. Landscaping of site will include improved amenities and more trees.</p> <p>Re plan to cut back but not remove trees – council comments are to ensure this work is not done until after nesting season.</p> <p>Wixoe Solar farm – we have made representation in 2023</p> <p>Acorn Biodigestion Facility – comments have been made in 2024. Concerns for downstream flooding.</p>

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24/128	<p>RECEIVE REPRESENTATIVES REPORT:</p> <p>a) Footpaths – Cllr S Mercer. Want to thank those who keep their areas abutting the paths clear. We do cut the paths, but we have noticed some dangerous fencing. Please ensure there are no nails or missing sections that could cause danger to young ones. The kissing gate has been removed to allow better disabled access to one of our pathways.</p> <p>b) Flood Action Group. The group is watching the Acorn development carefully and has made a planning comment. There is a vacancy for a volunteer to monitor the health of our river. It is only a few hours per month and full training would be given.</p> <p>c) Play Area – Cllr G Morley. We are undertaking to replace and repair all surfaces and equipment and would be grateful if an item is taped off – DO NOT USE. The clip holding disabled children in their special swing has gone! We are due to replace this shortly. If you see any vandalism, please report it.</p> <p>d) Parish Maintenance. Cutting has started.</p> <p>e) War Memorial. As usual, Volunteer Carter is keeping on top of this with regular clearing, weeding and painting. However, there is some minor damage from the lack of gully sweeping and grit from holes and repairs.</p> <p>f) Village Hall and Defib – Cllr T Jones. Our defib machine was not on the main ambulance system. This has been checked, and it should be on there soon.</p> <p>g) Highways. Hole in the pavement has had a temporary cover. Clerk to follow up. Damaged signage – some has rusted badly – all photos with locations to clerk to follow up Water Lane is still a major issue. Clerk to talk to Highways (again)</p>
24/129	<p>Popes Mill Bridge Progress – Cllr G Morley</p> <p>The feedback is that NLHF would fund such a project, and it could be seen as two phases; phase 1 being funding for the surveys, reports etc to investigate the work and costs that would be needed to restore the bridge to good condition, along with some associated improvements to the amenity walk beneath. A subsequent application (phase 2) for the actual repairs — this is the big application!!</p> <p>This is good news insofar as the NLHF see this as a project that they could potentially support, and they would be prepared to fund the preliminary project to scope/cost the work, which I've indicated would be in the region of £20,000. Although there is a caveat that they could potentially only support phase 1 and not the actual bridge works subsequently. But all is dependent on the submission and success of funding applications.</p> <p>They have given some pointers that I was already aware of, but in brief:</p>

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	<p>Ensure that our application even for the first phase is able to clearly demonstrate how it contributes to and addresses the four NLHF investment principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Saving heritage2. Protecting the environment (this is where associated improvements to the amenity walk may be key to the application)3. Inclusion, access and participation4. Organisational sustainability (possibly the toughest principle for us to demonstrate, but I've some ideas on this). <p>Other key points will be to look for some additional match funding that could strengthen any application, certainly at phase 2. It will also strengthen the application to identify key partners and stakeholders for the project, who would be willing to formally support the project and provide letters of support.</p>
24/130	<p>Street Clean review of last year and 2025/6 agreement.</p> <p>It was agreed to continue with this arrangement. The road should be swept on 28th Feb 2025, 5th June 2025, 8th Sept 2025 and 8th Dec 2025. Any concerns please let Braintree or the clerk know.</p>
24/131	<p>FINANCIAL STATEMENT – AGREE ANY PAYMENTS AGREE SIGNATORY AUTHORITY TO AUTHORISE RAISED PAYMENTS BEFORE NEXT MEETING TO AVOID CHARGES/LATE BILLING</p> <p>Invoices and the accounts were agreed.</p>
24/132	<p>CLERKS REPORT COUNCILLOR VACANCY</p> <p>We are looking for someone to make up the team who can spare an hour or so a week. Without support we cannot make best use of our facilities and funds. Please contact the clerk if you might be interested. Happy to have a chat or forward you on to another councillor to do so.</p> <p>S106 – use to improve amenity walk and repairs to boundaries. This will have to wait for the final assessment of the playground area so we can go ahead with improvements, including painting the railings.</p> <p>SSE – still trying to resolve issues After many hours of investigation, we have a clearer view of what our electrical costs should be. And are waiting for a reassessment of supply to support our figures.</p> <p>Solar Farm conversation. A number of suggestions were made re community involvement of the Sturmer Solar farm development. Clerk to follow up.</p> <p>Section 137 monies. This has increased this year to approx. £11 per voter. The monies can only be used for something that would benefit the whole village and needs to have this as supporting evidence before we are allowed to use it. Any ideas gratefully received and no, it cannot be used to come of our rates.</p>

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	DATE OF NEXT MEETING Thursday 1 st May 2025 - at 7:30 pm

Karen Simmons – Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer Dated **8th April 2025**.

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