

Thorpe Morieux Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting

Held on Thursday 18th September 2025 at 7.30pm in Thorpe Morieux Village Hall

Attendance

Cllr John Squirrell (Chair), Cllr John Gagen, Cllr Keith Lee, Cllr Jules O'Brien, Cllr Garry Russell, Cllr Ashley Simpson, Cllr Louisa Pepper (Vice Chair), Deborah Saw DC, Robert Lindsay CC, Sarah Headland (Clerk)

1. Apologies for absence:

None

Members' Declarations of Interest:

- a. To receive declarations of interest – Cllr Gagen and Cllr Russell are on the Village Hall Committee
- b. To consider requests for dispensation - None
- c. To receive disclosures of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests for the agenda under discussion - None

2. To resolve that the minutes of the meetings of the council held on 3rd July 2025 are a true and accurate record – APPROVED. Proposed by Cllr Squirrell and seconded by Cllr O'Brien.

3. To receive progress reports and for information:

a. Anglian Water Strategic Pipeline

The pipeline through Thorpe is pretty much finished. The dormice exclusion zone is still present but should be taken away in the Autumn. The first lot of compensation to farmers has been paid. Anglian Water has pledged to pay 50% of crop loss compensation next year and 25% for the following year. It is unclear who will be responsible for maintenance of the valves, going forward.

b. Footpaths and Public Rights of Way

Thorpe Wood - There are now some helpful signs in Thorpe Wood to let members of the public know which areas are actual footpaths or permissive paths and which are not.
Valley Farm – it has been noted that this footpath is being used as a road, mainly by dog walkers. This is causing a daily disturbance for residents living here; moreover, cars should not be driving on a footpath.

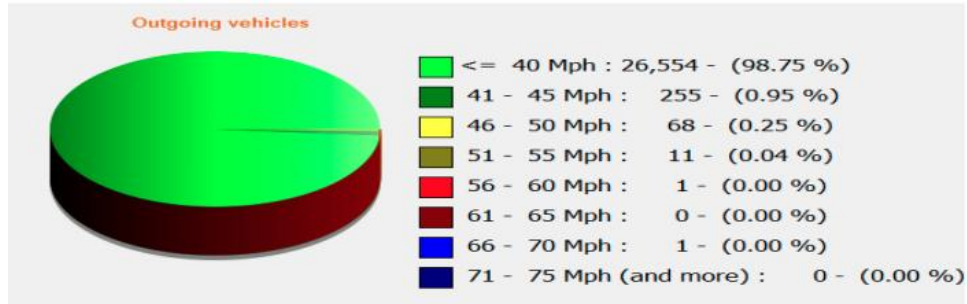
c. Neighbourhood Plan – Deborah mentioned that, despite what had been previously advised, there may be some money available after all for PCs from the DC, to be confirmed. There is also some beta testing ongoing at present on some new software that would halve the time it takes to create a NP. Update to follow in mid-November.

d. Village Hall charitable status update – The Village Hall committee have decided to become a registered charity, and this is now moving forward. It has been noted that the Parish Council needs to be more aware of its responsibilities and liabilities regarding the fact it is a trustee of the Village Hall. Community Action Suffolk offer a training session on VH governance for Trustees which the clerk will attend at a cost of £35.00. Further updates to come at the next meeting.

e. SID update – data and redeployment. The SID has been moved to the other pole. In 100 days – over 20k vehicles have gone past. Summary below:

Signed _____

Date: _____



4. Public participation session to include District and County Councillors Reports.

Both DC and CC reports can be found at the end of these minutes.

The County Council and District Council have published their business cases regarding Local Government Reorganisation, which can be found here:

<https://threecouncilsforuffolk.org/>

<https://onesuffolkcouncil.co.uk/one-suffolk-one-council-one-stronger-future/>

Following this, there will then be a public consultation. However, the Parish Council was informed that there will not be a vote, and it will ultimately be a government decision.

5. Clerk's Report

a. Schedule of items awaiting approval – APPROVED.

BFWD	£3,634.28	
Expenditure (approved and paid):		Payment power
Clerks salary MAY/JUNE	£372.00	LGA 1972, s.111
HMRC - PAYE	£93.00	LGA 1972, s.111
Kill your speed sign for empty SID pole	£73.98	RTR Act 1984 s.72(1)
Website support and hosting	£329.04	LGA 1972, s.111
FILCA Training course for Clerk	£144.00	LGA 1972, s.111
	£1,012.02	
Income		
Precept 2 of 2	£3,187.50	
	Total income £3,187.50	
Bank balance as of 18th September 2025	£5,809.76	
Items to be paid awaiting approval:		
Clerks salary July/August	£312.00	LGA 1972, s.111
HMRC - PAYE	£78.00	LGA 1972, s.111
Reimburse clerk for CC payment - SID sign clamps	£10.58	RTR Act 1984 s.72(1)
Village Hall - Defib replacement pads	£121.54	PHA 1936, S.234
	Total expenditure £522.12	

b. Bank reconciliation -APPROVED.

6. Cllrs reports including police report.

Cllr O'Brien – Warm Hub Cafés – 19 sessions have been run in the last year on Monday and Saturday mornings and on Friday evenings. Along with the donations, council grant and profits from the bar this is financially secure whilst maintaining some contingency.

Signed _____

Date: _____

Cllr Pepper – It has been noted that there have been many road closures, mainly due to City Fibre, often at multiple ends of the village. At one point last week it appeared that all entrances and exits from the village were blocked!

Cllr Squirrell - Police report – in the last 3 months there has been 1 crime reported and investigated (criminal damage). This takes the rolling annual average to 4 crimes in the last year – one of the lowest out of all the surrounding areas.

It was noted that there will be one more cut for Whitethorn Ley this year, invoice to follow.

The broken fence at Whitethorn Ley that was reported at the last meeting still has not been fixed – Clerk to send a reminder to Orwell Housing.

7. To consider sending a letter to Babergh District Council in support of a resident who is having issues with a neighbour. Deborah Saw is going to ask the DC community safety officer to contact Flagship homes to assist with this.
8. Items for consideration for inclusion on the next agenda – Village Hall Charitable Status update.
9. To consider planning applications (up to and including any new ones submitted on or before 18th Sept 2025)
 - a. For information:
 - DC/25/00605** - Discharge of Conditions Application - Condition 9 (Surface Water Drainage Strategy) Birds Farm, Blacksmiths Lane- APPROVED
 - DC/25/02558** - Application to determine if Prior Approval is required for a proposed Change of Use of Agricultural Buildings to Dwellinghouses (C3) - Barn East of Green Farm, The Green – AWAITING DECISION
 - DC/25/02980** - Full Planning Application - Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 9 no. dwellings and associated works Location: Manor Farm, Lavenham Road, Thorpe Morieux, Suffolk IP30 0NH - WITHDRAWN
 - b. New applications:
 - DC/25/04019** - Newsons Farm, Bury Road - Application for Listed Building Consent - Remove failed lime/sand render from north elevation and replace with lime/chalk/hair plaster on cork insulation boards.
There were no comments or objections from the PC regarding this application.
10. To confirm the date of the next meeting – scheduled for 13th November 2025.

Meeting closed at 21.20hrs

Signed _____

Date: _____

District Councillor's report to Thorpe Morieux Parish Council

18th September 2025

Local Government Reorganisation

Work continues putting forward the case for three unitary councils for Suffolk. The County favours one council for the whole of Suffolk. Babergh Councillors at a full council meeting on 22nd July formally agreed to join the county's other district and borough councils in putting forward a business case for three unitary councils which responds to residents' desire for local, accountable representation, offers genuine value for money and delivers more responsive services. The business case must be sent to the Government on 26th September and has to be approved by councillors at September's full council meeting on Tuesday 23rd September.

The County has published its business case which can be found here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/one-suffolk-business-case.pdf> debated it Tuesday 16th September.

The district and borough councils have published a website, [Welcome – Three Councils For Suffolk](#), which outlines the plan. Its business case can be found there. The three councils would each serve distinct regions anchored by Suffolk's largest towns, Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich and Lowestoft. This meets the government guidance that the new council areas have a "clear rationale," that they are "sensible economic areas" and have "sensible geographies."

There is one council proposed for Western Suffolk, one council proposed for Central & Eastern Suffolk, and one council proposed for Southern Suffolk & Ipswich. Thorpe Morieux, Cockfield, Lavenham and Sudbury would be part of Western Suffolk.

The Three Unitary Councils plan responds directly to what people across Suffolk have said they want: councils that are local, greater accountability with local councillor leadership, and provide services that understand and reflect the needs of Suffolk's communities.

It also delivers value for money. Independent analysis by KPMG shows the model could unlock £34 million in annual savings, while allowing reinvestment of £20 million every year back into vital services such as social care, highways, and housing. Reorganisation will cost money. Our calculations say £39 million and it will take 4.3 years for the costs of change to be paid back by savings, and a "breakeven" point reached.

This model also strengthens the voice of Suffolk in the new Mayoral Combined Authority for Norfolk and Suffolk, ensuring that local issues, whether rural or urban, aren't lost in a county-wide approach.

At a meeting held last Friday at Hadleigh Guild Hall for representatives of parish councils sponsored by James Cartlidge MP both the County Council and Babergh presented our respective plans and took some searching questions from the audience. At the end of the meeting James Cartlidge asked the audience to vote for their preferred option. The result was 25 for three unitaries versus 8 for One Suffolk with around five abstentions. One Parish Councillor did vote for both options.

A Mayor for Suffolk and Norfolk

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill was published on 10th July. July. Mayoral elections will take place on 7th May 2026 together with the county council elections. County councillors will sit for two years until the unitaries come into being but there will also be elections to shadow unitaries in May 2027 before the county, districts and boroughs are abolished in May 2028.

Signed _____

Date: _____

The mayor will have control over transport and infrastructure, adult skills and employment support; strategic housing and planning; economic development and regeneration; environment and net zero; health, wellbeing and public service reform and public safety.

The mayor will eventually take over the responsibilities of the Police and Crime Commissioners, Fire and health. and have significant influence on planning matters. We now know that the Mayor will be given £37.4 million per year for the next 30 years. This is not index-linked. They will also be able to levy a regional community infrastructure on major developments and levy precepts on council tax payers. Currently only three metro mayors do this for a limited range of purposes such as policing, fire and homelessness. Under the bill all mayors will be given power to use these precepts to raise money for any area over which they have control.

The Mayor will have a board made up of the leaders of unitary councils, which is why it is important that there is local representation, and commissioners that the Mayor will appoint. They do not have to be elected

There is mention in the bill about establishing neighbourhood governance structures but little detail. This will be published after the bill is law. The goal is "to move decision-making closer to residents, so decisions are made by people who understand local needs"

The Government said it will carry out a review on the best way to achieve this. It will issue guidance on how neighbourhood governance structures can work well with town and parish councils.

Rural businesses

The Rural Business Growth Fund has been set up to offer capital grants of up to £10,000 to projects which focus on sustainability, diversification and improving the local tourism and visitor economy.

In order to receive a grant, projects must meet one of the following priorities:

- Investment in net zero infrastructure
- Investment and diversification at small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
- Farm diversification outside of agriculture
- Visitor economy business expansion

Grants of up to £15,000 can also be agreed for projects which strongly support the net zero infrastructure or farm diversification priorities

The total value of the fund stands at £415,519, with £178,922 available for businesses in Babergh and £236,597 in Mid Suffolk.

The money is coming from the government's Rural England Prosperity Fund, which offers financial support to help improve productivity while strengthening rural economies and communities.

Applications for the fund are now open and are being assessed on a first come, first served basis. To find out more information about the Rural Business Growth Fund, [visit the Heart of Suffolk website](#).

Recycling Electrical Items

The council has set up a new recycling scheme where residents can dispose of broken or old electrical items such as kettles, toasters, coffee machines, mobile phones and tablets, (don't forget to remove all your personal data and restore your factory settings). Look out for the distinctive pink bins at the Magdalen Road Car Park in Hadleigh or the Cock Inn Coach Park in Lavenham.

On average each household has 30 redundant electrical items at home. The recycled items will be repaired, if possible, donated or their parts recycled.

Signed _____

Date: _____

Nominations open

Public nominations are now officially open for the 2025 Move More Awards which celebrates the people, groups and organisations that champion sport, physical activity, movement and social cohesion across our communities.

Award categories include: Individual Performance; Club of the Year; Unsung Hero; Active Community; School of the Year ; Triumph over Adversity as well as three others.

You can explore categories and [submit your nominations on the Abbeycroft website](#). Nominations close 14 September.

Register for Solar Together

The successful Solar Together Suffolk scheme is now open for registration for 2025. The group-buying programme enables Suffolk residents to buy solar panels and battery storage, helping to save money on their energy bills and cut carbon emissions.

It is backed by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, along with the other district and borough councils, and Suffolk County Council. It's free to register with Solar Together Suffolk and receive an installation quote - there is no obligation to go ahead with the installation.

The scheme not only offers solar panels, but also battery storage and EV charge points. Customers who have already invested in solar panels can also get quotes for battery storage, to get more from the renewable energy they generate.

Suffolk Big Weekend

The Suffolk Big Weekend free prize draw has now opened, offering residents the chance to win days out and experiences.

The event, which takes place on 18 and 19 October, is a celebration of Suffolk's varied tourism offering.

Businesses and attractions have donated prizes that showcase the very best of what they do.

Now, these prizes are up for grabs and residents are able to enter the free ballot until 29 September.

The Big Weekend originally launched in Babergh and Mid Suffolk last year. Its success has now expanded to include the entire county, in partnership with East Suffolk Council, West Suffolk Council and Ipswich Borough Council.

Prizes up for grabs include everything from afternoon teas and brewery tours, to boat trips and overnight stays. Details of the prizes and entry to the ballot can be found here: [Suffolk Big Weekend 2025](#)

Grants

If any local community group is looking for funding for small scale projects or purchases, please do contact me.

Signed _____

Date: _____

Report for Thorpe Morieux PC 15.9.25 by Robert Lindsay, County Councillor

Donkey sanctuary looking for new home

I heard that horse and donkey charity French's Care Haven, which rescues unwanted animals and also offers mental health therapy for humans, is about to be evicted from the land it rents near Groton. On contacting founder Jann Turner, I learnt that it is seeking to purchase 20 acres of grazing land within a ten mile radius of Hadleigh. I said I would let my parish councils know in case they knew of anyone who might be interested in selling. Jann's contact details are on her website:

<https://www.frenchscarehaven.org.uk/>

40mph and 30mph signs now up on A1141 at Union Hill through Semer and Kersey

As you will have seen these signs have now been installed. I have contributed funding to these from my discretionary budget – because I believe it will make it easier, quieter and safer for residents and businesses along that road as well as safer for drivers going through it.

Daily Hadleigh to Stowmarket Bus route

The funding for this has been allocated, but the county does not yet have a timetable to show to any would be operator, including Hadleigh Community Transport which operates existing routes (461 and 462) between those towns.

Leaflets promoting Conservatives' "one Suffolk" funded by council taxpayers.

The Conservatives who control Suffolk County Council are estimated to have so far spent more than £130,000 of council tax payers' money on selling their proposal for a single Suffolk mega unitary and attacking the district councils' rival proposals for three unitaries. The bulk of this went on a social media campaign and through the costs of delivering a leaflet to every household.

When this came to light, the Government issued a letter to all chief executives of local authorities saying:

"We would like to also take this opportunity to remind you of your responsibilities under the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authority Publicity. Please do take care in having regard to ... the principles of objectivity and even-handedness and particularly paragraph 16 which states that local authorities should not use public funds to mount publicity campaigns whose primary purpose is to persuade the public to hold a particular view on a question of policy."

More on three unitary plan

Our political group at the county recently were briefed early September about the rival three unitaries plan that districts are proposing by two chief executives from two of the district councils (Babergh and E. Suffolk). They pointed the benefits for citizens in having services like social workers and adult care devolved down to a level closer to communities. For example: staff teams, managers and social workers serving a smaller area are likely to have more resilience to pressures than ones trying to cover the whole county. A smaller authority also ought to find it easier to find school places for children with special needs closer to home rather than send them in taxis long distance. It will also be easier for a smaller authority to combine its housing expertise with serving the elderly who need sheltered accommodation, rather than them having to rely on them going into care homes.

Signed _____

Date: _____

County council AND Mayoral Elections May 2026

The Government's official position since December 2024 was that county council elections would be postponed for 12 months until May 2026. There was much speculation that this would again be cancelled because people would only be electing a body that lasts for two years before being dissolved. However as that date creeps ever closer, without any change of heart from Government, it is looking more and more likely that Suffolk County Council elections will be held then, at the same time as the Norfolk Suffolk Mayoral elections.

Progress on recycling household waste including food waste

New Government rules coming into force next year rightly insist councils must now collect and recycle glass and foodwaste and more plastics from the doorstep.

District councils are responsible for collecting the rubbish and the county council has to handle it at the depots.

On Tuesday 15 July, the administration decided to put £5.9m into updating the recycling centre at Great Blakenham so that it can handle more recyclable waste. Biffa runs the centre and this means it will charge them less for the service.

Separately, the council has signed a four-year contract to process all the county's food waste collected from the kerbside from next year at Adnams' anaerobic digestion plant near Southwold. The waste will be used to generate biomethane that can be connected to the gas grid and also used as a fuel for Adnams' lorries. The residue can be turned into fertiliser for nearby farmers.

Signed _____

Date: _____