

Thorpe Morieux Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting

Held on Thursday 12th March 2026 at 7.30pm in Thorpe Morieux Village Hall

Attendance

Cllr John Squirrell (Chair), Cllr Louisa Pepper (Vice Chair), Cllr John Gagen, Cllr Keith Lee, Cllr Jules O'Brien, Cllr Garry Russell, Cllr Ashley Simpson
Robert Lindsay County Cllr
Sarah Headland (Clerk)
One member of the public present

1. Apologies for absence:

Deborah Saw (District Cllr)

Members' Declarations of Interest:

- a. To receive declarations of interest – Cllr Pepper declared a Non-Registerable Interest in Planning Application DC/26/00455 and will not be present for the discussion other than anything raised during the public forum. Cllr Russell and Cllr Gagen are members of 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 8th January 2026 are a true and accurate record. APPROVED - proposed by Cllr O'Brien seconded by Cllr Pepper

3. To receive progress reports and for information:

- a. Footpaths and Public Rights of Way. The footpath signs at Almshouse Green and Thorpe Green have still not been repaired. The British Horse Society has applied to reclassify the track from Birds Farm to the old school as a byway open to all traffic.
Regarding the track towards Brettenham, located behind the lake towards the wash, a member of the public raised a question about its status. An application relating to this track and several others was submitted in 1973 by S&P; however, this route was not progressed and therefore was never designated as a public right of way. The relevant documentation will be retained for future reference.
The potholes at the far end of Green Lane are large and causing concern. These have all been reported, and there are currently fourteen awaiting repairs. Robert suggested that where multiple potholes occur on the same road, a request could be submitted to SCC asking for the road to be resurfaced.
Flooding on Bury Road by Moat Farm – the S & P side is still flooding. Clerk to send a reminder to Martin.
- b. Village Hall – Charitable Status Update. The Clerk, Village Hall Secretary, Treasurer, and Chair attended a free training session run by Community Action Suffolk on charitable statuses. The Village Hall Committee has not yet met since the training to discuss the next steps, so a further update will be provided at the next meeting. There was a general view that operating the Village Hall as a Community Interest Company may be more suitable than running it as a charity. At the same time, the land on which the Village Hall and its car park are situated needs to be formally registered. The Clerk will investigate this. It may also be helpful to review how other village halls in the surrounding area are structured and managed. S&P have not responded to the request that was made some time ago regarding ownership of the land behind the Village Hall. Clerk to follow up.
- c. SID update – data and redeployment – annual stats will be provided at the next meeting. New solar panel will be installed before next meeting.

4. Public participation session to include District and County Councillors Reports. Both reports can be found at the end of these minutes.

Robert mentioned there is £27 million available to improve bus services in Suffolk and Parishes could bid for this. There will be a piece in the PC section of the Thorpe Times asking if people would use an improved service if it were available.

In Bildeston, Anglian Water will be replacing a water main along the High Street in phases from June to November. Diversions will be in place during the works. A website will be set up to provide regular updates, and Robert will notify us as soon as it is available. The doctors’ surgery and pharmacy will remain accessible from one end of the village or the other throughout the works. Once the website is live, the link will be included in the Thorpe Times.

A decision on the unitary authority structure will be made on 23 March—specifically whether there will be one authority or three. However, the size of the ward will not yet be determined at that stage.

A member of the public spoke about planning application DC/26/00455. There is some doubt as to whether the application should fall under Class Q, as the building has not been used solely for agricultural purposes, which is a requirement of this classification. Concerns were also raised about flood risk, noting that the barn was not used for grain storage due to flooding from the adjacent field. In addition, it was suggested that the traffic modelling appears to have been significantly underestimated. There is also an assumption that the current barn roof contains asbestos, but the application does not mention any mitigation measures.

A statement was then read on behalf of a neighbouring property strongly objecting to the application. The main concern expressed was the potential noise and disruption that could result from the proposed conversion.

Cllr Pepper has now left the meeting.

5. Clerk’s Report

a. Schedule of items awaiting approval - APPROVED.

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| Items to be paid awaiting approval: | | |
| Clerks salary (quarterly) | £582.00 | LGA 1972, s.111 |
| HMRC - PAYE | £126.00 | LGA 1972, s.111 |
| SALC Payroll services | £22.80 | LGA 1972, s.111 |
| | | |
| | Total expenditure | £730.80 |

b. Bank reconciliation to be approved - APPROVED.

c. Review of Clerk salary and number of working hours per week – hourly rate of pay (£15) and number of working hours per week (3) will remain the same. The Parish Council would like to look at following NALC pay-scale guidelines in future. Clerk will circulate most recent pay-scale list ready for next review during budget meeting in November.

6. Cllrs reports including police report.

- Police report – since the last meeting there has been two crimes reported and investigated in December (burglary) and two crimes in January (domestic violence). Last 12 months total = 7 crimes.
- Last Friday’s Café was not well attended because the email reminder was not sent following a recent email hacking incident. Enquiries are being made as to how this can be communicated safely in future.
- Anglian Water Pipeline – the gaps are now being filled in starting from Bradfield.

7. To consider the issue of motorcycling damage on Whitethorn Ley Meadow. Several residents have expressed concern regarding several incidents, and it has been reported to the police. The issue seems to have stopped for now, but the council will revisit it if it happens again.

8. To consider the issue of ruined verges at Thorpe Green. It is understood that this has been caused by several large S&P trailers spreading fertilizer. There has been a lot of activity up and down Green Road with City Fibre putting in cable over the last few weeks also. The PC voted not to send a letter to S&P but to encourage residents to communicate their concerns directly.

9. Items for consideration for inclusion on the next agenda. None.

10. To consider planning applications (up to and including any new ones submitted on or before 12th March which may not be listed here if submitted after agenda published):

New applications: APPLICATION FOR PRIOR APPROVAL - AGRICULTURAL TO DWELLING - **DC/26/00455** - Valley Farm, Thorpe Green Lane. Proposal: Application to determine if Prior Approval is required for a proposed Change of Use of Buildings on Agricultural Units and former Agricultural Buildings to 3 Dwellinghouses (C3) - Class Q.

The Parish Council questions if this application really falls within Class Q requirements since there is evidence to suggest that it has not been used solely as an agricultural building. It is believed at some point it was rented out to a separate organisation to store vintage fire engines for over 20 years.

Another concern is the number of properties. With three separate dwellings there will be a greater increase in traffic; bearing in mind that Green Lane is a very narrow road with few passing spaces. The road itself is also in a poor state of repair. There also does not appear to be enough space allowed for parking, which will also impact neighbouring properties.

Flooding is also a concern that does not appear to have been addressed since there is a high risk of run-off water from the neighbouring field.

The Parish Council resolved to make a neutral stance on this application, with the above comments.

It was noted that Class Q developments are now subject to CIL.

11. To confirm the date of the next meeting – this will be 14th May 2026 at **7PM**. This will be the Annual Parish Council Meeting preceded by the Annual Meeting of the Parish.

Meeting closed at 21:54

Thorpe Morieux Parish Council report by Robert Lindsay county cllr 12.3.26

New bus 51 Hadleigh and Stowmarket begins April 13th

A five days a week service will start next month. Bus company TMS will operate it under the brand "Konect. It will be a 16 seater bus. There is still some £27m available in Suffolk to fund similar new routes over the next three years and parishes are able to bid for what they want with a simple online form.

Wattisham airbase sewage sludge processing site shut down

I'm pleased to say that the county council issued a full stop notice to this site just outside Wattisham airbase on the road to Ringshall on 20 January, meaning that they had a month to clear the site, unless they sought to appeal the notice. I have not heard of any legal challenge yet.

County council elections back on

As you have no doubt heard, last month the Government suddenly U-turned on its move to scrap county council elections and they are now back on with v little notice.

This is owing to a legal challenge which the Government found it could not defend against. Before its lawyers saw this legal challenge, the government was adamant that it had legal precedents on its side.

All in all this strikes me as representative of the cavalier way local government changes are being pushed through.

Vehicle Removal Trial for Resurfacing Works

Often road works have been delayed and extra costs added because people fail to heed the warning to move their cars beforehand. Suffolk Highways have announced that they will trial towing away vehicles that have not been removed between March and June this year for about 19 specific planned resurfacing works. The council will a fortnight before place cards placed under windscreens and through residents' doors. Two days before the works are due to begin, cones will be put out along with signage warning that it will become a towing zone on the day. If there are cars parked on the road on the day, officers will knock on doors to try and find the owner and as a last resort, vehicles will be moved. There is a £70 fine to get it back. Essex County Council has been doing this for about a decade and found that it has worked to cut costs of road works.

County Council chief executive quits with no new job to go to

On 13 February, it was announced that Nicola Beach, the Chief Executive of Suffolk County Council, would be resigning after six years at the end of March. Because the council will be dissolved in May 2028, the administration will be appointing two existing directors – Andrew Cook (currently deputy CEO) and Mark Ash (currently director of local government reorganisation) – into new joint chief executive roles for the remaining two years of the council's existence.

District Councillor's Report to Thorpe Morieux Parish Council

12th March 2026

Thorpe Morieux Issues

I contacted Orwell Housing at the request of the Parish Clerk to get them to repair the fence at the Whitethorn Leys estate. This fence marks the boundary between Orwell Housing property and Parish Council land, and it is also helpful in discouraging vehicles from accessing the meadow. I got this issue elevated from the repairs team to the Estates Services Manager and the fence has now been repaired.

The Joint Local Plan and the Call for Sites

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils are proceeding with its new Joint Local Plan in response to significant changes in national planning policy and updated Government housing requirements which have led to an 86% increase in our annual housing target. Babergh has held two Call for Sites at the end of 2025/2026 and in 2024.

The Councils have published a map of all sites submitted during these Call for Sites exercises. It can be accessed here <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/web/babergh/w/call-for-sites>.

Let me stress this is not a list of preferred locations for development, and all these sites have to be assessed and consulted on by communities. We have published it, so communities have early visibility. Assessments will be published through the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment in June/July 2026. Officer assessment does not determine allocations — that occurs at the draft plan stage, which will be subject to full public consultation.

Neighbourhood Development Plan Support

At the recent meeting of Cabinet, it was agreed that the Council would offer individual grants to Towns and Parishes to support the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans and Reviews which seek to allocate sites for housing development that meet Babergh's housing need up to a limit of £20,000.

More information will be given at the Town and Parish Liaison meeting to be held on Wednesday 25th March.

Town and Parish Liaison Meeting

The Town and Parish liaison meeting for local chairs and clerks has been arranged for Wednesday 25th March at The Stevenson Centre, Great Cornard from 2pm - 4pm. On the agenda to be discussed are:

- Update from the Leader
- Local Govt Reorganisation and Devolution
- Joint Local Plan & Neighbourhood Plans
- Changes to waste collection/bins
- Local Nature Recovery Strategy & Biodiversity Net Gain
- Our Budgets

The County Council Elections are back on!

The Government has said that the County Council elections must be held after having told the County Council that it could cancel the election if it thought it had, 'capacity issues.' It is the district councils' officers who run the election on behalf of the County and fortunately given the policy backtracking we have experienced from the government did not stop preparations.

The election will be held on 7th May. To vote in person on 7 May, you must be on the electoral register by 23:59 BST on **Monday 20 April**.

You can register online with [your National Insurance number, external](#), or by writing to your council's electoral registration office.

The rules about postal and proxy votes have changed, and you need to renew them every three years. Any postal or proxy votes set up before 31 October 2023 have expired.

If you are already registered, the deadline to request a postal vote is 17:00 BST on **Tuesday 21 April**.

We are expecting to hear about the government's decision about the future of local government in Suffolk this month, maybe.

Better Recycling

Residents will have received the first of a series of communications about the changes to waste and recycling. These changes were put into law by the last Conservative government. The aim of these changes is to increase recycling rates up to 65% in 2035 from 42% today.

The Government requirement for households and workplaces will be four containers for:

- residual (non-recyclable) waste
- food waste
- paper and card
- all other dry recyclable materials (plastic, metal and glass)

A new green-lidded bin and food waste caddies are due to begin arriving in May as the service will start on 1st June. If you take food waste, paper and card, glass etc out of the black bin there will be very little waste left in it which is why collections will move to a three-weekly basis with food waste being collected every week.

If residents believe they have not got sufficient space for four bins, then they will be given bags or boxes. Below is a link to FAQs:

[Future changes to bin collections - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk](https://www.babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk)