

Thorpe Morieux Parish Council

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting

Held on Thursday 10th September 2026 at 7.30pm in Thorpe Morieux Village Hall

Attendance

Cllr Lee (Vice-Chair), Cllr John Squirrel, Cllr John Gagen, Cllr Ashley Simpson, Cllr O'Brien
Cllr Deborah Saw (District Council), Cllr Robert Lindsey (County Council)
Sarah Headland (Clerk)

Apologies for absence

Cllr Louisa Pepper (Chair), Cllr Garry Russell

Apologies were accepted and approved by The Council.

1. Members' Declarations of Interest:
 - a. To receive declarations of interest - None
Cllrs Gagen declared that they are part 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 meeting of the council held on 9th July 2026 are a true and accurate record – APPROVED. Proposed by Cllr Squirrel seconded by Cllr Gagen
3. To receive progress reports and for information:
 - a. Footpaths and Public Rights of Way – The Bridleway from Home Farm to Thorpe Wood should be 3m wide but the hedge is overgrown narrowing it down to 1m in places. S&P to be contacted verbally regarding this.
 - b. Flooding on Bury Road near Moat Farm - no update, as above.
 - c. Village Hall – charitable status and land registration update – This is now in the hands of a local solicitor. They have asked what the correct name should be for the Proprietor. The PC agreed that this should be 'Thorpe Morieux Parish Council', Clerk to advise Solicitor and become the main contact going forward.
 - d. SID update* – data and redeployment – see stats below. It was decided that these be presented every 6 months rather than at every meeting.
 - e. Potholes update – there are none 'officially' awaiting repair on the SCC reporting tool, however, there are many still along Green Lane. Cllr Squirrel will investigate whether any of these meet the criteria to be repaired and report if so. The PC encourages all residents to report potholes via the SCC reporting tool: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/highway-maintenance/report-a-highways-issue>
 - f. Whitethorn Ley fence repair update – Orwell Housing was contacted last week for an update on the repair of the fence at Whitethorn Ley. They advised that the repair had been completed; however, it was confirmed that this was not the case, and photographs were provided as evidence. Deborah has been copied into the correspondence and will assist with progressing the matter if required.

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Date _____

*SID Data from 4th July – 7th September 2026



4. Public participation session to include District and County Councillors Reports (full reports are attached at the end of these minutes). Both reports were received with thanks.

It should be noted that the proposed Norfolk and Suffolk devolution plans have reportedly been withdrawn. The Government has paused the creation of the new unitary councils and withdrawn previous decisions to establish them, reportedly following legal advice in relation to judicial review proceedings. This means that **Babergh District Council** elections are expected to take place in May next year, rather than elections for the new unitary councils.

5. Clerk's Report
 - a. Schedule of items awaiting approval – APPROVED

Expenditure (approved and paid):

SALC Invoice for CiCLA Training Workshops (50% - split with Alpheton PC)	£219.00	Payment power
Clerks salary (quarter 1)	£546.00	LGA 1972, s.111
HMRC	£117.00	LGA 1972, s.111
Laptop for Clerk	£236.00	LGA 1972, s.111
Zurich Insurance Annual Premium (approved and paid)	£277.00	LGA 1972, s.111
	£1,395.00	

Income

Parish Precept - payment 2 Of 2	£3,467.00	Local Government Finance Act 1992
	Total income £3,467.00	

Bank balance as of 10th September 2026 **£6,802.44**

Items to be paid awaiting approval:

None

- b. Bank reconciliation to be approved – APPROVED

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Date _____

6. Cllrs reports including police report
- A complaint was received in August regarding a strong 'muck spreading' smell in the village near to Birds Farm. This was exacerbated by the extremely hot weather. Clerk advised the resident to contact the EA and DC as they have reporting tools for issues such as this. A communication was also sent to S&P, and the situation was resolved in a timely manner.
 - Police report – zero crimes reported in June and July. This makes seven crimes reported and investigated in the last 12 months.
 - District Council grants will again be available, and Cllr O'Brien confirmed that an application will be submitted for funding towards the Warm Hub Café.
 - The Whitethorn Ley wildflower meadow has been a great success this year and will have one more cut before the end of the season.
 - Some properties in the area are now being offered super-fast broadband following the recent City Fibre residency.
7. To discuss the recent reports of disturbing and anti-social behaviour in the village - A concerned resident reported an incident in which she was followed home one evening by a group of young people, leaving her feeling scared and intimidated. Significant noise was also reported outside the village hall during a club meeting earlier that same evening. The Parish Council urges residents to remind their young people to behave responsibly and show consideration and respect towards fellow parishioners. A notice will also be placed to this effect in the Thorpe Times. If any residents have any immediate future concerns then they should contact the PC or, in an emergency, the police.
8. To approve the updated Asset Register (laptop added) - APPROVED
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 10th September 2026 which may not be listed here if submitted after agenda published):

For information:

Manor Farm purchase

https://homes.bidwells.co.uk/properties/thorpe-morieux-bury-st3.-edmunds/rps_bid-RUR260140/

New applications:

None

It was noted that the Government's revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) now mentions 'infilling' i.e. allowing for roadside development between existing properties.

<https://www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/changes-national-planning-policy-framework-nppf-and-other>

11. To confirm the date of the next meeting – scheduled for Thursday 12th November 2026

Meeting closed at 21:01

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Date _____

Thorpe Morieux Parish Council report by Robert Lindsay county cllr 10.9.26

Govt “pauses” creation of unitary councils

The Government have said that legal advice – likely in relation to the judicial reviews launched by Reform in Suffolk, Essex, Norfolk and other counties – means they are “withdrawing” their decision to create the unitaries that had already been agreed in those councils (three were planned for Suffolk). That means that in May next year there will be Babergh District Council elections, not unitary ones. The Govt is reviewing the whole reorganisation process, one presumes to make it robust to any potential judicial review hearing. The Government is refusing to say how long district councillors or county councillors will have to serve nor when there might be a unitary election, or even if there will ever be one. The county council has spent £786,000 on the the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) so far (not including their legal judicial review costs).

Council warns of looming reserves crisis following Govt decision.

The council's latest estimate for the financial year has penciled in a £7.8m overspend for the year. The chief executive has written to staff warning that “if we continue as we are,” this overspend would mean reserves would fall “below the minimum level required for safe governance of the authority.” He highlighted that savings had become more imperative given the decision to delay LGR. One presumes that they were hoping that using up reserves wouldn't matter so much with only a short time left in existence.

Bildeston closure short cut over fields closed

A widely used illegal short cut over fields and alongside a public footpath that drivers were using and generated many complaints to me has now been closed. I presume by the landowner after SCC Highways got in touch and possibly involved the police, but I haven't been told the details. Highways put up signs warning against it a few days before the landowner closed it off.

51 bus timetables, 51S free, school travel petition

Just to let you know that the 51S shuttle bus between Bildeston and Stow is free for the duration of the closure.

Separately, I have been asking again about the lack of timetables. I am told TMS have been changing timetables for nearly all their routes and that this is why there has been a delay installing them. Unfortunately, SCC must install the notice boards, when asked to do so by TMS. Meanwhile TMS have doubled prices on their school time Central Connect service to Thomas Gainsborough in Cornard. Two different parents have raised complaints with me. Parents who choose a school that is not nearest do have to pay and are at the mercy of private bus companies who can charge whatever they want. The only answer is to club together to pressure the company with withdrawal of their custom, or a rival service.

Dunwich wildfire repercussions

After the wildfire, the Suffolk Fire Brigades Union wrote to the PM to ask for more appropriate kit, ie clothing that is lighter, boots for outdoor terrain, more 4X4 vehicles and more firefighters. Suffolk currently receives lower than average funding from the government for its fire service, although it is one of the driest areas in the country and is therefore more likely to be hit by wildfires in our increasing hot, dry summers. Some county Fire Brigades, like Hampshire, do have the correct light weight clothing.

£18k on remodeling leader's office

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The new Reform UK administration at the council is spending around £18,000 to remodel the Leader's office at Endeavour House, claiming these works were needed as there was not enough room in the current Leader's office.

Help to Replace Ageing Heating Systems

All Suffolk councils are partnering with Switch Together, a community group-buying scheme, to make it easier for Suffolk residents to choose installers to replace ageing gas, oil or LPG boilers with heat pumps. Through the government's Boiler Upgrade Scheme, eligible homeowners in England can receive a grant of £7,500 toward an air source heat pump, or £9,000 for households currently heating with oil or LPG. The grant is applied for upfront by the installer, so residents do not need to claim it back or repay it. Switch Together works by bringing residents together so that installers compete to win their business which secures better prices than homeowners could negotiate individually. Switch Together's group-buying savings apply on top of the government grant.

For more information about the scheme, please visit the Sustainable Suffolk website:

<https://sustainablesuffolk.org.uk/what-we-do/projects/switch-together-suffolk/>

Warm Home Loan

Homeowners across Suffolk can now apply for a loan to help fund energy efficiency improvements to their homes, thanks to a partnership between Suffolk County Council and Lendology. The Warm Homes Suffolk Loan scheme offers eligible homeowners access to loans from £2k to £15k at a fixed interest rate of 2.2%, with repayment terms of up to seven years. **Further info:** <https://www.lendology.org.uk/partner/suffolk-council/>

Public Consultation on Cuts to Healthy Child Service

Suffolk County Council's public consultation on proposed changes to its Healthy Child Service has been extended for an extra month. The proposed changes include cessation of the Young Person Pathway and Family Nurse Partnership, which provides specialist support to parents under the age of 21 after they have a baby. The proposals also include removal of the Community Staff Nurse role from Health Visiting teams, and the School Nursing service becoming term-time only. The consultation now runs until 18 October, with a decision likely to be made at Cabinet in November.

Further info: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/consultations-petitions-and-elections/consultations/healthy-child-services-consultations>

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Date _____

District Councillor's Report Thorpe Morieux Council Meeting

Thursday 10th September 2026

Council Issues

The Government withdraws from Suffolk LGR decision

Ministers are reviewing the plans to streamline local government "to ensure the process is robust and aligns with the new government's plans to rewire the state."

The review which will include decisions on Essex, Hampshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, which have been withdrawn in light of new legal advice.

This decision was completely unexpected. As unexpected as the decision to undertake local government reform two years also announced by Angela Rayner.

The Suffolk district councils and borough saw local government reform as an opportunity to assess how we could deliver not just our services, but all public services offered in Suffolk. We saw it as an opportunity to transform public services at the local level where residents interact with them every day.

Our councils have been put under tremendous pressure to meet a demanding schedule whilst maintaining day to day services. I have lost track of the hours council leaders have spent in meetings trying to ensure the best result for residents, we have committed funds to ensure we had the best evidence. Council employees have spent two years worrying about whether they would have jobs at the end of this process.

And what happens now? I have been on two calls so far with the Minister for Local Government and all I can say is that the Minister indicated that the terms of reference for the review might be completed by the end of the Conference Recess at the end of October and that the review will take quickly as possible but we were given no date as to when it would start or be completed. District Council elections will take place next May but with no guidance as to how long councillors will serve or whether the Mayoral election that was postponed to 2028 might take place at the same time. The Department accepts councils put resources into proposals, staff, engagement with residents and asks us to make "representations," to it but there is no indication as to whether we will be reimbursed, fully or partially.

We have to take the Minister at his word that this review is a genuine attempt to get LGR right but as he told us this devolution is the bigger prize."

Local government deserves better than this. Our officers certainly do and so do our residents who have told us time and time again that they do not want a mega-council for Suffolk. We need answers and a clear direction of travel if we are to have any confidence in this Government's declared aim of rewiring the state.

The New National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework was published on 17th August and came into operation on that day. Its intention is to make planning decisions more predictable, more evidence-led and harder to refuse. It states that proposals should be approved unless the benefits would be substantially outweighed by adverse effects.

The most controversial measure in the NPPF is a new 'national scheme of delegation.' In effect, it will formalise the idea that only "significant" planning applications should be decided by a committee of councillors, while the remainder will be made by planning officers. A subsequent announcement was that mayors will be given new powers to overrule local councils on planning applications for sites with over 150 houses, or on

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commercial space over 15,000 square metres, the size of an average supermarket. Something to bear in mind when voting for the Mayor of Norfolk and Suffolk in 2028 or in 2027.

Other important points to note, settlement boundaries do not exist only settlements. Let me explain if there is a house adjacent to the old boundary then development can take place on either side, in front or back. Some settlement can be bigger than existing boundaries and it will be easier to get planning permission outside settlement boundaries. However, hamlets will be excluded

Infill within groups of houses will be permissible but the NPPF doesn't specify the number of houses. The NPPF seeks to encourage small and medium sized builders and developers so smaller developments of 10 to 49 houses on a site not more than 2.5 hectares are specifically mentioned.

The natural environment policies explicitly consider the environmental qualities of land, including landscape character and the countryside's natural beauty. Understanding a landscape's character and qualities remains fundamental to considering how development can be successfully accommodated. Trees, hedgerows and other natural features of visual, historic, or nature conservation value are specifically identified, alongside the role of appropriate landscaping when for integrating a development into its surroundings

The Council will be preparing a briefing document for parish councils and Neighbourhood Plan Groups on the NPPF and its implications for the Joint Local Plan.

The adjudication on the Call for Sites will be published at the end of September - early October

Energy Efficiency and Listed Buildings

The NPPF makes it easier for listed property owners to make energy-efficiency alterations and to install low-carbon heating measures. This sounds positive but you will still have to apply for planning permission whereas the Council is working on a Listed Development Order which would avoid the need for application where circumstances are right e avoiding the need for application where circumstances are right

Boiler Replacement

All of Suffolk's public sector organisations have come together to help residents in Suffolk replace ageing gas, oil or LPG boilers with a heat pump combining a £7,500 or £9,000 government grant, depending on current heating fuel, with group-buying savings on installation.

Switch Together works by bringing residents together so that installers compete to win their business, securing better installation prices than most homeowners could negotiate alone. Once registered, residents receive a free, no-obligation personal offer, and their installer handles the grant application on their behalf. Switch Together's group-buying savings apply on top of the government grant.

Residents can check their eligibility and register their interest on the Switch Together website..

Give your views on the future of Adult Social Care – The Big Conversation

We all know that there are huge issues with adult social care in this country. It takes up a growing proportion of central government and county council budgets, is bureaucratic, difficult for people to navigate their way around and puts a huge burden on families. Successive governments have tried to reform it. There have been 22 reviews since 1997. They all failed because the challenges, particularly around funding, were seen as too politically difficult.

In Babergh, more than a quarter of our population are over the age of 65 compared to the national average of 18.5% and that proportion will grow over the coming years and also more of the social care budget is moving away from the elderly to working age adults who have long term health conditions and the disabled. These

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groups rely on a patchwork of services and their families and if people have to go into residential care if you have assets over £23,500 you will be responsible for the full cost of that care. This situation cannot continue and the system desperately needs reform. With Local Government Reorganisation on the horizon here in Suffolk, it's the perfect time to work towards joined-up delivery of services. Not only between the new authorities, but with our medical and local care providers too.

We have a great opportunity to help shape future services and make it fit for purpose for the next generation – so I encourage everyone to engage with this big conversation on the future of social care.”

The Starmer Government set up the Independent Commission on Social Care led by Baroness Louise Casey to set out a plan for a National Care Service to report next year. The commission has launched a national conversation about what adult social care should deliver for citizens and build consensus with the public on how best to meet the current and future needs.

Adult social care impacts everyone at some point in our lives. This is your chance to tell Government what you need and want to see in the future. We must all take this opportunity.

You can give your views via this link, <https://caseycommission.co.uk/bigconversation/take-part/>

Funding Summit

Last year the Council held a successful Funding Summit for voluntary, faith and community organisations. We got such positive feedback that we decided to hold it again this year. Funders Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils Grants Team, Community Action Suffolk, Suffolk County Council Funding Team, Lottery Community Fund, Heritage Lottery, St Elizabeth's Hospice Community Fundraising Teams and National Grid's funding representatives will all be there.

It will take place on Monday 5th October 9.00am – 2.30pm, at Lavenham Village Hall

View the programme here

Places are limited to two representatives per organisation. Secure your place here.

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Date _____