

MARLESFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Marlesford Parish Council Meeting,

held on Tuesday 17th February 2026, 7.00pm, at the Marlesford Community Centre.

Present:

Cllr Richard Cooper (Chair)
Cllr Heather McConville

Cllr Sophie Franklin
Cllr Jane Ford

Cllr Simon Barker

In Attendance:

Melanie Thurston (Clerk)
3 members of the public
Suffolk County Councillor Stephen Burroughes
East Suffolk Councillor Sally Noble and the Clerk

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He explained the new agenda format, splitting items into Governance, Finance and Reports to give greater clarity to the meeting.

Open Forum

Pip Headlam reported regarding the River Ore water testing. The River Ore Water Quality team works under the auspices of Deben Climate Centre, Four Rivers. They are requesting support from Marlesford Parish Council to purchase one piece of required equipment and consumable materials to carry out ongoing water testing from Marlesford to the junction of the River Ore / Alde. It is intended that this work will lead to a healthier river and improved biodiversity for the benefit of both wildlife and residents. The group of volunteers are striving to reverse the decline in our rivers by testing the River Ore twice monthly for levels of E.coli bacteria, phosphates, ammonia and nitrates at eight locations in Saxtead, Framlingham, Marlesford and Blaxhall. The annual costs to carry out 20 water tests monthly for a 12-month period at the eight locations will be £750, and the Parish Council is being asked to contribute £100 to this.

Quoit House A member of the public, owner of Quoit House, was aware there was concern re the replacement of the property's thatch with tiles. Despite the house being in a conservation area it is not a listed building. He outlined the reasons for changing the roof covering, primarily the cost of insurance has gone up considerably over the last 3 years and there are only 2 companies who will insure a thatched property; he feared the thatch catching fire in dry/hot periods when neighbouring properties have bbq's in their gardens. Also that the thatch had sunk beyond one meter. By removing the thatch it has made the house more insulated and cost effective. He noted that the District Council had allowed the change of roof covering through permitted development.

Suffolk County Councillor Stephen Burroughes suggested that Marlesford may wish to review its conservation area policy. He reported that the Government has been undecided about local elections, but they were now going ahead in May. Suffolk County Council prefer the 'One Suffolk' unitary council option.

County budget has been approved for 2026/27 at £85 million. He said that they were looking at more 20mph speed limits around Suffolk and the Police would be enforcing speed limits more rigorously.

The Chairman noted that there is a threat to the mitigation of the A12 through Marlesford, work due to start in May, stating that some County Councillors are against the reduction of the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph. Cllr Burroughes confirmed he would seek to do everything possible to ensure the planned works proceed.

East Suffolk Councillor Sally Noble reported that she has recently attended the 4 Rivers workshop and hoped to also attend the Alde & Ore workshop next week.

She reported that better recycling is a priority and the roll out of new bins was starting, she noted that a leaflet will be sent to every household informing about the new recycling and bin collections.

She noted that she has a new budget of Locality Funding of £7,500 and welcomes applications.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Cllr Franklin declared an interest in item 5c, Planning.

3. GOVERNANCE

a. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 26th November 2025

The Minutes were approved by all, proposed Cllr Barker, seconded by Cllr Franklin. The Minutes were signed by the Chair.

b. Matters Arising from the Minutes

The Chairman confirmed that the Parish Council had responded to the Local Government re-organisation consultation and opted to go for the single unitary council.

The Clerk reported that Suffolk Cloud has now made the village website compliant. The Clerk and Cllr Ford will carry out some housekeeping on the site.

It was unanimously agreed that the website domain name should be changed to marlesfordpc.gov.uk and each councillor to have their own parish council email address (christianname.surname@marlesfordpc.gov.uk). The Clerk's Parish Council email address to be clerk@marlesfordpc.gov.uk. These changes are to meet the new regulations. Suffolk Cloud has quoted £100 for the domain name change and £100 for 10Gb mailbox storage. SALC has supplied Cllr Ford with a list of 5 other website companies who can carry out the work. These will be investigated. The Parish Council approved that £200 can be spent on the work.

c. To Co-Opt 2 New Members onto Marlesford Parish Council

The Chairman reported that 2 vacancies had arisen to replace the Late Lord Marlesford and Samuel Catling on the Council. The Chairman noted that 4 applications had been received ahead of the meeting and these had been circulated to councillors for consideration. Since circulation 2 applicants had withdrawn their applications.

The two remaining applicants standing for the Council were Ms Julie Russell and Mr Edward Forwood. Apologies had been received from Ms Russell due to ill health. Mr Edward Forwood, introduced himself and gave a short resume. It was unanimously agreed to co-opt the 2 applicants onto the Parish Council, proposed by the Chairman seconded by Cllr Barker. A Declaration of Acceptance to Office was signed by Cllr Forwood. The Chairman agreed to deliver a Declaration of Acceptance to Office for Cllr Russell to sign. The Clerk confirmed she would inform the District Council of the 2 new Co-options so that Declaration of Interest can be completed.

***Action Chairman to deliver form to Cllr Russell
Action Clerk to contact ESC register of interests***

d. To Carry out an Annual Review of the Parish Council Risk Assessments

• Parish Council Risk Management/Risk Assessment

Cllr Ford suggested that there were a number of potential risks around the village which are not listed on the assessment. She agreed to carry out a review and update the policy.

Action Cllr Ford to review

- **Parish Council GDPR Risk Assessment**

The PC approved the review, proposed by Cllr Barker and seconded by Cllr Ford.

e. To Review and Approve Standing Orders

The Standing Orders were approved with no amendments needed.

Proposed by Cllr Ford seconded by Cllr Barker.

f. To discuss an Offer from East Suffolk Council to Speak to a Public Meeting on an Article 4 Direction

The Chairman outlined that an Article 4 Direction will preserve, protect and increase conservation of the village, and without it homeowners can make changes as they wish to the front of their property.

The Chairman reminded that the Parish Council had debated the Article 4 several months ago and a consultation was carried out in the village. A significant majority of residents in the village who were consulted by the District Council had objected to an Article 4 Direction and only 1 person wrote a letter in support. The Parish Council voted in support of the Article 4 Direction. However, concern had been highlighted as a result of the changes made to the roof at Quoit House. The Chairman asked the Parish Council to revisit the Article 4 Direction and invite a speaker from East Suffolk Council to explain more of the background of the Direction. This was agreed on a vote of 5 in favour, 1 against.

Action Chairman to make contact with ESC for a public meeting

4. FINANCE

a. To Approve Statement of Accounts

The Clerk confirmed the bank balances as at 31/01/26:

- Barclays Community Account £4,768.01 inc. £319.81 CILs and £150 traffic monitoring funds
- Business Premium Account £872.54

The statement of accounts was approved by all and signed by Cllr McConville.

b. To Approve Half Year Internal Audit carried out by Cllr McConville

Cllr McConville confirmed that she had carried out a half year audit and advised that all is in order.

c. To authorise the following Receipts and Payments:

- November – No Payments or Receipts
- December - Payments:
 - Suffolk County Council (replacement finger post sign) £1,430.84
 - Mrs M Thurston (Clerk’s pay) £619.80
 - Mrs M Thurston (Clerk’s expenses) £12.60
 - Suffolk Cloud (website accessibility report) £70.00
 - SALC (payroll service) £22.80
 - SALC (Cllr Ford training) £79.20
 - Mr Richard Cooper (reimbursement for Amazon voucher – village grass cutting) £100.00
- January – No Payments & Receipts

d. To approve the Internal Auditors Heelis & Lodge to carry out the Internal Audit for the year end March 2026

It was unanimously agreed to appoint Heelis & Lodge to carry out the internal audit, proposed by the Chairman seconded by Cllr Barker.

e. To approve additional signatory for accounts at Barclays Bank

The Chairman advised that currently there are only 2 signatories on the bank accounts, being the Chairman and the Clerk. A third signatory is required for good governance. Cllr McConville agreed to be the third signatory on the bank mandate. Approved by all, proposed by Cllr Ford seconded by Cllr Franklin.

Action Chairman to carry out completion of the bank mandate form

f. To agree transfer of £2,500 from current account to deposit account at Barclays Bank

It was unanimously agreed to transfer £2,500 from the current account to the deposit account at Barclays Bank to attract some interest. Proposed by the Chairman Seconded by Cllr Ford. It was agreed that research would be done to establish if such a transfer between accounts could be carried out without Parish Council approval each time.

Action Clerk to establish if transfers can be made between accounts

g. To allocate SCC Stephen Burroughes' Locality Money - £765.60 for Marlesford to be spent on updating the website accessibility in line with new regulations.

Cllr Burroughes noted that he had already allocated his Locality Money on the basis that it would be used towards a First Aid Course in the village; therefore it was not possible to reallocate the funds towards website accessibility. The First Aid Course is in hand with the Community Council and will deal with Cllr Burroughes regarding the locality funding.

h. To allocate the Outstanding CIL Money - £319.81 to Community Orchard Project. Funds to be spent by 31st March 2026

The Chairman noted that the cost to the Community Council for the establishment of the Community Orchard Project is £960. He proposed that the remaining CIL money, £319.81 is allocated to this project. Seconded Cllr Ford, agreed by all.

i. To approve the following expenditure:

- **Marlesford's contribution to water testing kit – up to £100**
Further to Pip Headlam's report on the River Ore water testing, it was unanimously agreed to make a contribution of £100 towards the cost, the remaining £750 to be shared between the other 7 villages.
- **Marlesford Community Centre – Hall hire for Parish Council meetings - £130**
Invoice received for the period May 2024 to April 2025, £130, was approved for payment.
- **Clerk's expenses to include half year Working from Home Allowance - £162.60**
Invoice received for the period November 2025 to February 2026 which includes the half year working from home allowance, period August 2025 to January 2026, total £162.60, was approved for payment
- **Reimbursement to Cllr Franklin for payment to Leiston Press for Dog Fouling signs - £37.20**
The new signs have been paid for by Cllr Franklin, reimbursement of £37.20 was approved.

All the above payments were unanimously approved, proposed by Cllr Ford seconded by the Chairman.

At 9.05pm the Parish Council agreed to extend the meeting to 9.30pm to enable the remaining business to be dealt with.

5. REPORTS FROM PARISH REPRESENTATIVES

a. Energy Projects – Cllr Richard Cooper

i. Sizewell C:

- **A12 Mitigation:** works scheduled to start w/c 4th May and running through to 26th August. Works will involve four consecutive night time road closures followed by various lane closures. At various times, the junctions of Marlesford Road, Bell Lane and Ashe Road will be close for use as contractor compounds. We are working with SCC on diversion routes. Note that a concern by some County Councillors about reducing the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph could put the whole scheme in jeopardy.
 - **Southern Park and Ride:** SZC intends opening the Southern Park and Ride from Monday 23/02/26. This will be for c80 parking spaces initially, and will then be increased in stages through to full capacity later this year.
- ii. **Scottish Power Renewables – Friston:** Various enabling works in and around Friston have started, including creating accesses on Snape Road in Knodishall. Some HGV traffic has already started. 210 HGV movements per day predicted at peak.
 - iii. **Sea Link:** Interconnector at Thopeness/Saxmundham/Friston. Development Consent Order (DCO) examination now under way (will run until May). Marlesford has made several representations, mainly around the cumulative impact of HGV movements through the village (300+ at peak). We are requesting various forms of mitigation, including improvements to Bell Lane junction, contribution to footpath to Wickham Market and insulation of the 23 properties within 20m of the A12 to protect against noise.
 - iv. **LionLink:** Interconnector at Walberswick/Saxmundham/Friston. Statutory consultation ends 10 March 2026. Expected HGV numbers very similar to Sea Link. MPC will be making representations for further mitigation in and around Marlesford. The DCO is expected to be submitted in late 2026 and examination will start in 2027.

b. Highways

- i. **Road Signage:** The fingerpost sign at the New Road/Buttons Road junction has now been replaced, making directional signage from Parham Airfield to the A12 more obvious. With signage on the A12 cleared, there should be no reason for HGVs to use Bell Lane to access Parham Airfield. The Chair has spoken to Alys Kindred (owners of Parham Airfield) who has agreed to remind businesses on the airfield that the designated route is via Buttons Road to the A12.
- ii. **Community Self-Help Scheme:** Designed to allow towns and parishes to do minor maintenance work that SCC can't get to eg hedge trimming around signage. SCC will:
 - Organise training for volunteers so they know how to work safely
 - Provide public liability insurance to cover volunteers while they're working
 - Give volunteers high-visibility safety clothing
 - Pay back the initial cost of approved tools and equipment bought by town or parish councils
 - Support town and parish councils as required to help them participate in the scheme
 Chair suggests that this is something that MPC and Marlesford Community Council should investigate.

c. Footpaths

- i. **Marlesford to Southern Park and Ride Footpath:** Discussions continue with Sizewell C and East Suffolk Council to get the footpath from Marlesford Road to Southern Park and Ride located on the NW side of the A12 hedgeline ie taking the footpath away from the carriageway. Very slow and bureaucratic process but progress being made and importantly, a drone topographical survey is about to be carried out by SZC – this should form the basis for the feasibility and technical evaluations.

d. SALC – Cllr Simon Barker

Cllr Barker noted that he plans to attend the next Area Forum.

He agreed to send SCC Stephen Burroughes a list of roads in Marlesford with the proposal of a reduction in speed limit from 30mph to 20mph.

Action Cllr Simon Barker

e. Planning – Cllr Richard Cooper

To ratify the response re the following planning applications:

- **DC/25/4878/LBC Listed Building Consent - The Old Bell, Main Road, Marlesford**
ESC has been advised that the PC supports the application.
- **DC/25/4877/VOC Variation of Condition - The Old Bell, Main Road, Marlesford**
ESC has been advised that the PC supports the application.
- **DC/25/4680/VOC Variation of Condition - Site At, Parham Airfield, Marlesford**
ESC has been advised that the PC supports the application.
- **DC/26/0208/LBC Listed Building Consent - Poplar Farm, Low Road, Marlesford**
This has been granted by ESC, the PC has no objections.

Cllr Ford asked what the Parish Council policy is for dealing with planning applications. The Chairman outlined that in future all councillors will receive notification of planning applications via the Clerk. Neighbouring properties are informed of applications directly by East Suffolk Council and are therefore able to lodge any concerns. If a planning application is considered as controversial then an extraordinary PC meeting can be called.

f. Footpaths & Access Nothing to report

g. Highways – Cllr Simon Barker and Cllr Richard Cooper Nothing further to report

h. Framlingham and Wickham Market Community Partnership – Cllr Sophie Franklin

Cllr Franklin informed that she will attend the next meeting and also the Marmoth meeting; and will find out what funding opportunities are available for Marslesford.

6. DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING.

- Annual General Meeting - Tuesday 19th May 2026, 7.00pm
- Parish Council Meeting - Tuesday 11th August 2026, 7.00pm

Meeting ended at 9.35pm.

Chair signature.....

Date.....