

Assington Parish Council

Clerk Christine Hargan 4 Northfield Road, Onehouse, Stowmarket IP14 3HF –

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Minutes of the meeting of Assington Parish Council on Monday 27th July 2026

Present: Councillors (Cllrs), Andrew Hill, Bronwen Stacey & David Wiles, Simon Thorogood, Kim Howard

In attendance: Christine Hargan (Clerk) DCllr Lee Parker CCllr Philip Faircloth-Mutton and three members of the community.

26701 **Apologies** for absence

Cllr Mark Armitage.

Thanks to Andrew for taking the meeting last month

26702 **Declaration of Interests** and **requests for dispensation**

None

26703 **Agree minutes of Assington Parish Council meetings on 11th May and 22nd June**

The minutes were agreed to be accurate and were signed by the Chair.

26704 **County and District Councillor Reports and Public Forum**

District Cllr Report Lee Parker

There were a few items of news:

- Fire risk to meadowland: Babergh District Council (BDC) has brought forward the cutting season, to avoid fires, in areas that are residential, as advised by Bio-Diversity officers.
- Full Council agreed to expand the East Bergholt conservation area. Resulting in the addition of Willy Lotts Cottage to the conservation area.
- £400k CIL money has been awarded to refurbish of Bell Vue Park in Sudbury, it will pay for an update to existing facilities, play equipment, toilets and general maintenance
- Parishioners have been invited to participate in a scoping consultation, views have been requested on how the district may be shaped in years to come there are 12 questions which can be completed online, prior to 31 July. Cllr Stacey agreed to circulate Nick Miller's response to the survey to enable an informed response to be made.
- On a local level, permission has been granted for the gym equipment. Thanks were extended to those involved.

CCllr Report Philip Faircloth-Mutton

A few updates since May

- Reorganisation: Suffolk's Reform council have been joined by other Reform Councils in taking the new Government Administration to Judicial review because they departed from their own procedure. A decision will be heard in September. The issue relating to three Unitaries is that it will be more expensive than leaving districts as they are. A decision will go to the Secretary of State.
- Elections for shadow authorities will take place next year
- The Care Commission has been rated as outstanding, particularly 45% of SCC budget.
- Only other update is the Highways request, engineer will be looking at speed matters, brought to attention
- Mayoral elections were postponed by the previous Administration until 2028, the new prime minister may bring them forward to 2027, whether one or two ballot papers await to be seen

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- **Questions**

- What was the objective of the Judicial review?
 - Cost, Unitaries will be more expensive than the current system. Helpfully for Suffolk County Council (SCC) the process appears to have been broken and therefore is open to challenge. The Review will ensure that Government abide by its own guidelines. CCllr Faircloth-Mutton felt that whilst two Unitaries would work, one Unitary System would be best to streamline contracts and avoid breaking up adult care.

A decision will be made by the Secretary of State in September.

- Does the CC want a mayor?
 - SCC is in bed with Norfolk County Council. There could be a Mayor from Norfolk who only looks at Norfolk it is highly unlikely that there will be a Suffolk Mayor.
- Is their idea a good one?
 - Yes, when it comes for money if the Council wants large infrastructure currently they have to approach central government for funding. The process is difficult as you have to bid. Norfolk got funding, but Suffolk did not, on similar projects. The Mayoral Budget will detail how much money is available.
- Who oversees the National Grid project?
 - New environmental and Community Fund. Interesting to see who was responsible. Evaluating who does what – productivity, managing land through the session. No one is challenging Balfour Beatty.

26705

Planning:

- A There are no planning applications to consider
- B No planning applications have been made since the publication of the agenda
- C Status of planning applications was noted

D Planning issues

- There have been concerns raised over a new roadway that is being constructed at Assington Autos. There appears to be no authorized planning consent for the roadway or to join this to the public highway, Cllr Faircloth-Mutton said that a modification to an existing application may have been made and therefore a determination has happened. There would still be a certificate for use, required and possibly an archaeology survey completed.
- Another Enforcement case with the land adjacent to Three Ways, where a cabin and 3 outbuildings have been erected on a field. Clerk to implement Enforcement procedure once What3Words location is provided.
- Gym equipment should be installed within 8 weeks.
- Concern was voiced about a large solar installation in a village in Northamptonshire, Whilst residents objected, planning consent was granted. Ultimately, if a local planning decision, is challenged it will to the Secretary of State on appeal. If sec of state says ok it will be built. Cllr Parker will look in on the determination.

26706

Agree actions on correspondence and emails

Noted in the actions

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26707

Clerk's report, agree any actions

Prior to the next meeting consideration to paying the insurance premium should be made, or gain additional quotes. There is no substantial rise in premium from last year, the policy with Zurich which is specifically for small Parish Councils is likely to be £264.00, from an indicative quote – it is only possible to gain firm quotations within 30 days of policy renewal. The closest comparable policy is from CAS and indicative costs are £548.00. Assuming no major change Clerk was instructed to renew with Zurich.

Chair to approach local contractor to attend to the signs as per the report in May.

26708

Finance

From RFO report Review reconciliation of accounts

Accepted

Statement of accounts vs budget

Accepted

Authorise payments

Resolved to pay in accordance with list published in the appendix

The bill for emptying dog and litter bins continues to rise and the cost of emptying the bins is a cost per bin, increasing the size of the bins and reducing the number of them would reduce the annual charge. Clerk to price up capacity and cost of larger dog bins and circulate, so that an evaluation can be made.

26709

Licenced Footpaths and APC Assets

- Welcome to Jeff Stacey who is tackling outstanding problems, many of which have been resolved since circulating his report, Footpath 20 to A134, has now been cut. Queries have been received re grass cutting and hedge cutting for the village in areas that are not Public Footpaths. There is a broken handrail re footpath 20 Clerk to report and liaise with Jeff to advise of the process.
- Works to Footpath 20 final section which is suffering from water retention, Jeff is in contact with owner who is not averse to improving the walkway or ditches, but the owner will need access across the path for his equipment. A French drain appears to be the most logical solution and ground would be reinstated above it.
- Cllr Stacey had received a message from the contractor re providing an additional cut, it was not considered to be necessary, but cutting the hedges is. Cllr Stacey to request that the hedge from the Thicks to Centuries is cut at the same time as wildlife area.
- Clerk to request an additional bench from Bryn Hurren for the conservation area with the Fitted price as close to £500 as possible.

26710

Neighbourhood Plan (NP) update

- The Government demands that a constant supply of deliverable housing must be maintained at 5 years BDC's land supply has reduced to 4.89 years which will tilt the balance in favour of new developments. Whilst the NP grants some protection, parishes need to designate additional land for additional housing. Parishes do not want developers dictating to BDC where future developments will be.
- Questions
 - Are lack of applications the problem ie that the NPs have been so successful in communities that the applications are lacking?
 - 5 year supply is dependent on the applications coming in if it is viewed as a hopper insufficient applications coming in, v the ones that are being completed on the bottom. Two or three years ago BDC were expected to deliver 770 homes across the district. Regardless of the number of applications coming through those

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applications are still being sifted. A process is progressing re what is and is not acceptable. The final number should be known before winter.

- Will the Local Plan still be in effect? All district plans are being adopted throughout Suffolk. Whilst districts are being split to fit the 3 new Unitaries under the LGR Parish boundaries are not being split, they are being cut out like a jigsaw puzzle.

The review of the NP will proceed with original projected 85 new properties being required in the parish over the next 40 years. Cllr Parker advised that an update of the numbers is encouraged. Currently it is unknown how many additional properties, or where they are required due to Policy shift. Councillors were advised to prepare for the full 85.

26711 Annual update of Policies

Resolved to adopt the Accessibility Statement and also the IT Policy as advised by the internal Auditor the other Policies Standing Orders and Financial Regulations did not require any amendments. Clerk to publish the revised Policies on the website.

26712 Assington Village Charity

Following the requirement for Planning Permission the Charity approached Fisher Jones Greenwood, who were in receipt of archived documents pertaining to the Playing Field. The solicitor established that whilst the land was gifted to the village hall. The only record was a scrap of paper and therefore legally the land is still owned by the Parish Council. Following discussion it was **Resolved** to gain a price for conveyancing work to transfer the portion of land for the playing field to the Village hall and to register it with the Land Registry. Clerk to gain advice as to whether there is a shortcut.

26713 Conservation Area Clerk was asked to contact BDC regarding the possibility of creating a pond in the Conservation area.

Resolved to change the use in principle,

26714 Questions to the Chair – follow up on two bungalows under construction in the centre of the village concerns were raised over the visual impact of the site. The owner was to be contacted by the Chair to see what can be done?

The meeting was closed at 8.56pm

The next scheduled **meeting** will be held on Monday 28th September 2026 at 7.00pm.

Appendix

Actions

Minute	Action	Who	Complete
251106	Provide parish photos for the website	all	
251109	Send photos of fallen signage at Rose Green and Dorking Tye to local contractor simon to pick up	ST	
26100	Clerk to liaise with both Cllrs Armitage and Howard regarding training and induction to Parish Council, Training for Cllr Armitage booked, Cllr Howard was not keen	Clerk	✓
26104	Traffic/reckless driving going past the pub, James Police should do it, reported category 1 danger to life, SCC are not legally able to progress, go back to Police. David to send James to revert to Police. again in village has it gone anywhere – no James will chase	JF	
26108e	Review reserves at the next meeting	All	
26308	Request suggestions for CIL expenditure on Facebook and website	Cllr Hill/Clerk	
26309	Notify LM Groundcare that the revised quotation has been accepted. A clear instruction must be provided to the contractor Cllrs to meet with the contractor to agree a schedule of work also to backfill/seed the area around permissive footpath and reduce a potential trip hazard to the ends of the path	Clerk Cllrs	✓
26505	Review the project for 20mph speed restrictions completion and funding	PFM	✓
26505	Category 1 speeding Discuss with SCC	PFM	✓
26511	Notify Heelis & Lodge of appointment as internal auditor for 2026/27	Clerk	✓
26513	Liaise with member of the public re meeting dates and venue to discuss the permissive footpath. Cllrs to attend meeting	Clerk/BS &ST	✓
26515	Internal Auditor report, liaise with IA re suitability of Privacy Policy and Accessibility Statement and ask whether Modern Slavery Policy is necessary	Clerk	✓
26515	Forward provisional policies to Standards Committee for editing	Clerk	✓
26515	Agenda item Policy Review in July meeting and reference internal audit in the minutes.	Clerk	✓
26515	Send exemption to external audit to PKF Littlejohn	Clerk	✓
26515	Complete audit documentation and Publish on website and noticeboard	Clerk/AH	✓
26516	Report missing Footpath sign to SCC and liaise regarding replacement	Clerk	✓
26516	Accept quotation from LM for landscaping the area surrounding the permissive footpath	Clerk	✓
26516	Check details of contractor who completed boardwalk within the village	Clerk	✓
26516	Diarise review of allotment rent in January for the budget	Clerk	✓
26517	Book Cllr Armitage on Councillor Training session 2	Clerk	
26519	Bus Shelter, Clerk to investigate who owns it regarding H&S maintenance	Clerk	✓
26521	Notify resignation of Cllr Howcroft to BDC and start the vacancy process	Clerk	✓
26521	Agenda item for next meeting Mandate change	Clerk	✓
26604	Mandate Change has been implemented but awaiting completion	Clerk	✓
26705	Look at Determination on the large Solar Panel farm in Northamptonshire to determine whether the same could happen in the local area	LP	

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26707	Approach local contractor to repair/reseat broken signs	Chair	
26708	Obtain costs and capacity of largest dog bins, distribute to Cllrs	Clerk	✓
26709	Report broken handrail to SCC and to provide information on how to do so to Footpath officer	Clerk	✓
26709	Request quotation for an additional bench to be fitted to the conservation area	Clerk	✓
26711	Publish updated policies on the website	Clerk	✓
26712	Gain advice on the transfer of land from PC to the Village Charity Gain costs for conveyancing work to transfer the land	DW	
26713	Gain advice from BDC Asset Management on procedure/permission to create a pond in the Conservation area and forward the advice to Cllrs. Emailed 3 August 2026	Clerk	
26714	Follow up re the two bungalows in the centre of village with possibility of purchasing the small parcel of land for a small Green	Chair	

Finance

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Bank Reconciliation to Date				
	2025 - 26		2026 - 27	
Income				
Balance Brought Forward from year end accounts	TBC	£88,874.16		£95,982.74
	Budget	Year End	Budget	YTD
Grants P3 grass cutting	400.00	386.52	400.00	0.00
Grants other	0.00	500.00	0.00	0.00
Bank Interest	2,000.00	2,185.49	2,000.00	474.69
Other = Donations, rebanked cheques Jubilee and Allot	360.00	360.00	0.00	360.00
CIL	0.00	9,561.10	0.00	0.00
Precept	9,600.00	9,600.00	9,600.00	4,800.00
VAT Repayment	0.00	855.83	0.00	0
Total Income	£12,360.00	£23,448.94	£12,000.00	£5,634.69
Expenditure	Figures exclude VAT where paid as it is reclaimed, and is shown as VAT paid			
Staff Costs, salaries, HMRC	5,000.00	4,513.97	6,000.00	1,635.70
Admin	300.00	465.40	300.00	161.70
Subscriptions	294.00	284.30	294.00	292.17
Donations	1,100.00	0.00	1,150.00	0.00
Street Lighting	900.00	0.00	900.00	667.97
CIL	30,000.00	10,756.88		0.00
Insurance	300.00	264.00	300.00	0.00
Audit	460.00	170.00	1,200.00	190.00
Grass Cutting (P3 Scheme)	1,200.00	0.00	1,675.00	0.00
Licensed Footpaths	300.00	0.00	included	0.00
Cut Allotments and Wildlife Area	150.00	5.00	included	0.00
Contingency	500.00		1,000.00	
Maintenance	1,400.00	0.00	1,000.00	143.15
Water and associated costs Allotments / Conservation	200.00	0.00		0.00
Neighbourhood Plan	0.00	0.00	15,000.00	
Bank charges	65.00	73.00	84.00	21.00
S142	0.00	300.00	0.00	0.00
VAT Paid	0.00	£1,890.83	£28,903.00	6.60
Total Expenditure	£9,595.00	£18,723.38	£57,806.00	£3,118.29
Totals BF+ Income - Expenditure		£93,599.72	£115,612.00	£98,499.14
Unity Trust Current Account	31 March 2026	£317.64	21-Jul-26	£699.35
Unity Trust Deposit Account	31 March 2026	£95,665.10	21-Jul-26	£97,799.79
	Total at year end	£95,982.74	Total held in bank	£98,499.14

Assington Parish Council

£ 98,499.14

20485977 • Current T1

£ 699.35

Available: £ 699.35

20485980 • Instant Access

£ 97,799.79

Available: £ 97,799.79

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Date

Payments to be made

£120.00 David Bracey Annual Playground inspection – he has now retired so we will need to gain a new inspector for next year.

£5.00 BDC lease of conservation area Meadow way

£1,555.00 BDC litter and dog bin collections for a year

£806.40 Clerk salary

£246.10 WAVE – allotment water

Payments since the last meeting

£14.00 bank charges

Income Received since previous meeting

£474.69 Bank interest

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Date