MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CONEY WESTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2026 AT CONEY WESTON VILLAGE HALL AT 7PM

Present: Cllrs Patrick Sullivan (Vice Chair), Paul Hines and Charlie King

Cllr Andrew Smith (West Suffolk Council) and Cllr Harry Richardson (Suffolk County Council). Luke Hibbert (Clerk and RFO)

5 members of the public were present.

In the absence of Cllr Francis, it was UNANIMOUSLY agreed that Cllr Sullivan would Chair the meeting.

1 Co-option of new Parish Councillors

None

2 Apologies for absence

Cllr Francis

3 Members' Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

3.1 None

4 Minutes

4.1 The Council UNANIMOUSLY approved the draft Minutes of the meeting of the Council on 3 September 2026 and authorised Cllr Sullivan to sign them as a true and accurate record.

4.2 Matters arising:

4.2.1 A quote to fit the new defibrillator cabinet to the Village Hall has been received (subsequently agreed by the Council in the Schedule of Payments for £90 plus VAT). The possibility of moving the defibrillator to the Bowls Club is being discussed between the Council and the Club.

ACTION: CLLR FRANCIS

4.2.2 Certain administrative details had been finalised with Lloyds and the move to Unity Trust Bank is being progressed.

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4.2.3 The Councillors approved a payment in the Schedule of Payments for £90 plus VAT to Westcotech to investigate a fault with the Speed Indicator Device.

5 Meeting open to the public

5.1 A representative of the British Legion delivered the Wreath and crosses for the Parish Council to lay on Remembrance Sunday on behalf of the village, and recorded his thanks to the representative of the British Legion who had undertaken collections in Coney Weston. There will be a service on Sunday, 8 November at St Mary's Church followed by a service at the United States War Memorial in the village with the Wreath being laid at the War Memorial at the Village Hall. Cllr Francis will represent the Parish Council.

6 Report from Suffolk County Councillor

6.1 Cllr Richardson reported that:

6.1.1 Local Government Re-organisation: The Government will make an announcement early next year, the options being the same as previously: 1 or 3 Unitary Authorities. Elections will take place in May 2027, although the newly elected Councils may be short lived depending on the decision of the Government in respect of LGR. The Mayoral elections will take place in May 2028.

6.1.2 A143: concerns remain about the situation with the repairs to the A143 and road closures in the surrounding area. The road surface had deteriorated again the previous week. A letter has been written by SCC Cllr Richardson, WSC Councillor Smith and various Parish Councils to Dr Prinsley (MP for Stowmarket and Bury St Edmunds), the Chief Constable of Suffolk Constabulary, Cllr Hadwen (leader of SCC), Cllr Hudson (SCC Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport) and Mr Andrew Cook (Joint Chief Executive of SCC) inviting them to a public meeting with the affected villages to discuss a robust and workable emergency plan to ensure future closures of the A143 are better managed.

6.1.3 Flooding in the village: Cllr Richardson had sent an e mail to Suffolk Highways for an update. He had not received a response by the time of the Parish Council meeting.

Cllr Richardson left the meeting at this stage to attend another meeting

7 Report from West Suffolk Councillor

7.1 Cllr Smith reported that:

7.1.1 Local Plan: 328 sites have been put forward by landowners for potential development. No sites have been put forward in Coney Weston.

7.1.2 Recycling: Cllr Smith will be asking WSC to send a letter to residents with details of future bin collections. Concerns have been raised about the frequency of collections. The black bins are collected every 2 weeks but are not usually full on collection, whereas the blue bins are only collected every 4 weeks but are often full well before they are collected. Cllr Smith has checked the position and it appears that that the recycling facility cannot deal with an additional blue bin collection.

7.1.3 Bottle banks: payments to village halls etc where bottle banks are currently located has been guaranteed for 2 years. Removal of the bins will likely start in 2027.

8 Parish Councillor Reports

8.1 Cllr King:

8.1.1 Playing Field: As the Clerk has been most involved with this issue since the last meeting, Cllr King asked the Clerk to provide an update: The Council has led the way on the issue of the trusteeship of the Playing Field charity being moved from the 3 current trustees to the Parish Council as the Sole Trustee. Former Cllr Clarke had succeeded in having title to the Playing Field being properly recorded at the Land Registry, and had communicated with the Charity Commission a number of times on the issue of the Council becoming Sole Trustee. The existing Governing Documents of the charity being outdated, Cllr Clarke had produced a draft replacement Trust Deed for the current Trustees to take forward discussions with the Charity Commission, the Charity Commission being prepared to discuss that issue only with the current Trustees. Whilst there had been long waiting times advertised by the Charity Commission, the Clerk had chased the Trustees for updates repeatedly. The Cllrs wished to record their significant frustration with the ongoing delays. A call between the existing Trustees, the Clerk, and Cllrs Francis, Sullivan and King is being arranged so that the Council can gain a full understanding of where matters stand and identify any ways in which it can assist in progressing matters.

8.1.2 Volunteers: one of the volunteers for the flower beds can no longer continue in the role. Cllr King will put an update on Facebook asking for new volunteers.

ACTION: CLLR KING

8.2 Cllr Sullivan:

8.2.1 Village Groups. A number of updates had been provided to Cllr Sullivan:

8.2.1.1 Bowls Club: development of the new Bowls Club pavilion is proceeding well. A member of the public present reported that the windows and doors are in. Cllr Francis had attended the AGM. Social Membership is available for £20 a year

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allowing members to use the bar, for example, with no commitment to playing bowls.

8.2.1.2 Village Pond: Ducklings are in the pond, moor hens have returned and some gold fish are present. The Duck House has been re-opened.

8.2.1.3 Table tennis club: the club is consistently popular and open to anyone who wishes to come along and have a game.

8.2.1.4 Village Hall: costs such as utilities and insurance are increasing, and the rent for the car park is likely to be £250 a year. Clubs are encouraged to use the hall. A number of successful events have been run so far in 2026. A live band is planned for November and a festive tea in December.

8.2.1.5 Village History Society: the Society is now becoming more of a social group.

8.3 Cllr Hines:

8.3.1 Planning: an application in respect of a tree subject to a Tree Preservation Order has been withdrawn.

8.4 Cllr Francis had updated the Cllrs in advance of the meeting. Cllr Sullivan dealt with the points in the Agenda for Cllr Francis' report, as follows:

8.4.1 Community Development: nothing to report

8.4.2 Parish Councils Forum: Cllr Francis will be attending the next forum in Mildenhall on 24 November.

8.4.3 Drainage and Highways: update provided by Cllr Richardson (6.1.3 above).

8.4.4 Village Hall car park lease: the Council understands that discussions are ongoing between the Village Hall committee and the landowner's agent.

9 **Clerk's report**

9.1 The Clerk reported that:

9.1.1 Insurance: the Council's insurance policy has been renewed with Zurich.

9.1.2 Training: the Clerk and Cllr Francis have attended training on the changes to the planning rules identified by Cllr Smith at the last meeting – more delegation to Planning Officers and the reduction in the number of Cllrs sitting on Planning Committees. Cllr Hines (as the Cllr responsible for Planning issues) had attended training given on planning by the Suffolk Preservation Society.

9.1.3 Standing Orders and Financial Regulations: no update had been received from NALC on the consultation being run on possible updates to the standard Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. The Clerk will continue to monitor the situation.

9.1.3.1 Data Protection: see 11.1.7 below. The Clerk will be undertaking data mapping. The Councillors have been provided with Data Protection training.

9.1.3.2 Budget: the Clerk will be producing the draft Budget for 2026/27.

9.1.4 Pension Regulator: the Council has completed its re-enrolment with the Pension Regulator.

10 Website

10.1 The Clerk reported that Suffolk Cloud, the organisation that supports the website and the Council's email system, is offering a new website to Parish Councils. The Clerk and the Chair have seen a demonstration and spoken to Suffolk Cloud about the possibility of replacing the current website with a new website. The website being offered looks very good. At least 25% of Parish Councils in Suffolk have already asked Suffolk Cloud to provide them with their new website. The usual cost is £300, but Suffolk Cloud are offering to discount this to £150. The annual costs paid by the Council to Suffolk Cloud will remain unchanged. Suffolk Cloud will move the documents on the current website to the new website. The Council could ensure that information on village events is kept up to date on the new website, including by link to the Facebook page. The Chair and the Clerk would discuss with Suffolk Cloud any tailoring of the new website to the specific requirements of Coney Weston.

The Council wished to record its thanks to Chris Flood for all her work and support on the website over the years.

A resident said that the existing website had more than just Parish Council information on it, it included historical information about the village. Would that be transferred to the new website? The Clerk said he could not say for sure that it would be, but that he would raise it with Suffolk Cloud if the Cllrs voted to invest in the new website. The Councillors UNANIMOUSLY agreed that the Council should invest in the new website.

ACTION: CLERK

11 Policy Review

11.1 The Council wished to undertake a rolling review of its Policies through the Council year.

11.1.1 Councillors' Code of Conduct: re-approved

11.1.2 IT Policy: re-approved

11.1.3 Freedom of Information Policy: re-approved

11.1.4 Grant Awarding Policy and Grant Application Form: an amendment had been proposed by Cllr Francis to replace the last paragraph with:

Receipts are expected to be provided along with a short report/e mail clearly demonstrating that the funds have been used for the purposes specified in the application.

The Cllrs UNANIMOUSLY re-approved the Policy, with the addition of this wording. The Grant Application Form was re-approved

11.1.5 Complaints Procedure and Complaints Form: re-approved

11.1.6 Employees' Code of Conduct and Grievance Policy: re-approved

11.1.7 Data Protection and Management Policy: The Clerk reported that the Internal Audit report for 2025/26 had commented that (1) the Council's existing Policy mentions the Disposal of Data and undertaking Data Audits, but doesn't provide any detail. The Clerk suggested that paragraph 2.6 be added: *"Paper documents should be shredded or burnt"*, and (2) paragraph 2.3 be amended to include *"..and data audits, including mapping of personal data and data risk assessments…*". The Cllrs UNANIMOUSLY agreed to these amendments and for the Policy to be re-approved with those amendments included. The Clerk will be undertaking data mapping and data risk assessments.

The Internal Audit report had also commented that Data Protection training should be provided to Cllrs. The Clerk reported that such training has now been provided to the Cllrs.

12 **Finance**

12.1 Asset Register: this had been reviewed by the Chair and the Clerk and updated, for example to reflect the purchase of the new defibrillator cabinet. The Cllrs UNANIMOUSLY approved the updated Asset Register.

12.2 Grant to the British Legion: the Cllrs UNANIMOUSLY agreed that the Council make a grant of £55 to the British Legion.

12.3 To review income and expenditure from 1 April 2026 to 31 October 2026: the Clerk presented a Budget Update report to 31 October 2026. The Clerk reported that the

insurance premium of £363 paid to Zurich had been inadvertently omitted from the report provided. Noted by the Council.

12.4 To approve payments and receipts: the following payments were approved:

Reference	Detail	Power	Amount £
1	HMRC - National Insurance	s.111, Local Government Act, 1972	46.45.
2	Administration	s.111, Local Government Act, 1972	893.23
3	Kate Martin – plants for the village	s.111, Local Government Act, 1972	34.30
4	Suffolk Preservation Society (training)	s.111, Local Government Act, 1972	10.00
5	Clerk expenses	s.111, Local Government Act, 1972	8.40
6	SALC payroll (1.4.26 to 31.3.27)	s.111, Local Government Act, 1972	64.80
7	Amy Mann (rent of Village Hall car park)	s.111, Local Government Act, 1972	150.00
8	Suffolk Cloud (new website)	s.111, Local Government Act, 1972	150.00
9	Westcotech (assessment of fault with Speed Indicator Device)	s.111, Local Government Act, 1972	60.00
10	British Legion (wreath)	s.137, Local Government Act, 1972	55.00
11	Vertas (Playing Field grass cut) - August	s.164 Public Health Act, 1875	159.44
12	Vertas (Playing Field grass cut) – September	s.164 Public Health Act, 1875	159.44
13	Vertas (Playing Field grass cut) – October	s.164 Public Health Act, 1875	159.44

13 Date of next meeting

13.1 The Councillors approved Thursday, 14 January 2027 as the date for the next meeting.

14 Exclusion of Public and press in the public interest for consideration of confidential items

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14.1 Legal and personnel issues.

The meeting closed at 8pm

Signed as a true and accurate record

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Cllr Patrick Sullivan (Vice Chair)

14 January 2027

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