

**Milden Parish Meeting**  
**Held on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 7pm**  
**at St Peter's Church, Milden**

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Chair	Sara Godfrey
Treasurer	Sandy De'Ath
Clerk	Jules Isahak
Babergh District Councillor (BDC)	Bryn Hurren
Suffolk County Councillor (SCC)	James Finch

**Present:**

Martin Beresford	Joe Coulter	Keith Grieve	Bridget Hawkins
Christopher Hawkins	Ken Hood	Adrian Miles	Sally Miles
Joy Morley	Stephen Morley	Denise Thomas	Justine Turner

Part	Discussion	Action				
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b>					
1.1	Apologies were received and accepted from; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jodie Baker</li> <li>• Simon Frost</li> <li>• Mark Isahak</li> <li>• Antony Watson</li> <li>• Gilly Watson</li> </ul>					
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025</b>					
2.1	The minutes were agreed and approved as a true and correct record of the meeting. <table border="1" style="width: 100%; margin-top: 5px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"><b>Proposed</b></td> <td>Denise Thomas</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Seconded</b></td> <td>Adrian Miles</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Proposed</b>	Denise Thomas	<b>Seconded</b>	Adrian Miles	
<b>Proposed</b>	Denise Thomas					
<b>Seconded</b>	Adrian Miles					
<b>3</b>	<b>Matters arising from those minutes</b>					
3.1	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; margin-top: 5px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>Part 5.3 – Overhanging trees on Powney Street</b></td> <td>The issue has been fully remedied. All overhanging growth has been professionally removed.</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Part 5.3 – Overhanging trees on Powney Street</b>	The issue has been fully remedied. All overhanging growth has been professionally removed.			
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	<b>Part 8.2 – SID Sign</b>	Installation of the second SID sign has been completed.	
<b>4</b>	<b>County Councillor’s Report</b>		
4.1	<p><b>Councillor James Finch shared his report as follows:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>One Suffolk plan revealed saving Suffolk £39.4 million a year with more local services</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Millions of pounds of public money would be saved and reinvested in frontline services and benefits for the whole of Suffolk, if the Government backs a new plan (published Monday 8<sup>th</sup> September). The ambitious proposal will see all of Suffolk’s six councils abolished and replaced with one new unitary council, which would deliver both local and county-wide services.</li> <li>▪ The One Suffolk business case demonstrates that a single unitary authority for Suffolk will save £78.2 million after the first five years, while three councils would cost an eye-watering £145.3 million more than the current two-tier system. After the first five years, one council would save £39.4 million a year, whereas three would cost £13.1 million more than the current model. The business case is built on rigorous financial analysis of Suffolk-based data conducted by global advisory firm Grant Thornton, rather than generic national modelling.</li> <li>▪ One Suffolk would have the capacity to create real improvements to council services which would benefit everyone, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved financial resilience, enabling the unitary council to free up resources for frontline services and keep council tax as low as possible.</li> <li>• Harmonising Council Tax to the lowest level across Suffolk. Based on current levels this would result in Band D properties seeing a reduction of £245 in Ipswich, £17 in East Suffolk, £29 in West Suffolk, £19 in Babergh and a freeze in Mid Suffolk.</li> <li>• A new deal for market towns, including Ipswich, backed by a £40m capital investment fund, and a review of car parking charges and markets, conducted in consultation with traders, businesses and representative bodies.</li> <li>• Empowering communities by offering powers and funding to town and parish councils where these councils express a desire for additional responsibilities. Creating a new town council for Ipswich to enhance democratic representation.</li> <li>• A proactive and revitalised highways service that says ‘yes’ more; acting swiftly, communicating clearly and delivering more.</li> <li>• Creating a unified planning framework that delivers greater consistency, efficiency, and strategic alignment across Suffolk, paired with local planning committees so decisions are made close to home.</li> <li>• Leveraging technology and innovation to create a modern council prepared for future challenges.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

- Building a strong, flourishing, and resilient local economy that serves all residents, businesses, and communities.
- A stronger voice for Suffolk through effective collaboration with the new mayor, focusing on clear investment priorities that maximise benefits.
- The One Suffolk campaign engaged communities from across Suffolk, with 8,189 responses to our Residents’ Survey. This made it the largest survey response rate for the County Council in the past decade. Immediately after a Full Council meeting, the Council’s Cabinet approved the One Suffolk Business Plan on 16th September and submitted it to the Government on 26th September. Government Ministers will be deciding, later this year, which proposals to put out to public consultation, before making their final decision in early 2026.
- The Business Case – Executive summary and the full report can be found here [One Suffolk Business Case](#)
- **Window now open to apply for primary school places**
  - The deadline for applications to secure a place for primary school places, including infant and junior schools, is Thursday 15th January 2026. All applications received by the closing date are processed at the same time using the schools’ oversubscription criteria to prioritise applications when necessary. Late applications are processed after all of those received on time.
  - Last year, Suffolk County Council received over 14,700 on time applications for pupils wishing to start at a primary or infant school, or to transfer to a junior school, or into Year 7 at a secondary school from September 2025. 94% of applicants received offers for their first preference school and 98.4% of applicants received an offer for one of their top three preferred schools.
- **Mapping project reaches major digital milestone**
  - Suffolk County Council has reached a major digital milestone in putting the county on the map. It has completed the Definitive Map and Statement (DM&S) consolidation project, using modern background mapping to prepare the updated legal record of public rights of way (PROW) such as footpaths, bridleways, and byways in Suffolk. The consolidation project is the process of preparing a new digital DM&S that incorporates all legal changes since the previous issue.
  - Moving away from hand-drawn maps and written notes, the council has created new versions of the maps from a digital database using specialist software against Ordnance Survey Mastermap base mapping. It has involved checking and digitising more than 10,500 individual routes across the county, ensuring they reflect the effects of more than 2,600 legal orders, including complex public path order packages.

- This ensures that Suffolk’s PROW network, which extends across thousands of miles of countryside, is properly recorded and accessible for generations to come. The updated Definitive Maps are clearer and easier to interpret and working from a digital database makes it easier to share data with a wide range of partners, including user groups, councils, developers, the National Trust, Natural England, and the Forestry Commission.
  - Working copies of the maps are available for the public to view and download from the [Suffolk County Council Rights of Way and Access pages](#)
- **Councillors approve devolution deal, paving the way for major investment for Suffolk**
  - Suffolk County Council’s cabinet has voted in favour of creating a new mayoral authority for Norfolk and Suffolk - which will bring £1 billion to the counties in the next 30 years - following overwhelming support from councillors in an extraordinary Full Council meeting on Thursday 2 October.
  - The new mayoral combined county authority (MCCA) would have access to a starting annual investment fund of £37.4 million - funded by the government. This is in addition to devolved funding from Whitehall to deliver public services.
  - The investment fund would enable the new Mayor to support a wide range of long-term, locally-driven projects that will boost economic growth, improve infrastructure and enhance the quality of life for residents. This could include transport infrastructure, housing and education and skills.
- **Suffolk Business Board backs devolution as catalyst for growth**
  - The letter outlines the Board’s strong belief that devolution will empower local leadership, attract significant investment and drive economic growth across the region.
  - Suffolk’s £21 billion economy is among the best-connected in the UK, home to globally recognised businesses and thousands of ambitious enterprises. The Suffolk Business Board, comprising leaders from key sectors across the region, is spearheading a new economic strategy aimed at accelerating inward investment, job creation and skills development.
  - The letter states:
    - The ambitions and opportunities business can deliver needs the active support of a streamlined governance structure that can help create the conditions for growth. Which is why, as local business leaders, we endorse the proposal to create a Mayoral Combined County Authority across Norfolk and Suffolk – a transformative opportunity to unlock growth, give more power and decision-making authority to local people and shape a more prosperous future for our region.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The letter also underscores the successful track record of collaboration between Suffolk and Norfolk, which has already attracted over £1.3 billion in investment and created and safeguarded more than 15,300 new jobs in recent years. The full letter from the Chairman, Mark Pendlington can be read here <a href="#">Open letter from the Suffolk Business Board</a></li> <li>• <b>Virtual Fostering and Adoption Sessions for the Stour Valley</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fostering is a flexible role with options for short term care from a weekend, a month, to longer term opportunities, all providing life-changing support for local children. If you want to find out more about what it's like to foster or adopt with us, please call a member of the team on 01473 264800</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
4.2	<p><b>Councillor Finch's priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Supporting Vulnerable People</li> <li>• Jobs and Growth</li> <li>• Localism and the Stour Valley</li> <li>• Building on Suffolk's Strength</li> </ul> <p>All of which is underpinned by strong financial management and fair council tax.</p>	
4.3	<p><b>Questions raised from the floor:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adrian:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>If the final decision concerning a Unitary Authority for Suffolk is going to be taken by central Government, does this mean that it is a 'done deal'?</b> <i>No, it is the Government's decision and not ours but no decisions have yet been made. I have confidence that the Government will make a decision but not that it will be a sensible decision; particularly where they are going in terms of farming.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Christopher:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Government is missing deadlines i.e. with Countryside Stewardship.</b> <i>There are some very unhelpful activities taking place and it is a very complex challenge. Suffolk has come up with some very different proposals to Babergh and we just have to wait to see how the Government will respond in terms of decision making but we are confident that the proposals Suffolk has put forward are the right way forward for the County.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Can you summarise this please?</b> <i>Quite simply the proposal is for one unitary authority to cover the whole of Suffolk. There would be some sub-groups underneath this umbrella for certain specific areas. The full proposal can be found at <a href="#">Suffolk County Council's One Unitary Authority Proposal</a></i></li> </ul>	
4.4	The Chair thanked Councillor Finch for his informative report.	
<b>5</b>	<b>District Councillor's Report</b>	
5.1	<b>Councillor Hurren presented his report as follows:</b>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Firstly, we are finally getting towards the final conclusions of the long drawn-out Local Government review</b> which has been chugging along for close on a year now. Both the County and combined Districts’ plans are now before Steve Read, the new Communities and LGR minister, for final determination and decision, we are now told that this will be towards the end of March 2026.</li> <li>• We will then be faced with Mayoral elections on 6<sup>th</sup> May and we already have four political candidates - more to come I am sure, as publicity brings more interest, before the window closes. We will then have spring campaigning before the ballot and the result being declared on 7<sup>th</sup> May.</li> <li>• I presume, that work will then start right away to form a cabinet and shadow authority before unitary elections in May 2027 but this is not yet entirely clear.</li> <li>• <b>At Babergh and Mid Suffolk, we are constantly striving to bring our housing stock up to date</b>, this is a constant battle due to changing legislation and increasing demands for better standards. We now have Awaab’s law after the little boy who died from inhalation of mould spores in an affected house (which is now of course unlawful). We, of course, have some older and in some cases not so old housing stock affected in this way and remedial action is promptly being taken.</li> <li>• What is even more concerning is the ever-increasing numbers of homelessness in our region, the numbers have gone up from 91 in 21/22, 123 in 22/23, 136 in 23/24 and more than that already by mid-October 2025.</li> <li>• <b>More urban councils also have to watch fume and pollution levels.</b> This is a terrible problem and an indictment on our modern society.</li> <li>• <b>The 2025/2026 budget is our priority now</b>, with budget and tax setting at the forefront of our minds, it will be hard once again to keep doing everything we do with limited funds and I am sure we will increase council tax by 3%, which is in line with inflation and keeps us standing still at least; with some increased charges we will struggle by for one more year. Our CIFCO (a property investment company wholly owned by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils) investments continue to do well and also our environmental tariffs and power from waste initiatives bring in good monies which should increase as power prices rise more than inflation.</li> <li>• <b>The Babergh growth scheme at Corks Lane is a disaster</b> but not sure how big the hit will be yet.</li> <li>• <b>We will do well to keep the district budget to around 9% of total council tax</b> as we always strive to do, and we will also have the Mayoral budget next year which will be an eye-watering amount.</li> </ul>	
5.2	<p>Councillor Hurren confirmed that he retains a Locality Budget but numerically this is only about £100. He also advised that there were so many other things he could talk about at the meeting and was merely sharing an appetizer but would be most willing to take questions and discuss any points further at the social part of the evening, once the formal meeting closed.</p>	
5.3	<p><b>Questions raised from the floor:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adrian:</b></li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>If the Government has not yet decided on the way forward with regards a unitary authority, why have candidates already come forward for a Mayoral Election? This sounds like it is a ‘done deal’ after all.</b>  <i>A Mayor will be voted for across the two counties of Suffolk and Norfolk (Babergh believes this to be a mistake!). This will happen whatever the outcome. The Government wants to have large authorities with an overarching Mayor such as Sir Sadiq Khan in London and Andy Burnham in Greater Manchester. Following the mayoral elections, there will be elections for a shadow authority but no one knows how this is going to work yet. The Mayor will however have huge powers, supported by a large budget and staffing structure.</i></li> <li>• <b>Denise</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Has any money been made from the car parking scheme?</b>  <i>Some money has been made but not a lot. The problem is that business rates are levied against car parks but car parks are not a business. They were developed to increase trade to villages and the market towns.</i>  <b>Denise repeated her question from the previous meeting, in respect of charity loop holes that may benefit the management of carparks.</b>  <i>The response hasn’t changed; BDC would happily give over the complete management of car parking to Sudbury, Hadleigh and Lavenham, where the charges have been implemented, in order that these locations could benefit from charity loop holes. None of these three areas wished to take on the responsibility. Babergh, as a council, is not able to take advantage of the loop holes so has no option than to apply charges, having put off the inevitable year after year, in the past.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>					
5.4	The Chair thanked Councillor Hurren for his comprehensive report.					
<b>6</b>	<b>Finance Report</b>					
6.1	<p>The Treasurer reported as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The bank account balance is currently £5,400 and is doing quite well.</li> <li>• At its meeting in November 2024, the Parish Meeting increased its precept to £1,600 (a 54% increase). This has covered all the expected extra expenses following the appointment of a new Chair and Clerk.</li> <li>• The Treasurer proposed to NOT increase the precept further at the current time.</li> </ul> <table border="1" data-bbox="411 1771 1265 1854"> <tr> <td><b>Proposed by</b></td> <td>Sally Miles</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Seconded by</b></td> <td>Denise Thomas</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Proposed by</b>	Sally Miles	<b>Seconded by</b>	Denise Thomas	
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6.2	<p>The Parish Meeting holds £9,748 in CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funds, having spent c£3.5k on the new SID sign. There is no further CIL money due.</p> <p><b>The following question was raised:</b></p>					

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Shouldn't the new build next to No. 1 New Cottages be expected to pay CIL?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>This property is believed to be deemed 'zero' CIL as it is now defined as a self-build. It was originally on Babergh's list but has now disappeared.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Noted that the extension to Pound Farm House has also disappeared from the list, this may be due to the fact that it has gone beyond the 6-year period allowed since planning was originally approved.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Following discussion, the meeting expressed concern that the property next to No. 1 New Cottages has been removed from the CIL list as it appears to be being built by a developer rather than as a self-build.</p> <p><b>Councillor Hurren to investigate as the property could be worth £3/£4k to the village in terms of CIL funding.</b></p>	<b>Councillor Hurren</b>
	<i>Note that item 8 was taken ahead of item 7</i>	
<b>8</b>	<b>Pavilion/Recreation Ground Report</b>	
8.1	<p><b>Adrian Miles shared his report as follows:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Pavilion is still in reasonable financial health with about £7.9k in the current account and £11.4k in the deposit account for long term back up. Funds need to be raised as the current account income has not been keeping pace with expenditure over the last 18 months.</li> <li>▪ In an effort to improve rural life Active Suffolk supported a series of Pilates classes which started in September. We are pleased to report that these were well attended and are continuing on an on-going basis. Those interested can sign up by contacting Claire Mortimer, visit <a href="#">Milden Pavilion</a> for further information.</li> <li>▪ We have a wine tasting event on 22<sup>nd</sup> November starting at 7pm with the opportunity to taste 10 festive wines supplied by Charles Easton of Nethergate Wines, along with grazing platters, pudding and a raffle. Tickets are still available.</li> <li>▪ Two successful events were held in the summer with The Fat Hen Pub night organised by the Cricket Club, raising good money for the Cricket Club, Milden Pavilion and St Peter's Church. In addition, we had a very successful Milden Midsummer Barn Dance held at the Morley's barn; a well-attended event enjoyed by all, raising £1,580 for the Pavilion Fund. Combining this with the earlier events in the year (Milden Singers and Shanty Folk) we have raised a total of £4,712 so far in 2025, which will be added to with the forthcoming wine tasting evening on 22<sup>nd</sup> November.</li> </ul>	
8.2	<p><b>Adrian raised two proposals for the meeting to consider;</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) A joint proposal from the Pavilion Management Committee and the Cricket Club to purchase a second-hand lawn mower, in order that the Pavilion playing field and cricket square can be wholly maintained by these two organisations rather than bringing in a contractor. This would potentially save money in the medium term.</li> </ol>	

	<p>2) A proposal to replace the current play equipment as it reaches the end of its usable life.</p> <p>Each proposal involves significant investment but it is thought that a considerable amount of the costs could be covered by the use of CIL and grant funding.</p>	
8.3	<p>Adrian confirmed that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In conclusion we are pleased to say that the Pavilion remains in a sustainable position so it can continue to provide a great facility for the village.</li> </ul>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Parish Expenditures</b>	
7.1	<p>In response to part 8.2 above, the following was discussed:</p> <p><b>1) <u>Playing Field Grass Cutting</u></b></p> <p>Adrian advised that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ an annual fee of c£2.5k is currently paid to Vertas for grass cutting at the Playing Field. This is likely to increase year on year.</li> <li>▪ The Cricket Club has proposed the purchase of a second-hand lawn mower, to the Pavilion Committee. The estimated cost for which would be c£5k (plus VAT) with running costs of c£1.5k per year. The expectation is that such a purchase would more than pay for itself within four years. Note that the cost for a new lawn mower would be c£30k.</li> <li>▪ CIL funding could potentially be used for such a purchase, although it would be necessary to have ownership of the lawn mower by April 2026, ready for the spring/summer season.</li> <li>▪ The lawn mower would be a Pavilion owned item.</li> </ul>	
7.2	<p><b>2) <u>Children's Play Equipment</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is likely that the current play equipment, which has been in situ for over 20 years, will be condemned.</li> <li>▪ Justine has sought two proposals for a complete set of new play equipment. Although the total cost of a full suite of equipment would be £20k, it can be purchased in sections, with as few or as many sections making up a play area as required or affordable.</li> <li>▪ The proposal is to prepare a questionnaire for the village, enabling interested parties to decide what they would like and what would be of most benefit to the village in terms of play equipment.</li> <li>▪ Any new play equipment would become Pavilion owned items.</li> </ul>	
7.3	<p>Noted that any decisions regarding the above proposals must be agreed by the Parish Meeting.</p>	
7.4	<p>No further proposals were put forward although it was mentioned that purchasing a marquee had once been discussed.</p>	
7.5	<p><b>Questions raised:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>If purchased, would the lawn mower become a parish asset and need to be insured by the Parish.</b> <i>As Pavilion owned items both the mower and play equipment would be covered by the Pavilion insurance.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>If CIL funding were to be used it would be necessary to reach agreement that both the Parish and BDC would be happy with the proposed expenditure; the expectation would be for the Parish to</i></li> </ul>	

	<p><i>make a small contribution, to demonstrate support (as was done with the new veranda). The Cricket Club would then help with running costs and maintenance.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What would happen if there was a big repair bill?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>It would be regularly maintained and there is only a small area to be cut but there would need to be a contingency to deal with any issues.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The Pavilion Committee would pay for the annual service.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
7.6	<p>Adrian concluded; <i>We think a lawn mower would be a worthwhile purchase for the village and would like to apply for CIL funding. A meeting with the Cricket Club will be needed to decide the best way forward. The Cricket Club is now much more sustainable and is an asset to the village. Costs have been researched and the Club has agreed to cover some of the maintenance costs.</i></p>	
	<p>The Parish Meeting unanimously agreed to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The Pavilion Committee pursuing discussions with the Cricket Club and BDC to purchase a second-hand lawnmower with the use of Babergh CIL funding with a small contribution by the Parish Meeting to demonstrate the Parish Meeting's support for the purchase.</li> <li>2) Approval for the preparation of a questionnaire to be distributed around the village, to canvass views on the installation of new children's play equipment at the Pavilion Playing Field.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Adrian/ Councillor Hurren</b></p> <p><b>Justine</b></p>
<b>9</b>	<b>Any other business</b>	
9.1	<p><u>Village Website</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Justine advised that this is now virtually complete. There has been a soft launch although there is still further content to add. Grateful thanks were expressed to Justine for all the hard work she has put into this.</li> <li>• The website can be visited at <a href="https://www.mildenpm.co.uk/">https://www.mildenpm.co.uk/</a></li> </ul>	
<b>10</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b>	
10.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 7pm</li> </ul>	
	The meeting closed at 20.15hrs.	