

Milden Annual Parish Meeting
Wednesday 20th May 2026 at 7pm

held at

Milden Pavilion, Church Road, Milden

Minutes

Present

Chair	Sara Godfrey
Treasurer	Sandy De'Ath
Clerk	Jules Isahak
Babergh District Councillor	Bryn Hurren
Suffolk County Councillor (Cosford Division)	Robert Lindsay

Attendees

Joe Coulter	Jan Ditheridge	Simon Frost
Keith Grieve	Ken Hood	Mark Isahak
Adrian Miles	Joy Morley	Stephen Morley
Denise Thomas	Justine Turner	

Part	Discussion				
1	Apologies for absence				
1.1	Apologies were received from; Christopher and Juliet Hawkins, John Harrison, Sally Miles, Antony and Gilly Watson.				
2	Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 11th November 2025				
2.1	The minutes were approved and signed as a true and correct record of the meeting.				
	<table border="1" style="margin-left: 40px;"> <tr> <td>Proposed</td> <td>Denise Thomas</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Seconded</td> <td>Stephen Morley</td> </tr> </table>	Proposed	Denise Thomas	Seconded	Stephen Morley
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3	Matters arising from those minutes				
3.1	The only matters arising were; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase of a lawnmower • Survey for new play equipment Both issues to be discussed under part 7.				

4	County Councillor's Report												
4.1	It had been hoped that ex-Councillor James Finch, would be in attendance to share his final report following his retirement as Councillor. Despite accepting the invitation to attend, unfortunately he did not arrive for the meeting.												
4.2	Following an official electoral boundary review conducted in 2021 by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, Milden was moved from the Stour Valley Division to the Cosford Division of Suffolk County Council. However, it is only following the local elections held on 7 th May, that this has been fully implemented for Milden. Now in the Cosford Division, Milden is represented by Councillor Robert Lindsay.												
4.3	The meeting was pleased to welcome Councillor Lindsay to his first Parish Meeting in Milden												
4.4	<p>Councillor Lindsay delivered his report as follows:</p> <p>1. County Election and the new Cosford</p> <p>I am pleased to have been elected as your County Councillor. While I have met some Milden residents on the doorstep, I look forward to working with and getting to know the Parish Meeting, and other residents in the months ahead.</p> <p>As you know, boundary changes mean that Milden is now part of Cosford division, an area I have been representing for the past nine years.</p> <p>The division has now become larger. I had been representing 18 villages, but four villages to the East were taken out of it, while Milden and six other villages, including Little Waldingfield and Alpheton, have been added, making a total of 21. From the northernmost hamlet, Cross Green in Cockfield, to the southernmost, Hagmore Green, Boxford, the new division is about 15 miles long and 10 miles wide at its widest part.</p> <p>I think I'd better say from the outset that given the large number of Parish Councils/Parish Meetings, attendance at every one of them will be impossible, especially given that many meetings occur at the same time.</p> <p>I do aim to focus on meeting the Parish Councillors/Representatives of the seven villages that are new to me to start with so that we can get to know and trust each other in the two short years the County Council has left of its existence.</p> <p>2. The new county council</p> <p>The elections cut the Conservative councillor numbers down from 55 to just nine with Reform winning 41 out of 70 seats, enough to form an administration on their own. Greens increased seats from nine to 13 – making us the official opposition - while LibDem and Labour seat numbers were roughly halved.</p> <table> <tr> <td>Reform</td> <td>41</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Green</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Conservative</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LD</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Labour</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Independent</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table> <p>At this stage it is not clear what Reform's policies are on County Council matters. There are press reports that the Chairman of Ipswich Reform Party has banned its new councillors in Ipswich from talking to the press. At the same time the former and would-be leader of Suffolk's Reform group, Christopher Hudson, has said that all the newly elected Reform councillors need to be put in an "academy" for six months to train them up.</p>	Reform	41	Green	13	Conservative	9	LD	2	Labour	2	Independent	2
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	<p>Last week we heard that Michael Hadwen, Reform councillor for Felixstowe had been elected leader of the group.</p> <p>We have our first full council meeting on Thursday 21st (tomorrow) when Mr Hadwen will be voted in as leader of the whole council, and he will appoint his cabinet members. I and my fellow Green councillors will do our best to hold the Reform administration to account for its two-year term. It looks like I will be opposition spokesperson for Highways and Transport.</p> <p>3. Question mark over unitaries</p> <p>As you probably know, the Government decided recently to opt for creating three new unitary councils across Suffolk in May 2028, to replace the existing district and county councils. I felt this was the best outcome of the two options available, as councils are better able to serve their residents if they are nearer to them.</p> <p>Reform’s new leader has said he does not like this decision and may seek a judicial review. My feeling is that the Government have followed due process in making their decision – whether or not one likes the outcome. I would have preferred it if the new county administration was prepared to work with the district councils towards preparing for three unitaries, so that they are as effective as possible for residents when they start in two years’ time. Residents will not be best served by more uncertainty.</p> <p>4. Two more elections in next two years - 2027, 2028</p> <p>If the Government does stick to its plan, in a year’s time, in May 2027, there will be elections of “shadow” unitary councillors – in our area for the new unitary of West Suffolk. Those elected will not actually be representing residents until the unitaries are legally created with full staff in May 2028.</p> <p>Alongside this, the Government is creating the office of a Norfolk and Suffolk Mayor, elected by all the voters in the two counties. That election is scheduled to happen in May 2028 and the mayor will take office straight away. Again, nobody knows at this stage whether the new administrations at Norfolk and Suffolk will co-operate with Government on this or try to stymie the plan for a Mayor. Personally I am unenthusiastic about the new post of mayor, as it appears to be a way for the Government to take power from lower tier councils to facilitate more planning permissions for development, rather than devolution of powers from central government. We shall see.</p>
4.5	<p>Adrian questioned;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will we be voting again in a year from now? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Yes, and then again in the following year as there will be Mayoral elections.</i> ▪ <i>There is a question over unitaries because of the threatened legal charges potentially being brought by the Reform party. There is also a question over the Mayoralty issue as many people in both Norfolk and Suffolk do not support this.</i> • If we are voting for shadow councillors in 2027, does that mean that we are paying for two councils, if recruitment is taking place and premises being sought? <i>I am not aware that there will be fully operational and staffed offices before May 2028. I think there will be preparations to hire staff and to line up a headquarters but there should be minimal costs in the first year. I do not know if shadow councillors will receive a full allowance in their shadow year; an independent commission will be set up to decide these things.</i>
4.6	<p>Councillor Lindsay went on to discuss his personal priorities as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buses and subsidised transport

	<p>This is a really important part of the function of a County Council and was desperately lacking in Suffolk, until two years ago, when a regular bus service was set up between Hadleigh and Stowmarket. Funding for this was possible as a result of £27 million being made available from the Government, for Suffolk bus improvement, last year. Parishes and communities have been able to bid for sums of money from this fund. Councillor Lindsay has supported bids to ensure some of the funding was spent in our area to improve community transport.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer streets where people live Councillor Lindsay has been involved in achieving low speed limits in certain areas and it is now slightly easier to enforce a 20 mile per hour speed limit.
4.7	Noted that the new Suffolk County Council administration, led by Reform UK will be formed tomorrow (21 st May 2026).
5	District Councillor's Report
5.1	Councillor Hurren was welcomed to the meeting.
5.2	<p>Councillor Hurren's report was shared as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firstly, to tell you that this year has been dominated by LGR (Local Government Re-organisation). This was stated as a government intent in late 2024 and has remained on the agenda ever since that time and although the Mayoral election for an area across all of Norfolk and Suffolk has been put back 2 years, everything else remains on track for unitary elections in 2028, with a 3-council set up for Suffolk along with Norfolk. This means that these councils will do everything that is currently carried out by Babergh and Mid Suffolk along with the current Suffolk County Council. <p>This proposal was put forward by the combined efforts of the 5 districts and borough across Suffolk due to worries of 1 council being too large and remote to do a proper job. Three councils geographically and strategically placed across our county should serve all constituents well and enable residents to have good democratic contact with their local councillor, working hard on their behalf. While the decision has largely been welcomed by the good people of Suffolk, council leader Mathew Hicks did not take it well and issued a pitiful statement, along with a withering speech.</p> <p>Regardless of what others do, Babergh and Mid Suffolk have already set up the required allocation of Councillors to work on setting up the unitaries within the next 18 months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For us the district council, we have once again set a balanced budget with a modest tax increase of 2.9%, this brings the cost of Babergh up to just over £4.00 a week for a band D property, which I feel is very good value indeed for all we do, this includes planning to a set prescribed standard, with a housing plan and land supply into the future to allow for prescribed growth, heritage and environmental inspection work to ensure that we and our buildings are kept safe and up to a required standard, without ever allowing a complete free for all. Also, our CIL scheme runs on a cost neutral basis and brings in many £millions for our communities and local enhancements and schemes. • Moving seamlessly on to waste collection, this has now moved on to a highly technical operation with recycling becoming a vital part of this. This is now moving on again with changes to what we collect and its frequency, glass at kerbside will now be an option along with some widening of options for more recycling and much less in the black bin. <p>Also, now we have a commitment to keep the bottle banks for another year or so and I believe payments will be given up front, this will be ratified after the election when purdah has ended. The days of a tin bin on the shoulders of the operative tipping it into an open lorry and then clattering onto the street are truly over.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good time to remind you that in Babergh and Mid Suffolk, no kerbside waste goes to landfill, all goes to the Power from Waste facility to make electricity for the national grid. Also, our solar panel initiative on just over 2,000 of our council houses which brought in just over £350,000 in tariffs during the last financial year, as well as providing cheap electricity for our tenants. Worth noting here also that the vast majority of our vehicles are now powered by Bio-fuel. • I will just touch on housing, our target numbers remain at 775 per annum for Babergh but for how long I am unable to say, the demand for housing generally is slowing but the need for first time housing and downsizing is increasing quite dramatically. Maybe with costs of raw materials and labour increasing and housing not selling, this might be a good chance to actually build something that is actually needed most. • One of the things that we have been doing currently is to organise the County Council elections for probably the last time. Although we should be doing the elections for the unitary shadow cabinet and PC next year but much can change. One of the things that Babergh has always done well and been proud of, is our ability to work with others to achieve the very best we can for our constituents. This long-term strength, may well be in doubt now with the new ruling group at the County. Ask me in 12 months! • For Boxford itself, I have been instrumental in saving and negotiating the deal for the Woodland Trust to take over Primrose Meadow. I understand that clearing work has started already and contractors are booked to erect gates and fencing along the front perimeter, this will I am sure become a jewel in Boxford’s crown, along with the neighbouring villages of Edwardstone, Groton, and the Eleighs and a brilliant asset for nature and our village, along with the nearby pond. • At Babergh’s AGM last week, Cllr Lee Parker was elected Chair of Council, Cllr Simon Dowling Chair of planning, Cllr Mary McLaren Chair of Overview & Scrutiny, and myself as Chair of Audit & Standards. I also am a trained substitute to serve on the planning committee and did so today. • I applaud the PCs endeavours to secure the long-term future of our Village pavilion with CIL grants and will help and advise wherever possible.
5.3	<p>Mark raised the following question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You refer to 1,300 sites being put forward for housing development. What happens to these now? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>These can be viewed here. It is hoped that they will be ‘sieved’ down, ideally by Christmas 2026. There are quite a lot of ‘no-hopers’ on the map.</i> ▪ <i>Council officers will assess each site to understand whether it is suitable, achievable and available, using national planning policy and technical evidence.</i>
6	Finance Report

6.1	<p>Sandy advised that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The accounts are complete and have been approved for internal audit by Adrian Miles The Governance Statement has been completed to comply with the law. <table border="1" data-bbox="213 297 1321 539"> <tr> <td>The annual accounts were approved</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Proposed by</td> <td>Ken Hood</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Seconded by</td> <td>Keith Grieve</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Governance Statement was approved</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Proposed by</td> <td>Justine Turner</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Seconded by</td> <td>Joe Coulter</td> </tr> </table>	The annual accounts were approved		Proposed by	Ken Hood	Seconded by	Keith Grieve	The Governance Statement was approved		Proposed by	Justine Turner	Seconded by	Joe Coulter
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The year started with an increase in funds, in the bank account. The balance currently stands at c£5,050. The precept will remain the same at £1,600. It was last raised in 2024 to cover costs associated with additional insurances and running the website. Milden’s CIL fund is currently £9,748 and is unlikely to increase as all funds have been called in, in relation to new builds in the village. 												
6.2	<table border="1" data-bbox="213 860 1501 1124"> <tr> <td data-bbox="213 860 1142 1124"> <p>Justine advised that Babergh continues to hold Section 106 funds to the value of £3,300. This is believed to be a precursor to CIL funding. It can be used to fund specified items, but clarity is needed on this. Councillor Hurren will follow up as the funds are not gaining any interest while being held by Babergh and its validity will expire after 10 years.</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1142 860 1501 1124"> <p>ACTION</p> <p>Councillor Hurren to follow up</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Justine advised that Babergh continues to hold Section 106 funds to the value of £3,300. This is believed to be a precursor to CIL funding. It can be used to fund specified items, but clarity is needed on this. Councillor Hurren will follow up as the funds are not gaining any interest while being held by Babergh and its validity will expire after 10 years.</p>	<p>ACTION</p> <p>Councillor Hurren to follow up</p>										
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6.3	<p>Thanks were expressed to Sandy for preparing the accounts and to Adrian for auditing.</p>												
7	Pavilion/Recreation Ground Report												
7.1	<p>Adrian shared the Pavilion Report as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After some very successful years the Pavilion is starting to suffer from high running costs and reduced income from events. As a result, funds have reduced to £2.3k in the current account and £11.4k in the deposit account. This is a big drop in funds from last year and is not sustainable in the medium term. The very base cost for running the pavilion is about £3.2k per year. This does not cover any investment or grass cutting and maintenance costs. Base income from events and hiring in 2025 was about £4.4k so does show a small margin. Income in 2025 included £1,580 from the Barn Dance. Without a big event this year our income will be below base costs. We urgently need to increase event income to maintain the pavilion for the future. Due to personal circumstances, we have two resignations from the Committee, that of Pearl Gee the bookings clerk, with immediate effect, and Debbie Kerr our Treasurer who will finish at the end of the year. In addition, whilst staying on the committee as Secretary, Justine Turner is reducing her fund-raising role which has taken a lot of her time. I would like to thank them all personally for the huge effort they have all put in over many years to build the pavilion into this wonderful facility, but this now leaves a big hole in the committee which needs to be filled, so we are looking for volunteers to step up and help out with fund raising, bookings and accounts. Anyone joining would be fully supported and given roles that would suit their skills and capabilities. It also creates opportunities to integrate into the community and with new people we hope to get new ideas for social and 												

	<p>sporting events which are much needed to raise funds in the coming years. Please get in touch if you would like to discuss the roles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fund raising events scheduled for the rest of this year as follows; <table border="1" data-bbox="311 293 1503 416"> <tr> <td>Village Cricket Match</td> <td>13th September</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Quiz Night</td> <td>9th October</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wine Tasting</td> <td>14th November</td> </tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I would urge you to attend and also encourage others to, as unfortunately due to lack of support we have had to cancel two events already this year!. 	Village Cricket Match	13 th September	Quiz Night	9 th October	Wine Tasting	14 th November
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7.2	<p>Actions from the last Parish Meeting;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Pavilion has purchased a second-hand lawnmower enabling the cricket club to maintain and cut the grass at times that suit their match schedule. The price of the mower was well below budget at £3k rather than the assumed £5k. We thank Reg Turner for sourcing and servicing this, which will eliminate the need to pay Veritas £2.3k per year for grass cutting. The mower has already been put to good use and as a result the cricket club is taking on a more significant and appreciated role in helping to maintain the grounds. Thanks also to Stephen Morley who has undertaken some significant ground works recently, with the ground now looking very nice. The process to replace the current play equipment which is reaching the end of its usable life has been initiated by Justine Turner who has had a good return on the play equipment survey (discussed under part 7.6). <p>In conclusion we can say that the pavilion is in good shape at the moment but needs new personnel, new ideas and more support from the community to survive in its current form.</p>						
7.3	<p>Adrian expanded further on funding issues explaining that the Pavilion had managed to survive until now, through being awarded £28k through Covid grants, but without the major events it has relied on in the past, will lose c£1k per year. Adrian added that there is a lot to manage, with both the Pavilion and the land attached to it. Although things are fine now, balances will start to reduce if funding streams are reduced.</p>						
7.4	<p>A discussion continued on the difficulties of engaging Mildenhall residents to attend events. There have been several new residents to the village over the past few years but it seems to be very difficult to get them involved in village focused events and activities. It continues to be the same small core of people who attend events and meetings. It is however positive that members of the Cricket Club are becoming more involved with the village; they have some good ideas and a lot of energy amongst themselves. There is now a very positive balance between the Pavilion and the Cricket Club; working collaboratively will be of great benefit to each entity. Mark commented that it would be helpful if more volunteers came forward to join the Groundhogs. Similarly volunteers who are not members of committees etc should be encouraged to join specific working parties, to support village activities.</p> <p>Councillor Hurren asked to be kept informed of events and activities in order that he can share through his own distribution channels.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1225 1431 1509 2011"> <tr> <td>ACTION</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Councillor Hurren</td> </tr> </table>	ACTION	Councillor Hurren				
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7.5	Noted that the newly purchased lawnmower is owned by the Pavilion but can be used by the Cricket Club. The Club will pay for the mower's maintenance and most of its fuel. Justine is currently finalising an agreement with the Cricket Club to establish the rules and responsibilities of use.					
7.6	<p><u>Play Equipment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justine has surveyed the village, concentrating on households with children and grandchildren and has received a good return. Two quotes have now been secured, each for c£20k to cover the costs of a Trim Trail and swings to replace the current facilities, which are 26 years old and need to be replaced. • The survey contained pictures of 10 different Trim Trail style items. Those surveyed were asked to choose their favoured 5 options from the list. The results as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Frame (Fig I) ▪ Balance Bars (Fig J) ▪ Monkey Swing (Fig A) ▪ Asymmetric Bars (Fig G) ▪ Pull-up Bars Fig (C) <p>When questioned by Ken, Justine advised that the facilities have to be suitably durable for adults and must be inclusive for everyone. The Trim Trail will need to flow but will also have some stand-alone items, ensuring it is inclusive for people with mobility issues (ie. Include basket style and cradle style swings).</p>					
7.7	<p>Costs noted as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="212 996 1061 1120"> <tr> <td data-bbox="212 996 758 1075">5 x Trim Trail items, including installation</td> <td data-bbox="758 996 1061 1075">c£6,800</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="212 1075 758 1120">3 x sets of swings</td> <td data-bbox="758 1075 1061 1120">c£2,500</td> </tr> </table> <p>It is now necessary to source one further quote to achieve the necessary three quotes required for procurement purposes.</p> <p>The inclusion of 'child sized' football goals was also discussed. The price for these would be c£100. Councillor Hurren kindly offered to purchase these from his Locality Budget</p>	5 x Trim Trail items, including installation	c£6,800	3 x sets of swings	c£2,500	<p>ACTION</p> <p>Justine</p> <p>Councillor Hurren</p>
5 x Trim Trail items, including installation	c£6,800					
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7.8	From a funding point of view, it may be possible to use the Section 106 money along with money from the CIL fund for new play equipment. It is also possible that a bid for a Community Development Grant could be made in respect of equipment for adults and the disabled. It was also noted that the District CIL is open all year round and can be applied for at any time.					
7.9	<p>A vote was taken amongst those in attendance with the unanimous decision for;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Parish Meeting to contribute up to £5k of CIL Fund, towards new play equipment. Section 106 funds should form £3,300 of the cost and other grants sought to make up the difference. <p>Noted that there is also scope to input further funds from the precept. It is hoped that the new play equipment will be installed in readiness for summer 2027.</p>					
8	Any other business					
8.1	Joe advised that he and Sara would like to divert the public right of way that runs directly in front of their house to the new driveway/permissive bridleway that has been in place since late 2022. The Parish Meeting gave their unanimous consent to this being pursued.	<p>ACTION</p> <p>Joe and Sara</p>				

8.2	Mark advised that not only has the Pavilion Committee lost members but the one and only Church Warden in Milden has retired both from this role, and as a member of the PCC after 10 years of service. A further member of the PCC has also resigned. Although two new members have joined the PCC, the period over the next five months will be critical as the Vicar will also be retiring at the end of September. The PCC has discussed forming working groups for particular tasks and involving people that are not necessarily committee members, particularly in terms of fund-raising events. More people need to be pulled into this community asset and efforts should be made to try to use it for more things.
8.3	Mark also advised that Youth cricket coaching (All Stars) has started with all places having been filled.
8.4	Councillor Hurren advised that the 'Go Start' bus route 112 that comes through Milden on Tuesdays and Thursdays will pick up from the crossroads, or with prior notice from the Milden bus stop. Call 01787 242116 or visit https://www.gostart.org.uk/
9	Date of next meeting
9.1	Tuesday 10 th November 2026 at 7pm