

# RATTLEDEN PARISH COUNCIL

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## Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 25th February 2025 at 19:30 in Rattlesden Village Hall

Draft Form duly approved on: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Present:** Cllr. Tony Edwards (Chair), Cllr. Sarah Osborne (Deputy), Cllr. Dave Goodlad, Cllr. Russell Morley, Cllr. Dan Jewers, Cllr. Richard Osborne.

**In Attendance:** County Cllr. Penny Otton, District Cllr. Nicky Willshire, Parish Clerk Nick Skelhorn and five members of the public.

**Absences:** Apologies were received from Cllr. Howard Knight.

**2025/015**      **Declarations of Interest**  
None.

**2025/016**      **Minutes of the Last Parish Council Meeting**  
It was collectively resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 28th January 2025 be approved as a true record of events.

**2025/017**      **Public Comment and Questions on Agenda Items**  
Birds Green Bench – Two residents of Birds green requested if the Council would consider placing a bench on Parish Council owned land near the entrance to the Pavilion. The Council discussed if usage would justify investment, and the Clerk raised the need to confirm the presence of underground utilities that may dictate placement (i.e. no concrete slab over the associated protective strips). Subject to their being a feasible location, the Council resolved to engage adjacent residents.

Birds Green Speeding – Residents raised concerns over speeding vehicles along Birds Green, especially by users of Pavilion facilities at the weekend. The Council discussed potential options (Speed Indicator Devices, speed bumps) but none were deemed feasible at present (no land to site a SID, speed bumps a noise issue for adjacent residents / would cause parking issues).

Dog Waste – Multiple residents aired their concerns about dog waste around the village and its footpaths – examples were given of 15+ bags thrown in a ditch and deposits at Birds Green / along the footpath adjacent to the Five Bells Meadow. Ideas to try and raise public awareness of the issues (dog poo tree and banner, spray painting deposits, publicising local authority abilities to issue fines) were proposed by residents. The Council resolved to investigate the installation of additional bins / signage warning of potential fines, however, it shared concerns with implementing a more ‘action based’ approach (i.e. concerns ‘dog poo tree’ would result in bags being blown around / be vandalised, that spray painting deposits would create an unattractive / negative image etc.).

**2025/018**      **County Councillor’s Report**  
The Council received Cllr. Otton’s report. An update on potential devolution was provided (a single unitary deemed favourable due to potential economic benefits) and how the County Council were looking to resume the running / management of the County’s libraries which are currently managed by the Suffolk Libraries charity.

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**2025/019**

## **District Councillor's Report**

The Council received Cllr. Willshere's report. Cllr Willshere confirmed the District Council's concerns in light of the proposed devolution – Unlike other local authorities BMSDC is in good financial standing / has assets, and what might happen to these under a merger to the detriment of residents. An update was also provided on the recent cancellation of the village bus service, namely how insufficient funds had been generated from the Rattlesden stop (most people getting on at Stowmarket). Cllr. Edwards suggested he had spoken with Dan's Coaches about rerouting another service to stop in Rattlesden, but how it was not currently financial feasible.

**2025/020**

## **Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes**

**020.1 'Minute 003 'Village Lunches'** Mrs L. Stiff confirmed that funding requirements had kindly been met by the District Council. **'Allotments'** A meeting between the chair of the Hanging Hill Allotment Society and Mrs. Minns had been arranged to work towards the creation of a Jubilee Allotment Society. **'River .Rat (Whalebones)'** The headteacher, Ms. Cannon, confirmed a note had been sent round to children / parents about conduct near the Whalebones and the river.

**020.2 'Minute 011.2 'Jubilee Field / Allotment Works'** All works have been complete (memorial tree planted, water supply surround built).

**2025/021**

## **Planning**

**021.1 February Applications:** DC/25/00723 (Hall Farm Cottage, High Street (Listed Building's Consent) Removal of the damaged sole plates at the front and rear of the property; Installation of new sole plates using construction-grade oak, in keeping with the original materials; Repair and reinstatement of affected wall sections using two coats of lime plaster on wool board, internally and externally). The Council confirmed they had no objections.

**021.2 Applications Approved/Rejected in Febuary:** DC/25/00246 – Water Run House, High Street (Tree Works). Approved on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

**2025/022**

## **Finance**

**022.1 Financial Report:** The Clerk's financial report up to the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 was received.

- Current account balance = £50

- TSB deposit account (general and earmarked reserves + £4,239.16 CIL) = £41,049.56

- Dudley deposit account (CIL funds less c.£4.2k in TSB deposit) = £66,311.13.

The Clerk reiterated that general and CIL reserves remained high and that strategies should be considered to utilise funds appropriately.

Explanation was also provided on various February budget discrepancies (i.e. December salaries paid in early January and only a part month payment to the Warden; planned Grounds overspend of general reserves; Cleansing Grant already credited).

**022.2 Payments Schedule:** The schedule of payments for February 2025 totalling £4,535.18 was presented to the Council and duly approved.

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*Should a member of the public wish to view any supporting documentation in relation to the above please contact the Clerk.*

**022.3 2025/2026 Budget and Precept:** The clerk confirm acceptance by BMSDC of the 2025/2026 Precept, a sum of £25,811.32, being a 15% increase on 2024/2025.

**022.4 Internal Audit Appointment:** The Council formally confirmed the appointment of Graham Reid to conduct the internal audit of the Council's finances for the 2024/2025 period. The Council collectively shared their sincere thanks to Graham for again offering his expertise.

## **2025/023 Allotments (Jubilee Lease)**

The Clerk drew the Council's attention to the previously circulated draft lease seeking approval of the final form to be agreed with the to be established Jubilee Field Allotment Society. The Council collectively approved the draft form for engrossment.

## **2025/024 Grants**

**024.1 Rattlesden Revelations:** The Clerk advised that a grant request for the sum of £500 (to cover printing and production costs) had been sought from the Rattlesden Parochial Church Council (Revelation publishers) to afford circulation to continue ad free (same amount as requested in 2024). The Council collectively resolved to award the full amount requested.

### **024.2 Community Council Grounds Maintenance**

Following the withdrawal of the previous grant request (**see** minutes 2024/138 and 144.1) the Community Council submitted a revised application now seeking funds to support the ongoing grass cutting costs of the Pavilion Playing Field. In addition to details provided on the Community Council's financial standing (evaluated and deemed acceptable in November 2024, see minute 2024/138) the Council were provided with specific costs for the upcoming 2025/2026 grass maintenance contract. Upon review, the Council collectively agreed to award the full requested amount from CIL Funds (£1,638.01) due to the wide community benefit derived from the use of the playing field and the subsequent ability it would afford the Community Council to invest in existing and new infrastructure for the benefit of the community.

## **2025/025 Works**

**025.1 Ground Works Contract Renewal:** The Clerk confirmed that as per the current main ground works contract that Council approval was required to renew services for a further 12month term. The Clerk also shared proposed price increases (Cemetery, memorial and common land grass cuts and associated maintenance 5% increase on current contract rates; Ad-hoc grass cuts to St. Nicholas to increase to £140/cut). The Council collectively agreed their approval given the high-quality service that had been delivered over the last 12months, noting how the proposed increases seemed reasonable and proportionate given current market conditions.

**025.2 Highways Signs Repair/Replacement:** The Clerk confirmed that a) Suffolk County Council required a sum of £5,487.33 to repair / replace all identified eleven damaged highways signs and b) that current damage was deemed insufficient to meet the County Council's replacement criteria (i.e. wonky / rusted / faded signs, but still functional). Cllr. Otton confirmed that she could contribute £3,120 from her remaining Local Highways Budget, which left a shortfall of £2,367.33. The Council consider options to reduce the

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scope of the works, but it was decided to utilise £2,367.33 of CIL funds to make up the required total given the benefits that would be derived from replacement for the whole community given local traffic continued to increase.

**025.3 New Village Signs:** The Clerk sought feedback on the proposed locations of four new 'Welcome to Rattlesden' signs and confirmed Highways safety requirements (i.e. 0.5m between the edge of the sign and the highway. The Council confirmed that the best way forward would be the replacement of existing 'Rattlesden' signs given their footprint was larger than the proposed installation. The Clerk was tasked with seeking approval from Highways.

**2025/026**

**Dog Fowling**

See minute 2025/017 above.

**2025/027**

**Rolling Review of Council Policies – 02 Financial Regulations**

Following review, the policy was approved by the Council in its current form.

**2025/028**

**Matters to be Brought to the Attention of the Council**

**028.1 Footpath Sign Bell's Meadow Bridge:** Cllr. Morley highlighted that the footpath way marker had detached from the post and was in the riverbed. The Clerk was tasked with instructing the Warden to retrieve and (if possible) to reinstate it.

**028.2 Memorial Oak (Jubilee Field):** Cllr. Edwards confirmed he would seek quotes for a memorial plaque wording for which was agreed by present Councillors.

**0.28.3 Redundant SID Batteries:** Cllr's Goodlad and Edwards confirmed the number of now spare SID batteries and sought approval from the Council to sell these to other authorities where possible which was duly approved.

**2025/029**

**Next Meeting:**

The date and time of the next meeting is the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 19:30 in the Village Hall.

**The meeting closed at 21:20**