

# RATTLEDEN PARISH COUNCIL

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## Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 30th September 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. R Osborne, Cllr. Howard Knight, Cllr. Dave Goodlad, Cllr. Russell Morley, Cllr. Dan Jewers.

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

**Absences:** None.

**2025/101      Declarations of Interest**  
None.

**2025/102      Minutes of the Last Parish Council Meeting**  
It was collectively resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 29th July 2025 be approved as a true record of events.

**2025/103      Public Comment and Questions on Agenda Items**  
In attendance were the residents of White House Farm (Felsham Road) who shared concerns with planning application DC/25/01579 (Barn Owl Campsite), namely fears of creeping development (tractor shed only recently built on greenfield site and now use being changed), increased vehicular and foot traffic in and around their property (already issues with 'lost' campers trespassing) and safety concerns about the new entrance onto highway (current entrance has no planning permission and near is near a blind bend).

**2025/104      County Councillor's Report**  
The Council received Cllr. Otton's report. Specific details were provided on updated bus schedules for the local area (accessible though the SCC website) and an update on the reorganisation of Suffolk Libraries (the leading Councillor has resigned and joined Reform).

**2025/105      District Councillor's Report**  
The Council received Cllr. Willshire's report. Cllr Willshire highlighted the Council's current focus on devolution, specifically how the district/borough Council's had collectively agreed on a three-area system. If proposal are successful, the new system will be established alongside the existing to allow a 'seamless switchover'.

**2025/106      Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes**  
**106.1** Minute 089 '**Vehicle Speeding**' Temporary speed monitoring equipment is due to be installed imminently on Top Road (near the cemetery) and in High Town Green.  
**106.2** Minute 099.3 '**Bottle Bank Locks**' Locks have been obtained and installed.

**2025/107      Planning**  
**107.1 August/September Applications**  
DC/25/03180 (Green End, Rattlesden Rd.) Erection of two storey side extension (following demolition of rear extension), relocation of front door with a new porch, replacement

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glazing and new external insulation with render/timber finish. – no objections confirmed on 4th<sup>th</sup> Sep. via email

DC/25/02579 (Barn Owl Campsite) Extension and conversion of tractor shed to form site manager's dwelling and cafe for campsite – Reviewed in meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September. RPC objects (7/7 councillors). Cllrs. collectively expressed concern about the proposed change of use to the recently constructed tractor shed given 1) fears of creeping development (green field site to now have residential and commercial entities), 2) dangerous access off the highway (adjacent to blind bend, no planning permission for current entrance and reports of near misses during construction), 3) Insufficient justification for the proposed use (manager's primary residence c.200m down the road, and site licensed for only 10 units which would struggle to support a café) and 4) impacts on amenity of neighbouring properties (reports of vehicles arriving / leaving at unsociable hours and using unofficial footways).

## **107.2 Applications Approved/Rejected in August/September**

DC/25/02762 (Stone Cottage, High Town Green) Erection of a side two storey extension and general alterations. Granted 29<sup>th</sup> August '25

DC/25/02813 (Wild Briar, Birds Green) Installation of 25 solar panels on garage / property roof. Granted 18<sup>th</sup> August '25

DC/25/02762 (Peal Cottage, Church Path) Variation of condition of DC/24/02799 amendment from timber to render on north and west elevations. Granted 3<sup>rd</sup> September '25

2025/108

## **Finance**

### **108.1 Financial Report**

August and September combined financial report appended to minutes (includes bank balances, reserve movements, budget performance etc.)

### **108.2 Payments Schedule**

The schedule of payments for August 2025 totalling £17,276.85 (of which £9,358 was a CIL reserve grant to Rattlesden Preschool) was presented to the Council in July via email (no meeting) and was duly approved. Receipts for August were £520.90. A copy of the approved schedule is enclosed with the September report which was formally confirmed in this meeting.

The schedule of payments for September 2025 totalling £5,645.05 (of which £3,616.74 was a CIL reserve grant to Rattlesden Community Shop) was presented to the Council and was duly approved. Receipts for September were £12,941.23 (Second Precept payment receipt).

### **108.3 Internal Audit Report**

The clerk presented feedback on commentary from the internal audit report (details within the appended September financial report). Councillors acknowledge proposals and agreed to implement proposals. Cllrs. S Osborne and Edwards reiterated ongoing issue with TSB and gaining access to online banking and therefore not being able to set-up multi-user approvals. The Clerk highlighted issue with the current accountancy software and not being able to split out VAT on transactions from a reporting perspective.

### **108.4 Clerk / RFO Salary Review**

The Clerk confirmed the publication of the 2025/2026 Local Government Services Pay Agreement and associated scale, confirming an increased hourly rate from £14.60 to

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£15.06 for the SCP Level 13 rate (Clerk's salary band as per contract). Approval was given by the Council to implement the uplift.

*Itemised details of spend and applicable powers for this month will be detailed in next month's RFO report. Should a member of the public wish to view any supporting documentation in relation to the above please contact the Clerk.*

**2025/109**

## **Grants**

**109.1 Hanging Hill Allotments Fencing Works:** The clerk summarised details of a CIL grant request from the Rattlesden Hanging Hills Allotment Association to help fund 1) repair works to the boundary fencing and 2) replacing a door on the main storage shed. Single quotations only were provided for both, with two options outlined for fencing repair works (£315 door replacement, £1062/£1850 wooden/steel post replacement). The Council collectively approved the request for metal fence posts / door works (totalling £2,165) subject to the receipt of additional quotations to evidence that best value was being achieved.

**109.2 Jubilee Fields Allotment Association:** Details of costs to source materials and plant-up a new orchard at Jubilee Allotment (to be undertaken by the Association at a cost of £591.75) were presented to the Council. The Council were satisfied from the information provided that necessary due diligence had been undertaken to select reasonably priced, quality trees and materials and collectively agreed to release ring-fenced funds from the dedicated £600 reserve.

**2025/110**

## **Works / Maintenance**

**110.1 Cemetery Green / Bird's Green bench:** The clerk confirmed he was due to meet with Gedding Mill shortly (early October) to measure up the site and obtain formal quotations.

**110.2 Bus Shelter / Bottle Banks:** Works to the bottle bank are complete. Details were presented of costs in addition (£405) to the pre-approved £4,175 (resulting from higher than anticipated steel costs / choosing to paint opposed to powder coat) which was duly approved. The Clerk confirmed Mr Patterson was on annual leave until mid-October, and that works on the bus shelter were scheduled thereafter.

**110.3 Village Signs:** The Clerk reported back on recent site visits to all proposed locations, highlighting how signs on Drinkstone hill, near the Baptist Church on Lower Road and on Stowmarket road could not be sited where originally planned (verges too narrow, or not possible to switch out with existing signs due to requirements to retain 30MPH signs). Alternative locations were discussed, but it was concluded that these (all being further out from the village centre) did not compliment the chosen design. The Council concluded that at this time only one new sign was to be pursued to replace the existing sign opposite cemetery green. Costs to apply for a highways license (£170) were approved.

**110.4 Cemetery:** The Clerk confirmed works to approve the outside of the cemetery entrance were scheduled to commence in October (costs of £680 having been approved via email in August). The clerk also raised additional work requests for consideration – cutting back the verge/trees between the cemetery and Gunnerside and topping the wildflower section at the top of the cemetery which has become overgrown / dominated by weed species – the works were approved subject to the provision of agreeable quotes.

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**110.5 Watersplash Green:** The Clerk confirmed works to increase the height of the willow tree canopy and conduct general vegetation clearances has been completed (costs of £240 having been approved in August via email). Discussions were also held around an adjacent resident's request to cut back the willow tree by 50% due to fears of overshadowing / root invasion. The Council raised concerns that the proposed may not aesthetically sit well in the conservation area and that, following consultation with the Council's Tree Officer and BMSDC, that severe pruning was only likely to increase root and crown vigour which would be detrimental. From a flood risk perspective, the tree roots provide stability to the riverbank. It was concluded that no works would be progressed at this time.

**110.6 Defibrillator:** The Clerk confirmed a nonrepairable fault with the defibrillator on the Village Hall. The Council discussed options to replace the unit in the existing location versus a new location. Given another defibrillator was present at the Five Bells Public House (c.100m away) the Council agreed that resiting the unit at the Pavillion would be of more use. The Clerk is to engage the Community Council to see if they would be amenable.

**110.7 Jubilee Field:** The Council confirmed that following the end of the ground nesting bird season that they would now proceed with topping Jubilee Field (cost of £250) and that they approved quoted costs of £30/tree to re-stake and support trees as required before winter. The Clerk confirmed the commemorative plaque had been completed and the Council confirmed mounting it on a solid wooden post was preferable – clerk to arrange and confirm costs.

**2025/111**

## **.Gov account Domain / IT Policy**

Cllr. R Osborne presented three options to the Council to afford compliance with revised domain and IT Security compliance requirements, all of which would afford a) a .gov.uk domain name and website hosting b) dedicated email accounts for all Councillors/the RFO c) cloud storage and d) regulatory compliance (GDPR, WCAG 2.2 AA, Privacy statements etc).

- DIY option (multiple suppliers) - £300/annum
- Netwise - £500/annum + £700 set-up fee
- Hugofox - £449.76/annum

It was proposed that a DIY option would be difficult to manage, ensure unified compliance and would require multiple logins for Councillors which may hamper adoption. From a technical / compliance perspective offering from Netwise and Hugofox were similar, albeit Hugofox utilised an unusual URL structure and, unlike Netwise, was not limited to solutions for Parish Council's alone. Following review of the details, and viewing several live website example, Councillors opted to proceed with Netwise due to the higher quality / more professional web templates on offer, better user interface, and their specific focus on support/compliance for Councils. A full copy of the appraisal is available upon request.

The Clerk presented a new proposed draft IT policy for review which was based on a NALC template. The policy was approved for adoption subject to some minor amendments surrounding training requirements.

**2025/112**

**Rolling review of Council policies and procedures – '07 Publication Scheme':** The Council conclude that all policies remained appropriate and proportional and approved the policy in its current form.

**2025/113**

**Matters to be brought to the attention of the Council**

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**113.1 PIP:** Cllr. S Osborne again shared additional details of a potential creation of a Parish Investment Infrastructure Plan to afford a better understanding of parishioner need/desire for facilities and infrastructure. Councillors agreed to review the matter further in the November meeting.

**113.2 Village Hall Room Rents:** Cllr. Edwards / the Clerk clarified that rents were now payable to the Preschool following them taking on the leasehold status of the property. Rates are to remain £8.75/session, but may increase in January 2026.

**2025/114**

**Next Meeting:**

The date and time of the next meeting is Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> October at 19:30 in the Village Hall. The meeting is one week earlier than normal.

**The meeting closed at 21:30**

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