

Signed..........Date.....8/5/2025.....

GREAT BLAKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL – MINUTES

Minutes of Gt Blakenham Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 10th April 2025 at Parish Rooms.
Present: Chair Cllr Nick Leonard, Vice Chair Cllr Debbie Kemp, Cllr Karen Wheeler, Karen Grimwood (Parish Clerk), SCC Cllr Chris Chambers, GBVH representative and 1 member of the public.

1. To receive and approve any apologies for absence. **MSDC Cllr Marriott, Cllr Powell, Cllr Durrant**
2. Declaration of any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests
 - a. Councillor's declaration of interest appropriate to any item on the agenda. – **Cllr Leonard 8b Sea Cadets**
 - b. To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interest (if any)
 - c. To grant any requests for dispensations as appropriate.
 - d. Co-option of parish councillor(s) / to sign declaration of acceptance.
3. Public Forum
 - a. To receive the report from the County Councillor -see attached report
 - b. To receive the report from the District Councillor – see attached report
 - c. To receive questions from members of the public -

4. Planning

- a. To consider the following planning applications.

DC/24/05243	Land Adjacent To 10 Chapel Lane, Great Blakenham, Ipswich , Suffolk	Land Adjacent To 10 Chapel Lane, Great Blakenham, Ipswich , Suffolk Response extended to 11 th April 2025
DC/25/01207	Units 5 And 6, Plummers Dell, Great Blakenham, Ipswich Suffolk IP6 0JG	Retention of change of use of land from B2 to B1 office use and re-positioning of Porta cabin. Re-positioning of porta cabin approved under application 1308/17. OBJECTED FURTHER INFO REQUIRED

- b. To note any planning determinations.

DC/25/00478	86 Plummers Dell IP6 0HW	Erection of single storey rear extension (following demolition of conservatory), first floor extension and front porch extension - GRANTED
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5. To approve the Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 13th March 2025 **Approved**
6. To note the Clerk's update from previous Meetings.
 - a. Logged the concrete boulders in Blue Barn Lane with Highways. Response- ***They have inspected the route again. The landowner did reposition one of the concrete blocks in May 2024 (following contact from the rights of way department) to improve the access and the width that is available there now is, in keeping with the width that exists between the concrete bollards that have been in position there for a long time. We feel this was a reasonable response.***
 - b. Written to Environment agency concerning Stop plank and brick repair- **awaiting response.**
 - c. Village Hall Playground- **Playground inspection will be booked and no dogs/disclaimer signs will be installed .**

Signed.....



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7. Growth, Highways, and Infrastructure

- a. Street Lighting – **Agreed to replace bulbs and pole brackets to street lights on Stowmarket Rd. Cost £2385 + VAT**
- b.
- c. Port One – **The application for the expansion of Port One was reviewed, Clerk tasked to organise an informal meeting with neighbouring parishes to gather their opinions on the expansion and how it will affect them.**
- d. Email domains – **Cllr Powell examined the possibility of transitioning to gov.uk domains, considering associated costs, and recommended continuing with Suffolk.cloud for management and transition, which would incur a fee of £130. Additionally, he proposed the implementation of a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy to facilitate email access on personal devices. The council agreed to proceed with both the engagement of Suffolk.cloud and the adoption of the BYOD policy.**
- e. Donation requests – Parish Room flooring, Sea Cadets, Bowls club heating, Brave futures
Parish room flooring – declined to a donation at this present time.
Sea Cadets- Agreed to £100 donation
Brave Futures – Agreed to £100 donation
Bowls Club flooring- They agreed that the club could utilise the remaining £2,014 from the initial £25,000 donation towards plumbing expenses but chose not to provide any additional funding.
- f. Potential Joint PC surgery meeting- **Agreed that would like to host a joint meeting and clerk to arrange a convenient time**
- g. Internal/ External Audit – **Chair agreed& Signed section 1 of the AGAR for internal audit . Agreed to PKF Littlejohn completing the external audit . This is to be submitted by 31.07.2025**
- h. Litter/dog bin emptying service- **Advised by MSDC that they had over charged by £15 last year and they will remove from this years invoice.**
- i. Maintenance Tender update – **Clerk advised that has received 3 tenders so far but wanted to make council aware that costs will likely be higher that previously thought.**

8. Allotments.

- a. Community Asset – **Application in progress**

9. Village Maintenance - **None**

10. Churchyard and Cemetery –

- a. Topple testing update – **Clerk advised that has not been very successful in contacting relatives for graves stones that need maintenance.**
- b. Cemetery shelter – **Agreed clerk will look into costs of new shelter over the coming months**

11. Training and Development for Councillors and Clerk – **None**

12. Finance

a. To consider approving and making the following payments: **Approved**

Payroll	B	Ending 31.03.2025	£1050.22	LGA 1972 s111
Nest	DD	Month 12 Ending 31.03.2025	£50.61	LGA 1972 s111
HMRC	B	P30 Ending 5 th April 2025	£162.87	LGA 1972 s111
EE/K Grimwood	B	WIFI/mobile reimbursement	£28.04	LGA 1972 s111
Shades	B	Inv 2643 Mole Hill clearance at churchyard.	£30.00	LGA 1972 s111
Shades	B	Hackneys Corner maintenance as per tender Inv 2642	£135.00	LGA 1972 s111
Shades	B	Street Cleaning as per tender Inv 2640	£1316.67	LGA 1972 s111
Shades	B	Grounds Maintenance as per tender Inv 2641	£507.50	LGA 1972 s111
Three	DD	Clerk phone contract	£13.00	LGA 1972 s111
SALC	B	Councillor Basics Training INV 29539	£158.40	LGA 1972 s111
ICO	DD	ICO renewal fee ICO:00019642948	£52.00	LGA 1972 s111
Parish Rooms	B	Yearly Room Hire	£200.00	LGA 1972 s111
Pest Control Services	B	Wasp nest treatment cemetery	£65.00	LGA 1972 s111
SALC	B	6 months payroll service Inv 29651	£57.60	LGA 1972 s111
SALC	B	Salc membership subscription 2025/26 Inv 29926	£799.04	LGA 1972 s111

Signed  Date 8/5/2025

- a. Payments outside of meeting – **None**
- b. Money Received –£67.08 **Bank credit**

Bank Balance @ 31/03/2025

Unity Trust Current Account Balance - £168,937.84

Unity Trust Saver Account Balance - £12,032.47

Approved

13. Reports -GBVH

Village Hall funding - Councillors require quotes for the security and fire alarm systems before any funding can be allocated. Once these have been received the request for support can be revisited again.

Discussed the process of changing the deeds, and the councillors believe that solicitors are unnecessary for this task. With assistance from CAS and their templates, the constitution can be revised. A consultation period with village residents is essential to address any objections. If there are none, the GBVH can then approach the Charities Commission to officially adopt the changes at no cost.

GBVH requested help with grant applications; link provided to register and gain information on available funding in Suffolk, along with support and advice on how to apply. [Home | Funding 4 Suffolk](#)

Illegal encampment - A caravan was parked overnight at the village hall, prompting several individuals to be contacted regarding the procedures for addressing illegal encampments. All involved parties were informed about the necessary steps to take should similar situations arise in the future.

14. Correspondence –

- a. Working hours of landfill site
- b. Height of landfill mound

Cllr Chambers has contacted the dept who monitors the site and advised that they are currently investigating all issues. He will update when he has a response.

15. Future meetings

- a. To note invitation for items to be considered in the next meeting.
- b. To note the date of the next scheduled Meeting on 8th May 2025 and any items for the agenda.

Karen Grimwood - Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

Great Blakenham Parish Council

Email: pc@greatblakenham.suffolk.gov.uk

Phone: 07463329570

Date: 11th April 2025



Cllr Chris Chambers

**Gipping Valley
Division**

www.chrischambers.uk

**April 2025
Report**



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97.5% of pupils receive a place at one of their preferred Secondary Schools on National Offer Day

This year parents and carers of 97.5% of children were offered a place on National Offer Day at one of their three preferred schools and 91.9% were offered a place at their first preference school.

Suffolk County Council received 7831 applications from parents and carers indicating which secondary school they would prefer their child to transfer to in September 2025.

Families who applied online can log in to the online service from today to see the school their child has been offered. They will also receive an email to confirm this offer unless they have indicated that they do not wish to. Letters will be sent to parents who made a paper application by second class post on the 3rd of March 2025.

Published criteria were used to decide which children had priority for school places to ensure that the process was fair and clear.

Once school places have been confirmed, parents and carers need to consider how their child will get to and from school. If their child is eligible for Suffolk County Council funded school travel, they will receive an email by Thursday 3 April 2025 with details of how-to opt-in and when.

Further information on secondary school admissions can be found at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.

Council continues to oppose pylons in final round of consultations

Suffolk County Council maintains that more can, and should, be done to improve National Grid's plans for their Norwich to Tilbury pylon project.

A final round of consultation for the project in Suffolk has now been completed (3 March 2025), ahead of an expected Development Consent Order application later this year.

The county council has welcomed a series of changes to the latest set of plans, evidence that National Grid has listened to some of the council's concerns and those of local communities.

However fundamental differences remain, with the council clear that offshore and undergrounding solutions should be priorities for the scheme.

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One particular blow came at the beginning of this latest consultation, with National Grid writing to local leaders in Norfolk and Suffolk saying that there would be no undergrounding in the Waveney Valley.

One of the considerable changes that the county council believes is possible in the current set of plans, is the option to remove some existing powerlines between Bramford and Lawford.

The county council believes that National Grid, UK Power Networks and the regulator, Ofgem, should work together to investigate removing this line, which goes through two National Landscapes and passes close by the iconic Willy Lott's cottage at Flatford.

Suffolk County Council's response to the latest, and previous, consultations can be found at suffolk.gov.uk

According to [National Grid's website](#), they intend to submit a Development Consent Order application to the Planning Inspectorate for the Norwich to Tilbury project some time in 2025.

Suffolk County Council confirms decision to bring Library Services back In-House

Suffolk County Council has confirmed that it will be bringing all 45 libraries back under its care and control. The decision, made at the Cabinet meeting earlier in March, will ensure continued access to high-quality, community-focused library services across the county. As part of this move, the council plans to:

- **Keep all 45 libraries open**
- **Maintain opening hours**
- **Create job security for all frontline staff**
- **Secure a sustainable future for Suffolk's library services**

In addition to continuing its core library services, the council is investing £200,000 in mobile libraries, with a further £157,000 for new books and to replace public computers in libraries across Suffolk.

Libraries have long been at the heart of Suffolk's communities. They are essential spaces for learning, connection, and support, and the council is committed to ensuring they remain hubs that bring people together. The focus is on building upon the excellent services already provided, strengthening libraries' role as trusted local resources that meet the evolving needs of residents.

Looking to the future, Suffolk County Council envisions libraries becoming even more integrated into the wider community, serving as convenient access points for a range of

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Suffolk County Council would like to express its sincere gratitude to Suffolk Libraries, who have run the library contract for the past 12 years. Their passion and hard work have been integral to the success of library services in the county, and the council appreciates all they have done to support local communities. We look forward to welcoming library staff back into the county council and continuing to support them in delivering outstanding services to the public.

We would also like to thank the 1,250 volunteers whose commitment has been essential in delivering high-quality services to residents across Suffolk. As we transition the library service back under council control, we remain fully committed to working with our volunteers. Their invaluable contributions will continue to play a central role in the future of our libraries, and we are excited to explore new opportunities to expand volunteer involvement.

The library service will officially return to Suffolk County Council control on **1st June 2025**.

One new council is the best option for Suffolk

Suffolk County Council's cabinet has approved an interim plan for local government reorganisation in Suffolk which will be submitted to ministers. A full business case will be submitted in September 2025, following extensive engagement with residents, town and parish councils, businesses and local organisations.

- [Local Government Reorganisation in Suffolk - Interim Plan](#)

The key benefits of one council are:

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- **Clearer accountability** – there would be less confusion over who is responsible for what
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200 new specialist SEND places for Suffolk

The creation of 200 new specialist places across the county for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is set to be considered by Suffolk County Council's cabinet.

An extra 100 places could open this year, and another 100 new places by September 2026, with future plans being drawn up. These places will be spread across Suffolk and tailored to meet need and demand.

The plan to be presented to cabinet next Tuesday <April 1> outlines how £18.6million could best be spent to support the growing population of SEND children and young people who need specialist education. Over the last five years, Suffolk pupils accessing special schools and units attached to mainstream schools has increased by over 40%.

The proposal includes £3million to be spent on small groups and units in mainstream schools from September 2025 and £12million to be spent on developing satellite units linked to existing special schools across Suffolk from September 2026. The remaining £3.6million is earmarked for further SEND provision.

In the past five years, 1,025 new specialist SEND places across Suffolk have been agreed.

On top of these new 200 places, future plans will continue to be drawn up. Using the recently published Joint SEND Needs Assessment report, work is underway to create a Joint SEND Sufficiency Plan, written in conjunction with health, social care, inclusion and transport. This will establish how future Department for Education SEND capital money should be spent.

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Plans will now be drawn up by the Local Area SEND Partnership.

This funding is in addition to the 200 new SEND places that Suffolk County Council's cabinet will discuss on Tuesday 1st of April.

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The additional funding, announced on Thursday by the Department for Education, is from the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation and awarded to all local authorities across England. In total, the East of England will receive £126.6 million which will fund around 1,000 places for children with SEND.

The Local Area Partnership, which delivers SEND services in the county, is made up of Suffolk County Council, the NHS Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) and NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB, the Suffolk Parent Carer Forum and education settings.

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DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT APRIL 25

Local government reorganisation

Jim McMahon MP, Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution has confirmed receipt of our interim plan for local government reorganisation in which we had confirmed our support for two or three unitary councils within Suffolk. The five district and borough councils of Suffolk had collaborated to align on a vision for local government reorganisation tailored to residents' needs. The final version where the five councils will commit to one of these models is to be submitted by September this year.

£500K boost for community projects thanks to developer funding

On 5 March, the government launched a survey to young people about which support services, facilities and opportunities they need. In the latest round of CIL funding £181,861 has been allocated to five projects in Mid Suffolk. £75,000 is to be awarded for a rebuild of Little Blakenham Village Hall. Other grants will be made to upgrade the Gipping Valley River Path, for additional solar PV and onsite battery storage at Blackbourne Community Centre, Elmswell, for a community courtyard and social space at Badwell Village Hall and for the installation of a new sewage system at Battisford and District Cricket Club.

Covid 19 Day of Reflection

On 9th March special memorial trees were planted in Green's Meadow, Stowmarket for the national Covid-19 Day of Reflection, marking five years since the pandemic and its impact on families, businesses and communities.

2.9m boost to make council homes warmer and lower bills

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils have provisionally been awarded 2.9m by the Warm Homes Social Housing Fund which will be added to the £8 million already committed by the Councils to install energy-saving measures in social housing. Work has begun on upgrading 100 council properties with the lowest EPC ratings with improvements such as cavity and loft insulation, new windows, PV Panels and air source heat pumps. Another 150 homes are to be added to the list as a further step towards achieving a good standard of energy efficiency by 2027.

Reminder: Notification – Planning Statement of Community Involvement Consultation Monday 17 March to Monday 12 May 2025

Parish Councils have recently received an email from John Mawdsley of MSDC Planning saying that we will shortly be going live with our consultation on the proposed changes to the Planning Statement of Community Involvement. This concerns a proposal to stop sending neighbour letters for certain types of planning applications, as most neighbour comments are received electronically. There is a statutory requirement that we notify neighbouring residents about a planning application by sending a letter, or by placing a site notice on display in the relevant location. Currently, we do both.

The consultation will run for 8 weeks until 23:59 on Monday 12 May 2025. The Comms team will also be notifying the public of this consultation on our social media channels.

Consultation webpages:

- <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/w/planning-consultations>
- <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/planning-consultations>

The proposal is to keep sending letters where the planning application involves 10 or more homes (Major applications) but not for other types. These are: • Minor applications which are developments of between 1

and 9 homes • Householder applications, which include extensions, loft conversions, doors and windows, fences, gates and garden walls or outbuildings • Others, which include Listed Building Consents, changes of use, advertisements.

Whilst the Council say they receive little feedback in response to the letters that they send out, e.g. to neighbours I feel that many people would miss out on finding out about developments near to and potentially affecting them if the letters concerning minor applications were to be stopped.

Expansion of Port One Logistics Park

Port One's plan to expand into the abandoned SnOasis site in Great Blakenham was reported in Bury Free Press on 31st March. It is reported very favourably in terms of thousands of jobs and billions of economic growth. Curzon de Vere Ltd. And Valley Ridge Holdings Ltd. had submitted a scoping report of Mid Suffolk District Council earlier this month. The new site would comprise another 304 acres and would house a vertical farm, a technology hub, a farm shop and café plus a permanent market. A concrete production facility would be built at Port One created from the recycled by-products of the waste-to-energy plant opposite.

Also included in the proposal is a reworking of Junction 52 of the A14 to include a new lorry lane. Formal plans for the expansion should be lodged in October this year. Andrew Mellen, MSDC Leader said that this district was "an attractive place to do business". This was interpreted by the paper as "excitement for the plans".

Port One had described plans to revamp Great Blakenham Riverside Park in 2023. Now the park is to include 50 hectares of solar panels plus a charging station for the electric truck fleets of Suffolk-based haulage firms.

Encourage young people to help develop National Youth Strategy

On 5 March, the government launched a survey to young people about which support services, facilities and opportunities they need.

[tps://www.iwill.org.uk/NYS-Deliver-You/?](https://www.iwill.org.uk/NYS-Deliver-You/)

Young people aged 10-21 and those with special educational needs up to 25 years old will be able to submit their views on a range of topics. They will be asked what issues matter to them in their local area, what services they think should be available to young people, and how money should be spent in their area.

A communications toolkit has been launched by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to support this survey.

The survey closes on 16 April.

‘Warm and Fuzzy’ heat pump campaign launched

On 6th March the government launched its new ‘Warm and Fuzzy’ heat pump campaign to encourage people to upgrade their existing boiler or heating system to a heat pump, with the help of the £7,500 government grant.

The campaign also aims to help homeowners better understand the benefits of heat pumps and the next steps they can take to start their journey towards low carbon heating.

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero has produced a campaign toolkit to help councils promote the message in their area.

<https://beis.frontify.com/d/Y8rE9qXZPCv7/warm-and-fuzzy-heat-pump-campaign?#/overview/background-information>

The toolkit contains suggested messaging and social media materials to help cascade the information on social media, in newsletters and on websites.

Government announces employment support for sick and disabled people

On 6th March the Department for work and Pensions announced plans to see 1,000 existing Work Coaches deployed in 2025/26 to deliver tailored and personalised employment to around 65,000 sick and disabled people on health-related benefits.

The coaches will help claimants access other support such as writing CVs and interview techniques as part of the Government's Plan for Change.

Further reforms to overhaul the planning system

On 10th March the government set out further reforms to the planning system which they say will help deliver 1.5 million new homes.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/bureaucratic-burden-lifted-to-speed-up-building-in-growth-agenda>

Under the new plans, organisations such as Sport England, Theatres Trust and The Gardens Trust will no longer be required to input on planning decisions. The scope of other 'statutory consultees' will be narrowed to focus on heritage, safety and environmental protection making much better use of standing guidance in place of case-by-case responses. Councils should now only consult statutory consultees where necessary and decisions should not be delayed beyond the 21-day statutory deadline unless a decision cannot otherwise be reached.

Allocations made to deliver the ‘Warm Homes Plan’

On 11th March the government announced the first steps to delivering the ‘Warm Homes Plan’ with the allocation of £1.8 billion of government funding for councils and social housing providers in England.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/up-to-170000-homes-to-get-energy-saving-upgrades>

Up to £1.29 billion is available for the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund Wave 3 for councils and registered providers of social housing.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/up-to-170000-homes-to-get-energy-saving-upgrades>

In addition up to £500m is available for the Warm Homes: Local Grant for councils to be delivered from April 2025 to March 2028.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/warm-homes-social-housing-fund-wave-3-successful-social-housing-landlords-including-local-authorities-and-housing-associations>

The schemes will provide energy performance measures and low-carbon heating solutions to help tackle fuel poverty.

Up to 170,000 homes in England will benefit from energy efficiency upgrades, helping to deliver warmer, more energy efficient homes in local communities in England.

Celebrations to mark VE and VJ Day – Tip Top Towns

On 13 March the government announced further details of plans to engage communities in the 80th anniversaries of Victory in Europe (VE <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/national-theatre-film-and->

imperial-war-museums-bring-second-world-war-stories-to-a-new-generation-as-part-of-ve-day-80-plans) and Victory over Japan (VJ) Days.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/national-theatre-film-and-imperial-war-museums-bring-second-world-war-stories-to-a-new-generation-as-part-of-ve-day-80-plans>

The government is inviting the public, volunteer networks and community groups to come together and get in the community spirit for VE Day 80 by taking part in Tip Top Towns. Whether in a town, village or city, communities are encouraged to get their postcode ready for Monday 5 May, whether that be preparing community gardens, hosting craft events to create street party decorations, sprucing up their local areas or encouraging children to draw pictures to put in their windows.

The public are invited to share their pictures of activity on the government's VE and VJ Day webpage: <https://ve-vjday80.gov.uk/tiptoptowns/e>

and across social media using the #VE80 hashtag, with VE Day certificates available to all who participate.

Councils are asked to help promote participation in Tip Top Towns ahead of 5 May.

Planning guidance: letters to chief planning officers

On 20 March MHCLG issued a planning update newsletter to chief planning officers of local planning authorities in England about the latest announcements relating to planning practices and policy:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67dbfe98db5bf0deba4b4f87/2_Chief_Planners_Newsletter_March_25.pdf

The newsletter highlights the Planning and Infrastructure Bill that was introduced to Parliament on 11th March, to help streamline the delivery of new homes and critical infrastructure, supporting delivery of the government's Plan for Change milestones.

Under the terms of this bill people living near new electricity transmission infrastructure will receive up to £2,500 over ten years off their energy bills. The Bill comes alongside wider planning reforms including the new National Planning Policy Framework and is at the heart of the government's 'Plan for Change' missions to deliver the 1.5 million homes alongside 150 major projects.

Funding to improve local sports facilities

On 21st March the Department for Culture, Media and Sport announced that there will be £100 million in government funding to enable people in the UK to benefit from upgraded sports facilities in their local area.

The funding is expected to support new and improved pitches, changing rooms, goalposts and floodlights to improve access to sport and physical activity for local communities. The funding will be targeted at deprived areas and support greater access and participation levels among under-represented people including women and girls, ethnic minority groups and disabled players.

Clubs and organisations in the UK are now being urged to come forward and apply for funding. Applications can be made in England via the Football Foundation <https://footballfoundation.org.uk> on an ongoing basis. The first tranche of beneficiaries are expected to be confirmed in summer 2025.

Councils are encouraged to share this information as appropriate.

UK Pesticides National Action Plan launched

On 21 March the government launched the UK Pesticides National Action Plan:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-pesticides-national-action-plan-2025>

setting out how it will work collaboratively with farmers to minimise the impacts of pesticides on people and the environment.

The Plan sets out how all four UK governments will support farmers, growers, and other land managers to voluntarily increase their use of nature friendly farming techniques and embrace alternative measures to reduce the potential harm from pesticides by 10% by 2030, while controlling pests and pesticide resistance effectively.

The core goals of the National Action Plan are to:

- Set clear targets and measures to monitor the use of pesticides
- Encourage uptake of Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
- Strengthen compliance and promote good practice

The government has also published an IPM guidance page:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/integrated-pest-management-ipm-in-farming>

which provides clear and practical information about IPM tools to support planning and decision making.

Councils are encouraged to share this information as appropriate.

Public health updates

COVID-19 vaccination: spring 2025 campaign resources

On 19 March, the UK Health Security Agency published a new leaflet for the spring 2025 vaccination programme:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-spring-booster-resources>

People aged 75 years and older, residents in care homes for older people, and those aged 6 months and over with a weakened immune system will be offered a dose of COVID-19 vaccine this spring.

Influenza of avian origin confirmed in a sheep

The UK's Chief Veterinary Officer has today (24 March) confirmed a case of influenza of avian origin in a single sheep in Yorkshire:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/influenza-of-avian-origin-confirmed-in-a-sheep-in-yorkshire>

While this is the first time this virus has been reported in a sheep, it is not the first time influenza of avian origin has been detected in livestock in other countries. There is no evidence to suggest an increased risk to the nation's livestock population.

However, the UK Chief Veterinary Officer is urging all livestock keepers to remain vigilant to the clinical signs of avian influenza following recent outbreaks.

Funding to support social and affordable housebuilding announced

On 25th March the government announced that up to 18,000 new social and affordable homes will be built backed by £2 billion of government funding:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/2-billion-new-investment-to-support-biggest-boost-in-social-and-affordable-housebuilding-in-a-generation>

The funding comes as a down payment from HM Treasury ahead of more long-term investment in social and affordable housing planned later this year, which will provide additional funding for 2026-27 as well as for future years.

New affordable homes will start construction by March 2027 and will complete by the end of this Parliament. The government is encouraging providers to come forward as soon as possible with projects and bids to help increase the delivery of new housing supply.

New rules simplifying recycling for workplaces in England come into effect

The government has announced that new rules on how workplaces in England sort their recycling and waste have now come into effect.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-rules-simplifying-recycling-for-workplaces-in-england-come-into-force>

From 31st March, workplaces with 10 or more employees will need to arrange for the collection of the following:

- **dry recyclable materials – including plastic, metal, glass, and paper and card**
- **food waste**
- **residual (non-recyclable) waste**

Workplaces will need to separate paper and card from the other dry recyclables unless their waste collector collects them together. They will also have the freedom to decide on the size of containers and frequency of collections based on the volume of waste they produce.

*Adrienne Marriott
Blakenham District Councillor
01/04/25*