

GREAT BLAKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Gt Blakenham Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 10th July 2025 at Parish Rooms.
Present: Vice Chair Debbie Kemp ,Cllr Matt Powell, Cllr Karen Wheeler , Karen Grimwood (Parish Clerk),
SCC Cllr Chris Chambers and 2 members of the public.

MINUTES

1. To receive and approve any apologies for absence.- **Cllr Leonard, Cllr Durrant & Cllr Adrienne Marriott**
2. Declaration of any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests
 - a. Councillor's declaration of interest appropriate to any item on the agenda. **Cllr Durrant 6a**
 - 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 - **Two members of the public raised questions regarding the future of the allotment site and whether the Parish Council could guarantee provision of allotments after the expiry of the current licence in October 2026. They also noted that some plots were empty so would give the appearance that the site is not needed or used.**

The Council noted that a number of plots are currently standing empty, as potential tenants have declined to take them on due to the short-term nature of the existing licence.

The Parish Council currently has access to the land until October 2026, after which the landowner intends to sell the site for development. The Council is actively exploring all avenues to retain the site, though the high value of development land presents considerable challenges. A Community Asset request submission to Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC) is an option but without a viable funding solution this may not be sufficient to secure the land.

Councillors at present time cannot guarantee the availability of allotments beyond October 2026. However, the following steps are being taken:

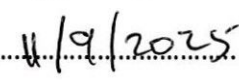
- Investigating alternative land options.
- Engaging in discussions with the current landowner.
- Considering a suggested alternative site on Stowmarket Road (opposite Meadow Drive), though this location is prone to annual flooding and is likely to be unsuitable. .

Clerk to progress the Community Asset request with MSDC and provide an update when response received.

4. To approve the Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 12th June 2025.- **Approved**
5. To note the Clerk's update from previous Meetings. **None**

Signed.....

1

Date

6. Planning

a. To consider the following planning applications.

DC/25/02875	Retail Unit, 7 Moses Walk, Great Blakenham, Ipswich Suffolk IP6 0GT	Application for consent to display an Advertisement(s) - Installation of 3No fascia, 8No dibond, and 1No Gantry sign- Deadline 22 nd July 2025 – No Objection
SCC/0053/25 M	Malting Farm GT Blakenham IP6 0LX	Retrospective application for the change of use of land to enable the expansion of the existing recycling facility for the processing of inert waste and aggregates, - Deadline 22 nd July 2025 – No Objection
DC/350520	30A Blueleighs Park Chalk Hill Lane Great Blakenham Ipswich Suffolk IP6 0ND	Application for Works to Trees subject to Tree Preservation Order MS141/W1 - T1- Ash Remove tree as its not suitable for location and has poor form. Tree splits low down and moves dramatically in the wind.- Deadline 12 th July 2025 – Would prefer tree to be pollard rather than cut down as long as safe
DC/350520/S XZTJPSH060 01	1 Aspen Close Great Blakenham Suffolk IP6 0HQ	Erection of single storey rear extension following removal of existing conservatory – Deadline 12 th July 2025 No Objection
DC/25/01795	Land Adjacent Pesthouse Lane Barham Suffolk	Extension of existing vehicle parking area approved under 3277/15, and conversion of building to associated office (Class E)- Deadline 15 th July 2025 No Objection

b. To note any planning determinations. - **None**

7. Growth, Highways, and Infrastructure **None**

8. Governance

- a. Pilot Workshop Meeting and Port One/Devolution – **Cllr Leonard participated in a meeting on July 9, 2025, where a proposal was discussed for the five local parish councils to meet with MSDC and a consultant. The aim of this meeting is to gather information regarding the costs and processes involved in developing a joint neighbourhood plan . Councillors have agreed to send a representative to the upcoming meeting to assess the costs involved in developing the plan, which is expected to take approximately two years. They also think that Nettlestead should be included in this initiative.**
- b. Risk Assessments – **The Parish Council reviewed and approved the following Risk Assessments : Allotment management, battery-operated hedge trimmer use, bus stop and signage cleaning, gravestone inspections, community litter picking, office desk setup, financial matters, grass cutting schedules, health & safety procedures, and volunteer planting initiatives.**
- c. Finance update – **The Parish Council reviewed the Quarterly Finance Report and noted that no issues were identified.**

10. Village Maintenance

- a. Bus stop repair Stowmarket Rd – **The Parish Council wanted to thank a local resident for voluntarily repairing the fascia board at the bus stop on Stowmarket Road. The Council greatly appreciates the resident's contribution to maintaining community amenities.**

11. Allotments

Signed 

Date 11/9/2025

Response from land agent for land on Stowmarket Rd - The councillors discussed the proposal regarding the lease of land (approx. 7 acres) for community use. The land agent suggested that a long-term lease possibly could be offered (10–20 years) to enable fundraising with the ultimate aim of purchasing the land. The indicative rent would be linked to agricultural rent, estimated at around £400 per annum. It was noted that this figure would not be prohibitive, but is open to further discussion regarding terms.

Councillors agreed that the principle of leasing the land was worth exploring further, but felt the rent proposed was too high. Clerk to ask whether the rent could be reduced. It was acknowledged that the land is not suitable for allotments, but councillors discussed the importance of retaining it for community use, particularly as a green space and for wildlife.

12. Churchyard and Cemetery - None

13. Training and Development for Councillors and Clerk - None

14. Finance

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

HMRC	Bacs	P30 ending 05/07/2025	£327.79	LGA 1972 s111
Payroll	Bacs	Ending 31.06.25	£1050.22	LGA 1972 s111
Shades	Bacs	Street Cleaning as per tender Inv 2706	£1316.67	LGA 1972 s111
Shades	Bacs	Hackneys Corner as per tender Inv 2708	£135.00	LGA 1972 s111
Shades	Bacs	Grounds maintenance as per tender Inv 2707	£507.50	LGA 1972 s111

a. Payments outside of meeting

Three	DD	Council phone contracts	£33.98	LGA 1972 s111
Nest	DD	Month 3 Ending 30.6.25	£50.61	LGA 1972 s111
Unity Trust	DD	Bank Fees	£6.00	LGA 1972 s111
Lloyds Bank	DD	Multipay card fee	£3.00	LGA 1972 s111

Income received - Unity Trust Credit Interest - £320.04

Bank Balance @ 30.06.2025

Unity Trust Current Account Balance -£ 30,177.68

Unity Trust Saver Account Balance - £162,352.51

Total - £192,530.19

15. Reports:

Village Hall –

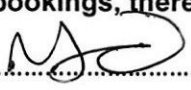
A new Chair and Vice-Chair have been elected.

Representatives from Port One have invited two members of the Parish Council to attend a meeting. The purpose is to discuss the potential benefits for the Village Hall regarding the proposed development at Port One.

The Village Hall will be purchasing a container unit for storage. As the Parish Council are custodians of the deeds, it was requested that the Parish Council apply for planning permission, which would allow a discount on the fee. It was agreed that

All members will undergo DBS checks.

With the success of the bar, particularly with Friday openings, and an increase in hall bookings, there is a growing need for additional voluntary bar staff.

Signed.....

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Date11/9/2025

Councillors noted report and agreed to apply for the planning application for storage unit hardstand.

16. Correspondence

- a. **Parking Issues - Complaints were received regarding residents parking vehicles on pavements, obstructing access for pedestrians, wheelchair users, and prams. It was also reported that such parking can at times block drivers' line of sight when entering/exiting roads. The problem appears to be particularly prevalent in the Blakenham Fields area. The Council advised that these incidents should be reported to the police, who hold the authority to take enforcement action if necessary.**
- b. **Sackers Explosions - The Council received correspondence from the East Anglian Daily Times regarding reports of explosions/bangs originating from Sackers, which have allegedly caused windows to be shattered in flats on Gipping Road. The Clerk responded with a comment that the Council is already aware of these incidents and has been monitoring the situation. The Council is in regular discussions with Suffolk County Council and the Environment Agency to seek solutions and ensure appropriate measures are taken to prevent further occurrence.**
- c. **Elite Travel/Boardley & Roberts - The Parish Council noted complaints from residents regarding potential planning breaches and operating hours at the land owned by Boardley & Roberts in Plummers Dell. Concerns included the presence of large vehicles in a residential area and associated noise levels, with Claydon Travel and Elite Travel currently operating from the site. The Clerk has contacted the Planning Department at Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC), who confirmed they will be meeting with the landowner's agent to assess the situation. The Council agreed to await further clarification from MSDC before pursuing further.**

The Council received contact from Elite Travel, who advised that they are keen to work with the Parish Council and local community. The company expressed their willingness to help mitigate any issues raised, and emphasised their commitment to working together with residents, not only as an employer but also as a community partner.

17. 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 11th September 2025 and any items for the agenda.**

Karen Grimwood -Email: clerk@greatblakenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

Date: 11/07/2025

Signed 

Date 11/9/2025



Cllr Chris Chambers

**Gipping Valley
Division**

www.chrischambers.uk

**July 2025
Report**



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Suffolk Libraries to Become Suffolk Community Libraries from 1 June

The service will continue to operate as usual, with no changes for library users and all 45 libraries will remain open.

This ensures the council can continue delivering library services in a sustainable way, strengthening the role libraries play across Suffolk's communities.

Councillor Philip Faircloth-Mutton, Cabinet Member for Environment, Communities and Equality, said:

"This move is not just about preserving the service we have; it's about making libraries even more integral to the services we offer. While they already provide excellent spaces for reading and community engagement, we want to expand their role and ensure they become vital access points for a wide range of public services.

"We're incredibly grateful to Suffolk Libraries and all their dedicated staff for everything they've done, and for working closely with us to ensure a smooth transition. We value their expertise and passion, and we look forward to working with them as they become Suffolk County Council staff."

Suffolk County Council extends its sincere thanks to everyone involved in the transition and looks forward to this new chapter for library services in Suffolk.

For more information, please visit www.suffolkcommunitylibraries.co.uk

New Strategy Launched to Tackle Violence Against Women and Girls in Suffolk

While Suffolk remains a safe county in which to live, work, and visit, the reality is that Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence continue to affect too many people. These crimes are often driven by harmful attitudes and gender-based stereotypes that disproportionately impact women and girls. However, the strategy recognises that anyone, regardless of gender identity, can be a victim and that support must be inclusive and far-reaching.

The new Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy places the experiences of victims and survivors at its heart. Shaped through extensive engagement with victim-survivors, support services, and frontline professionals, the strategy sets a clear and ambitious vision:

For everyone in Suffolk to play their part in preventing and identifying Violence Against Women and Girls, creating the safety we all deserve.

Chris Chambers - County Councillor for the Gipping Valley Division

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To achieve this vision, the strategy is built around four key ambitions:

- Stop the abuse before it starts
- Support every survivor
- Hold abusers accountable
- Build a united front

In March 2025, the Suffolk Safer and Stronger Communities Board formally endorsed the strategy, marking an important milestone in the county's coordinated response to Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

Councillor Philip Faircloth-Mutton, Cabinet Member for Environment, Communities and Equality and Chair of the Suffolk Safer and Stronger Communities Board, said:

"These are complex issues that require a joined-up approach, with action across all parts of our community. This strategy provides a shared vision and a plan for how we can work together to create lasting change in Suffolk."

Help is available, whether you are currently experiencing abuse, have recently left an abusive relationship, or are concerned about someone you know, you are not alone. A wide range of local, specialist support services is available [Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls \(VAWG\) | Suffolk Constabulary](#)

For more information, and to read the full strategy, visit: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/Suffolk-VAWG-Strategy-2025-28.pdf>

Council reorganisation affects us all - so have your say today

A new survey giving residents the opportunity to shape the future of councils and public services in Suffolk has been launched.

It's part of the Government plan to reshape and streamline councils in Suffolk to save money, reduce confusion and improve public services for residents.

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for devolution, local government reform and NSIPs, said: "It's fairly well known that we strongly believe that replacing Suffolk's six local authorities with a single new council would be smarter, simpler and better for our county.

"We've arrived where we have because early figures show it's the only way to save money, improve services and keep your council tax as low as possible.

"But that doesn't mean our proposal is the finished product. We want our plan to improve residents' connection with their local council and we'd like their help to ensure that's the

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case.

"A key part of this work is finding out what people think about the state of local government in Suffolk – and what their hopes are for the future.

"After all, it's their council tax and services so what they think is vitally important.

"This survey will help us to develop our plan so that we can be confident it addresses the issues that matter most to you. I'd therefore encourage all Suffolk residents to take a moment to have their say."

The survey only takes about 10 minutes to complete, and can be done online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/devolution, by emailing devolution@suffolk.gov.uk or by calling 0345 603 1842 where a member of Suffolk County Council's customer services team can help residents to complete the survey.

People can also visit any of Suffolk's 45 libraries to complete the survey online.

It asks questions about local democracy – such as how you raise issues that need addressing, local decision making – such as how you might want to get involved and about the specifics of council reorganisation itself.

The survey is open for eight weeks – until 4 August 2025.

The survey will play a part in helping Suffolk County Council to develop a comprehensive business plan that looks at the best way to organise councils and deliver public services in Suffolk – so that the Government has all the information it needs to decide which proposal(s) to put out to public consultation.

From best practice elsewhere in the country to the costs of various options currently on the table, no stone is being left unturned.

Whilst a final proposal is still to be developed, Suffolk County Council believes that a new single local council is the smartest, simplest, and best option for the whole of Suffolk which will deliver the biggest savings and most sustainable service improvements. The council argues that any alternatives will have to work hard to justify the risks of breaking up critical services like social care, creating new council boundaries and smaller population sizes.

Early analysis by financial consultants PwC suggests that establishing a single new local council could cost around £19 million but that this could be repaid quickest through the significant financial savings achieved by having one council.

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Alternatively, the cost of breaking Suffolk into two or even three – as proposed by Suffolk's district and borough councils - would cost £7 million to £13 million more and, in the case of three new councils, that investment would never be repaid as there would be no savings to be found.

Councillor Rout said: "If we want our new structure to retain key local services and to be truly accessible, then the new council or councils needs to be able to afford to do so. "Breaking Suffolk up would place such financial pressure on new councils that those small, discretionary local services we all value would be at risk from day one.

"To create a truly sustainable and effective council structure for Suffolk, one new council is not just the only viable option, but also the best one."

Suffolk challenges Government on Planning reform at a National Infrastructure Conference

The Council and other speakers raised concerns that proposed changes to the NSIP regime were not suitably robust to manage the significant changes which NSIPs can bring to host communities, particularly with the proposed replacement of a statutory duty for pre-submission consultation with statutory guidance.

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Devolution, Local Government Reform and NSIPs, said:

"I'm proud that Suffolk County Council continues to lead the way with its NSIP expertise and influence and can bring together colleagues and speakers from around the country. "Suffolk has one of the greatest concentrations of NSIPs in the UK, and for me it's important to ensure that local communities are considered first-and-foremost by local authorities, project promoters and government. "Today there were some robust discussions around government's proposals to scrap the statutory duty to consult for NSIPs. "This is something that the county council fundamentally disagrees with - our communities need more and better consultation, not less. "We welcome any opportunity to further engage with Government to share our expertise as to what meaningful engagement should look like."

Delegates from across the country attended the Conference to hear speakers from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), legal experts, and industry leaders discussing the emerging

Planning and Infrastructure Bill, effective communication with project promoters, and the importance of local impact reports.

The conference further cements Suffolk County Council's recognised role as a Centre of Excellence for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) for its expertise when

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engaging with projects, such as Sizewell C, the Gull Wing, National Grid upgrades, solar farms and offshore wind farms.

The conference was sponsored by Cornerstone Barristers, Howes Percival, National Infrastructure Planning Association and Sharpe Pritchard.

Following the success of this year's conference, it will take place again in June 2026.

£8m funding for Bus Service improvements

The funding from the Department of Transport's Local Authority Bus Grant can be used to create new bus services or enhance existing routes.

Following on from previous grants from the Department for Transport to improve bus services, totalling £3.7m of revenue funding between 2023 and 2025, the new grant which has been allocated for 2025/26 comprises of:

- £2,805,076 revenue for delivering new or enhanced services.
- £5,229,805 capital for new and improved bus stops, bus stations, bus priority measures or vehicle upgrades.

This money will enable Suffolk County Council to invest up to £5 million in capital projects to increase bus priority on congested streets, make improvements to bus stops and gain a better understanding of the journeys people are taking, paving the way for more innovative fare offers in the future. The council also plans to upgrade the current Real Time Passenger Information system, giving live updates on when buses will arrive at stops across the county.

The remaining £2.8 million will be spent supporting the existing services on the county's bus network and working with bus companies to finalise a number of route improvements and new services, set to launch later this year.

The previous funding has created and enhanced more than 15 routes across the county, through the council's Bus Service Improvement Programme (BSIP). These included the first Sunday and evening service between Sudbury and Bury St Edmunds for more than 20 years and direct links from Haverhill and Mildenhall to the West Suffolk Hospital.

Successful bids will be contacted in the coming days with new and enhanced services coming online later this year.

"We have seen the positive impact from the previous BSIP funding and our close work with parish councils and local community groups, to enhance and set up new bus links – in many

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cases the first links in many years allowing people to access goods and services using public transport.”

Cllr Chris Chambers, Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste

Cllr Chambers continued: “This new round of funding will enable us to continue to improve bus journeys in the county and support our ambition to help make public transport a viable alternative to the car for more Suffolk residents.

“We are also aware of the recent cancellations of services in Newmarket and Marham Park, and we are working with local providers and the community to find solutions, utilising the funding from Department for Transport. We have an excellent track record of supporting services when needed and hope to reach a solution soon.”

A full list of enhanced and new services funded with the previous BSIP funding can be found at: [Bus Service Improvement Plan - Suffolkonboard](#) including videos from services who received BSIP round 1 funding.

Details of successful bids for the latest round of funding will be posted on Suffolk On Board.

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DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT JULY 25

Beautiful walks and foodie gems celebrated in new project

Stunning walks and fantastic places to eat are showcased across Babergh and Mid Suffolk in a new initiative.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have developed the 'Grazing Walks' guide highlighting perfect places to enjoy a picturesque walk followed by a treat at a local pub, cafe or independent shop.

With more than 20 locations highlighted, its aim is to encourage more people to explore our unspoilt countryside, be active, and support local business.

Cllr Tim Weller, Mid Suffolk's cabinet member for environment, culture and wellbeing, said: "We want people to savour the scenery of our beautiful district, and then sample some of Suffolk's finest ingredients.

"It is so good for all of us to get outside, get some fresh air, and work up an appetite. I really hope people enjoy these trails, which I think showcase our beautiful towns and villages and help us appreciate what's on our own doorstep."

The Mid Suffolk guide includes locations such as Thornham Magna, Thwaite, Thorndon and many more. The Babergh guide highlights the villages between the Wool Towns including Kersey, Assington and Boxford, among others.

Details of each location, maps of the walks available, and places to eat, are available on the Heart of Suffolk website - heartofsuffolk.co.uk/grazing-walks

Community events return this summer

Communities in Babergh and Mid Suffolk are set for another summer of fun as a hugely popular series of free events returns for another year.

This year, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are partnering with Abbeycroft to deliver Community Fun Days at four locations across the districts – Sudbury, Hadleigh, Thurston and Stowmarket.

Families that attend one of the events can look forward to a wide range of activities, from bouncy castles and axe throwing to arts and crafts and dancing.

In addition to the activities, there will be numerous information stalls from local organisations and charities, providing access to valuable resources, support and information.

The events are scheduled to take place between 10am and 2pm at:

- Sudbury, Belle Vue Park – Monday, 21 July
- Thurston, New Green – Thursday, 24 July
- Hadleigh Pool and Leisure Centre – Friday, 25 July
- Stowmarket, Recreation Ground – Monday, 28 July

Each Community Fun Day is free to attend and has activities for all ages – simply turn up on the day. However, children that receive means tested free school meals are able to pre-book some activities and order a free lunch by [visiting the Abbeycroft website](#).

MSDC Pride in your Place grant returns

Applications for this grant have reopened, offering funding to projects that bolster community pride and celebrate the heritage of towns and villages across the district. These grants are for £250 to £5,000 (with a total pot of £50,000) and are available to town and parish councils, village hall or playing field committees, sports clubs and centres and community shops and pubs.

In the previous funding window which opened in November 2024, the Pride in Your Place grant was used to fund 20 unique projects. Successful applications included a new history trail in Bramford, footpath resurfacing in Thorndon, improvements to the engineer's memorial in Eye and a new bus stop bench in Gislingham.

Improving the efficiency of windows in listed buildings

Many listed buildings suffer from poor energy performance due to badly fitting windows and single glazing. Anyone who wants to make an upgrade currently has had to apply for listed building consent, but the process is set to be made a lot easier in respect of grade two listed buildings. Under a trial scheme between Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils and Historic England upgrades should be much quicker and easier to install. This would also apply to double glazing installed and introduced after the property was listed and those which were already installed within a modern extension.

Mid Suffolk District Council Meeting 26.06.25

Two motions were introduced at Thursday evening's meeting. The first related to the introduction of more 20 mph speed limit zones across Suffolk where there is local support. The motion, by Councillor Jen Overett, called for Suffolk County Council to review its criteria for speed limits. Currently, Suffolk County Council says it's confident that speed limits are largely appropriate across Suffolk and rules out 20mph speed limits on any A or B roads or roads with existing mean speeds above 30mph. However, it also says a review is underway to make it simpler for residents and parishes to apply for 20mph zones. Discussion on the topic drew attention to high costs which communities would have to pay in order to demonstrate current levels of speeding. I spoke about concerns at Little Blakenham, especially in relation to the safety of horse riders. The motion was passed by all but two councillors.

The second motion, brought forward by Councillor Terence Carter focussed on the need for one of the councillors to become a disability champion to act as a liaison point with the disabled community and promote accessibility across all council decisions and strategies. The disability champion would work closely with the Mid Suffolk Disability Forum to ensure that their priorities are evaluated and actioned. The motion also suggests that councillors be provided with mandatory training on disability awareness, inclusive planning and the social model of disability. The motion was passed unanimously.

Funding to support arts and cultural organisations in England On 29 May, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, (DCMS) announced that arts and cultural organisations will be able to apply for a share of £85 million from the government for vital repairs and upgrades:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/85-million-to-support-arts-and-cultural-organisations-across-the-countrygrades>.

The new Creative Foundations Fund will help arts venues in England to address a range of issues, such as repairing building infrastructure, outdated or failing systems, inefficient energy systems and inaccessible spaces. It will ensure beloved local venues like theatres, performing arts venues, galleries, grassroots music venues and contemporary arts centres can continue.

Arts and cultural organisations in England are encouraged to apply for a share of up to £10 million each from the fund.

The online portal to register expressions of interest for the Creative Foundations Fund opens on 30 June. Full guidance, including eligibility criteria and details of how to apply can be found on Arts Council England's website.

Councils are encouraged to share this information as appropriate

Reminder: Funding to protect historic buildings

In April, the government announced that communities in England can now apply for a share of almost £20 million to help care for historic buildings and heritage sites in their local area.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/local-heritage-to-be-protected-with-20-million-of-funding>

The new £4.85 million Heritage Revival Fund <https://ahfund.org.uk/grants/england/>

is currently accepting applications for projects that will help to rescue and repurpose neglected historic buildings, like theatres, department I

Hot weather communications toolkit 2025

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has produced a hot weather communications toolkit for 2025

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1D36CV8tkV3WOIWk7UPQy30tRz1KUOTAg>

to help provide basic health information that can be communicated during hot spells so that the right messages reach the right people at the right time.

The material in the toolkit is largely the same as last year, with an additional section containing information on other hazards which can occur during the summer months including thunderstorm asthma, flash flooding and drought. The toolkit supports UKHSA's Adverse Weather and Health Plan and Weather-in-Health Alerting (WHA) system which issues Heat-Health Alerts (HHA).

The core alerting season for HHAs started on 1 June, ending on 30 September. Individuals and organisations that wish to receive the impact based HHA must register to receive the alerts which are also publicly available on the UKHSA Data Dashboard.

The East Midlands, South East, South West, London, and East of England will be under an amber alert from 27th June, while a yellow alert has been issued for Yorkshire and Humber, and the West Midlands.

Data dashboard:

<https://ukhsa-dashboard.data.gov.uk/weather-health-alerts/heat>

Consultation Outcome: Funding for the Homelessness Prevention Grant from 2026-2027

Earlier this year, the Ministry of Housing & Communities conducted a review of the Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) formula.

The consultation closed on 11 March 2025, and 189 responses were received in total.

On Friday 20th June, a summary of the responses was published which details the government's response and next steps towards updating the funding arrangements for the Homelessness Prevention Grant from 2026-27 onwards.

There was some support for using Housing Benefit plus Universal Credit claimants to reflect homelessness demand. However, a significant number of respondents felt that this did not fully capture pressures from households that are working and not in receipt of benefits. Responses suggested that the use of Mean Rents in the Private Rented Sector, alongside a labour cost adjustment might give a clearer picture.

Final decisions will be taken later this year when budgets are confirmed, considering the amount of funding available and taking account of the consultation feedback.

The Fair Funding Reform

Local government runs around 800 essential services that we all rely on, support the most vulnerable, and are the foundation of a functioning state.

The demand for, and cost of, services has increased significantly – and that this has made the job for local authorities in recent years much harder.

Earlier this year, the government announced the £69 billion financial Settlement for 2025-26 - a 6.8% cash terms increase, with £600 million being directed through a one-off Recovery Grant to sustain councils with historical low tax bases and higher levels of deprivation. At the Spending Review earlier this month, they also announced over £5 billion of new grant funding over the next three years.

Competitive bidding for funding pots is going to end, to be replaced by multi-year financial Settlements in 2025-27 that will give local leaders the certainty and stability they need to plan for the future.

At the Spending Review additional funding was announced for preventative services. This will keep more families together, improving outcomes for children and reducing local authority costs, while joining up disparate agencies and support services.

The Government's reasoning is that too many areas have felt the combined impact of reducing government support and low historical tax bases to raise income from. This has been coupled with high levels of need driving up demand for services, which have shifted from early intervention and prevention to crisis management.

Adjustments will be made for the costs of remoteness faced by rural communities, and the ability of individual local authorities to raise Council Tax, while also resetting business rates income. Initially local councils will be worse off with the ending of the rural services delivery grant – which last year totalled over £100m. This is one of a number of funds being “repurposed” to redirect funding towards more deprived areas. We will wait to see whether Mid Suffolk counts as a “deprived area”.

Mid Suffolk are basing financial plans on a “worst case” scenario in that their Medium Term Financial Forecast is based on a pessimistic perspective of no future Government funding and a significant drop in Business rates income. Similarly Mid Suffolk's Capital and Treasury Strategies, approved last February, sets the Capital Programme and associated borrowing limits at “a prudent and affordable level”,

Update: Drainage standards

On Thursday (19 June) the Department for Transport announced that the government are updating the national standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems to help tackle water pollution and protect communities from flooding.

The new standards will give developers clearer guidance on how to create rainwater management systems that mimic the natural environment and deliver better outcomes.

Key features of the new standards include:

- Reducing flood risk by actively managing surface water on site
- Improving water quality before it enters rivers and streams
- Provide community benefits by creating more attractive and resilient places to live and work
- Prioritising solutions that enhance biodiversity and green space
- Encouraging water efficiency, by enabling the reuse of rainwater through harvesting and collection systems
- Emphasising long-term maintenance and performance

Faster Planning Appeal Procedures

On 25th June, the government announced new regulations to streamline the planning appeals process. Expected to begin by the end of 2025, the reform is about enabling planning appeal decisions to be made more quickly.

Under the new process the majority of written representation appeals will accept only the evidence put before the local planning authority during application. This will allow a full body of evidence to be provided at application stage, giving local planning authorities the information they need to make decisions, keeping decisions local.

Public health updates:

Home-testing kits available as part of the cervical screening programme

Today (24 June) the UK government announced it will offer home-testing kits for cervical cancer screening

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-testing-kits-for-lifesaving-checks-against-cervical-cancer>

as part of a new 10-year health plan. These kits are for those who have missed their regular screenings. The goal is to make it easier for people to get tested by allowing them to do it at home. This initiative aims to increase participation in cervical cancer screening and catch more cancers early.

Earlier this week (20 June), the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) was warning of variations in the uptake of the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine across England. These variations increase the risk of cervical and other HPV-related cancers in areas with lower vaccination rates. The HPV vaccine is available for free until age 25 through GP surgeries. The UKHSA emphasises the importance of both vaccination and cervical screening to prevent cervical cancer. Despite some improvements, vaccination rates remain below pre-pandemic levels.

Councils are encouraged to share with public health colleagues to promote vaccine uptake and awareness of the new home testing kits.

Advice accepted on autumn 2025 COVID-19 vaccination programme

On the advice of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation the autumn 2025 vaccination programme will target people who are at the highest risk of serious illness to protect the most vulnerable. Vaccination will be offered in England in Autumn 2025 to:

- Adults aged 75 years and over
- Residents in a care home for older adults

- Individuals aged 6 months and over who are immunosuppressed.

The government encourages anyone who is eligible for COVID-19 vaccination to come forward for vaccination this autumn.

Reminder: UKHSA urges travellers to take steps to avoid infection abroad

Earlier this month (10 June), the UK Health Security Agency reported an increase in travel-associated enteric fever cases (typhoid fever and paratyphoid fever) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. These are serious preventable illnesses caused by Salmonella bacteria, usually spread through contaminated food or water.

Meanwhile, provisional data shows that imported malaria cases remain at concerning levels in the UK. There were fewer imported dengue cases reported in the first quarter of 2025 compared to last year in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Travel Health Pro website, <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/>

supported by UKHSA, has information on health risks in countries across the world. It is a one-stop-shop for information to help people plan their trip abroad.

*Adrienne Marriott
Blakenham District Councillor
01/07/25*