

DENNINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held on Monday 7th July 2025 at 7.30pm at Dennington Village Hall



1. Councillors present

Robert Wardley (Chair)	John Calver	Doris Dearing	Nick Hopewell-Smith
Vashti Mouncer	Sam Steward	Kevin Shelver	

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr. Lunn (working).

In attendance

Lydia Kindred (clerk)	2 residents	
County Councillor Stephen Burroughes		District Councillor Vince Langdon-Morris

2. Declarations of interest

None

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 19th May 2025 were approved as a true record of the meeting.

4. Matters arising

A resident raised some questions at the Annual Parish Meeting in May, including asking how to encourage greater resident attendance to Council meetings. The Chair responded by outlining various initiatives that have been tried in the past to boost engagement. In relation to representation at SALC, it was noted that no one came forward to stand as the Council's representative at the AGM in May.

The suggestion to hold two litter picking events per year was noted, as was the poor attendance at the Council's latest litter picking evening. The suggestion that the Council donates towards the village Christmas event, including the provision of Christmas trees, was noted and can be considered later in the year.

5. Chair's report

He has cleaned highways signs in the village. He has replaced a damaged post at the Village Square. Has met with the Highways Officer.

6. Clerk's report

Stage One of the Tour of Britain cycle race will be passing through Dennington on 2nd September

The clerk has written an article of updates from the Parish Council for the summer newsletter which is now available.

Dogs on leads/clear up reminder signs have been purchased for the communal green areas and sports club and the Chair will look to erect these.

The Chair is booked on for the Community Self-Help training day which will then allow DPC to run community work parties if he is supervising.

The Chair and Clerk attended SALC's AGM and 75th anniversary event. On 16th July, they will attend the next East Suffolk Council Town and Parish Planning Forum.

The public rights inspection period for financial records is ongoing; no public requests have been received so far.

Framlingham's Neighbourhood Plan Review continues and the Town Survey seeking thoughts on future development is live until 21st July.

JPAG has been renamed SAPPP and the 2025–26 Practitioners' Guide includes important updates. New data compliance requirements (Assertion 10) will require additional work regarding data protection and digital compliance. Councils will be required to have an official email account which Dennington is already implementing and it has already moved to a gov.uk web domain.

The Chair and clerk attended SCC's briefing on local government reorganisation and devolution in Brandeston. Notes have been shared with all Councillors. A consultation on Suffolk's unitary council structure is live. Mayoral elections for Suffolk and Norfolk are likely to take place in May 2026.

An email has been written to the Sports Club asking why the Parish Council does not feature on the sign thanking benefactors for contributions towards the play area improvements.

7. **Responsible Financial Officer's report:**

a) The following payments were approved:

Amount	Payee	Details
£43.99	L. Kindred	Dogs on leads signs
£1,003.15	L. Kindred	Pay to 30 th June
£231.20	HMRC	PAYE to 5 th July
£20.00	Dennington Village Hall	Hall hire July – invoice awaited
£7.14	Robert Wardley	Postmix reimbursement
£30.00	ESC	Bike rack excess grant refund

b) Receipts & payments since the last meeting:

20/05/2025	£47.00	ICO – Data Processor Fee (Direct debit)
02/06/2025	£14.18	Barclays Interest
02/06/2025	£48.86	Barclays Interest

£169.97 East Suffolk Council Bike racks (covered by Tour of Britain grant)

c) The bank balances as at 30.06.2025 were:

Community account £5,572.93
Equipment account £14,757.60
Savings account £3,888.19

d) The bank statements and bank reconciliation were reviewed by the Examining Officer.

e) The year-to-date receipts and payments account was noted.

8. **Highways and footpaths issues in the village:**

8.1 The Chair provided an update from his site meeting with the local Highways Liaison Officer. SCC has been clearing culverts at Wash Lane and are carrying out additional surveys here to see if any additional works are required.

8.2 The Chair reported that one of the posts surrounding the oak tree in the Square (opposite the pub) has been replaced. Two further posts are also in need of replacement. It was agreed to allocate £100 per post for this work. The Chair will carry out the installation.

Regarding the repaired village gateway sign located on private land, councillors reviewed and approved a quotation of £400 for the reinstallation of the sign.

9. **First registration of the Sports Club land**

The Chair gave an update on this and a discrepancy with the plan showing the extent of the property which can be further examined when the main section of land has been registered.

10. New residents welcome pack

After a suggestion during the Annual Parish Meeting. Cllr. Mouncer has started working on this and has included information on clubs and organisations in the village, history, local information, public rights of way. These will be available to collect at the café and can also be distributed to new residents by Councillors.

11. Communications between the Sports Club and Volunteer Mowers

Cllr. Wardley reported that a football club is currently using the pitch on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings. Cllr. Mouncer requested that the Sports Club keep volunteer mowers informed of all pitch bookings in advance, to help minimise disruption and avoid scheduling conflicts.

12. Tractor Mower

The Chair gave an update on ongoing issues with the tractor mower over the past year. He has obtained three quotations for a potential replacement for Councillors to consider. It was noted that the mower has only carried out 306 hours of work. Cllr. Shelver presented a breakdown of the annual costs associated with the current mower, which was purchased in March 2020. He recommended that the Council explore either contracting out the grass cutting or leasing a new mower as a potential cost-effective alternative.

At this point, the Chair suspended the meeting to invite comments from residents. Following discussion, it was agreed to retain the current mower and arrange for a full service during the winter period. Cllr. Wardley will also investigate future liaison options for grass cutting, to keep alternatives under review while the trade-in value of the existing mower remains strong.

13. Heritage finger post signs

Councillors were concerned by the costs of these signs. It was agreed not to continue with this project at present.

14. Governance changes

Some changes from the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (formerly known as the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance) were considered, including the addition of Assertion 10 regarding data protection compliance. The Council has already switched to a gov.uk website and email addresses.

The Clerk will circulate a link to a useful webinar outlining the digital compliance obligations. Councillors are asked to notify her once they have watched it, so the training records can be updated accordingly.

15. Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

The village had a NWS scheme but it is dormant. A resident has suggested that it is relaunched. This would need a NHW co-ordinator to lead it. Cllr. Mouncer will look into it with a view to considering being the scheme Co-ordinator. The village could be broken into sections and ask residents to sign up to this and Parish Council digital mailing list.

16. Correspondence

Pensions Regulator re Auto-Enrolment due in October

Barclays notification of reducing interest rates on account (1.25% to 1.20%)

Adnams Communitiy Trust Report

PUBLIC SESSION

A resident raised concerns about the narrowness of the footpath at Mill Lane, which currently makes it difficult for pushchairs to use. It was also reported that some neighbouring properties are discarding rubbish onto the path and vegetation has become overgrown. Cllr. Wardley will seek a site meeting with a Rights of Way Officer to explore the possibility of widening the path. He will also discuss the matter with Cllr.

Burroughes.

A resident suggested improving communication between the Parish Council and residents, noting that current methods traditionally used by Neighbourhood Watch Schemes can be slow or ineffective. He suggested creating a Parish WhatsApp group or simpler alternative to share updates quickly. He also asked why contacting parish councillors is not easier and suggested the possibility of publishing councillor contact details on the website.

A resident questioned why Highways cannot take more action to reinforce road edges. The County Councillor noted that if Highways are unable or unwilling to address these issues, local community action could be considered as an alternative and he would be happy to consider this further with the Parish Council.

Cllr. Burroughes explained that due to heart-related health issues since October, he has been unable to attend recent meetings, but is now receiving treatment and hopes to resume attendance as his health permits. He reassured residents that the Library Service is not at risk. Whilst Suffolk libraries have now been brought back in-house, no staff redundancies or library closures are planned. On local government reorganisation, he shared that Suffolk County Council is proposing a single-unitary authority model to improve service delivery and reduce costs. Elections scheduled for 1st May were cancelled and may be rescheduled in two years' time. Residents are encouraged to take part in the public consultation survey. Cllr. Burroughes also asked that any future requests for meetings with the Highways Liaison Officer be made through him rather than directly by the Parish Council.

The District Councillor reported that footpath improvements in Earl Soham have recently been completed using funds from his Enabling Communities Budget.

17. Councillor Reports on actions and updates

Cllr. Hopewell-Smith gave a report on his recent informal survey of residents at Owls Green, sharing both the results and additional observations gathered during conversations with residents. The clerk will prepare a brief summary of the findings and publish this on the village website. Cllr. Hopewell-Smith hopes to strengthen the sense of connection between Owls Green and Dennington village.

Cllr. Wardley reported that he has spoken to the landowner near Owls Green and he is not willing to create any additional permissive footpaths to link Owls Green to the village centre.

18. Matters to be raised at the next meeting

Owls Green residents survey and arising issues.

Mower leasing option

Neighbourhood Watch/village communications list

Progress on the welcome pack

19. The next meeting was confirmed as being on Monday 8th September 2025. There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.55pm.

Signed

Chair

Date