

Letheringham Parish Council

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on Monday September 8th 2025, 7pm in Easton & Letheringham Village Hall

Prior to the meeting start, seven neighbours of the DC/25/2977/FUL solar proposal met councillors to explain their remaining concerns with the scheme and answer questions prior to Letheringham councillors considering their response to ESC as a consultee – Item 2025.43.

Members of the Council present:

Paul Clarke (PC) (Chair & RFO)
Trevor Gill (TG) (Vice Chair & Clerk)
Jan McNeill (JM)
Malcolm Ross (MR)
Andrew Maskery (AM)

In attendance:

One Letheringham resident

2025.34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

SCC Elaine Bryce (EB) – Fully supports LPC's objections to DC/25/2733/FUL
ESC Vince Langdon-Morris (VLM)
ESC Owen Grey (OG)

2025.35 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations and dispensations previously granted relating to the solar array and BESS proposal (DC/25/2733/FUL) continue to apply.

2025.36 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on August 11th 2025.
Approved unanimously. Signed by PC

2025.37 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

In relation to the minutes of the May 12th Annual Meeting, PC, as RFO, noted that no formal acknowledgement had yet been received from the external auditor that the Certificate of Exemption had been processed and confirming no further action was needed. PC had chased this and awaited a confirmation. PC also noted that no one had asked to see the accounts during the period of public examination.

2025.38 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- 2025.38.1 A question was raised about the submission expiry date for the solar farm proposal DC/25/2733/FUL. PC said the case officer had agreed a deadline of 10th October 2025 for LPC and confirmed that any responses received up to this date would be considered. The case officer had said he was still waiting for several statutory consultees to respond and was still assimilating the applicant's submission as well as comments from the public. He will then draw all this together and respond to the applicant with a series of issues and clarifications for the applicant to address.
- 2025.38.2 A question arose about flooding – whether the action group's flood consultant report would be dismissed or considered. PC informed that ESC case officer will consider all

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submissions. If they are too technical, they will rely on statutory consultees – eg Highways and flooding or appoint their own specialist advisors to assess submissions.

- 2025.38.3 A question arose about the most recent photos that the applicant has submitted which show that the site is flat – who at ESC will check that (suitability)? JM informed that a landscape consultant will speak to ESC about this.
- 2025.38.4 JM commented that those having issues with ESC’s portal, can just email ESC Planning department.

2025.39 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES

- 2025.39.1 **Highways& Rights of Way:** JM reported that SCC PROW Officer Debbie Adams had attended site and inspected with PC and JM several areas where issues had been raised. DA had agreed several actions. So far, the only work completed had been installation of the safety rail around the collapsing culvert at the Park Road end of footpath 9 (Brickles Cottages to Park Road) where a good job had been done.
**Action: JM to email TG with actions agreed with Debbie Adams
JM to contact Debbie Adams to chase up other agreed actions**
- 2025.39.2 **Website:** TG said that the LPC website is difficult to use and may become an issue when it comes to addressing Assertion 10 and Accessibility (see item 2025.42). He is currently discussing a way forward with website host “One Suffolk”.
- 2025.39.3 **SALC:** PC reported that the only information worth relaying related to Devolution & Local Government Reorganisation and these updates had been forwarded to councillors.
- 2025.39.4 **Community/Neighbourhood Watch:** It was agreed that the installation of some signs should be progressed asap ahead of shorter days when criminal activity increases.
Action: AM to order signs from NHW website.
- 2025.39.5 PC thanked AM and MR for organising and hosting the Community Cheese & Wine evening which had been well received.

2025.40 FINANCIAL REPORT

- 2025.40.1 **Finance Report:** PC presented the Financial Report at 31st August 2025 (see appendix 1) which had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting. MR signed a hard copy
- 2025.40.2 **Payments & Receipts 01/10/25-31/08/25:** The following transactions since the last meeting were noted:
Payments:
£60.96 Hollins Architects & Surveyors Printing A0, A1 & A3 plans
Receipts:
£50.00 Barclays Bank Compensation
£24.33 Barclays Bank Interest
- 2025.40.3 **Bank Balances & Reconciliation at 31/08/25:**
Community Account: £2,839.95
Deposit Account: £7,348.78
MR signed a hard copy of the bank statement.
Proposal: PC proposed transferring £2,000.00 from the Community Account to the deposit account to earn some interest. Unanimously agreed.
Action: PC to transfer£2,000.00 from the Community to the deposit account

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2025.40.4 **Invoices to pay:** PC noted that payments for village hall hire for the last three meetings had been made since August 31st but invoices had come in too late to appear on the Finance Report and Agenda for this meeting. The Internal Audit fee remained unpaid.

2025.40.5 **Year to Date actual vs budget**
PC noted that the expenditure to date had been well below the budget, largely because there had been no salary or expenses for a clerk.

2025.41 REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF STATUTORY DOCUMENTS

All updated versions had been circulated to councillors ahead of the meeting for their review. No issues were raised. So, each was approved in turn.

2025.41.1 **Internal Control Statement:** PC had reviewed and updated for the current financial year. No issues to report.

MR proposed & AM seconded. Approved unanimously

2025.41.2 **Data Protection Risk Assessment:** TG had reviewed and noted it might need further updating in the light of Assertion 10 changes.

MR proposed & AM seconded. Approved unanimously

2025.41.3 **Privacy Notice:** TG had reviewed

MR proposed & AM seconded. Approved unanimously

2025.41.4 **Parish Council Risk Assessment:** PC had reviewed and updated.

MR proposed & AM seconded. Approved unanimously

2025.42 GOVERNANCE CHANGES – ASSERTION 10

TG updated councillors on the process LPC needs to follow with respect to Assertion 10– Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

2025.42.1 **Website:** Recommendation to switch to a .GOV.UK domain name at a cost of £25 (per year). LPC existing website address will act as a forwarding site (at no cost). A new domain name will be required. “www.letheringhamparishcouncil.gov.uk” was proposed and agreed.

2025.42.2 **Mailbox:** LPC will need a 10GB mailbox at a cost of £24 per year. The issue of separate

2025.42.3 **Accessibility Review:** Recommendation to carry out an accessibility review to ensure no unforeseen issues on conversion. It is important to have a sustainable and easy to use method of adding content to the site (Agendas, Minutes, Policies, News, etc) going forward. The review will cost £108 and will not include changing existing PDF’s into web forms (too lengthy). However, future content would be added in an accessible format. It has been recommended that the Accessibility Statement states that these have not been converted.

2025.42.4 **Costs:** The total cost in year 1 is estimated at £157.

Proposal: TG proposed approval of all the above actions and projected costs. PC seconded. Unanimously agreed

Action: TG to instruct One Suffolk to proceed and set up separate email addresses for the Clerk & Chair.

Action: RFO to include annual costs of .GOV.UK domain name and mailbox in 2026/27 and future budgets.

2025.43 PLANNING & LICENSING APPLICATIONS

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- 2025.43.1 **DC/25/2733/FUL:** Construction & operation of solar farm (49.9MW) & BESS (50 MW) & associated works etc on parcels to NW of Easton & SW of Letheringham.
PC reported that he had submitted an initial response on the original deadline date of August 15th, based on the discussions at the parish meeting on August 4th and the parish council's decision at the extraordinary meeting on August 11th to object. The response had included a request for an extension to October 10th for a full response. This extension had subsequently been agreed by the case officer. PC suggested that an extraordinary meeting be held to agree and endorse final comments to ESC, although this could probably be done by email, given the decision to object had already been taken (2025.31).
JM commented that SCC mentioned that SCC Flood Team do not acknowledge that the area floods at any time other than 1:100.
TG suggested LPC insists an on-site inspection and not to rely on desk-based assessments.
PC asked if S.19 was referenced in the 12 requests for further information in the SCC Flood Team response. They were not.
PC suggested that we chase the S.19 report as we did prior to this application.
PC mentioned the applicant has stated that the cable route is not part of the application. The case officer is looking into the issues around whether or not the cable route should be part of the application site. This involves reviewing recent case law to look at whether this meets correct planning guidance.
Action: TG to draft a response to SCC Flood Team's email and to consider their full submission to ESC.
Action: TG to send email asking about timing.
- 2025.43.2 **DC/25/2977/FUL:** Erection of solar PV installation of 20 MW & all associated infrastructure for 42 years on Land South of Easton Lane, Glevering Park
Neighbours of the site had been invited to meet with members of Letheringham Parish Council immediately prior to this meeting to give their views and inform councillors on the issues that remained. They had highlighted the following concerns:
Loss of BMV land: Grade 3A
Settings of Heritage Assets: Abbey Farm (Grade II listed) & Barn settings will be significantly affected and this has not been adequately considered from an impact perspective.
Amenity: Views will be massively interrupted towards Pettistree and Campsea Ashe, which are visible from the site. The applicant says there is no significant amenity value as there is not a footpath. This is simply not correct as Easton Lane is a Quiet Lane and used by walkers, cyclists who currently enjoy views over the site.
Cumulative Effect: there are currently 7 projects local to the Wickham Market Substation, which is drawing a lot of interest to connect to the grid, including SZC Park & Ride and solar sites at Loudham, Pettistree, Parham, Easton & Letheringham and others possibly at pre-application stage.
Mitigation: Very little and poor overall. The planting scheme will struggle, as will wildlife. The only mitigation is due to the power lines, rather than to benefit neighbouring houses. Panels still come very close to Easton Lane and the properties there.
Consultation: Neither Hacheston PC nor the applicant (Grupotec) had notified residents.
Flooding: The land sheds a lot of surface water during heavy downpours.
Temporary? 42 years is not temporary.

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Benefit to community: Nothing, higher prices not lower.

The application was discussed and it was agreed to respond with an objection.

Proposal: LPC objects to application DC/25/2997/FUL, based on the grounds below. Proposed AM seconded MR. All agreed.

1. Use of BMV land is 3A
2. Visual impact with panels 3.3m high running aspect towards Campsea Ashe and Pettistree. 4.3m high CCTV posts.
3. Proximity to a Grade II heritage asset in Abbey Farm
4. Loss of amenity – Walkers, Cyclists, Horse Riding
5. Cumulative effect during construction.
6. Impact on Wildlife

Action: PC to draft a response and circulate to councillors for approval prior to submission.

PC gave updates on progress since the Annual Meeting on the following applications:

- 2025.43.3 **DC/24/0820/FUL:** Wheelchair accessible WC within the church yard of Letheringham Church. **Consented.**
- 2025.43.4 **DC/24/4202/FUL:** Conversion of three barns to dwellings at Abbey Farm. **Consented.**
- 2025.43.5 **DC/25/0693/EIA:** EIA screening opinion on installation & operation of a solar development & BESS on land in Letheringham & Easton.
On June 25th the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government had declined to issue a screening direction. This meant that ESC's decision stood and an **EIA was not required.**
- 2025.43.6 **DC/25/1051/VOC:** Variation of condition 2 on consent DC/20/3495/FUL for cart lodge and store at Pike Cottage. **Refused**
ESC Planning Committee South had discussed this application and refused consent at their meeting on June 24th. The case officer expected that the applicant would appeal the decision and had three months to initiate this with the Planning Inspectorate. The appeal would not involve the parish council.
- 2025.43.7 **DC/25/1540/FUL:** Demolition of existing barns and four new-build dwellings at Abbey Farm. **Consented.**
LPC had intended sending a response in support and commending the thoughtful approach to the design in relation to heritage and the sensitive setting but responding to the solar application had taken over.
- 2025.43.8 **DC/25/1959/FUL:** Single storey rear extension, reduction in size of swimming pool & changes to fenestration on main at The Lodge Park Road. **Consented.**
This had been circulated to councillors via email and no concerns had been raised. No response had been made to ESC.

2025.44 ENERGY PROJECTS

PC was concerned that energy projects such as the solar proposals which fall below the NSIP threshold and the sheer numbers of them being proposed were having a major

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impact on local people and they needed to be put on the radar. PC questioned how we could do this - write to ESC, SCC, MP's cc'ing all Parish Councils?
MR suggested staying focussed on responding to the project here for now and review at the December meeting.

JM agreed that collaboration is needed to other PC's and communicating that to ESC.

AM asked about hiring a hall and inviting those who are not fully aware.

Proposal: TG proposed sending an email to ESC & SCC asking how many current applications, how many in pre-app advice and when is the strategy coming to ensure

Action: TG to draft email to be sent to ESC & SCC

2025.45 QUIET LANES

JM reported on the recent traffic survey which had been carried out by SCC Highways and funded by SCC Elaine Bryce. It had recorded traffic levels and speeds over two weeks in August. Both were well below the maximum levels for eligibility for Quiet Lane designation.

PC said he thought that the results for Hall Road had been attributed to Pit Road and vice versa. He would raise a query with Josh White.

Proposal: PC proposed an email be sent to residents putting forward the case for Quiet Lane designation and seeking their views. Agreed unanimously

Action: JM and PC to liaise to draft an email.

2025.46 Dates for Future Scheduled Meetings

8th December, 23rd February, 18th May (Annual Meeting), 7th September, 7th December.

The meeting closed at 9:45pm.

Signed:

Date:

letheringhamparishcouncil@gmail.com

<https://letheringham.onesuffolk.net/>

Appendix 1 follows: Financial Report at 31/08/2025

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Finance Report at 31st August 2025

Bank

31/08/2025 Total balance at bank: £10,188.73

Payments Schedule

Heelis & Lodge - internal audit report 2024/25 85.00

85.00

2025-26 Variance to Budget

Budget		Actual to date		Variance	Comments
2,000.00	Precept	2,000.00		-	
50.00	Bank Interest	24.33		(25.67)	
	- Grants	-		-	
	- Misc	50.00		50.00	
145.11	VAT Reclaim	-		(145.11)	
	- Not in Use	-		-	
	- CIL	-		-	
	-	-		-	
2,195.11	TOTAL RECEIPTS	2,074.33	-	(120.78)	
2,120.00	Salaries	258.00		1,862.00	
38.00	Admin	69.80		(31.80)	
310.00	Insurance	-		310.00	
	- Capital	-		-	
	- Asset Maint.	-		-	
	- Training	-		-	
100.00	Website	-		100.00	
	- Misc.	-		-	
85.00	Audit	-		85.00	
132.50	Hall Hire	-		132.50	
70.00	Clerk's Expenses	6.30		63.70	
75.00	Subscriptions	63.86		11.14	
50.00	Burial Ground	-		50.00	
	- LGAs142	-		-	
100.00	River Testing	-		100.00	
150.00	VAT	13.96		136.04	
3,230.50	TOTAL PAYMENTS	411.92		2,818.58	
(1,035.39)	Net Under/(Over) expenditure	1,662.41		2,697.80	

Summary and Bank Reconciliation

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS SUMMARY

Balance as at 1st April	8,526.32
Total Receipts	2,074.33
Less Payments	411.92
Balance	10,188.73

CUMULATIVE FUNDS REPRESENTED BY

Community Account	2,839.95
Business Premium Account	7,348.78
Add Unpresented Income	-
Less Unpresented Cheques	-
Balance c/f	10,188.73

Trial -

Unpresented Cheques

0.00	-
0.00	-
0.00	-
0.00	-
0.00	-
0.00	-
0.00	-
0.00	-
0.00	-
0.00	-
Total	-

Statement of Reserves 2025-26

	Reserves as at	Transaction Summary		Balance C/F
		Receipts	Payments (Net of VAT)	
	01/04/2025			
General/Precept Reserve (100% c	2,000.00	-	-	2,000.00
Quiet Lane signage & implementa	2,500.00	-	-	2,500.00
Election Expenses Reserve	500.00	-	-	500.00
Deficit 2025/26 - funds to cover	1,050.00	-	-	1,050.00
Churchyard maintenance 2025/26	200.00	-	-	200.00
Deficit 2026/27 - funds to cover	1,000.00	-	-	1,000.00
Drainage & Flooding Advice & Sup	500.00	-	-	500.00
Asset Maintenance Reserve	500.00	-	-	500.00
ECB Grant from ESC - for fingerp	1,000.00			1,000.00
	-			-
	-			-
	-			-
Total earmarked reserves	9,250.00	-	-	9,250.00
Unallocated balance at bank less unpresented cheques				938.73
Total Cumulative Funds				10,188.73