

Letheringham Parish Council

<https://letheringhamparishcouncil.gov.uk>

Minutes of a Meeting held on Monday February 23rd 2026 at 7.15pm in Easton & Letheringham Village Hall

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PRESENT

Paul Clarke (PC) (Chairman & RFO) (SALC)
Trevor Gill (TG) (Vice Chairman & Clerk) (Website)
Jan McNeill (JM) (Highways & Rights of Way)
Andrew Maskery (AM) (NHW & Community)
Siobhan Hubbard (SH) following co-option at item 2026.06

IN ATTENDANCE:

Vince Langdon Morris (VL-M) (ESC District Councillor).
Five members of the public

2026.01. APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF ABSENCES

None

2026.02. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations received.

The chairman reminded all that, following advice from ESC Monitoring Officer and SALC, all councillors had previously declared Interests relating to the solar array on land included in DC/25/0693/EIA – subsequently covered by planning application DC/25/2733/FUL.

Dispensations were granted for four years at the meeting on 08/05/2025 on grounds a) to bar all those with Interests would impede the transaction of the council's business, and b) in the interests of representing the community. Item 2026.12 on this agenda.

2026.03. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Protection of the landscape and countryside around Letheringham and throughout the Deben valley was raised by a resident. The locality used to be classified as a Special Landscape Area to recognise its quality and distinctiveness but this designation was no longer used by ESC although the landscape retained its special character. The questioner asked if the Parish Council could pursue any other designation that might be available to recognise and give some protection to the special character of the landscape. The chairman asked the District Councillor if he was aware of anything. VL-M suggested the question was referred to him by email to follow up.

The tree felling carried out between Pit Road and the river during the summer was raised by another resident. The questioner was unhappy that so many trees had been removed, leaving the area bare and asked if any action was being taken. Councillors said they had received several complaints from local residents about the impact of the work. The Forestry Authority had investigated a potential illegal felling as the Felling Licence had only covered the trees within the poplar plantation. However, a significant area beyond the plantation had been clear felled. PC stated that the landowner had explained to him that one or two trees leaning over the river and partially fallen in would be removed while the equipment was on site to fell the poplar plantation. However, the work carried on was well

beyond what the landowner had told PC would be done. PC noted that the felling licence had a replanting condition requiring planting of cricket bat willows. He noted that that no planting of these or any other trees had yet taken place and the end of the planting season was fast approaching. PC said the parish council had no specific powers in relation to this but JM agreed to follow up.

Action: JM to follow up with Forestry Authority.

Cllr VL-M reported that Framlingham had set up a Community Resilience Group which responded to SCC on their s 19 report into Babet. They had hired a consultant to provide evidence. He said that ESC had split their Resilience budget into two parts. One of these could now provide funding for the training of parish councillors. The Fram Community Resilience Group had purchased radios for emergency use.

2026.04. MINUTES

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on December 8th 2025 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair. Proposed PC, seconded AM.

2026.05. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

All covered by later items on the agenda.

2026.06. CO-OPTION

2026.06.01 To consider applications for the vacancy on the Council

The Chair confirmed that LPC had complied with statutory requirements to notify the vacancy. He summarised the subsequent co-option application procedure and said that one application had been received after the deadline of 6pm on Friday 20th February. An expression of interest had arrived by email to the wrong email address on Saturday 21st and the application form and signed declaration of eligibility were received on Sunday 22nd.

PC proposed that the deadline be upheld and this application be rejected. JM seconded. All agreed.

TG suggested that a published Policy for Co-option would ensure that the process and deadlines were clear to all from the outset.

Action: PC to draft a co-option policy for approval at the next meeting.

The Chair said one application had been received ahead of the deadline. It was from Siobhan Hubbard who was attending this meeting. He read out the information on the application form including her declaration of membership of Stop Deben Solar Action Group. There was some discussion of the candidate's relevant experience and membership of SDSAG. The Chair thanked the applicant for raising this issue and referred to his exchanges with Chris Bing, ESC Monitoring Officer, who had said that issues such as this were common place in small rural communities dealing with major planning applications which affected many in the community. He had stressed the importance of transparency in declaring interests and granting dispensations. LPC had followed his advice. All agreed that this was not a bar to considering the application.

2026.06.02 To co-opt a new councillor:

PC proposed that Siobhan Hubbard be co-opted as a member of Letheringham Parish Councillor. TG seconded. All agreed.

2026.06.03 To sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

SH signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form as a councillor and took up a seat with other councillors for the remaining items on the agenda.

2026.07. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES

2026.07.01 Highways & Rights of Way

JM reported that the grit box was full. JM had reported to SCC that the recently installed safety rail around the culvert outfall where footpath 9 meets Park Road was broken.

2026.07.02 Website

TG reported that the new GOV.UK domain was in place and working as expected and that the old address was still set up to divert traffic to the new domain.

2026.07.03 SALC

PC reported that NALC had produced a webinar that provided guidance summarising the changes in the proposed NPPF on which a consultation was open until March 10th. He did not think it was something LPC need respond to as a parish council but individual councillors could respond as private individuals.

2026.07.04 Community/Neighbourhood Watch

AM said there appeared to be little value in membership of NHW and they had not been communicating local break-ins. However, recently this had changed and reports of some incidents were now being passed on.

2026.08. FINANCIAL REPORT

See Appendix 1 at end.

All financial information had been circulated to councillors (except SH) ahead of the meeting and was presented at the meeting by PC as RFO.

2026.08.01 The Financial Statement & Bank Reconciliation at February 1st 2026 were explained.

2026.08.02 The Receipts & Payments Schedule for December 1st 2025 to February 1st 2026 showed no expenditure since December 1st and only a quarterly interest payment received.

2026.08.03 No payments had been made between December 1st 2025 to February 1st 2026

2026.08.04 The bank balances at February 1st 2025 were noted:

Community Account: £1,336.10 Deposit Account: £8,399.53

2026.08.05 The allocation of the council's reserves was reviewed. PC proposed to reallocate the £500 set aside for flooding advice post Storm Babet in October 2023 as this had not proved necessary in the two years since the event. The 2026/27 budget approved in December 2025 had a deficit of £1,550. The sum of £1,050 currently allocated to fund the 2026/27 deficit would therefore need to be increased by £500. There was general agreement.

JM proposed that £500 be re-allocated from flood advice to 2026/27 deficit. TG seconded. All agreed.

2026.09. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

PC had registered interest in SALC acting as internal auditor following an unsatisfactory experience with the 2024/25 internal auditor. He had circulated the SALC Letter of Engagement. He felt they would give a very thorough service and potentially find issues but, without a CiLCA qualified clerk, it would ensure that LPC had thorough oversight.

PC proposed the appointment of SALC as internal auditor for the year April 1st 2025-March 31st 2026 at a cost of £128.00. AM seconded. All agreed.

2026.10. RENEWAL OF INSURANCE FOR 2026/27

All insurance renewal documentation received from the current provider CAS Insurance Ltd as agent for Ansvar Insurance Ltd had been circulated to councillors ahead of the meeting. All were happy to renew the policy.

TG proposed renewal of the current policy for the year 07/03/2026-06/03/2027 at a cost of £227.06. JM seconded. All agreed.

Action: PC to confirm renewal with CAS and set up payment

2026.11. IT POLICY

2026.11.01 Approval of an IT Policy

Following the December meeting, TG had circulated a draft IT Policy based on the NALC template of November 2025. It was agreed that this was much more involved and detailed than anything required by Letheringham Parish Council. However, to tailor a policy individually would require significant time and it made practical sense to adopt this standard version and tailor it at a later date.

TG proposed that the draft IT Policy as circulated be adopted. PC seconded. All agreed.

2026.11.02 Individual GOV.UK email addresses

It was generally agreed that, to satisfy the requirement of Assertion 10, all council business should be conducted using GOV.UK email addresses. Whether these should be one for each councillor by name or role or more generic was left to be decided.

TG proposed individual @letheringhamparishcouncil.gov.uk email address for each councillor at an annual cost of £24 each. JM seconded. All agreed.

2026.12. PLANNING & LICENSING APPLICATIONS

To receive an update on current applications on which the Council has been consulted and consider any responses or further actions:

DC/25/4249/FUL Single storey rear & side extensions The Lodge Old Park Farm, Letheringham.

PC had not heard back from the case officer and had not pursued the issue of the PROW. However, the full detail of the response from SCC PROW had been incorporated as informatives into the planning permission which had been granted since the parish council meeting on December 8th 2025.

DC/25/3884/VOC Variation of conditions on DC/25/1540/FUL for demolition and construction of four new dwellings at Abbey Farm, Letheringham.

This application was approved 22/12/2025. Letheringham Parish Council had not responded.

DC/25/2733/FUL Solar Farm (49.9MW) & BESS (50 MW) Letheringham & Easton. A Letheringham resident had written to the parish council raising an issue regarding the cable connecting the two land parcels. The cable is not included in the current application and yet it is understood it would remain a private cable and therefore require planning consent. A response had been drafted and circulated to councillors ahead of the meeting for submission to the case officer at ESC along with the resident’s letter. **PC proposed that this response be submitted to ESC. Agreed unanimously.**

Action: TG to submit LPC third response to ESC Case Officer from .GOV.UK address.

JM noted the February 27th deadline for the applicant to submit their responses to issues raised by the earlier public consultation. She also pointed out that there had been a lot of concern over BESS and the guidance issued by the Chief Fire Officers Association in December 2025 about fire safety standards relating to them.

DC/25/2977/FUL Solar Array (20 MW) Glevering Park Hacheston.

PC reported that a response had been drafted based on the grounds previously agreed but had yet to be submitted.

2026.13. SECTION 19 REPORT FOR LETHERINGHAM

The report had been published online by SCC on 19/12/2025 without informing the parish council. When it was discovered by a resident by chance, the clerk had circulated it to the LPC mailing list. TG reported that one landowner had responded to the issue of managing runoff from agricultural land upstream comparing infiltration rates on permanent grassland versus arable land.

It was noted that SCC had incorporated information submitted by LPC but there had been no dialogue or collaboration between the parish council and SCC during the preparation of the report in direct contravention of SCC's published guidelines. SCC had tasked LPC with actions in the months following publication but had not even notified LPC of the report's publication.

It was agreed that the report had a number of inaccuracies and shortcomings but drew some valid conclusions.

Ahead of the meeting TG had circulated to councillors a draft response to the report.

It was agreed that there was a need to respond to SCC and challenge the lack of collaboration with LPC and some of the content.

PC proposed that a response be submitted to SCC. JM seconded. All agreed.

Action: JM & TG to submit a response to SCC

2026.14. ASSET REGISTER

The resident currently storing the Darcy boom had requested that alternative storage be found. JM felt that the boom had proved difficult to use as intended (to remove duckweed from the river surface) and did not envisage it being used again. JM recommended that it be sold subject to the agreement of the members of LDRAG for whom it was originally bought.

PC suggested it might be useful to the Deben Climate Centre for their river work.

PC proposed that, subject to the agreement of members of LDRAG, the asset be sold or ownership transferred to another suitable body such as DCC. JM seconded. All agreed.

Action: JM to clear this with LDRAG members.

2026.15. HIGHWAYS ISSUES

JM updated the meeting on the following:

2020.15.01 Quiet Lanes

JM reported that the SCC pilot was still running and there was no timeline for when Letheringham could apply for the scheme. JM said she was clear on what was required by way of public consultation and had accepted that this would have to await developments from SCC.

2020.15.02 20 mph Speed Limit

A resident had asked if the parish council would support an application for a 20 mph speed limit in Letheringham in line with a new policy adopted by SCC. PC had found information on the policy on SCC website and it appeared likely that traffic surveys and possibly traffic calming (at the parish council's expense) could be involved. JM had spoken with SCC Elaine Bryce and was awaiting hearing back from her on options.

Action: JM to follow up with SCC EB

2020.15.03 Gulley jetting

PC reported that the parish council had received 12 hours' notice of road closures on Hall Road and Cooks Hill to enable gulley jetting on three consecutive days in January. The work had been carried out. A fortnight later a further notice of road closure for the same purpose was received. However, no signage appeared but the jetting lorry turned up and then left after establishing the work had been done. PC felt this was a waste of resources. He assumed it had been triggered by the s19 report but did not know as the parish council had only received the road closure notices.

Action: JM to contact Josh White SCC Highways Liaison Officer to establish what work had been ordered and whether it had been completed.

2026.16. DATES OF SCHEDULED MEETINGS IN 2026

18th May (Annual Meeting), 7th September, 7th December.

The meeting closed at 8.48pm

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 1 relating to Item 2026.08 Financial Report:

Financial Statement & Bank Reconciliation at February 1st 2026

Receipts & Payments Schedule for December 1st to February 1st 2026

Appendix 2 relating to Item 2026.08.05 Reserves

clerk@letheringhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

<https://letheringhamparishcouncil.gov.uk>

DRAFT

Letheringham Parish Council

Finance Report at 1st February 2026

Bank

01/02/2026 Total balance at bank: £9,735.63

Payments Schedule

07/03/2026 CAS Insurance Ltd - 2026/27 renewal 227.06

227.06

2025-26 Variance to Budget

Budget		Actual to date		Variance	Comments
2,000.00	Precept	2,000.00		-	
50.00	Bank Interest	75.08		25.08	
	- Grants	-		-	
	- Misc	50.00		50.00	
145.11	VAT Reclaim	-		(145.11)	
	- Not in Use	-		-	
	- CIL	-		-	
	-	-		-	
2,195.11	TOTAL RECEIPTS	2,125.08	-	(70.03)	
2,120.00	Salaries	258.00		1,862.00	
38.00	Admin	77.30		(39.30)	
310.00	Insurance	-		310.00	
	- Capital	-		-	
	- Asset Maint.	-		-	
	- Training	-		-	
100.00	Website	205.83		(105.83)	
	- Misc.	21.85		(21.85)	
85.00	Audit	-		85.00	
132.50	Hall Hire	126.00		6.50	
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	56.63		93.37	
3,230.50	TOTAL PAYMENTS	915.77		2,314.73	
(1,035.39)	Net Under/(Over) expenditure	1,209.31		2,244.70	

Year to Date Summary and Bank Reconciliation

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS SUMMARY

Balance as at 1st April 2025	8,526.32
Total Receipts	2,125.08
Less Payments	915.77
Balance	9,735.63

CUMULATIVE FUNDS REPRESENTED BY

Community Account	1,336.10
Business Premium Account	8,399.53
Add Unpresented Income	-
Less Unpresented Payments	-
Balance c/f	9,735.63

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				485.63
Total Cumulative Funds				9,735.63

Letheringham Parish Council

Schedule of Payments & Receipts for year to date at 01/02/2026

01/04/2025 – 31/03/2026

Payments:

Date of invoice	Invoice No	Minute	Date payment made	Supplier	Description	Chq No	Net	VAT	Total
31.03.25	29566		07.04.25	SALC	Payroll Service 01/10/24-31/03/25	BACS	19.00	3.80	22.80
01.04.25	29793		07.04.25	SALC	Subscription 01/04/25-31/03/26	BACS	63.86	-	63.86
N/A	N/A		17.04.25	Mrs M Thurston - clerk	Pay 01-14/04/15 & holiday pay for year	BACS	258.00	-	258.00
14.04.25	N/A		17.04.25	Mrs M Thurston - clerk	Expenses 01-14/04/25	BACS	6.30		6.30
18.08.25	14449&69		18.08.25	Hollins Architects & Surveyors	Printing A0/ A1 & A3 drawings	BACS	50.80	10.16	60.96
04.09.25	526&555		04.09.25	ELVH	Hall hire meetings 12/05, 04/08 & 11/08/25	BACS	84.00	-	84.00
29.09.25	564		02.10.25	ELVH	Hall hire meeting 08/09/25	BACS	28.00	-	28.00
30.09.25	30423		02.10.25	SALC	Payroll Service 01/04/25-30/04/25	BACS	7.50	1.50	9.00
28.10.25	UPC0040		01.12.25	Ufford Parish Council	River Deben Water Testing	BACS	100.00	-	100.00
21.09.25	N/A		01.12.25	Andrew Maskery	NHW signs bought by Andrew Maskery	BACS	21.85	-	21.85
30.10.25	INV-0912		01.12.25	IT Services at CAS Ltd	Website .GOV.UK domain & 2 mailboxes	BACS	60.83	12.17	73.00
01.10.25	INV-7061		01.12.25	Community Action Suffolk	Website hosting 01/11/25-31/10/26	BACS	55.00	11.00	66.00
03.11.25	571		01.12.25	ELVH	Hall hire meeting 09/10/25	BACS	14.00	-	14.00
27.11.25	INV-7385		01.12.25	Community Action Suffolk	Website accessibility review	BACS	90.00	18.00	108.00
Payments made to 01/02/2026:						Total		56.63	915.77

Signed:

Paul Clarke

Date:

03/02/26

Receipts:

Date	Payer	Details	R	Amount
30.04.25	East Suffolk Council	Precept 2025/26		2,000.00
02.05.2025	With our apologies	Barclays Bank		50.00
02.06.2025	Bank interest	Barclays Bank		24.33
08.09.2025	Bank interest	Barclays Bank		24.39
08.12.2025	Bank interest	Barclays Bank		26.36
Receipts to 01/02/2026:			Total	2,125.08

Signed: *Paul Clarke*

Date: *03/02/26*

Letheringham Parish Council Reserves

February 2026

Background:

At the meeting on 08.12.2025 the council agreed a budget of £3,946.00 and a precept of £2,275.90 for 2026/27 with the intention of funding the net deficit (after interest and VAT receipts) of £1,500.00 from reserves.

Extract from Small Authorities Proper Practices Panel *Practitioner's Guide 2025*

Reserves:

5.31. As with any financial entity, it is essential that authorities have sufficient reserves (general and earmarked) to finance both their day-to-day operations and future plans.

5.32. Smaller authorities have no specific right to accumulate funds via the precept. All reserves should be reviewed and justified regularly (i.e. at least annually). It is good practice to transparently publish both the level and rationale of all reserves.

General reserves:

5.33. The general reserve of an authority comprises its cash flow and contingency funds to cover unexpected inflation, unforeseen events and unusual circumstances.

5.34. The generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a smaller authority's general reserve is that this should be maintained at between three and twelve months of net revenue expenditure.

5.35. The reason for the wide range is to cater for the large variation in activity level between individual authorities. The smaller the authority, the closer the figure may be to 12 months expenditure, the larger the authority, the nearer to 3 months. In practice, any authority with income and expenditure in excess of £200,000 should plan towards 3 months equivalent general reserve.

5.36. In all of this it is important that each authority adopt, as a general reserve policy, the level appropriate to their size, situation, risks and plan their budget so as to ensure that the adopted level is maintained. Consideration of the minimum level of reserves requires not only consideration of level of income and expenditure but also the risks to that income.

5.37. Authorities with significant self-generated income (other than the precept or levy) should take into account situations that may lead to a loss in revenue as well as increased costs and adapt their general reserve accordingly.

Earmarked and other reserves:

5.38. None of the above in any way affects the level of earmarked and/or capital receipts reserves that an authority may or should hold.

5.39. There is, in practice, no upper or lower limit to EMR/CRRs save only that they must be held for genuine and identifiable purposes and projects, and their level should be subject to regular review and justification (at least annually and at budget setting) and should be separately identified and enumerated. Significant levels of EMRs in particular may give rise to enquiries from internal and/or external auditors.

Proposed Allocation of LPC Reserves at 23.02.2026:

General	2,000.00
Guidance recommends holding 25-100% of annual income in case income not received so that council can continue to function for a significant period. 2026/27 precept is £2,275.90	
Quiet Lane Signage and Implementation	2,500.00
This money includes £2,325.43 originally received as grants for speed reduction measures on B1078. Subject to approval of the grant-awarding bodies (SCC & ESC (as SCDC), it is available for Quiet Lanes.	
Election Expenses	500.00
If Letheringham has a situation where an election or poll is required, the cost in 2023 would have been c. £650. It is good practice to have a sum set aside to cover a significant part of this.	
Deficit 2026/27	1,500.00
The council has voted to spend part of the reserve to finance expenditure in 2026/27 rather than increase the precept.	
Deficit 2027/28	1,000.00
It is likely the council will also need to spend some money from reserves in 2027/28 to finance activity while keeping council tax rises down.	
Churchyard Maintenance	200.00
The council previously agreed in principle to contribute to the fuel and consumables for churchyard maintenance. A £50 cost has been shown in the 2026/27 budget. No money has been requested in 2024/25 or 25/26.	
Asset Maintenance Repair & Renewal	500.00
A fund which is paid into each year from the budget and ensures funds are available as repairs and replacements are needed.	
ESC ECB Grant received August 2024	1,000.00
Awarded for signage subsequently funded directly by SC Councillor. Use subject to agreement of ES Councillors. River water testing and Quiet Lane potentially suitable uses.	
Unallocated	535.63
Total:	9,735.63
(balance at bank at 01.02.2026)	

Allocation of LPC Reserves as agreed 10.02.2025:

General 2,000.00

Guidance recommends holding 25-100% of annual income in case income not received so that council can continue to function for a significant period.

Quiet Lane Signage and Implementation 2,500.00

This money includes £2,325.43 originally received as grants for speed reduction measures on B1078. Subject to approval of the grant-awarding bodies (SCC & ESC (as SCDC), it is available for Quiet Lanes.

Election Expenses 500.00

If Letheringham has a situation where an election or poll is required, the cost in 2023 would have been c. £650. It is good practice to have a sum set aside to cover a significant part of this.

Deficit 2025/26 1,050.00

The council has voted to spend part of the reserve to finance expenditure in 2025/26 rather than increase the precept.

Deficit 2026/27 1,000.00

It is likely the council will also need to spend some money from reserves in 2026/27 to finance activity while keeping council tax rises down.

Churchyard Maintenance 2025/26 200.00

The council has agreed in principle to contribute to the cost of fuel and consumables for churchyard maintenance but no cost has been shown in the 2025/26 budget. The offer has not been taken up in 2024/25 but some provision seems wise.

Advice & Support to address drainage & flooding 500.00

The council intends to press for improvements in drainage and reduction in flooding of properties and roads. This may require engagement of specialist advice and guidance

Asset Maintenance Repair & Renewal 500.00

A fund which is paid into each year from the budget and ensures funds are available as repairs and replacements are needed.

ESC ECB Grant received August 2024 1,000.00

Awarded for signage subsequently funded directly by SC Councillor. Use subject to agreement of ES Councillors. River water testing and Quiet Lane potentially suitable uses.

Unallocated 278.86

Total: (balance at bank at 31.01.2025) 9,528.86