

# TOSTOCK ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

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## Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 8 April 2025 at 7.30pm in Tostock Village Hall

**Present:** Parish Councillors: Cllr Jane Storey (Chair), Cllr Michael Bauly, Cllr David Blundell, Cllr Paul Callow, Cllr Roger Cross and Cllr Julian Kearsley;  
County Councillor: Cllr Andy Mellen;  
District Councillor: Cllr Harry Richardson;  
12 residents; and  
Parish Clerk: Doug Reed (who took the minutes).

### **25.01 Welcome and Introductions**

Cllr Jane Storey, Chair of the Parish Council, welcomed attendees and outlined the meeting procedure, with formal reports by elected representatives to be followed by the opportunity for village bodies and organisations to be heard.

### **25.02 Apologies for Absence**

Received from Parish Councillor Cllr Andy Sharkey (Footpaths Officer), Parish Councillor Sue Smith, Graham MacDowall (Chair, Village Hall Committee) and Elizabeth Dunn (Tennis Club).

### **25.03 Minutes of the Last Annual Parish Meeting**

It was proposed by Julian Kearsley, seconded by Sharon Markell, that the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting, held on 9 April 2024, be approved as a true record and duly signed by the Chair. The proposal was carried.

### **25.04 County and District Councillors' Annual Reports**

**04.1 County Councillor:** Cllr Mellen referred to his report (held with the minutes and published on the village website). In speaking, he outlined the process towards the reorganisation of local government; the move to bring Suffolk Libraries back into the County Council; the significant financial constraints applying to Suffolk Highways which impacted upon the ability to properly maintain roads in the county; the disappointing result of the Ofsted inspection of social care services for children and young people; and the improving services for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services.

**04.2 District Councillors:** Cllr Bradbury was not in attendance but had provided a written report (held with the minutes and published on the village website). However, Cllr Richardson referenced his report (held with the minutes and published on the village website) when he also spoke about local government reorganisation, albeit from the District Council perspective. He went on to note the requirement to increase local housing targets and the changes to bin collections scheduled for implementation from 1 April 2026.

### **25.05 Parish Council Annual Report**

Cllr Storey reported on the activities of the Parish Council (held with the minutes and published on the village website) which had met six times in the last year. At the Annual Parish Council meeting in May 2024 Cllr Andy Sharkey had been co-opted to serve on the Council but it was agreed not to appoint a Vice-Chair. She confirmed that attendance by councillors was always good despite two

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councillors being affected by illness and work commitments. The latter had, regrettably, resulted in the resignation of Cllr Sarah Cobbold who, with no election having been requested, was replaced by the co-option of Cllr Sue Smith.

She noted that the Council was represented on two village organisations with Cllr Roger Cross being on the Village Hall Committee, and Cllr Mike Bauly and Cllr Sarah Cobbold representing the Council on the Tostock Poor's Charity. All Council agendas, reports and minutes were now posted on the village website.

A Finance Working Group had been created, led by Cllr Julian Kearsley to, not least, address inherited financial problems. It recommended a budget which was followed by prudent management such that the unavoidable rise in the precept which occurred for 2024-2025 did not have to be replicated - the precept for 2025-2026 being able to be held at level set last year.

Cllr Storey offered her thanks to fellow councillors for their work and constructive participation in meetings which have had a regular if reduced number of residents in attendance. She said that challenges had been varied but that all members approach them with good intentions, mostly good humour and, crucially, a determination to do what was best for Tostock.

## 25.06 Current Issues

Cllr Storey added to her report in relation to four areas which had arisen during the year:

**06.1 "Tostock Chronicle"** - noting that the cost of production over advertising income was a cost to parishioners (paid for by the Parish Council) she reported that issues had now been limited to 16 pages enabling costs to be kept down without detriment to the quality of the publication nor its value to the village. She offered thanks to Kim Mars, as Editor, for his hard work and to those who kindly took the time to distribute the newsletter.

**06.2 Website** - Tom Whitman had done an excellent job in managing this key village facility but, regrettably, had been unable to continue. Whilst acknowledging his contribution and thanking him for what he had achieved, Cllr Storey asked for anyone who might be willing to take on the website to get in touch with the Parish Clerk.

**06.3 Speedwatch** - this was suggested some while ago when the village was experiencing problems with speeding vehicles during the major A14 road works that were undertaken. Whilst the idea was not yet dead, there was seemingly no immediate interest in the notion. However, Cllr Storey confirmed that the Parish Council was looking to invest in a further Speed Indicator Device (SID) to add to the existing one. The co-ordinator of the present device was always looking for volunteers to help and, again, anyone able to offer their services was asked to contact the Parish Clerk.

**06.4 Defibrillator** - following a successful 'Basic Life Skills' course in March, attended by a dozen residents, which included how to use at defibrillator, a further event had been scheduled for 5 July.

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## **25.07 Village Organisations**

The meeting was able to hear brief reports from a number of organisations which evidenced the variety of opportunities and activities which existed in the village. The following offered reports (written reports provided are held with the minutes and published on the village website):

- ◆ Art Show (Linda Stock)
- ◆ Book Club (Kathleen Lord)
- ◆ Knitting and Crochet Group (Jane Parnum)
- ◆ Poor's Estate (Sharon Markell)
- ◆ St Andrew's Church (Jeanne O'Reilly)
- ◆ Tennis Club (Elizabeth Dunn)
- ◆ Tostock Past & Present Society (John Parnum)
- ◆ Tree Officers (Becky Smith)
- ◆ Village Hall (Rosemary Lister)
- ◆ Village Recorder (Jane Storey)

## **25.08 Any Other Matters**

None.

## **25.09 Thanks**

Cllr Storey concluded the meeting by thanking everyone who had attended and contributed.

## **25.10 Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next Annual Parish Meeting would be held on Tuesday 14 April 2026.

**There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.35pm.**