

# TOSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

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**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the full Council  
held on 13 January 2026 at 7.30pm in Tostock Village Hall  
(Approved 10.03.26; minute 26.03.07 refers)**

**Present:** Cllr Jane Storey (Chair), Cllr David Blundell, Cllr Paul Callow, Cllr Roger Cross, Cllr Glenn Lebbon, Cllr Andrew Sharkey and Cllr Sue Smith.

**In Attendance:** County Cllr Andrew Mellen; and  
Parish Clerk: Doug Reed.

**26.01.01 Apologies for Absence**

Accepted from Cllr Michael Bauly and Cllr Julian Kearsley both of whom were absent for health reasons.

**26.01.02 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

**02.1 Interests:** None.

**02.2 Dispensation Requests:** None.

**02.3 Dispensation Decisions:** None.

**26.01.03 Minutes of the Last Parish Council Meeting**

It was resolved that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council, held on 11 November, be signed as a true record.

**26.01.04 County and District Councillors' Reports**

**04.1 County Councillor:** Cllr Mellen presented his report and provided an update on the latest regarding local government reorganisation.

**04.2 District Councillors:** Both Cllr Bradbury and Cllr Richardson had sent apologies. Their written reports, circulated to councillors, were duly noted.

**26.01.05 Public Comment and Questions**

None.

**26.01.06 Correspondence**

Cllr Storey reported on items both sent to and received by the Council. She noted the following in particular:

◆ Given she and Kat Bauly were to jointly take on the editorship of the "Tostock Chronicle" she was due shortly to meet with both the former editor and to seek advice from the printers of the newsletter, Gipping Press, regarding the format in which it needed to be produced.

◆ The bench at the Church Road/New Road corner was in need of repair. The Clerk would seek to engage a local handyman to undertake the work.

◆ Land off Flatts Lane which, further to a 2025 tribunal judgement had been formally registered in the name of Suffolk County Council, was to be the subject of an appeal hearing on 5 February in the Royal Courts of Justice. It was not known if the judge would effect a decision on the day.

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## 26.01.07

### Finance

**07.1 Responsible Financial Officer:** It was noted that the NatWest current account stood at £9,355.94 and the reserve account at £59,086.31 further to which it was resolved that the reconciliation be approved. Of the total it was noted that £53,516.21 was Community Infrastructure Levy funding which could not be spent on day-to-day matters.

**07.2 Litter-Picker:** An increase in the rate of pay per hour paid to the Council litter-picker from £10.00 to £10.85, based on the new National Minimum Wage applying from 1 April for those aged 18-20, was confirmed.

**07.3 Payments and Income:** It was resolved that the schedule of payments be approved. The schedule comprised the following:

- ◆ Gipping Press Ltd: "Tostock Chronicle" (December/January) - £267.00;
- ◆ Clerk: salary (November) - £353.03;
- ◆ HMRC: PAYE and NI (November) - £93.65;
- ◆ Clerk: homeworking allowance (November) - £26.00;
- ◆ O Holland: litter-picking - £90.00;
- ◆ Clerk: salary (December) - £353.03;
- ◆ HMRC: PAYE and NI (December) - £93.65;
- ◆ Clerk: homeworking allowance (December) - £26.00;
- ◆ Ticehurst Gravels: planings for potholes - £68.00 + VAT £13.60; and
- ◆ Clerk: administrative expenses (2025-2026) - £27.95.

Income received was duly noted as follows:

- ◆ NatWest: reserve (deposit) account interest - £42.99;
- ◆ NatWest: reserve (deposit) account interest - £50.71; and
- ◆ "Tostock Chronicle": advertising - £255.00.

**07.4 Community Infrastructure Levy:** The funding position was noted.

**07.5 Finance Working Group/Budget and Precept 2026-2027:** The Working Group report was introduced by Cllr Storey in the absence of Cllr Kearsley. The improved financial position was noted, being a product of effective budget management and consistent with best practice for smaller parish councils. As a consequence the Group proposed no rise in the precept so that the Parish Council element of the council tax demand would be unchanged at £53.38 (based on Band D). Accordingly, it was resolved unanimously to approve the Group proposal such that:

- the precept for 2026-2027 be set at £12,318.00; and
- the Council budget (as presented) be approved for 2026-2027.

**07.6 Internal Audit:** As recommended by the Finance Working Group, it was resolved that Heelis and Lodge be retained to conduct the internal audit of the Council for 2025-2026 at a cost of £190.00.

## 26.01.08

### Asset Register

The Register was reviewed, confirmed as accurate and duly approved.

## 26.01.09

### Risk Register

Councillors reviewed the Register and potential implications for the Council insurance cover. Cllr Sharkey highlighted the need to add the matter of trees at The Leys given that they could pose a health and safety hazard subject to a comprehensive audit of their condition. With that included, the Register was duly approved.

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## **26.01.10 Village Website**

Given the ongoing absence of a volunteer to manage the website, initial enquiries had been made with Suffolk Cloud to see if the facility could be outsourced to the site provider at a reasonable cost. The Clerk was asked to seek a formal quotation for consideration at the next Council meeting.

## **26.01.11 Village Hall Project Plan**

The Workstream Activity Tracker for the Village Hall Improvement Project was welcomed by the Council and prompted various questions. It was, therefore, agreed that a full discussion be deferred until the next meeting which Graham MacDowall, as project lead, would be invited to attend.

## **26.01.12 Ongoing Matters**

None.

## **26.01.13 Planning**

### **13.1 New Applications:**

None.

**13.2 Decisions:** The following application result was noted:

DC/25/03895 Snapdragon, The Green - replacement roof to create loft extension; replacement of existing glazing; erection of single storey side and rear extensions (following demolition of existing garage). GRANTED.

### **13.3 Applications Awaiting Decision:**

None.

## **26.01.14 Matters for the Attention of the Council**

Cllr Smith reported that 420 (free) saplings were due to be received by the Council by early March. A distribution process would then be agreed.

## **26.01.15 Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council would be held on Tuesday 10 March at 7.30pm in Tostock Village Hall.

## **26.01.16 Motion to Exclude the Press and Public**

It was resolved to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the final substantive agenda item on the grounds that, while any decision was of public interest and would need to be recorded formally, the discussion leading to that decision would be likely to involve personal and/or confidential data which it was not in the public interest to disclose and which needed to be properly safeguarded on behalf of all concerned.

## **26.01.17 Easement (Village Green)**

Cllr Callow reported that he had been pursuing the householders concerned for their formal agreement on the costs and process by which the easement would be paid and was awaiting a confirmed response.

**There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.17 pm.**