

Semer Parish Council

Minutes of the Council Meeting held at Semer Village Hall on Thursday 19th March 2026 commencing at 7.00pm.

In attendance: Councillors Steve Nuttall (Chair), Jackie Barraclough, John Lawrence, James Pitcher, Victoria Waples (Clerk) and one member of the public.

1. Chair's welcome including the statement for the reporting at meetings of the council – Councillor Steve Nuttall welcomed all to the meeting and the statement was read to all present. All were advised that since the last meeting Richard Keens had resigned from the Council. Councillor Steve Nuttall would take the Chair as Vice-Chair until the formal elections for the post of Chair in May 2026.
2. Apologies for absence: there were no applicable apologies for absence. Council resolved to accept the apologies as submitted. Apologies were noted from County Cllr. Lindsey and District Cllr. Jamieson.
3. Code of Conduct and Declaration of member's interests:
 - i. To receive declarations of registrable interests, other and non-registerable interests as detailed in Appendix B of the Local Code of Conduct - there were no applicable interests declared.
 - ii. To receive notification of gifts or hospitality exceeding £50 – there were no gifts or hospitality to declare.
4. Minutes of meetings:
 - i. To approve the minutes of the following meetings and to give authority to the Chair to sign the minutes in accordance with legislation:
 - 20th November 2025
 - 15th January 2026
 - 29th January 2026

It was **resolved to approve the above minutes and grant authority to the Chair to sign them as being a true and accurate record of the meetings that took place.**
5. Public Forum:
 - i. To receive the report from County Councillor Robert Lindsay – the written report was taken as read. Noted the new bus service which wasn't stopping in Semer but there might be an opportunity to obtain a license for a hail and ride bus service that might stop at places such as the village hall. There were no matters for onward referral.
 - ii. To receive the report from District Councillor Leigh Jamieson – the written report was taken as read. There were no matters for onward referral.
 - iii. To receive comments from the public on the agenda as published or concerning Semer.
6. Parish Matters: to receive an update on items raised at previous meetings: none were reported as outstanding.
7. Statutory Business:
 - i. To consider applications received for the casual vacancy and, if appropriate, resolve to co-opt a new member to the Parish Council – following receipt of a valid nomination, it was agreed to co-opt Mr Ian Christian Ross to the parish council. The Clerk agreed to send over

So approved and signed at the meeting of 28.05.2026

the required information for completion to allow Mr. Ross to join the council as a parish councillor.

- ii. In light of the changes to the Practitioners' Guide 2025, council to resolve to:
 - a. Adopt an IT Policy (Paper entitled IT Policy) – the council was made aware that all smaller authorities (excluding parish meetings) must also have an IT policy which explained how everyone – clerks and members - should conduct authority business in a secure and legal way when using IT equipment and software. This related to the use of authority-owned and personal equipment. It was **resolved to adopt the policy as submitted**.
 - b. Adopt a Subject Access Request Policy (Paper entitled SARs Policy) – the council was reminded that one of the recommendations from the last audit was to adopt a wider range of policies – the policy as submitted would explain the process and procedures when dealing with requests from people who have the right to ask for copies of their personal data stored and used by the parish council. It was **resolved to adopt the policy as submitted**.
 - c. Confirm that the council has in place a Data Protection Policy (Paper entitled Data Protection Policy 2026) – the meeting was made aware that all smaller authorities were expected to process personal data with care and in line with the principles of data protection. It was acknowledged that the parish council under the DPA 2018 was classified as both a Data Controller and a Data Processor. It was **resolved to adopt the policy as submitted**.
 - d. Confirm that the council has in place appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect personal data (See Data and Electronic Retention Policy 2026) – the meeting **confirmed that its current policy was up to date and should be taken as reviewed with the meeting's date inserted**.
 - e. Confirm that there are no amendments to council's Privacy Policy (Paper entitled Privacy Policy) – it was **confirmed that there were no amendments required to the adopted document**.
 - f. Confirm that the Clerk has carried out a GDPR risk assessment on the control measures in place to ensure compliance with Data Protection Legislation – all **confirmed that delegated authority was given to the Clerk to carry out appropriate GDPR risk assessments to ensure that the council was compliant with GDPR**.
 - g. To review and adopt the Council's Financial Risk Assessment for the year ending 31st March 2026 (Paper entitled Financial Risk Assessment 2025-2026) – **council resolved that, having reviewed the risk management procedures outlined in the submitted paper, confirmed that they were in place and that whilst those risks highlighted are subject to further action, there are no regulatory or contractual issues that may impact on the council for which a further risk assessment might be required**.
 - h. To review and adopt the Council's Internal Control Statement for the year ending 31st March 2026 (Paper entitled Internal Control 2025-2026) – it was **resolved that**, having considered and reviewed the Statement of Internal Control, **the Council considered that the controls currently in place are effective and appropriate for Semer Parish Council in its management of public finances. It was further agreed that that the system of internal control was sound and provided an adequate foundation to mitigate the risks associated with the operation of public money**.
 - i. To review and approve the Asset Register for the year ending 31st March 2026 – (Paper entitled Asset Register 2025-2026) – the meeting **resolved to accept the register as written, noting that there were no changes from the previous year**.

- j. To review and adopt the revised Standing Orders 2025 – [existing document](#) – it was **confirmed that there were no amendments required to the adopted document.**
- k. To review and adopt the revised Financial Regulations 2025 – [existing document](#) – it was **confirmed that there were no requirements to the adopted document other than changes to the Public Contracts Procurement levels.**

8. Planning:

- i. review and consider the following planning applications as submitted by Babergh District Council: to search for the application use this link: none at time of serving
- ii. To note the determination by Babergh District Council of the following planning application:
 - DC/25/05262 - Planning Permission for the change of use from garden to equine ménage, construction of ménage. Retention of existing stables. Change of use from garden to equine paddocks and associated fencing. Location: Wood View, Dairy Road.

9. Financial Report:

- i. To note receipt of the following monies since the last meeting: council noted the following receipts:
Eastern Power Networks UK – Wayleave £4.60.
- ii. To consider and approve the following items for payments it was **resolved to approve the following items for payment:**
 - Clerk's Hours for February through to March - £400.95.
- iii. To note the bank balances to date and consider the financial position as at 16th March 2026 – the meeting noted the current bank balance of £2,917.68. It was noted that Cllr. Barraclough had confirmed that position and signed the submitted bank reconciliation sheet.
- iv. To consider the budget to actual position as at March 2026 – the meeting reviewed the budget to actual position noting that the overspend was due to the expenditure that had been incurred on works to the bridge on Church Meadow.
- v. To review and adopt the Reserves Policy for the year ending 31 March 2026 (Paper entitled Reserves Policy) – council reviewed the adopted policy noting that there was an aim to ensure that the General Reserves was kept at a minimum of three months of predicted expenditure. It was acknowledged that council's general reserves were low, and that it would seek to regularise the position over the coming years. Whilst council's reserves would be finalised at year-end, it was anticipated that £1,178 would be allocated as General Reserves with the balance for Asset Improvements.
- vi. To receive confirmation of the precept to be levied for the year commencing 1st April 2026 – conformation was given that Semer Parish Council's Precept Upon the Charging Authority was for a precept for 2026/27 of £4,500. This would be paid to the Parish in two instalments, 50% in April 2026 and 50% in September 2026. This precept gives the Parish a Council Tax Band D amount of £65.26 which is an increase of 15.55% on 2025/26. All noted that these are the amounts that will be shown on the Council Tax Bill.
- vii. Council to consider whether it wishes to make a charitable donation to the following organisation following the submission of letter requesting same: SARS – it was agreed that the Council would not offer a donation not at this point in time given its current financial position.
- viii. To review the effectiveness of Internal Audit for the year 2025 - 2026 – (Paper entitled Internal Audit) – **Council also resolved that having reviewed internal audit in terms of independence, competence, proportionality and effectiveness it has complied with its duty under the 2015 Regulations and met the standards of audit provision.**

- ix. To confirm the appointment of the Council's Internal Auditor for the year ending 31st March 2026 (Paper entitled Internal Auditor) - **it was resolved that**, having regard to the Audit Plan as per Appendix A of the submitted paper, **Council agreed to the appointment of Mr Trevor Brown CPFA to carry out the internal audit on Semer Parish Council at a maximum cost of £200 plus pro rata travelling expenses at £0.45 pence per mile.** It is anticipated that the audit will take place in late April 2026.

10. Councillor Reports:

- i. To receive urgent matters of concern – there were none forthcoming.

11. Correspondence:

- i. BMSDC – Town and Parish Updates – all confirmed receipt of the monthly reports for December 2025 through to March 2026.
- ii. BMSDC – NSIP and large-scale energy projects – all confirmed receipt of the updates from BMSDC.
- iii. Local Government Reorganisation – all noted that the government's decision on the preferred unitary system of government for Suffolk was still awaited.
- iv. SALC – it was confirmed that all weekly bulletins were emailed to councillors for their perusal. Councillors to contact the Clerk if there are any items of interest / training courses they wish to attend.
- v. To receive matters of interest not requiring a direct response.

12. Date of next meeting: all agreed the following dates for futures meetings: 28th May 2026 (Annual Council Meeting); 16th July; 24th September; 26th November; 21st January 2027 and 11th March 2027.

13. There being no further business to transact, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.22pm.