

# STETCHWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Mrs. Karen Peck

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## Minutes

Thursday 9th July 2026 at The Ellesmere Centre (Gredley Room) at 7pm.

In attendance: Councillor Bell (WB) Chair, France (AF), Puddick (JP), Breen (SB) and County Councillor Edge (JE)

**090726/1 Apologies for Absence (Local Government Act. 1972 s.85 (1))**

Apologies for absence received from Councillor Saunders and Sharp – accepted.

**090726/2 To Receive Declarations of Pecuniary and non-Pecuniary Interest**

Councillor France 090726/7 (b) and (c)

**090726/3 Open Forum for Public Participation**

There were no members of the public in attendance.

**090726/4 To Approve the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Stetchworth Parish Council held on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2026**

The meeting minutes from the Annual Meeting of Stetchworth Parish Council were **APPROVED** unanimously as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Motion carried.

**090726/5 To receive District & County Councillors' Reports**

County Councillor Edge provided a detailed written report and gave a brief overview overing these key matters highlighted were LGR decision due w/c 13<sup>th</sup> July 2026, Kingsway withdrawal, Forest City and the new Highways Contract now in place which should aid management of priorities. A full report is attached the minutes  
District Councillor Sharp sent a written report attached to the minutes.

**090826/6 To receive the Ellesmere Centre Report**

No report was received but it was note that the Summer Show was a great success and thanks to all those who make it happen each year.

**090726/7**

**Council Business:**

**a) 23 Coopers Close – Parish Owned Tree – Anglian Landscaping full report with supporting images for discussion**

The Parish Council has sought professional advice from East Cambs Trading Tree Department who provided an updated survey with photos, it stated: the tree has been previously reduced, both on the recreation ground side and the garden side (very heavy reduction, back to the boundary and past it in some places).

While a reduction back to previous pruning points could be carried out, this would only reduce the tree on the recreation ground side and provide little benefit to the overhang over the garden. It would reduce the height so would give them a little more light in the garden.

If you were to allow to do the reduction back to previous pruning points, this is unlikely to be detrimental to the tree, as long as the reduction did not go further than the previous reduction points. If Council are going to allow request to complete the work, they should stipulate that the tree is not to be reduced past the previous reduction points and the work will be checked after completion.

The Council unanimously **RESOLVED** to follow the advice from East Cambs Trading and for the Clerk to write confirming the decision, requesting that a works date, insurance/Risk Assessment are provided in advance of works commencing. The contractor is required to send photographs of the before and after condition of the tree. All works are to be at no cost to the Parish Council and the Parish's Tree Company will assess all works.

**b) To discuss and approve ongoing support for the service of the Portaloo located at St Peter's Church**

The Parish Council **RESOLVED** to provide ongoing support for the serving of the Portaloo located at St Peters Church. Motion carried. AF and AS abstained from the discussion and vote. **Proposed WB Seconded SB**

**c) To discuss grant proposal from St Peters Church to help with the fence repairs**

The Church Warden has made the Council aware of the PCC is intending to get quotes for fencing around the cemetery. The cemetery came into use in the early 1900s and the original iron fencing is still in place – however, it is leaning and completely down in places. They did try to get someone to quote to repair some years ago but didn't find anyone interested. The PCC has known that work is necessary but more urgent work always seems to be needed in the church. They are in the position of having some funds left after our last major work in 2024 and really want to get this work done – they know that the cost is going to be in the thousands. The PCC note:

In July 1976 the Parish Council agreed in principle to assist in the upkeep of the cemetery – within the "Powers of Constitution of Local Councils" within the Council's rights. It is thought this was mainly intended for help with grass cutting etc. However, the PCC has not, so far, asked for help with grass cutting – though the PC does pay for grass cutting in the churchyard. It is therefore asked if the Parish Council might consider giving a grant towards the new fencing. The PCC will inform the PC of quotes as and when received and any progress towards having the work done.

The Parish Council in principle wish to support the Church and would look at contribution as a when quotations are sought.

Decision

**090726/8**

**a) Finance - to approve accounts for payment:**

May 2026

RH Landscapes – Grass Cutting

HMRC, Wages and Expenses

Unity Trust – Service Charge

TBM – Microsoft 365 and support

Ellesmere Centre – Hire

SSE – Street Light Energy

June 2026

HMRC, Wages and Expenses

TBM – Microsoft365 and support

Unity Trust Bank – service charge

BACs £343.20

BACs £695.32

BACs £7.00

BACs £33.75

BACs £104.00

DD £81.26

BACs £530.22

BACs £33.75

BACs £7.00

SSE - Street Light Energy  
K&M Lighting – Street Light Maintenance  
RH Landscaping – Grass Cutting  
TEEC – Website and domain  
St Peters Church – LHL services Inv 204420 205852

|      |         |
|------|---------|
| DD   | £TBC    |
| BACs | £281.52 |
| BACs | £343.20 |
| BACS | £223.20 |
| BACs | £84.00  |

All payment were **APPROVED** unanimously.  
**Proposed WB Seconded SB**

- b) To note monies received: None
- c) To accept bank reconciliations for 30<sup>th</sup> June 2026  
All bank reconciliations were approved unanimously.

**Proposed WB Seconded SB**

**090726/9**

**Planning**

- (a) To receive planning application decisions and tree works: -  
**None**

- (b) To consider planning applications received: -  
**None**

**090726/10**

**Date of Next Meeting & Matters for Future Consideration –Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2026** at 7pm in The Gredley Room, Ellesmere Centre

Meeting closed at 19.27

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K Peck  
Clerk and RFO  
Stetchworth Parish Council

.....  
W Bell  
Chair  
Stetchworth Parish Council

**Date signed:** To be signed at the next meeting of Stetchworth Parish Council. In draft format until this time.

## **East Cambridgeshire District Council Report – Stetchworth Report July 2026 Alan Sharp**

This month there are just updates on ongoing news and issues.

### **Waste Services**

We have had over a month of the new waste collection service.

Without being complacent, the new service has gone as well as we could have hoped.

We had a breakdown with of the new food caddy collection vehicles on the first day, which meant that some of my villages were a day late for collection of the food caddies.

The take up of using the food caddies has been more than 90%, which is better than expected.

That first week meant that our crews needed strong stomachs, because some residents had started using the caddies from when they were received, rather than using them from the last week in May. However, that is a one-off, as the caddies are on weekly collection.

A thank you to all residents, but if there are any issues or queries, please contact the waste team on 01638 665555 or send me a message.

### **Council Reorganisation**

Still awaiting the decision from Government.

### **The Ellesmere Centre Post Office**

The likely outcome for the Post Office is one of a community Post Office.

The Trustees are working on becoming an incorporated charity and then set up a commercial arm to run the Post Office.

This will involve significant legal expenses, which the Trustees are searching for funding avenues to offset some of these costs.

### **Forest City**

No new update on this.

### **Kingsway Solar**

The application for proposed solar farm that would have covered 3,700 acres around Weston Colville and West Wrating has been withdrawn.

However, I do not believe that this has gone away.

The applicants have not provided information required by East Cambridgeshire District Council and as I explained on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire twice over the last three weeks, we need to be vigilant for residents in respect of the proposal that borders on our district with a 10-kilometre length of overhead pylons across farmland and studland.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

Local authorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have been expecting the Government to announce its proposed new council boundaries before parliamentary business ends for the summer on Friday 17 July.

However, with Essex, Hampshire and Norfolk all initiating legal challenges to the Government's proposals in their area, and with a change of Prime Minister imminent, it's less clear that an announcement for Cambridgeshire will be made in that timescale.

## CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

### Cambridgeshire's SEND Reform Plan

The council have submitted their plans to meet the criteria covered by the government's White Paper. The submission sets out Cambridgeshire's aims to deliver a 3-year plan to change the SEND and EHCP environment by aligning with its Inclusion for All programme. This will bring support to children that need it to their local schools except in the most complex cases. A key contributor to this plan comes from 'Experts-at-hand' funding to help develop the workforce to support our schools and young people.

If the plan is accepted by ministers, it will result in up to 90% of the Safety Valve deficit the County holds being cleared by a government grant, this deficit was £96m as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026, so will be a welcome development.

### Holiday activities and food

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme returns this summer, with holiday scheme places and nutritious meals for eligible school-aged children across Cambridgeshire from 21 July to 28 August.

The programme provides primary and secondary aged children with access to healthy food, fun activities and enriching experiences throughout the school holidays. Government funding for the programme is confirmed until December 2028.

More than 130 schemes are expected to run across the county, offering over 2,500 places for children. Activities will range from sports, outdoor adventure and play-based schemes to drama, technology, creative arts and youth-focused programmes.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities/support-withthe-cost-of-living/holiday-activities-and-food-programme>

## COMMUNITIES, SOCIAL MOBILITY AND INCLUSION (COSMIC)

### New ways of tackling poverty

Members of the council's COSMIC Committee have unanimously agreed new anti-poverty initiatives using the Government's multi-year Crisis and Resilience Fund.

The County Council is receiving a share of this fund, which replaces the Household Support Fund. It is required to be allocated to:

- support to those experiencing financial shock
- support that improves residents' financial resilience
- activities that connect and enhance local support, such as community food projects.

Councillors have agreed to use the fund to:

- procure a new crisis payment scheme, worth £400,000 this year and £1M in each of the two following years
- award £800,000 to Citizens Advice to continue to deliver an Income Maximisation service across Cambridgeshire until 2029
- award £1.5M over three years to fund an advice outreach service for residents who are isolated rurally or digitally, or otherwise unable to access mainstream support.

The income maximisation service delivered by Citizens Advice has so far supported 3,182 residents gaining a combined £3.7M in additional income.

Further income maximisation work will be provided through LIFT, the Low-Income Family Tracker which has already been used very successfully in South Cambridgeshire and will help identify residents who may be missing out on support they are eligible for.

Families previously in receipt of holiday food vouchers as well as low-income families with younger children will be prioritised for identification by LIFT and receive a targeted offer of personalised support. Families will also be encouraged to access the Holiday Activities and Food programme described earlier in this report.

### Digital support for unpaid carers

According to the 2021 Census 52,236 people in Cambridgeshire are caring for a family member, friend or neighbour who is ill, older, or disabled. Caring responsibilities can impact people's health, finances, and employment opportunities.

Bridgit is an AI-enabled digital support platform developed in partnership with Caring Together Charity, who support carers on behalf of the County Council.

Bridgit provides a one-stop, 24/7, digital hub offering personalised advice on wellbeing, employment, finance, care options, and local support services. Since its launch in 2024, Bridgit has been accessed by more than 9,000 carers, generating over 13,000 personalised self-help

The system tailors its guidance to individual users and uses targeted social media outreach to help identify 'hidden carers'; people who don't recognise themselves as carers and may not realise that support is available.

Work is now under way to develop Bridgit Gen 2, which will be available later this year.

The council is also refreshing its All-Age Carers Strategy (2026–2028) to reflect rising demand and the changing needs of carers. This work has been informed by extensive consultation, ensuring that carers' voices, feedback, and what matters most to them are at the heart of the strategy.

The updated strategy will focus on earlier identification of carers, improved access to support, better support for young carers and parent carers, strengthened mental health and wellbeing support, and closer partnership working.

## ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN INVESTMENT - PLANNING

### Kingsway

The application for the Kingsway Solar Farm has been withdrawn. Early signs are that they will continue to work on the application for resubmission. It is unclear how much they will need to do to rectify any feedback they may have received from ministers.

### Forest City 1

Following confirmation from Housing Minister Matthew Pennycook that the government will not centrally support Forest City's "speculative proposal",

he indicated the developers could attempt to progress their plans through local planning systems, without Westminster's endorsement. Mr Pennycook went on to say, "When it comes to the East of England, the Government's focus is firmly on the establishment of the Greater Cambridge Development Corporation, and using it to deliver nationally significant growth in Cambridge and its surrounding areas in partnership with local leaders and communities".

This pie-in-the-skie concept is not going to get any traction any time soon, so although we need to keep our eyes open, we can all stop being concerned about it for now.

## **HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT**

### **Highways contract renegotiated**

The council has agreed an extension of its road maintenance contract with M Group, which will provide better value for taxpayers and stability during Local Government Reorganisation.

The contract was due to end in June 2027 but will be extended until June 2030. As part of the extension a number of enhancements have been jointly agreed between the council and M Group, prioritising improved value for money and quality control. The terms coming into effect in July this year.

In July 2025, the Government advised that authorities going through Local Government Reorganisation should ensure that their decisions do not negatively impact the sustainability of successor authorities or limit the ability of those future councils to deliver on their priorities, within their budgets.

This short-term extension will enable the future councils to procure their own road maintenance contract, rather than tying them into a long-term contract.

The collaboratively agreed enhancements secure an improved deal, including:

- an introduction of fixed costs for regular maintenance activities to secure better value for money and improved accuracy for budgeting
- a revised quality control regime that incentivises delivery of work on time and meeting standards
- direct penalties for failure to deliver to the required quality and time standards (in addition to remediation of work)
- tracking of all road maintenance vehicles to enable monitoring of their whereabouts and outputs to ensure we are getting an efficient service.

### **Bus services at risk**

An independent review for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority warns that bus networks across the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area could see severe cuts.

Driven by a funding shortfall and Mayor Paul Bristow's announcement that he will not increase his mayoral precept, the report projects a ten per cent network cut by 2029 and a nineteen per cent reduction by 2035, with nearly thirty-eight per cent of services at risk. Services south of Newmarket that were already dismal are set to be further impacted as a result.

### **Local Highways Improvement bids**

The East Cambridgeshire Local Highways Improvement panel meets on Friday 3 July to consider and score the eleven 'complex' bids submitted by councils and communities in East Cambridgeshire. This includes a bid from Cheveley in the Woodditton division.

We have six other bids from the division that are classed as non-complex and will be scored by officers.

All successful bids will be confirmed by the Highways and Transport Committee in October.

### **Local Maintenance**

The postponed surface treatment on the B1063 from Newmarket to Silverly is currently being rescheduled for mid-summer delivery.

The B1061 outside of Dullingham is scheduled to be delivered late in September. In the meantime, I have secured some interim patching to see drivers through over the summer with the worst carriageway shadowed by the treeline.

### **Lines and signs**

I've been working with our Highways Maintenance Officer to identify key junctions and safety features that need lines refreshing. This should start to be more noticeable as the summer progresses.

### **Footways**

At the recent Highways Committee, I continued to raise concerns with our footways, the pavements in many areas being of really poor condition. The Councils performance reporting is very bias toward road safety, with no comparable data being utilised for our footways. They have now taken an action to find ways to use A&E and other NHS reporting to identify links to falls on our footways. Please do continue to report defects. Footways should be repaired considerably quicker than the roads and the new contract will result in fines for the contractors where this does not happen on time.